

PART ONE: INFECTION

While “Edge of Anarchy” gave the PCs ample opportunities to explore Korvosa and become acquainted with its districts and people, most of these encounters occurred under stressful circumstances. With the quieting of much of the city’s disorder and the slow acceptance of Queen Ileosa as Korvosa’s new sovereign, the city returns to a state of near normalcy—although the scars of the past week’s upheaval still show on many buildings and in whispered gossip. In the downtime following their first adventure, the PCs should be given time to explore the city, resupply, and clean up any loose ends. As “Seven Days to the Grave” promises to drastically alter the face and feel of Korvosa, be sure the PCs have ample time to prepare. Characters should be encouraged to make connections and grow attached to people and places throughout the city, especially if they’re locals. Such bonds should cause the tragedies of the impending days to affect the characters even more deeply and lend personal inspirations to their search for a cure.

The harbinger of Korvosa’s continued troubles came in the ominous form of the *Direption*, a black-sailed Chelish ship secretly owned by the nefarious criminal organization known as the Red Mantis and loaned to the local cult of Urgathoa as one method to begin the plague. Largely a decoy—a mysterious scapegoat to divert inquisitive eyes from the plague’s true source—the ship also carried several magical boxes known as *death’s head coffers*—containers used to preserve highly infectious material for safe transport. The cult of Urgathoa knew that once the city sank the ship, these air-tight containers would float and wash ashore all along the river’s banks, where the poorest of the poor generally dwell, and that the infected coins would circulate swiftly. Other coins were scheduled to enter circulation at other points as well (including via the bank of Abadar), but as fortune would have it, the first to find the coins from the *Direption* was a child.

The Yellow Light

As this adventure begins, an ominous disruption presages the city’s newest peril. Just before midnight, the evening’s peace is shattered by a wooden screech, followed by the thunder of a trebuchet being fired. Again and again the sounds echo from the Wall of Eodred near North Bridge, waking nearly all of North Point. Across the river in Trail’s End, citizens wake just in time to see a sleek brig burn and swiftly sink into the wine-dark waters. The rest of the night passes in breathless anticipation of the wall-weapons’ further use, which fortuitously never comes.

Next morning, gossip buzzes through the city and fanciful tales run wild. Every tavern and street corner is abuzz with rumors of pirate raiders and ghost ships. The Crimson Throne remains quiet on the matter, though,

BLOOD VEIL

The affliction that the people of Korvosa will soon widely fear as “blood veil” is no natural malady. Created by plague shaping priests of Urgathoa and funded by the Red Mantis, blood veil is a refined form of Vorel’s phage, an unnatural disease that first came into being deep under Foxglove Manor, on Varisia’s coast (see *Pathfinder* #2). The arcane and alchemical manipulations of these two nefarious organizations have altered the potent necromantic infection into a weaker but more virulent weapon.

Blood veil takes its name from its most apparent symptom, a rash and mask of blisters that covers the face. In its initial stages, the disease is characterized by headache, fatigue, coughing, and the aforementioned rash. As it progresses, the cough becomes more obtrusive, the rash spreads to the neck, face, and limbs and develops into pox-like blisters, and the lymph glands swell into painful buboes. At its most advanced stage, the blisters grow to the size of grapes or larger, internal bleeding creates black patches on the skin, and blood is expectorated. Ultimately, a most unseemly, wheezing death occurs. If left untreated, blood veil kills the average human in approximately 7 days.

Blood Veil—contact or injury; Fortitude DC 16; incubation 1 day; damage 1d3 Constitution and 1d3 Charisma.

with even the loosest-tongued politicians seemingly knowing nothing of the previous night’s incident. With so many far wilder and more interesting tales circulating, the facts of the matter become lost among the frenzied gossip.

PCs who seek more information about the night’s events are best served by waiting until the city digests the most unlikely rumors and the wild storytelling dies down. On the night of the *Direption*’s sinking, very little can be discerned, and even interrogating a guardsman stationed upon the wall reveals only that an order was given to fire upon a light on the water. Gather Information checks can turn up the following facts and fictions.

