

Sabina nods curtly at the PCs as they approach, then says, “Greetings. They tell me you’ve something that belongs to the queen. Is this correct?” If the PCs show her the brooch, Sabina smiles and steps aside, holding out a hand to welcome the PCs to Castle Korvosa. As the guards make to follow, she steps in. “You may return to your posts. These heroes pose no threat to the queen.” Sabina hopes to engender a bit of trust in the PCs by doing so—she certainly isn’t threatened by them and is confident she can handle any trouble they might have planned.

Sabina Merrin is not much for mincing words. She curtly asks the PCs how they’d like to be introduced to the queen. As they answer, she continues to appraise their trustworthiness and skill, and more importantly, their eagerness to please the queen. As they round the corner, she announces their arrival with a loud, clear voice, then steps aside to allow the PCs to enter the throne room.

Queen Ileosa sits upon the Crimson Throne. She is a vision of celestial beauty despite the black mourning dress and veil she wears in honor of her husband’s death. A small silver coffer sits in her lap. The throne room itself is pristine but strangely empty—an open area with a vaulted ceiling, stained glass windows of past kings and queens looking down from the eastern wall, and crimson tapestries hanging along the others. An immense fireplace offers additional light and heat to the hall, and a silk carpet provides a gently arching path to the throne’s base. Sabina takes the brooch from the PCs, hands it over to her queen with a flourish, then takes up a position at the throne’s left side as Ileosa addresses the PCs.

“This brooch was stolen from me some time ago—I had not expected to see it again, truth be told. And yet, here on my darkest day, you come before me with kindness. The return of this brooch is much more than an honorable deed. It is inspiration. It is hope.

“I love Korvosa, as my husband did before me. His death has shocked the city as it has me, but I will not see his legacy destroyed in death, and I shall not see my city torn apart. All Korvosa stands at the precipice of a disaster wrought by her citizens—these riots cannot continue. You have already done my heart a great service in returning this bauble to me on this dark day, and you shall be rewarded. Yet, perhaps you can serve your city more.

“If you so choose, I shall have Sabina see to it that you have an escort of guards when you leave here—they can see to your safe journey to Citadel Volshyenek. I shall send word ahead of you to Field Marshal Cressida Kroft to let her know you are on the way—the Korvosan Guard is stretched thin, and it can certainly use the aid of heroes such as yourself. Now, I need to retire to my personal quarters—my grief has drained me. Again, I thank you for the kindness you have shown me, and I hope your days of serving the crown are only just beginning.”

With this, the queen directs Sabina to hand over the reward for returning the brooch—the bodyguard swiftly does so, handing the small silver chest (itself worth 50 gp) to the PCs. Inside the red-velvet-lined interior rest 12 gold ingots imprinted with the royal seal of Korvosa—each bar is worth 100 gp.

At this point, Queen Ileosa excuses herself. With a whirl of the hem of her mourning dress, Queen Ileosa is gone from sight. Sabina escorts the PCs back out of Castle Korvosa and, if they wish, assigns them an escort to the Citadel before bidding them farewell also.

PART FOUR: WELCOME TO THE GUARD

Citadel Volshyenek is located in Midland, overlooking Jeggare Harbor, where it serves as the base of operations for the Korvosan Guard. The Citadel currently operates on a skeleton crew, as almost all available guards are hard at work in the city, desperately trying to keep order. Two nervous guards stand at the entrance to the Yard, but as the queen promised, the PCs are expected. They quickly wave the party through, and one guard escorts the PCs into the central keep, where a harried and tired-looking woman rises from her desk to greet the PCs—this is Field Marshal Cressida Kroft, an attractive, dark-haired human woman dressed in red armor. She introduces herself and asks for the PCs’ names as she bids them to sit. Since Eodred II’s death, Cressida hasn’t slept, yet she bears her exhaustion well, in no small part due to regular visits from a priest of Abadar who casts *lesser restoration* on her to help in fighting back fatigue. She sighs deeply as she speaks to the PCs.

“Ah yes—you are the ones sent by Queen Ileosa. Greetings—my name is Cressida, and heroes of your caliber are exactly what Korvosa needs now. You’ve been on the streets. You know better than me how bad things are out there. It’s breaking my heart to see Korvosa tear herself apart like this. Every little bit of aid we can get from upstanding citizens like you helps. If you’re willing, I’d very much like to retain your services as agents of the Guard. I don’t need to say, of course, that you’ll be well compensated for these services.”

