

Curse of the Crimson Throne Session Summary 09/14/2008

Attendance

Chris (Malcolm Zirkus) scatters a pile of miniatures across the table and announces, “Everyone who’s playing, take a mini!” *Georgina* sighs in disappointment: picking through little plastic people is one of her core competencies, though she normally thinks about it as “Human Resources”.

Ernest (Annata Vieri) offers, “I shall be a holy warrior! A striver for the faith!”

Bruce (Valash Not-Gurelle) already knows to not ask *which* faith he strives for. Previous answers have already left him scarred for life.

Patrick (Thorndyke) asks, “Can I have some bonus traits? Or maybe some feats? I really like feats! And feet, but that’s a subject for another day.”

Paul shudders, once again asking himself why he subjects himself to the ordeal of running these games.

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Class & Level</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Valash Not-Gurelle	Bruce	Half-Elf	Sorcerer 1 (Air Elemental)	Half-blooded Chelaxian bastard
Annata Vieri	Ernest	Human	Cleric 1 (Holy Warrior)	Cleric of Sarenrae.
Malcolm Zirkus	Chris	Human	Fighter 1	Chelaxian, and proud of it!
Thorndyke	Patrick	Human	Ranger 1	Chelaxian, but not nearly so proud.

A Slow Day at the Church of Sarenrae

The morning finds *Annata Vieri* puttering around the Pantheon of Many down in Southshore. A ragged local creeps in and attempts to sell her some drugs, so she lectures him strongly upon the evils of drugs, for they pollute the soul and doom all whom they touch. She shapes her flawlessly cherry-red lips into a disapproving pout and admonishes the man, “Go find yourself some honest work!”

The erstwhile drug-seller runs off, calling back, “Religion is the opiate of the masses! You are the tool of the oppressor!” *Annata* flips her bright red hair and pretends to have not heard his words. Once again she fails to see that creepy pock-faced teen who keeps on following her around.

As she turns back to the altar, she notices a harrow card on the ground. The card is The Theater, and on the back is scrawled a note: "I know what Gaedrin has done to you. He has wronged me as well. I know where he is, but I cannot strike at him myself. Come to my home at 3 Lancet Street at sundown. Others will be there as well."

Oh no, It's Happening Again

Malcolm Zirkus shakes his head to clear the fogs away. He realizes that he is standing in the *Sticky Mermaid* tavern down in Old Korvosa, surrounded by unconscious bodies. He moans, "Oh no, not again." He picks up someone's mostly-full beer stein and drinks to clear his head. He remembers that he was trying to ask about the whereabouts of *Gaedrin Lamm*. Then he notices a Harrow card stuck to the bottom of the stein: The Uprising, with the same note on it as Annata received.

I've Got to Find Some Dinner!

Thorndyke the Ranger is "hunting" through an alley, looking for some food. He hears a rustling in a rubbish bin. He sneaks up and pounces, hoping to find a succulent rat. His blade at the ready, he pulls aside a piece of rotted leather only to find a humanoid creature with the head of a rat. It hisses at him. He throws himself back in horror and desperation, landing in a pile of offal. Scrambling further back, he discovers his own Harrow card: The Survivor. He makes his way towards Lancet Street, hoping that his mystery contact has food. He mourns, "Why did I have to be the worst urban ranger ever?"

Get Out of My Shop, You Pesky Kids!

Valash Not-Gurette is searching through his scribe's shop, trying to figure out if he has another piece of parchment and a spare nib to replace the ones he just ruined. He fails to find a nib, but he does find a Harrow card: The Courtesan. He reads the back and thinks to himself, "Well, this day's pretty much shot and that shopkeeper's going to be angry about his ruined contract. Time for me to take a side trip to Lancet Street."

The Meeting on Lancet Street

The characters find themselves in a small, incense-scented room with a dreamlike feel. The place is decorated with several tapestries with heroic themes. A wooden table

with a bright red throw cloth stands in the center of the room. A basket covered with a blue cloth is underneath the table. There is a note on the table.

Malcolm shows up first. He reads the note, learns that his host has left bread and wine in the basket, and will be back soon. He pours himself some wine, eats some stale bread, sits quietly and waits. Three glasses later, a bird-faced kenku monster comes shuffling in through the door. He falls off his chair, shouting wildly, “Stand back, vermin! My wallet is my own!”