Check

DC Information Gained

- 10 The Korvosan Guard fired upon and destroyed a ship full of foolish pirates from Riddleport who had obviously hoped to sneak into the heart of the city under cover of night. (False)
- 15 A sinister-looking ship refused inspection as it sailed into the river. When it neared North Bridge and still failed to make its intentions known, the watch fired upon and destroyed it. (True)
- 20 None of the guardsmen who signaled or shouted out to the ship received a response. Some say that no one was on board at all. (True)

Upon hearing rumors of a strangely lit ship, a DC 20 Profession (sailor) check reveals that shining a single yellow light is a nautical warning identifying a ship under quarantine.

The PCs likely have more questions about the *Direption* and might even seek to investigate the sunken wreck (see Part Four if they insist), but for now, its importance should be downplayed. Present the event as part of the campaign's background flavor, if you can. The general feeling about the incident should be that it was a potential danger that has been handled, although many in Korvosa remain surprised at the quickness and lethality with which the intruder was dealt with.

The First Symptoms

The day after the *Direption* sinks into the Jeggare, Brienna "Breeze" Soldado made the most serious discovery of her life. Washed up on the shore near her Trail's End home was a strange wooden coffer. When she opened the ruined box, she found 50 shiny silver coins—the largest fortune the child had ever seen. Shocked at her good luck and thanking Desna, she raced into North Point, intent on spending every coin of her unexpected windfall as quickly as she could.

Unfortunately for Brienna, the coffer she found was a *death's head coffer*, and the coins that remained inside it even after it washed ashore were infected with blood veil. Brienna fell ill quickly. Her mother, Tayce, did all she could think of, drawing on more than 20 years of common parenting sense and mothering instinct, but nothing seemed to soothe the girl. By evening, despite the attentions of her mother, the neighbor women, and a pinch-faced local herbalist, Brienna's condition had only worsened.

After a long night that brought little respite, it was clear that Brienna's condition was dire indeed. Tayce sent her sons into the city to schedule a visit from a cleric from the Grand Vault of Abadar, while she called on her only family in the city—her departed husband's brother, Grau Soldado.

A Second Favor

In "Edge of Anarchy," the PCs likely met Grau and helped him to recover from his depression and alcoholism. Their kindness and support made a mark, and now that his niece has taken ill, Grau realizes these fine adventurers might be her best shot at recovery. Even if there are no healers among the PCs, Grau still seeks them out, having seen that they have a knack for getting things done and knowing they're probably the best equipped to help of all his contacts.

Grau uses his contacts with the Guard to locate the PCs, an easy enough task if they are still in the good graces of Field Marshal Cressida Kroft. Physically, he's in much better condition than the last time the PCs met him,

having shaved, bathed, and sobered up. Psychologically, though, Grau remains distressed. If he encounters a character besides the one he's looking for, he urgently requests to be led to the PC he believes can best help his sick niece. Once Grau finds the PC he's looking for, he looks for a private place they can talk.

"My niece is sick. I don't know what she has and neither does anyone in Trail's End. She's broken out all over in red pocks and can barely keep down food, or even the swill that good-for-nothing herbalist gave her. Her mother's talking about going to the Bank of Abadar, but her family can't afford to pay the prices their clerics would demand. Then I remembered how you and your friends handled yourselves during the riots, and how you helped me out, and I figured you all could help. A bunch of resourceful folk like you, I'd bet if you don't already have a way to fix this you must know who can. Surely you can't just sit by while a child suffers, can you?"

Grau's request is simple and straightforward in his eyes—he is shocked if the PCs refuse. If it comes down to it, he offers to pay the PCs for their services, but he can only afford 100 gp (50 gp shy of being able to pay for a *remove disease* spell). Should the PCs still refuse, he resorts to guilt and insults to try and goad them into coming before finally giving up and seeking help elsewhere.

A Family in Need

Grau's sister-in-law's family lives in a small community northeast of Korvosa disparagingly called Trail's End—a slight against the number of settled Varisians in the area. Made up primarily of Varisians—with a few Shoanti and socially disaffected Chelaxians—Trail's End is poor and reputedly dangerous, but the neighborhood feels more like a small town than any district within the city proper. The criminal element is obvious and impossible to ignore in the faces of dozens of toughs and thugs who loiter on the streets here, Sczarni brutes who call themselves the Bashwater Boys and prey exclusively upon Chelaxians and other outsiders. Knowing most city folks' distaste for Varisia's natives, the residents of Trail's End return such prejudices, creating a community that thrives off Korvosan coin but reviles the city all the same.