Assuming the PCs agree to hear her out, Cressida continues.

“Korvosa’s got enough troubles as it is without my own men losing their way and going rogue. As much as it pains me to admit, though, this has happened several times already. Many guards have deserted their posts, more concerned about friends and family than the city. I can understand this, yet not all of the deserters have family—some of them are simply using the riots as an excuse for personal gain. One such man is Verik Vancaskerkin. Worse than a lone deserter, he’s convinced a small group of fellow guards that Queen Ileosa is going to ruin the city.

Whether she does or doesn't isn't the point—right now, we've got a city-wide crisis on our hands, and I need all of my guards working with me to see us through. A deserter is worse than a lost resource—it's an infection. I can't afford to pull any of my other patrols off duty to deal with Vancaskerkin, and I'd rather not expose any of them to him anyway, since I neither want Vancaskerkin to infect more guards with his talk of secession, nor do I want some overly patriotic guard killing Vancaskerkin outright. I need impartial, skilled talent. Like you.

"Vancaskerkin and his men have holed up in an abandoned butcher's shop up in Northgate—the place was called All the World's Meat. I need you to check out the place. Try to avoid killing any of the deserters if you can, but if you must, they brought it upon themselves when they threw in their lot with Vancaskerkin. For him, I'd really prefer it if you could capture him alive and return him to me for interrogation, but if he makes that impossible, I'll accept his body as well. Finally, see if you can find out why Verik deserted—if there's more to it than simple personal politics, I need to know immediately. Bring me Verik alive, and there's another thousand gold in it for you. Dead, he's only worth half that."

Cressida offers the PCs a spot in the Citadel barracks if they need somewhere to stay the night or to rest, and also says that she'll put in a good word with Theandra Darklight, the owner of the Three Rings Tavern in Five Corners. By the next day, the party should have a line of credit there that gives them not only a place to sleep and eat while they're in the service of the Guard, but also a headquarters. Cressida has worked with adventuring parties before and knows how to treat them well. Again—she's destined to become one of the PCs' stronger allies during *Curse of the Crimson Throne*, so make an extra effort to see that the PCs see her as a friend and supporter.

Verik Vancaskerkin's Story

Sergeant Verik Vancaskerkin is not brilliant by any stretch of the imagination, but he has always been opportunistic. The sergeant probably should have hung his ambitions up the first time Vimanda Arkona contacted him, but the sensuous prodigal daughter of the Arkona family proved most persuasive.

The Arkonas are one of Korvosa's oldest noble families, and thanks to their strong ties and regular trade with the distant country of Vudra, one of Korvosa's wealthiest. Rare

THE TRUTH BEHIND THE THRONE

Even now, Queen Ileosa is playing the PCs. The only truly honest emotion she shows is her delight at getting back her brooch. Yet the PCs should, at this point, have no reason to suspect the queen of deception. Although she is herself a neutral evil aristocrat 2/bard 4, she's also under the effects of a *misdirection* spell. Any attempt to read her aura instead reads Sabina's aura, indicating that Ileosa is a lawful neutral human. This is the primary reason Ileosa never lets Sabina wander far.