Annata Vieri takes off her Physician’s Mask and asks, “Are you all right? You shouldn’t drink so much wine if you haven’t eaten first.”

Malcolm answers, “I think this wine has been poisoned. I’ve only had three glasses. But I feel warm and slightly less dexterous.”

As they talk, Thorndyke and Valash Not-Gurelle filter in. The ranger Thorndyke makes a beeline for the food. The others avert their gazes.

Valash Not-Gurelle explains, “When I was a kid, my best friend was an old man and his talking owl. I get my fatherly advice from the whispery voices I hear all around me. They teach me magic!” Annata Vieri looks concerned and pulls the wineglass away from the sorcerer. He pulls it back, “I need that!”

Malcolm grins, “Yay! Chaotic neutral!”

It doesn’t take long for the characters to establish that each of them has some kind of argument with the loathsome *Gaedrin Lamm*.

Soon enough, an attractive Varisian woman with long, dark hair enters the house. She smiles and greets the characters, then produces a Harrow deck and starts shuffling. “I am Zellara and this is my home. I have been a fortuneteller here for many years.”

Valash comments, “You talk to the voices! I respect you for that!”

“Err... yes. I am constantly accompanied by the voices of the spirits, and of the dead. I know from them that all of you have been wounded by his actions. A year ago, he stole my Harrow deck from me. My son sought to recover it, but Gaedrin’s thieves murdered him. I asked the spirits for help, and they have answered my call. He may be found in a warehouse in the fishmarket, down at Pier 17. I need your help to deal with him: the Guard is too slow, and what assurance would I have that the law would deal with him, after so many years of successfully evading the law?”

Annata Vieri is dubious, “I’m not so sure we should be taking the law into our own hands like this. This is more like vigilantism.”

Valash suggests, “My human relatives are wealthy and powerful, and I have long known that they treat the law with the sort of respect normally associated with outcasts, beggars and thieves.”

Zellara shushes them, “First, a Harrow reading!” Everyone gets four Harrow points. For this adventure, they may be used for:

- Dexterity rerolls: may be used Initiative, Dexterity-based attacks, Reflex saves, and so on.
- Dodge bonus: a +1 Dodge bonus to AC for one encounter. Up to three points per encounter.
- Speed bonus: a +10’ increase to speed for one encounter. Only one point per encounter.

Planning for the Visit

Annata cautions the others that Gaedrin Lamm trains young children to steal for him. She is okay with the idea of hunting him down (at least after some convincing), but she insists that the others must not hurt any of his young charges. Malcolm heads over to the marketplace to purchase a club, a pillowcase and some rope.

The Old Fishery

The characters head directly from *Zellara*’s house to the Old Fishery, arriving some time after sundown. The reek of brine and week-dead fish hang heavily over the decrepit building. A rotted dock crawls around the side of the building and around to the river’s edge.

Annata suggests, “Perhaps before we start we should ask for Sarenrae’s blessing?”

Valash Not-Gurelle offers, “Don’t worry, the voices already think this is a good idea.”

Annata rolls her eyes, “Gah. Sarenrae bless this poor, benighted weirdo.” She casts *Guidance* upon everyone.

Thorndyke scouts the area, picking his way carefully along the barnacle-encrusted pier. He notes that all the windows are securely shuttered. He finds a side door, locked. He moves past to pry open a shutter and peer inside. He sees a fishery inside, and one that does not show signs of careful hygiene. He also sees twenty-six children sleeping in ratty hammocks or just on the floor, watched over by a sleeping brutish half-orc. He slips inside, then motions to the rest of them to come inside.

Giggles the half-orc wakes as Valash creeps inside. Thorndyke moves up to him and slashes at him. Giggles ducks underneath the cut, then slams into Thorndyke with his morningstar. Thorndyke crashes into the wall and staggers, but does not fall. Annata moves to his side and invokes the blessings of Sarenrae to seal up his wounds. Thorndyke croaks, "I think you left some wood splinters inside that wound... but I don't care!"

Malcolm flings himself through a window, rolls past Valash, and leaps to the working floor, his flail at the ready.