Tayce Soldado lives here with her three children, Brienna, Charlo, and Rello. Despite being only half-blooded Varisians, Tayce's sons have distinctly Varisian features, with unruly black hair, brown eyes, and olive skin, while Brienna takes more after her father, having a paler complexion, with light hair and freckles. Tayce and her family are well-known and quietly respected in Trail's End, and have nothing to fear from the local Sczarni toughs. While Tayce works as a washerwoman for those in the community and several families in North Point, her children also bring

in a few coins for the family—Brienna working as a maid, while Charlo and Rello work as unofficial apprentices to a wheelwright friend of the family.

Tayce is a single mother. Her husband Bayan was murdered long ago by highwaymen. Left with three children to raise alone, Tayce dedicated her life to bringing them up right. Grau visits the family at least once a week to ensure that they're safe and have everything they need. He respects and honestly likes Tayce, but his visits are inspired by familial concern and fraternal obligation, not any one-sided feelings for his brother's widow.

Only a crooked block away from the Jeg-gare shore, the Soldado home is a squat, two-story wooden building in desperate need of repair and gardening. Overall, the building feels like the home of a family too busy living to bother with tedious chores. Inside, the house is remarkably clean and well-kept, filled with worn, well-used furniture and decorated with the crafts and scribbles of children. Tayce ceded the one bedroom to her children years ago and sleeps on a couch on the first floor. Since Brienna's illness, though, the boys have joined their mother downstairs.

Infectious Encounters

When Grau and the PCs reach Tayce's home, Charlo and Rello are playing quietly in the living room, while Tayce attends Brienna upstairs. Every few minutes, a spasm of ragged coughing fills the house from above. Ishani Dhatri, an acolyte from the Bank of Abadar, is in the kitchen with a bag of herbs, brewing some concoction that smells of cinnamon and anise. Upon seeing the man still there, Grau is obviously displeased and goes upstairs to have a sternly whispered conversation with Tayce. Any character who makes a DC 20 Listen check can make out the gist of the conversation: Grau scolding Tayce for racking up a bill with an expensive and worthless healer when he said he would handle things, and Tayce defending her decision and restating the direness of Brienna's condition.

Ishani Dhatri (LG male human cleric 5) attends a kettle boiling in the kitchen hearth until Grau and Tayce come back downstairs. He's just nearing 30 years old, yet still only a low-ranking priest in the church of Abadar. His mother brought him to Korvosa when he was less than 10, fleeing an outbreak of scarlet leprosy in Vudra that had already claimed his father. Taking the first ship to

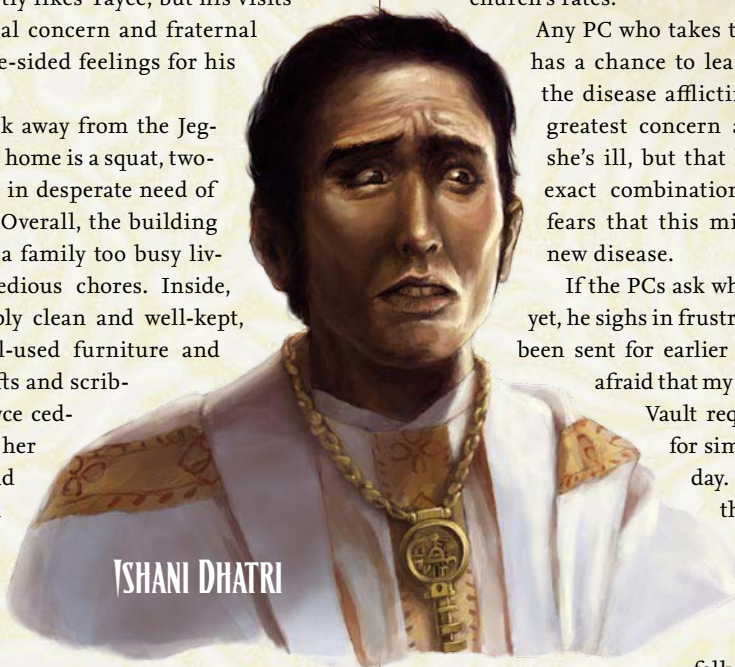
anywhere, Ishani and his mother found themselves on the return journey of an Arkona expedition and have lived in Korvosa ever since. Ishani's experience in Vudra scarred him, and he has sought to help the sick ever since. He knows he can't offer actual healing without seeking payment, and the use of herbal remedies and other methods of fighting illness are his way of skirting the system for folk who need his aid yet cannot afford the church's rates.