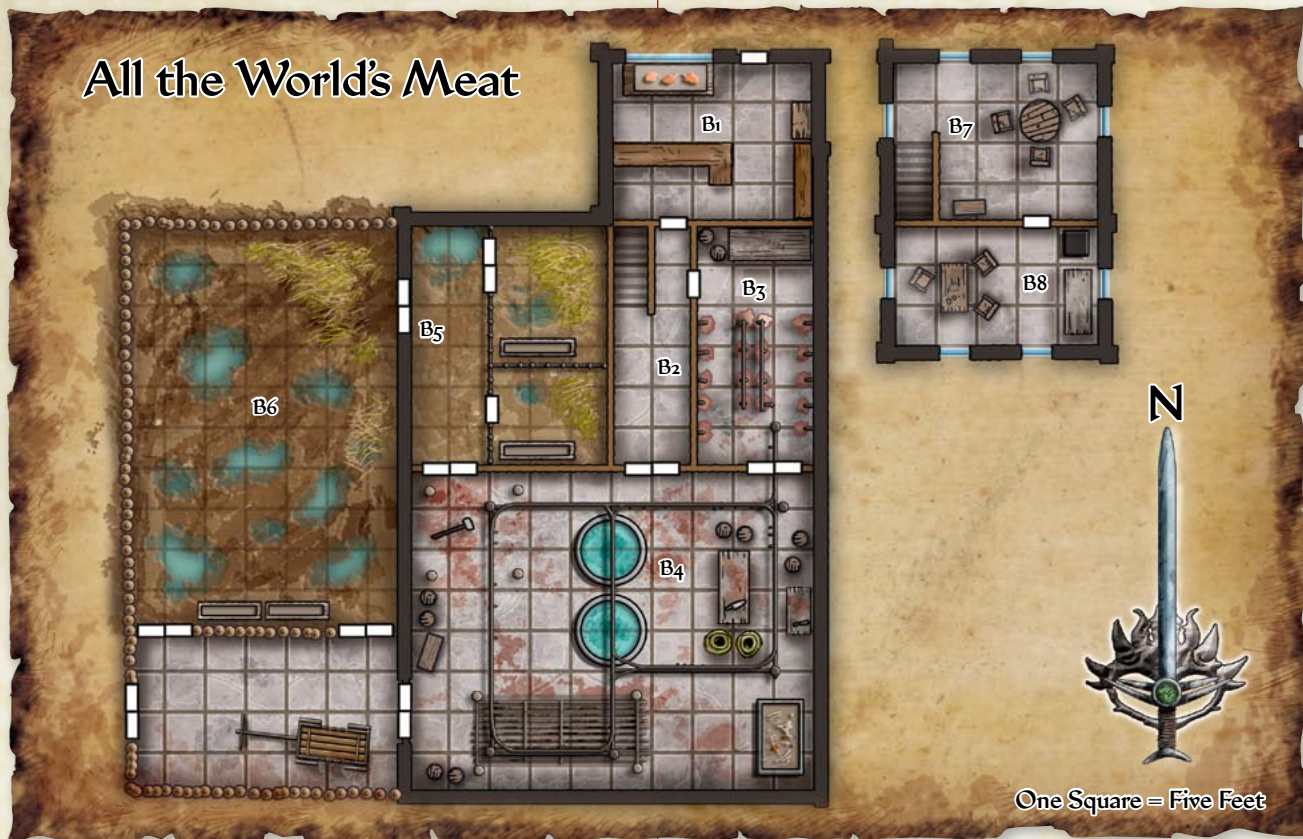
and exotic imports from Vudra guarantee the Arkonas' continued wealth, and it was on this backbone that the family rose in power to become the de facto rulers of Old Korvosa, the large island just north of the city proper. The family's own open acceptance of all manner of vice has certainly influenced the growth of Old Korvosa, yet it keeps things under relatively tight control nevertheless. Viewed as heroes by much of Old Korvosa's lower class and as troublemakers by most of the rest of the city, the Arkonas' true secret is one of Korvosa's best kept—the leaders of this family are rakshasas.

Vimanda Arkona is one of Glorio Arkona's closest allies—a lover, an assassin, a spy, and an advisor. Vimanda has been subtly and stealthily infiltrating dozens of organizations and families throughout Korvosa, building a network of contacts she hopes to some day use to her advantage.

Her chosen contact among the Korvosan Guard was a man of high enough rank to wield some power, but not so high so as to be the center of attention—Verik Vancaskerkin.

It was, in fact, through Vimanda's contacts and her pulling of strings that Verik blazed through the lower ranks to make Watch Sergeant. With little more going for him than a fit physique, piercing eyes, and a winning smile, Vancaskerkin did well for himself, but he's got his sights set higher, and he definitely doesn't know when to quit.

Right after the Queen ascended the throne, the Arkonas saw the end of the monarchy blowing in the wind. With the right moves, they hope to topple Ileosa and claim the throne for themselves by installing a puppet prince. When the protests, strikes, and violence began, Vimanda quickly contacted Verik (who believes her to be nothing more than his secret Vudran lover) and convinced him to gather his closest friends, forsake the guard, and claim control of the old butchery known as All the World's Meat. As the Arkonas suspected, food has quickly become a source of



contention in Korvosa, with regular shipments of meat from outlying farms cut off. Already, Vancaskerkin and his thugs have gathered a sizable following in Northgate, and when that following is large enough, the Arkonas are ready to step in and mobilize an army.