Thorndyke slashes again at Giggles, this time delivering a vicious slash. Giggles return strike cripples Thorndyke, but does not kill him. Thorndyke responds by driving his scimitar into the creature's throat, allowing the half-breed's polluted lifeblood to flow across the filthy floor.

Thorndyke gasps, "You got any more of that healing magic?"

Annata does, but is far more interested in ushering the orphans out of the building. She waits until they are all free of the place before casting *Cure Light Wounds* on Thorndyke. As they leave, they tell Malcolm that Gaedrin Lamm is "Down below!", explaining that they lower kids through a hole in the floor to a boat on the river, and that children so handled never come back.

Malcolm takes Giggles' flail. Annata reveals her background on the streets by commenting, "Now we'll call him 'Two-Flail' Malcolm."

Annata investigates some barrels marked with a red fish symbol. She finds that they are packed with fermenting fish guts, apparently in the process of becoming slurry. Thorndyke offers, "That's the main ingredient in dock dumplings. Those are pretty good if you fry 'em up right." Valash Not-Gurelle throws up a little bit in his mouth.

The characters investigate the room. They find no keys on Giggles' body, but Malcolm finds a key hanging from a hook on the door. They are able to hear the sounds of a dog on the other side of one door. The creature starts to bark, so Thorndyke moves up to use Wild Empathy to calm the creature. The dog quiets, but then a voice calls out from behind it, "Hey, what's up over there?"

The characters hear tiny footsteps behind the door. Malcolm claps his hands and whispers, "Tiny footsteps! I hope whoever's making them is cute and adorable!" Annata rolls her eyes.

The Gnome Taskmaster

The door opens to reveal a cranky-looking gnome, the taskmaster *Hookshanks Grueller*. Annata remembers him as a vicious master who enjoys bullying human children because they are even smaller than he is. He is neither cute nor adorable. Malcolm is very disappointed.

Thorndyke doesn't let Hookshanks' adorable size stop him: he steps in and cuts at the gnome, who dodges out of reach. Valash invokes his eldritch powers and hits Hookshanks with a *Ray of Enfeeblement*, drawing away his vitality.

Hookshanks snarls at his dog *Bloo*, forcing it to attack Thorndyke. Thorndyke pleads, "No! Don't attack me! I have sausages!" Bloo snaps at him anyway, taking the sausages out of Thorndyke's wounded hand. Valash takes vengeance upon Hookshanks by lighting him up with a *Lightning Ray*.

Malcolm steps up and slams Bloo with his flail, knocking him over. Thorndyke's expression falls. Malcolm assures him, "That dog isn't dead! It's just sleeping!"

Thorndyke protests, "But... but I can see him right there!"

Malcolm reassures him, "No you can't... he's gone off to the farm. He's much happier now."

Hookshanks takes this opportunity to run for it. Annata runs him down with a scimitar slash across his spine. Then she calls down the blessings of Sarenrae to ensure that even Bloo and Hookshanks survive the fight. This doesn't prevent the others from looting Hookshanks:

- Small studded leather armor
- A small kukri

- A disguise kit
- A key

The Fall of Yargin

Malcolm continues to search the building, eventually finding the front office (where Bloo apparently slept) and a barracks with two bunk beds and one sleeping human. Malcolm sees *Yargin* stir and wastes no time in rushing over and threatening the man's life. Yargin responds to Malcolm's order, slowly putting on his pants and answering questions. The characters quickly loot and interrogate Yargin. He is carrying:

- *A Wand of Acid Splash* (28 charges)
- Three vials of acid
- Two tanglefoot bags
- A thunderstone
- Leather armor
- A light crossbow
- 10 crossbow bolts
- A dagger
- A garnet amulet (worth 100 gold)
- A key

Yargin tells the characters that the walkway is beneath the building. There is no direct route to it. Gaedrin has a boat tied up along the dock: his room is down there.

Underneath the Old Fishery

The others tie a rope around Annata and lower her through the hole in the floor so she can look around. She reports that there is a walkway underneath, and a boat tied to it. The boat is more like a barge, and clearly isn't seaworthy: it is actually built into the walkway. Unfortunately, the walkway is not near the hole, so getting to it requires some talent. The characters clamber down with Climbing, avoiding the terrible fate of falling into the foamy, greasy water.

The characters stumble along the walkway, noting that there is only about four feet of clearance above the walk. Moss and cobwebs hang thick from the rusted chains.