Any PC who takes the time to talk to Ishani has a chance to learn much about him and the disease afflicting Brienna Soldado. His greatest concern about the girl isn't that she's ill, but that he doesn't recognize the exact combination of her symptoms—he fears that this might be a harbinger of a new disease.

If the PCs ask why he hasn't cured the girl yet, he sighs in frustration and replies, "If I had been sent for earlier perhaps I could, but I'm afraid that my duties at the Golden One's Vault required me to entreat him for similar miracles already this day. Even if I could, though, the tenets of my church force me to request a donation for Abadar's power—one that I suspect these simple folk could scarcely afford."

Nearing 40, **Tayce Soldado** (NG female human commoner 3) possesses a simple beauty, scarcely hidden by her disheveled appearance and wan features—she's not slept in more than a day. Despite her personal state, her concern for her daughter drives her on and she welcomes the PCs sincerely, especially if one of them has the look of a priest. She knows nothing of how her daughter might have become so ill, as the girl has drifted in and out of consciousness since her discovery. Once Tayce satisfies herself that one of the PCs might be able to help her, she invites the healer upstairs with her to see Brienna.

The creaky steps open up into a bedroom loft above the main room of the Soldado home. A young girl with auburn hair lies in one of the beds, her slight frame dwarfed by the bed's size and the pile of pillows, afghans, and quilts surrounding her. Splotches of an angry red rash cover her face and arms, appearing in irregular shapes and sizes. Suddenly, her restlessness is interrupted by a violent fit of hacking coughs that jerk her entire frame, lifting her well off her pillows. The spasm passes after a moment, dropping her back to the bed, but seemingly having done little to ease her breathing.



ISHANI DHATRI

CONTRACTING THE PLAGUE

Although Brienna certainly doesn't mean the PCs harm, this is the first time the PCs are exposed to blood veil in the adventure. As the disease is passed through contact and injury, simply being among victims of the plague has a chance of infecting the PCs. As the adventure progresses, the PCs likely spend more time among the diseased and in areas that might be thick with infection. From this point on, in addition to typical ways of getting sick, PCs have a 15% chance every day of being exposed to blood veil simply in the course of their day—perhaps by brushing up against a victim on the street, taking an infected coin, or by any of a hundred other everyday interactions. You should check every morning to see if any of the PCs were exposed to the disease the previous day. Those who were should make the Fortitude save to resist, with failure indicating immediate damage as the incubation period ends. Of course, daily uses of *remove disease* can protect the PCs from blood veil, but doing so also reduces their resources to aid others who fall ill during the adventure.

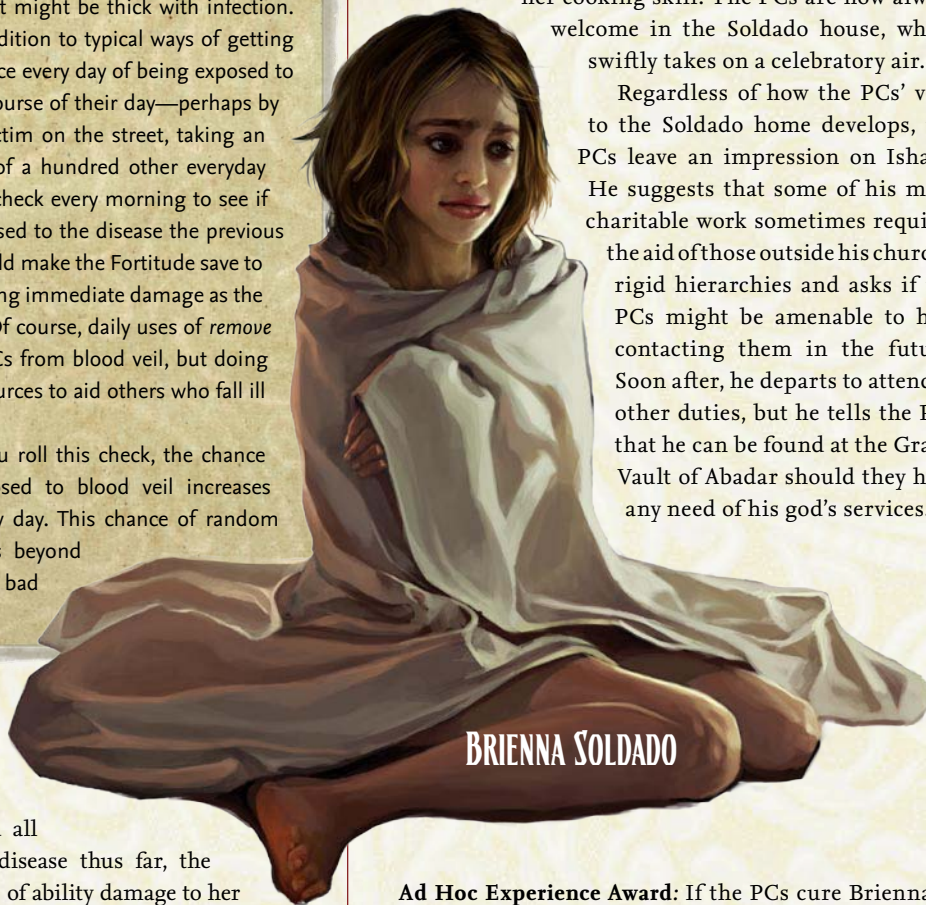
From the first time you roll this check, the chance of being randomly exposed to blood veil increases by a cumulative 5% every day. This chance of random exposure never increases beyond 50%, regardless of how bad the plague gets.