Vancaskerkin is in his early 20s, a man who escaped early from the streets of Riddleport to seek his fortune elsewhere. He left behind several brothers, but the only one who he misses is older Orik, a strong role model in Verik's younger years. Last Verik heard, Orik had been forced to flee Riddleport as well, after some scandal involving a tiefling prostitute and an alchemist. Verik hopes some day to take the time to return to Riddleport and track down his brother, but for now, his secret duties to exotic Vimanda increasingly keep his attention.

All the World's Meat

The previous owner of All the World's Meat was arrested for tax evasion and soon thereafter died in prison. His shop has remained in escrow with the government for nearly a year, boarded over and empty until Vancaskerkin, at Vimanda Arkona's urging, moved in. Verik has taken to sleeping in the small upstairs office, with his four accomplices spending most of their time here as well (sleeping wherever they can find someplace comfortable). The shop is located at 22 Stirge Street.

Should the PCs ask around on the street about Verik and his boys, a DC 10 Gather Information check is enough to learn that the group's taken to calling themselves the Cow Hammer Boys, and that their program of free meat during the time of unrest is keeping many families from going hungry. With a DC 20 Gather Information check, the PCs learn that the Cow Hammer Boys also hire out as mercenaries—if one wishes to hire them in this manner, all you need to do is to ask about “the night's special cuts.”

B1. Shopfront (EL 2)

A sign bearing the image of a fat, smiling cow hangs above the entrance to this shop. Inside, a long counter runs over half the room's width, beyond which a door stands ajar. A low bench sits against the east wall, while to the north a marble-topped table displays cuts of meat before a wide, grimy window. A few flies crawl and circle in the air above the meat.

This room is where Verik's men hand out fresh meat to locals in search of food. The meat on display in the window is replaced daily, but by the end of the day the flies are back in force. This doesn't dissuade the guards from handing out these aged cuts to the day's last customers, of course.

Traffic in and out of the building is heavy for the first hours of the day, as locals arrive in large numbers for free

meat. Stragglers wander by now and then throughout the rest of the day, but the free meat goes fast and most of those who arrive after noon leave empty-handed. Once the sun sets, the doors into area **B1** and **B6** are locked and lights burn in the windows of area **B7** for several hours before going out. Livestock (usually skittish-looking cattle or pigs) is brought into the pen (area **B6**) every morning just before the shop opens. The animals are butchered after dark and the meat stored in area **B3**. Based on the amount of livestock going in, a DC 25 Spot check or a DC 15 Profession (butcher) check confirms that there is a strangely large amount of meat coming back out.

Creatures: The butchery is staffed by four self-important ex-guards who are more impressed with Verik's rebellious nature than the concept of feeding hungry locals. They've taken to calling themselves the Cow Hammer Boys, and they enjoy the power of deciding which family eats at night. They have been talking among themselves about methods to use their newfound power to get rich. They haven't quite decided yet if they're going to let Verik in on their plan. During the day, one guard stands at the entrance to the building, one staffs the shopfront and hands out meat, and the other two handle the actual preparation of the meat in area **B4** or tend to whatever animals they've got in the stocks.

Two guards stand at attention here—Baldrago (a tall man with bushy eyebrows that merge into one just above his large flat nose) and Malder (a wheezy man whose chainmail doesn't quite fit his ample frame). Unless the PCs are disguised as down-on-their-luck locals, both guards have little interest in handing out meat to them and gruffly ask them to "kick off." Mentioning "the night's special cuts" brings an immediate end to their hostility, and Malder nods to Baldrago, who closes the front door to allow a little privacy. The Cow Hammer Boys hire themselves out for petty thuggery—they ask no questions of those who hire them, only demanding a payment of 50 gp per person to be beaten. Although the guards never openly admit that those they beat are almost always killed, they certainly imply that fact by offering guarantees that, after they visit the mark, their client need never worry about the victims again. What they never allude to at all is how they dispose of the bodies here.

At no time do the Cow Hammer Boys let anyone up to talk to Verik. The reason for this is simple—Verik doesn't know about the renegade guards' side business as thugs for hire, and they worry that if he found out how they've been getting rid of the bodies, he'd do the same to them. If anyone attempts to push their way into the back room (or if anyone blatantly refuses to leave the shop after being told to do so), both Baldrago and Malder draw their swords and call out to area **B4** for help. They don't attack first unless a PC successfully makes it further into the building.