Valash comments, “I can’t imagine what level of desperation would cause somebody to live in this kind of environment.”

Thorndyke offers, “I can!”

Valash decides not to inquire further.

The characters move further in, finding a cramped chamber that proves to be Gaedrin Lamm’s personal quarters and playground. It is a grim space dominated by a central pit. Hooked chains dangle into the filthy river water. And Gaedrin himself stands on the far half of the chamber, accompanied by his pet giant alligator *Gobblegut*.

Gaedrin yells out, “You! I remember you, you worthless piece of shit! I should have killed you first I laid eyes upon your miserable carcass.”

Malcolm offers, “Well, now you’ll have a chance to rectify that.”

Gaedrin hefts his hand crossbow, “I sure will. They’ll have to pick through Gobblegut’s leavings to find any sign of you.”

Thorndyke attempts to intimidate Gaedrin, “You’ll have to shoot your way through me, first! And I have a lot of blood in me!”

Gaedrin rolls his eyes. He’d hoped that he would be fighting adventurers with less embarrassing challenges.

Annata moves forward, “Gaedrin! Now it is time for you to pay for your crimes against the children of this city!” She gives him a good slashing with her scimitar. Gaedrin takes a significant hit, but doesn’t seem very impressed by her “Won’t somebody think of the children!” speech.

Gaedrin steps back and takes a shot at Gobblegut, enraging the creature. It bellows and snaps at Valash, grabbing him in its jaws. Valash falls, with a merciful lack of screaming and pleading. Gobblegut raises its ragged jaws, preparing to chomp the sorcerer into two irregular parts. Thorndyke runs at the creature and gives it a tremendous cut, but does not fell it. Malcolm moves in with his heavy flail and finishes the creature. Malcolm congratulates Thorndyke, “Our plan to feed him the sorcerer as a decoy worked perfectly!”

Valash groans, “Great... let’s not do it again...” then falls unconscious again.

Annata closes in on Gaedrin to prevent him from escaping, then chops through his crossbow hand and through into his side to *really* prevent him from escaping. Gaedrin is stricken.

Thorndyke gaffs Gobblegut and pulls the body in. Annata decides that she cannot live with letting Gaedrin die in cold blood, so she unleashes a *Healing Burst* on everyone wounded, including Gaedrin. She pretends to ignore the fact that Thorndyke has already slit Gobblegut's belly and is gnawing upon raw crocodile meat. She investigates Gaedrin's body and finds:

- A masterwork dagger
- A masterwork hand crossbow
- 10 crossbow bolts
- A ring of keys

She comments, "You know, hand crossbows are still exotic weapons but it doesn't look like he had the Exotic Weapons Proficiency feat."

Malcolm points out, "Well, he really only got one shot off before you ended him."

Annata and Valash don't even pay attention to Malcolm: they've figured out that the next room appears to be Gaedrin's filthy, roach-infested quarters. The most obvious objects of value are a trunk with a rusted lock and a hatbox with flies buzzing around it.

The Apparition

The characters pull the trunk and the hatbox out of the room and search the place. Annata opens the hatbox to find that it contains a severed head, badly made up to conceal the sagging flesh. He peers at the head and concludes that it looks like Zellara's head, clearly dead for several weeks. There is a wooden box underneath the stump of the head's neck. Annata gingerly lifts it out and discovers that it contains a Harrow deck. When she touches the top card, she feels the presence of Zellara in the room.

She says, "Thank you for helping me to achieve my revenge against Gaedrin Lamm. I hope that this will not be the end for your group: in the shadows, I saw many troubles in store for the city and you have a destiny to face them. I will stand as your guardian in this."

Malcolm pipes up, "Would you like your head buried?"

“Please. Return it to Trail’s End on the Eastern bank of the river.” She continues on to explain that she has several useful abilities, including *Identify* up to three times per day and the occasional Harrow reading.

The chest proves to contain all the treasure and finery Gaedrin has collected, each wrapped in cloth and secured in twine.

