



ESCAPE FROM OLD KORVOSA

CURSE OF THE CRIMSON THRONE: CHAPTER THREE

The queen's madness grows. Her paranoia and anger blossom. Her newfound powers quicken, unlocked by the merging of her soul with a fragment of the great blue wyrm Kazavon. She sees Korvosa now as populated by two castes—slaves and enemies. The city, already weakened by anarchy after her husband's death, now staggers in the aftershocks of the plague. Korvosa's defenders have either shut themselves away or are so exhausted from recent events that it is a simple matter for Queen Ileosa's new army—the Gray Maidens—to establish martial law. Old Korvosa is the first of her victims, cut off and quarantined, left to die of its own internal strife. Yet in this dying district languishes the city's salvation—if only it can escape from Old Korvosa in time.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Korvosa was built over a foundation of evil. Although they remained sealed away in a hidden vault below the Castle until very recently, the *Fangs of Kazavon* have not lain quiet over the centuries. The fragment of Kazavon's spirit lodged in these relics knew that someday they would be discovered and released. Yet inside the hidden vault his spirit could do little to influence the minds of the thousands that it felt, so agonizingly close, in the growing city above. Now and then, though, a particularly susceptible mind rose in Korvosa, a mind whose thoughts and emotions were, for whatever cruel twist of fate, more open to the lingering presence of the ancient dragon. As these minds slept, Kazavon could whisper to them, and in so doing he hoped to lure one into the castle to release him, to become a vessel for his building power.

Yet time and again, Kazavon's whispers to these tortured, sensitive souls backfired. Instead of fostering a sense of loyalty, he fostered only madness. Left to their own devices, these impressionable victims would have developed in their own rights as talented artists or poets, but with Kazavon's influence, they became murderers, rapists, or suicides. Queen Illeosa's discovery of the *Fangs of Kazavon* was an unforeseen accident, one Kazavon took advantage of immediately. He abandoned his current "projects" in the city, seven sensitive men and women with whom he had slowly been making strides. The loss of their muse was a tragedy for these seven—living their lives at times comforted and others horrified by Kazavon's whispers, they had grown accustomed to his faint voice in their dreams. For six of the seven, the loss of that voice was too much to bear—they quietly killed themselves, becoming six more nameless victims in the wake of the anarchy and the plague. Only one lives to this day—a moody but talented painter named Salvator Scream.

Born Salvator Bevery, this struggling young artist was kicked out of his home by his father, a devout Abadarian who found the gruesome paintings created by his son sadistic and evil. Seeking shelter with several of his artist friends who dwelt in a flat in Old Korvosa, Salvator swiftly found regular work creating backdrops and other paintings for Pilts Swastel, purveyor of all things grisly and vile for the city's most notorious playhouse, Exemplary Execrables. It was at Pilts's suggestion that Salvator changed his surname to "Scream," since that helped Pilts market the man's violent art even better.

Salvator Scream's work drew many eyes and admirers, and not just among the regulars at Exemplary Execrables. His work became a favorite of many noble families and other prominent citizens, who found his subjects shocking and safely scandalous—among them the seneschal of Castle Korvosa, Neolandus Kalepopolis. Neolandus was more interested in the artist than the art, and after attending a

showing of "Tears of Abendego" at Exemplary Execrables (a performance he found distasteful at best), he met the young artist. The two formed a fast friendship, one of the few in Salvator's life, and their meetings at various eateries to discuss art, history, and religion became a weekly event in both their lives—one that Kalepopolis, always a private man, kept relatively secret.

So when he survived an attempt on his life by the Red Mantis and was forced to flee his home in the Castle, wounded and poisoned, it was to Salvator's doorstep Neolandus fled. With the aid of Salvator and his network of contacts in the Old Korvosan artistic underworld, Neolandus managed to both recover from his wounds and avoid the Red Mantis. Yet as things in Korvosa grew worse, and the Red Mantis grew closer to discovering him, Neolandus realized that he needed to find a new hiding place. Salvator had just the patron in mind—the Arkonas. Long a fan of his grisly work, Glorio Arkona (who was, in fact, actually a rakshasa named Bahor) gracefully agreed to hide Neolandus in his estate as a favor to Salvator. Of course, gaining control of the seneschal played perfectly into the Arkonas' plans to upset the queen, for according to Korvosan law, only the seneschal can legally depose a corrupt monarch. Neolandus has become little more than a caged pet to the Arkonas, an insurance policy they're waiting patiently to cash in while Old Korvosa grows more desperate.

Today, Old Korvosa is cut off. Quarantined and forgotten, the island has been left to fend for itself. The Arkonas have retained control over Fort Korvosa but the majority of Endrin Isle has fallen to the mob—a mob increasingly under the control of a man who calls himself the Emperor of Old Korvosa, and who, in his previous life, was none other than Pilts Swastel. His control over Old Korvosa grows by the week, and one of his most recent acquisitions is Salvator Scream, one of the only men in Korvosa who knows that Neolandus has a secret that could tear the city apart. That the seneschal suspects the truth behind Queen Ileosa's madness and what must be done to stop it is the seneschal's greatest secret—once this information spreads, Queen Ileosa will spare nothing to see him dead, and might well burn Old Korvosa to the ground to do it.