Brienna Soldado is a 1st-level commoner with a base Constitution score of 9 and a base Charisma score of 12. Having failed all of her saves against the disease thus far, the affliction has dealt 4 points of ability damage to her Constitution and 5 points to her Charisma (reducing her scores to Con 5 and Cha 7). As she gains no bonuses to her saving throw from her class, she has to make another DC 16 Fortitude save against the disease to avoid taking even more damage every morning—currently a d20 roll with a -3 penalty. At this rate, without receiving healing or other treatment, Brienna will die within the next 2 or 3 days.

The PCs have three obvious choices: heal Brienna on the spot via a cleric or paladin with the capability to cure diseases; prepare a spell, fetch a magic item, or recruit a healer capable of curing the girl; or do nothing. *Remove disease* saves Brienna's life, but it takes a few *lesser restorations* or similar spells to immediately restore her to full health. Regardless, if the PCs only use *remove disease*, her coughing fits and restlessness immediately vanish. In either situation, Tayce is overwhelmed. Brienna wakes almost immediately. She's slightly befuddled by the crowd

of strangers in the house and all the fuss before she asks her mother if lunch is ready yet. The PCs immediately become Tayce's personal heroes, and she proves very animated and affectionate in her thanks (few can hope to escape the relieved mother's hugs). Although the Soldados can hardly afford to compensate the PCs, Tayce is eager to prepare them a feast—a considerable reward, considering her cooking skill. The PCs are now always welcome in the Soldado house, which swiftly takes on a celebratory air.

Regardless of how the PCs' visit to the Soldado home develops, the PCs leave an impression on Ishani. He suggests that some of his more charitable work sometimes requires the aid of those outside his church's rigid hierarchies and asks if the PCs might be amenable to him contacting them in the future. Soon after, he departs to attend to other duties, but he tells the PCs that he can be found at the Grand Vault of Abadar should they have any need of his god's services.



Ad Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs cure Brienna of blood veil on their first visit to the Soldado home, grant them a CR 3 experience award.

A Second Harrowing

In "Edge of Anarchy," the PCs gained a powerful magic item—*Zellara's Harrow Deck*. As indicated in the previous adventure, this Harrow deck plays a recurring role throughout *Curse of the Crimson Throne*. "Seven Days to the Grave" is tied to the suit of Shields in a Harrow deck—and by extension, to Constitution.

Zellara's spirit haunts her Harrow deck, and at several points during this Adventure Path, she can perform a special Harrow reading to grant her chosen heroes, the PCs, advantages over what is to come in the adventure. After the PCs leave the Soldado home, Zellara can sense that something dire is coming for Korvosa. She uses her empathic link to instill an urge to perform a Harrow

HARROW POINT USES

In “Seven Days to the Grave,” the PCs are faced with numerous situations where health and resolve win the day, be this avoiding the contagion that plagues the city, resisting the toxins and poisons possessed by many of the people in the adventure, or enduring the implied race against the clock to find a cure for blood veil before it kills thousands. During this adventure, a character can spend his Harrow Points in the following ways.