- Zellara’s Harrow deck
- A narrow teak cigar case inlaid with tiny bits of jade (worth 25 gold pieces)
- A two-pound gold ingot bearing the Cheliox coat of arms (worth 100 gold pieces)
- A miniature gold crown (worth 350 gold pieces)
- A fist-sized scrimshaw carving of a kraken with garnets for eyes (worth 200 gold pieces)
- A silver ring inscribed “For Emma, the Light of My Nights” (worth 150 gold pieces)
- A highly scandalous ivory figuring of two succubi (worth 450 gold pieces)
- A masterwork shuriken
- An adamantite arrowhead
- An abalone shell holy symbol of Shelyn (worth 300 gold pieces)
- A tiny glass tube containing an *Oil of Keen Edge*
- An obsidian *Wand of Magic Missile* (23 charges)
- A crystalline vial (worth 50 gold pieces) containing a dose of *silversheen*
- A bejeweled brooch depicting a pseudo-dragon and an imp entwined with each other in a yin-yang patter. The clasp is broken, but it is clearly worth much more than anything else in the collection.

Thorndyke makes a point of taking Gobblegut’s skin, claws and teeth.

Gaedrin’s Ultimate Fate

Annata proposes, “I think I have a solution for the Gaedrin problem. I’m going to hang him from the chains over the water and his gods can judge him.”

Malcolm offers, “That’s a good plan. You do that. There’s something I need to do upstairs in the meantime.” He goes upstairs to fetch a bucket of chum. After Malcolm chums the water the characters leave Gaedrin to a grisly and well-deserved fate.

The Barge

The characters very carefully move down to the other end of the walkway. They find Gaedrin's little boat, and determine that there is no obvious way to get into the barge from the walkway. Up close, it is clear that the barge is rotted and warped, held together only by the layers of rope around it. The name on the stern is *Kraken's Folly*. Malcolm very carefully proceeds onto the barge's deck, moving towards the one door near the aft. The door is marked with a red fish emblem.

He opens the door. The air inside is foul. He moves inside. A spider the size of a cat springs at him. Malcolm squeals like a little girl. The others run in just in time to see him squash the thing.

Thorndyke examines the remains and comments, "That was a sewer-spider, also known as plumber's bane. They lurk through Korvosa's sewers and alleys, feeding on bats and rats. They're really good fried."

Malcolm moves down into the hold of the barge. The place is dark and dank, full of disintegrating crates. Scratching sounds emerge from behind some of the crates. Annata flings a rock enchanted with *Light* inside. Another sewer-spider attacks it, then dies in a crispy mass as Valash hits it with an *Elemental Ray*.

Against everyone else's advice, Malcolm moves forward into the hold. Three spiders attack him. He squeals, "Get them off! Get them off!" The characters get rid of them with a combination of blades and *Elemental Rays*.

Civil Unrest and Chaos, Oh My!

As the characters return to the city from the fishery, it is plain that something horrible has happened: Korvosa is in flames. A wing of Sable Company griffon riders head towards Korvosa Castle at flank speed. As the characters watch, one of the griffons erupts in blood and crashes through a wooden wall, sending splinters and debris to the street below.

As the characters watch, a herald's voice rings out, "The King is dead! The King is dead! Long live the Queen!"

Another voice silences the herald, "Silence, you miserable traitor! Death to the Usurper Whore! Death to the Queen! Death!"

Thorndyke suggests that now would be a good time for looting. A moment later he sees a company of armored Hellknights stomping down the street, hot on the heels of a gang of looters. He rethinks his plans, especially when Valash suggests, “I think you could take a Hellknight, go for it!”

The characters realize that Lancet Street is only about two blocks away, so they head over to Zellara’s house for refuge. The characters find the house intact, an island of safety and security in an otherwise crazy time. This time around, the house clearly looks like it has been abandoned for weeks: the tapestries are gone, there is no sign of food, and the furniture is all broken apart. The characters are glad to see the place even so: they take a breath and relax. But this moment of rationality isn’t to last: Annata insists that the characters need to go to the Pantheon of All to help the wounded. She further indicates that she can certainly talk her way past any problems the characters might encounter along the way. By the time Valash realizes he should object, the others are already on the way out the door.

Why Don't They Have Real Sewers in This Stupid City?

The characters are halfway to the Pantheon when the street in front of them buckles, cracks and explodes upward. They watch as one of the city’s otyughs hauls itself out of the hole it just created, drawn by the sounds of chaos and bloodshed.