BALDRAGO AND MALDER—RENEGADE GUARDS CR 1

Male human warrior 2

CE Medium humanoid

Init +4; **Senses** Listen -1, Spot -1

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17

(+5 armor, +2 shield)

hp 11 each (2d8+2)

Fort +4, **Ref** +0, **Will** -1

OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft.

Melee longsword +4 (1d8+1/19-20)

Ranged light crossbow +2 (1d8/19-20)

TACTICS

During Combat The guards open with shots from their crossbows, switching to melee only if their enemies close to do the same. If more than one guard is involved in a fight, at least one tries to fall back to support the other with crossbow fire.

Morale If reduced to 4 hit points or less, a guard attempts to flee into the city. If at least two guards are killed, the others abandon Verik and flee as soon as they see proof of the other two's deaths.

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 11, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +3

Feats Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +4, Ride +7

Languages Common

Other Gear chainmail, heavy steel shield, longsword, light crossbow with 10 bolts, 20 gp

B2. Hall

The stairs in this hallway lead up to area **B7**.

B3. Meat Locker (EL 3)

The air in this room is stale, stinking of day-old meat and blood. Straw litters the floor, scattered to catch what drips from the meat hooks affixed to the walls and ceiling on metal rods. To the north is a low blood-stained table and two barrels of salt, while to the south, a pair of double doors stands. An iron bar extends through a narrow hole at the top of the doors; the bar runs along the ceiling for five feet before ending at a vertical pole running floor to ceiling.

Meat butchered in the early evening is salted and then stored overnight in this room—by noon, the meat here is all gone. If the PCs enter this room while meat is stored, the majority of it consists of pork and beef, but at least a half-dozen cuts are harder to identify. A closer examination and a DC 25 Knowledge (nature) check reveals that these cuts don't come from animals at all, but from humanoids.

B4. Killing Floor (EL 1, EL 3)

The floor of this grim chamber is strewn with blood-stained straw, and the reek of slaughter is almost overpowering. The room itself is a killing floor. A metal track affixed to the ceiling dangles meat hooks here and there, allowing the hooks and their gory loads to be moved easily from the northwest where a large hammer sits on the floor amid a permanent bloodstain. To the south, a bloodstained grill covers a wide hole in the floor. Just north of the grill sit two large vats of water; one boiling and one cold. Two large butcher blocks stand to the east next to barrels of salt, and in the southeast corner sits a reeking vat of cast-off meat and bones.

This is where the Cow Hammer Boys slaughter animals (and victims of their under-the-counter mercenary work), preparing them for the next day's handouts. Animals are killed in the northwest corner of the room after being led in from the holding pens, then hung from hooks and wheeled over the grate to be bled, skinned, and butchered. The blood and the majority of the entrails are allowed to slop through the grate into the pit below. Once the animal is prepared, it is allowed to soak in the boiling water and then the cool water to clean the carcass and slow decay, and is then wheeled over to the blocks to be butchered.

The rusty grating in the southwest corner can be bashed through or pried up out of the ground to allow access between the filthy tunnel and this room. The area below is a disused sewer tunnel that runs due east into the river, although the tunnel narrows down to a 4-foot-wide, mostly flooded passageway for most of that length.

Characters who investigate the filthy, rancid chamber below area **B4** find a circular cesspool 15 feet across and 10 feet high. Much of the room is filled with rotting meat, congealed blood, and bits of bone. Anyone who searches through the area exposes himself to filth fever (DMG 292) if he has any wounds. A DC 20 Search check reveals numerous fragmentary human remains (mostly partially destroyed heads, hands, and feet), proof of the unsavory goings-on in the slaughterhouse above.

RUSTY IRON GRATINGS

hp 40; Hardness 10; Break DC 24

Creatures: During the day, there's a 75% chance of encountering the remaining two Cow Hammer Boys here. Parns worked as a butcher before joining the Guard and meeting Verik; his skills made him the key recruit to Verik's plan. Parns himself, a broad-shouldered man with long sideburns, welcomed the opportunity since the Guard simply wasn't as exciting a job as he'd hoped. Now, as a butcher and mercenary, the man's sadism has a perfect outlet. The other man found here is Karralo,

a thin and jittery man with a sallow complexion. Of the four renegades, Karralo is the most unsure—he doesn't mind beating up folk for money, but the thought of butchering them to dispose of the evidence has made him increasingly nervous.