Adventure Synopsis

This adventure begins with the leader of the Sable Company attempting an assassination of Queen Ileosa—an attempt that backfires horribly as the queen reveals the extent of her power granted by Kazavon and the *Crown of Fangs*. In the aftermath of this event, the PCs receive word that, on quarantined Old Korvosa, their old friend Vencarlo might have discovered something of great import regarding the queen. The PCs brave the anarchic streets of Old Korvosa only to find Vencarlo missing and his home transformed into a Red Mantis ambush. Following a trail of clues, the

HARROW POINT USES

In “Escape from Old Korvosa,” the PCs are faced with numerous situations where reasoning, logic, and attention to detail can save lives. Disabling deadly traps, discovering hidden clues, and being able to recognize threats for what they are (and to know about the key weaknesses of certain monsters, like the rakshasas) can make all the difference. During this adventure, a character can spend his Harrow Points in the following ways.

Intelligence Rerolls: Spend a Harrow Point to reroll any one Intelligence-based skill check. You must abide by the new result (although if you have additional Harrow Points remaining, you can use them to attempt additional rerolls).

Flash of Insight: Spend a Harrow Point to be able to make a skill check in an untrained skill you don’t normally have ranks in. You gain a one-time +5 insight bonus on this skill check.

Arcane Wrath: Spend a Harrow Point to increase the strength of an arcane spell as it is cast. This spell gains a +2 bonus on its save DC, a +4 bonus on its caster level check to overcome spell resistance, and a +2 bonus on any attack rolls needed to strike the target.

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 “Escape from Old Korvosa,” and when a PC who drew that card reaches that encounter, he gains a +2 bonus on all rolls modified by Intelligence, and all arcane spells cast by him manifest at +1 caster level. These bonuses last for the encounter’s duration.

The Hidden Truth: Combat with Vimanda

The Wanderer: Combat with Sivit the darksphinx

The Joke: Encounters involving Pilts Swastel

The Inquisitor: Combat with Senshiir the beatific one

The Foreign Trader: Encounters involving Laori Vaus

The Vision: Encounters involving Salvator Scream

The Rakshasa: Encounters involving Bahor/Glorio Arkona

The Idiot: Games of Blood Pig

The Snakebite: Combats against Red Mantis assassins

PCs learn that a strange artist named Salvator Scream likely knows where Vencarlo went, as well as what information sent the teacher into such a state in the first place. Unfortunately, Salvator is now securely in the hands of a petty warlord who calls himself the Emperor of Old Korvosa.

After dealing with the Emperor and interrogating Salvator, the PCs learn the secret—the seneschal of Korvosa still lives! He, and likely Vencarlo now, is in the clutches of the notorious Arkona family, the self-styled rulers of Old Korvosa. The PCs visit Palace Arkona only to learn that its patriarch has secrets of his own. In order to rescue

Vencarlo and the seneschal and learn the awful truth behind the queen’s mysterious power and rising cruelty, the PCs must brave the infamous Vivified Labyrinth below Palace Arkona and then escape from Old Korvosa alive.

The Third 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*. “Escape from Old Korvosa” is tied to the suit of Books in a Harrow deck—and by extension, to Intelligence.

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. Not long after the PCs defeat the cultists of Urgathoa and save Korvosa from the plague, Zellara senses Ileosa’s growing strength, but does not yet know what it signifies. She uses her empathic link to instill an urge to perform a Harrow 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 and performing the reading. When you do this reading, take pains to interpret the cards from the past to dwell upon events (either of the campaign world or each PC’s life) that involved despotic overlords and cruel dictators. When you get to cards representing the present, focus on metaphors that relate to Korvosa’s current woes, particularly the growing sense of oppression, martial law, and the fact that the queen herself might be seeking the PCs’ deaths. For the cards representing the future, get grim—interpret the cards as ghosts and demonic animals (particularly tigers and mantises) who plague the living, metaphors that place life as a cruel and vindictive play or other work of art, and recurring themes of beautiful women with ashen skin and blank faces (to symbolize the Gray Maidens). As a particular note, if the Rakshasa card comes up in the reading, you might want to give the role that card plays in the reading particular attention—focusing on its interpretations of dominance or freedom from enslavement, depending on its alignment in the spread.

PART ONE: INTO THE DYING CITY

With the end of the blood veil plague, Korvosa settles into a wounded silence. At first, it seems as if the city is healing and recovering from the tragedies she has suffered, but it should soon become apparent that the damage done to Korvosa during the riots after Eodred II’s death and the plague itself might have been even greater than anyone feared. The streets are dull and muted, strangely empty