The characters gawk at the creature for a bit. Then Valash decides that he’d better do something. He zaps the creature with a *Ray of Enfeeblement*. Annata moves up to protect Valash, aware that the sorcerer has only four hit points left. Thorndyke goes one better: he runs full out at the creature, evades its lashing tentacle, and makes an off-balance swing that glances off its leathery hide. It burbles at him and slaps him square in the face. Thorndyke feels fairly fortunate until it latches on to him and tries to pull him towards its maw.

Malcolm moves in to the attack. Valash decides to help out with *Enlarge Person*, making Malcolm big. Really, really big. Malcolm offers, “Where were you back when I was trying to impress my girlfriend?”

The otyugh demonstrates that it is completely impressed: it makes a series of attacks against the *Enlarged* Malcolm, who stands secure in his armor. He swings his morningstar overhand and cracks its skull. The otyugh staggers, but does not fall.

Valash opens up with a barrage of *Elemental Rays* that the others are certain probably annoys the big creature. Thorndyke moves in low with his twin blades and cuts its belly open, piercing a vital organ. The ugly monster collapses to the ground.

The characters don't bother trying to search it for treasure. They simply run.

The Pantheon of Many

While Annata treats the wounded, the other characters listen for rumors. Annata learns that the King was killed by a strange disease that could not be treated even with the efforts of the High Priestess of Sarenrae, experts from Abidar, and the adepts from the Pentacle Temple of Asmodeus. It is as if the gods themselves wanted him dead.

Bad Times in Korvosa

The initial riots are quelled swiftly by the Guard, the Hellknights and the Sable Company, but the city remains in a state of unrest for some days thereafter. The tradesmen and the dockworkers refuse to work, which prevents food supplies from coming into the city. Annata explains that the workers are legally enjoined from unionizing, leading to their current state of upset. Faced with a possible famine, people are fighting over the remaining food stores in the city.

Valash suggests that the characters could take Gaedrin's boat across the river to Trail's End. They could bury Zellara's head, and then see if there is any food available in the hinterlands. The others agree, though to Valash's dismay they seem to think that he was thinking about importing food to the city to relieve the suffering of the hungry.

On the way through the city, the characters encounter a pack of six laborers threatening a young aristocrat. The leader of the laborers is a heavy-set man with mutton-chop sideburns and greasy hair. He is about to mangle the aristocrat's arm when Annata steps in and talks him down. In his gratitude, the aristocrat gives the characters five platinum pieces.

Further on, the characters are picking their way along a Midland street when they encounter a drunken soldier. The man is clearly a mess: his uniform is filthy and disheveled and he is moaning, "It'll be the end of Korvosa, everything has gone to shit!" Annata tries to reassure him, to little effect. Valash takes a different tack, persuading the man that he has plenty to live for and will surely see it if only he looks into his heart. The

soldier is surprisingly willing to swallow Valash's line. While the sorcerer talks, the others guide him towards a garrison and hand him over to his comrades. The other soldiers promise to clean him up and keep him safe. They admit that the situation isn't too good: the Queen has brought in the Order of the Nail and paid them in gold, but they represent a ham-fisted response to the problem. One soldier tells the characters that many of the Guard are cut off from each other.

Malcolm notices that Valash is cutting himself. Again. He takes the half-elf's knife away and urges him to use his Inside Voice when he feels like talking about how he hates both elves and Chelaxians.

The Varisian Enclave at Trail's End

The boat trip out to Trail's End is a lot less eventful than the trip through the streets of Korvosa. They find that the place is a small suburb inhabited by a mix of Varisians and Chelaxian outcasts. Varisian toughs lounge along the streets; one of them blocks the characters' way.

Annata speaks to the man in Varisian, explaining that she brings Zellara back for burial. The Varisian tough notes that Zellara has not lived in the town for years, but promises to take them to what is left of her family. He also points out that Trail's End remains peaceful and orderly, "Because we keep our own order over here."

The Varisian takes the characters to Zellara's mother. Annata tells Zellara's story, and returns both her head and her Harrow deck. Zellara's ancient mother tells the characters that it is one of the oldest, most powerful Harrow decks, but it does not yet want to return home. She tells them that the characters must keep it until their role is done.

The Varisians are much less enthusiastic about the idea of selling any of their foodstocks to the Temple of Sarenrae to benefit the people of Korvosa. Valash offers, "Then could you maybe just sell me a 20 pound bag of flour? I can promise you that none of it will end up in the hands of the poor?"