If Parns and Karralo aren't here during the day, they're instead in area **B5** or **B6** feeding and tending to the day's livestock. For several hours after sunset, the two are busy butchering animals in here. When victims of their mercenary work arrive, these unfortunates smuggled into this room already unconscious or dead and wrapped in sacks. Parns particularly enjoys butchering humans, but Karralo has increasingly begged off this duty. Such grisly work typically takes place after midnight, but doesn't occur every day—usually the renegades “process” three or four victims a week in this manner.

Characters who choose to investigate the cesspool have more than disease to fear—the room is the lair of three reefclaws. The spiny aberrations are the only reason the room hasn't overflowed and the drainage hasn't clogged, but even then, the monsters are having a tough time keeping up with the grisly offerings. Well-fed, the creatures attack only if they think intruders are attempting to steal their food—by searching through the remains, for example.

KARRALO AND PARNs—RENEGADE GUARDS CR 1

Male human warrior 2

hp 11 each (see page 29)

OFFENSE

Melee warhammer +4 (1d8+1/x3; Parns only)

TACTICS

During Combat Parns and Karralo fight with similar tactics to

Baldrago and Malder, but instead of having Weapon Focus (longsword) as a feat, Parns has Weapon Focus (warhammer) and fights with his trusty cow hammer.

Morale If reduced to 4 hit points or less, a guard attempts to flee into the city. If at least two guards are killed, the others abandon Verik and flee as soon as they see proof of the other two's deaths.

REEFLAWS (3)

CR 1

hp 11 each (see page 88)

B5. Holding Pens (EL 4)

Two foul-smelling animal pens take up the majority of this room. Each pen is defined by a wooden fence set with a gate. Inside each is a long water trough and heaps of filthy hay. The floor here is hard-packed earth.

The southern pen is normally used to hold animals ready for slaughter, but the Cow Hammer Boys have taken to just bringing in livestock directly from the yard and simply don't use this smaller one.

Creatures: The northern pen houses a pair of large, perpetually hungry pigs. These two aren't used for slaughter, but rather to dispose of viscera, bones, and other unwanted byproducts of the slaughter. Anyone entering the southern cage is immediately attacked by the ravenous and ill-tempered pigs.

BOARS (2)

hp 25 each (MM 270)

CR 1

Treasure: Under the water trough in the southern pen, the Cow Hammer Boys have dug a small hole in which they hide their earnings from their mercenary work. Discovering the secret stash requires a DC 20 Search check. The stash consists of several bags, and in all contains 450 gp, 740 sp, and 800 gp worth of assorted pieces of jewelry and gemstones.

B6. Cattle Pen (EL 1)

This large cattle pen is open to the air, and the stink of manure, mud, and animal is strong, despite the breeze that wafts through the stockade's wooden fence. To the south stands a roofed shed containing a straw-filled wagon.

Every morning, a delivery of 1d6–3 cows and 1d4–2 pigs arrives here, brought by ranchers brave or desperate enough to make the trip into the city despite the rising tensions. On some days, no livestock arrives at all, forcing the Cow Hammer Boys to gather their own meat or turn away needy customers. Livestock found here is skittish but relatively harmless.

B7. Breakroom

A round table sits in this room, surrounded by four wooden chairs. A stack of cards sits on the tabletop. A cabinet to the southwest hangs open, a tangle of dirty clothes and blankets within. Four thin bedrolls lie rolled up against the north wall.

This room is where the Cow Hammer Boys come to relax every evening. They typically play games of Towers late into the night, using a mostly complete but tattered Harrow deck, then unroll bedrolls and flop down anywhere there's space when the urge to sleep hits. The stairs descend to area B2.

B8. Slaughterhouse Offices (EL 3)

A single large desk stands in the eastern part of this large office, transformed into a makeshift bed by a bedroll and several blankets and pillows. A table and three chairs sit to the west; several papers lie strewn over the table's surface and a

chamberpot sits under it. One of the papers is pinned to the tabletop by an exquisite silver dagger.

Creature: This room has been claimed by Verik as his personal quarters—he's been living here ever since he fled the guards when the king died, emerging less frequently as his paranoia that the Korvosan Guard might try to track him down grows. He spends an increasing amount of time each day drinking and sleeping, leaving the day-to-day running of the operation to his four men (which, incidentally, gives them a lot of leeway to conduct their mercenary work on the side). Verik hasn't seen his lover Vimanda since the riots began. He entertains thoughts of making the trek to Old Korvosa to call on her, but he hasn't yet worked up the energy to do so.