Constitution Rerolls: Spend a Harrow Point to reroll any one Fortitude saving throw, Concentration check, or other Constitution-based d20 roll. You must abide by the new result (although if you have additional Harrow Points remaining, you can use them to attempt additional rerolls).

Fast Hit Point Recovery: Spend a Harrow Point after resting for a minute to catch your breath and recover from your recent ordeals—you heal a number of hit points equal to your class level and 1 point of ability damage (but not ability drain) each time you do so. You may spend a Harrow Point in this manner once after each encounter.

Damage Reduction: Spend a Harrow Point to gain damage reduction 3/—. This damage reduction persists for the duration of the encounter in which you spent the Harrow Point.

THE CHOSEN

In addition, the card a PC draws during the choosing has special qualities during this adventure. Each of these cards is tied to a specific encounter in “Seven Days to the Grave,” and when a PC who drew that card reaches that encounter, he gains a +2 bonus on all rolls modified by Constitution and a number of temporary hit points equal to twice his character level. These bonuses last for the encounter’s duration.

The Trumpet: Combat with Davaulus (area F8)

The Survivor: Combat with Lady Andaisin (area G14)

The Desert: Combat with Yicca (Area D3)

The Brass Dwarf: Combat with Jolistina (area E)

The Teamster: The Color of Death (area B)

The Mountain Man: The Hungry Dead (area A)

The Tangled Briar: Combat with Girrigz (area C6)

The Sickness: The Sick Ward (area F2)

The Waxworks: Combat with Rolth (area G5)

reading in the mind of the PC who carries her deck. If that PC doesn’t comply soon by using her cards to perform a reading, she takes matters into her own hands once she sees the PCs are alone by creating a *major image* of herself who then performs the reading. When you do this reading (which should only be done with Constitution cards at the choosing), take pains to interpret the cards from the past to dwell upon previous brushes with disease, sickness, and death the PCs might have experienced (be

these drawn from their character histories or from events in “Edge of Anarchy,” such as the battle with the carrion golem or otyugh). When you get to cards representing the present, focus on metaphors that relate to the recent visit to the Soldados, the mysterious ship sunk in the harbor, and the general sense of unease in the city. For the cards representing the future, get grim—interpret the cards as dire warnings, mass graves, undeath, rot and decay, birds feasting upon the dead (to symbolize the Queen’s Physicians), and beautiful women with ashen skin and blank faces (to symbolize the Gray Maidens).

**PART TWO:
A DAMSEL IN DISTRESS**

In the aftermath of “The Edge of Anarchy” the PCs probably have some questions, particularly about the events surrounding Trinia’s botched execution and her rescue at Blackjack’s hand. It’s even possible the PCs might have thrown in their lot with Blackjack by aiding his escape—in this case, the general chaos of the scene keeps their actions anonymous to a certain extent, although it isn’t long before Queen Ileosa realizes the PCs represent her greatest enemies.

The PCs aren’t the only ones who have an interest in Blackjack, though. In the days following his daring rescue of the king’s accused assassin, the Korvosan Guard has been scouring the city for the fugitives—thus far to no avail—and the enraged queen has set a royal bounty of 5,000 gp for the capture of Trinia Sabor. Wildly embellished news of the event spreads quickly to every corner of the city, leaving all to wonder why Korvosa’s long-absent hero chose now to reappear and why he rescued a sentenced killer.

After his rescue of Trinia, Blackjack—the alter ego of Vencarlo Orisini—returned to the Orisini Academy to devise a way to assure the painter-turned-scapegoat’s safety. The smuggling of a single girl out of the city would usually be no problem for the well-connected swordsmaster, but in the days following the city riots and general upheaval, many of Vencarlo’s usual contacts are either doing time or laying low. He knows he’s being watched by the government, and he can’t disrupt his routine—yet every day that Trinia remains hidden in his school is another that she might be discovered. Thus, he turns to the adventurers who his friend Field Marshal Kroft put so much faith in—heroes who might have had a hand in aiding his daring stunt during Trinia’s supposed execution—and sends them a short, cryptic note that invites them to pay him a visit in his academy in Old Korvosa.

Even if the PCs don’t know where Orisini Academy is located, it’s a simple matter of a DC 10 Knowledge (local) or Gather Information check to secure directions. The academy is located at 16 Hillcrest Street, near the center of Old Korvosa. A sign hanging from the front door reads,