Vancaskerkin is a handsome man who still wears his Korvosan Guard livery and armor, even though he abandoned everything it stands for by organizing his gang. If he hears fighting or calls for help from his men below, he doesn't immediately react—assuming its the guard come for him, he spends several rounds trying to decide to make his rebellion official by joining the fight or clambering out a window to escape. In the end, he decides to join the fight, likely arriving just as a confrontation with his men below comes to an end.

Verik's initial attitude is hostile—he refuses to surrender unless his attitude is adjusted to friendly (requiring a DC 35 Diplomacy check), or he's defeated in combat. If confronted with hard evidence that his men have been murdering locals on the side for pay (the stash of treasure from area B5, the body parts from B4, or a confession from one of his men would all work), his spirit breaks. Realizing how much harm he's actually been doing, he drops his weapons and allows the PCs to arrest him. He won't reveal Vimanda's role in the affair unless made helpful, in which case he finally admits that it was her idea to leave the guard and form a gang to help feed the locals. He's quick to point out that her plan isn't bad—people need to eat, after all—but can't give a good reason why one of the Arkonas would want him to do this. In any event, Vimanda cannot be contacted at this point and the Arkonas have no interest in discussing her current location or any supposed links to Vancaskerkin.

Verik is not the only one of Vimanda's agents in this room. The silver dagger on the desk, a gift to him from the lovely Arkona daughter, is in fact a shapeshifting spirit known as a raktavarna, a spy of sorts bound to Vimanda's mind and soul. In the form of the silver dagger, the raktavarna has been keeping an eye on Verik, and if it sees him captured, it immediately informs Vimanda via its telepathic link to her, then shifts its observation to the PCs. The creature hopes to be claimed by one of them as treasure (radiating magic if such is detected for, although *identify* reveals no powers) so it can report on the PCs to Vimanda. The raktavarna remains with the PCs as long

as possible—it can be sold as a normal silver dagger (and if it is, it attempts to escape its new owner to return to the PCs as a different object) but doesn't function as one for the purposes of damage reduction.

If the raktavarna is discovered for what it truly is, it reverts to its true form and attacks for 1d3 rounds, at which point Vimanda decides the spirit has outlived its usefulness and severs her link with it, killing it immediately.

VERIK VANCASKERKIN

CR 3

Male human fighter 3

CN Medium humanoid

Init +2; Senses Listen -1, Spot -1

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15

(+5 armor, +2 Dex)



**VERIK
VANCASKERKIN**

hp 24 (3d10+3)

Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0

OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft.

Melee mwk spear +6 (1d8+3/x3)

Ranged mwk composite longbow +7 (1d8+3/19-20)

TACTICS

During Combat Verik prefers to fight with his longbow. He switches to his spear only if someone manages to engage him in melee.

Morale Verik surrenders if brought below 6 hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 13

Base Atk +3; Grp +5

Feats Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (longbow)

Skills Handle Animal +7, Intimidate +7, Ride +10

Languages Common

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other Gear** masterwork chainmail, masterwork spear, masterwork composite longbow (+2 Strength) with 20 +1 arrows

RAKTAVARNA

CR 3

hp 19 (see page 86)

Ad Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs manage to bring Verik back alive, award them experience as if they had defeated a CR 2 creature.

PART FIVE: THE AMBASSADOR'S SECRET

Once the PCs resolve the situation with Verik Vancaskerkin (with the renegade guard either behind bars and awaiting trial for desertion or in a coffin awaiting burial) and have collected their reward, Field Marshal Cressida Kroft invites them in to her office with another job offer. Only this time, when she meets with the PCs, she's not alone. A handsome man sits in one of the chairs at her desk, and as the PCs enter, he rises and bows. Cressida introduces the man as an old friend—one Vencarlo Orisini. A DC 15 Knowledge (local) check is enough to recognize him as one of Korvosa's most respected and renowned teachers of the honorable arts of fencing and swordplay. Vencarlo is a charming man, and he bows deeply as he's introduced. Cressida explains that, although Vencarlo himself has always been an outspoken critic of Korvosa's government, she has always valued him as a friend and advisor. Particularly in these dark times, his input about the temperament and morale of the citizens of Korvosa is invaluable to the Field Marshal, who's desperate to get the city back under control. Vencarlo is complimentary and polite to the PCs, congratulating them on their successes and noting that, "If Korvosa had more fine folk like you, we'd already be