Fencing Our Goods

After a quick debate on the wisdom of selling goods to Varisian traders that ends after Valash points out that the Varisians couldn't possibly treat the characters any worse

than the Chelaxians already have and the other characters point out that by and large they are all Chelaxian (or at least half-Chelaxian).

The characters sell off most of the goods they took from Gaedrin Lamm. They are just a bit surprised when the fence exclaims, “The Queen’s brooch! How did you get this? It was stolen some time ago, and the Queen has offered a reward for it!” He offers the characters first 800 gold and then 900 gold for it, but the characters defer.

Each share is worth 490 gold, 6 silver, 2 copper. The characters sell the *Wand of Acid Splash* but keep the *Wand of Magic Missile* and all the other magical items. As part of his share, Malcolm keeps the teak cigar case.

I Don’t Understand Your Unhealthy Obsession with Charity

Annata spends the aristocrat’s five platinum pieces on food to bring back to the Korvosan people. He also spends five gold pieces on a black sheep for sacrifice in the temple. Malcolm spends 20 gold of his own money buying various delicacies for his own consumption. Valash follows suit, pausing at the 15 gold piece mark to convert the remaining five gold into alcohol.

The Streets Are Overrun with Prophets

When the characters return to Korvosa, they find that wild-eyed prophets are preaching doom from streetcorners. One white-haired man howls, “The Eye of Groaetus has returned from the Boneyard to stare upon Korvosa!”

Another prophet, a diseased man in a ragged robe, fixes his gaze upon Malcolm. He cries out, “You appeared to me in a dream! Time of sickness and disease! A new age of doom and pestilence!” The prophet grabs hold of Malcolm’s jacket. Malcolm recoils from the man’s obvious skin lesions and necrotic smell.

Malcolm struggles with the man, easily breaking the prophet’s hold, then pummels him with a pillow-wrapped club. Annata hands him some curative herbs and urges him to rub his hands with them. She tells him, “You could use these to replace your Fort save. I got a 7 on my Heal check!”

The characters drop off their food supplies at the Pantheon of All, then head towards Castle Korvosa to see about the promised reward for returning the Queen’s brooch.

The Castle of the Queen

Castle Korvosa is one of the most recognizable landmarks in all of Varisia, an ancient flat-topped pyramid dating back to the Thassalonians. One corner of the pyramid has collapsed, but eager Korvosan masons have built additional structures upon it creating a fortification of unique character.

The castle is clearly locked down: the characters are intercepted by guards as they approach, and only allowed to continue on after the guards are able to send a messenger back for authorization. When the characters enter, they are met by a beautiful woman in plate armor. Annata Vieri whispers, “That’s Sabina. There are rumors that the Queen is having an affair with her!”

Tawdry details aside, the woman inspects the brooch. She is clearly pleased by what she sees: she dismisses the guards, describes the characters as heroes, and asks how they would like to be introduced to the Queen. The characters give their names. Thorndyke refrains from admitting that he is a trash-rutting alley-sleeping vagrant.

The characters see the Queen upon the Celestial Throne, a vision of beauty in spite of her black mourning dress. The throne room is pristine but empty, decorated with stained glass windows depicting previous generations of Korvosan royalty and elegant tapestries. The characters note that there are no other places to sit beyond the throne.

Sabina takes the brooch from Annata and hands it reverently to the Queen, taking her place at the Queen’s side. She thanks the characters, noting that she is grateful for this bit of kindness in her darkest day. She then speaks of her love of Korvosa and her dedication to ensuring that the city survives through the current crisis. And then she offers the characters a chance to serve her further. She requires first that they proceed under escort to Citadel Volshyenek to speak with the Field Marshal. And with that, she claims that her grief has drained her and she must retire. She hands Sabina a small silver chest. Sabina hands it to the characters.

- The chest itself is worth 50 gold pieces.
- The twelve gold ingots inside are marked with the Royal Seal of Korvosa and each is worth 100 gold pieces.

Each character takes four gold ingots and proceeds to the Citadel Volshyenek with an escort.

The End of the Session

Each character advances to second level. There is much rejoicing. Valash Not-Gurelle learns *Mage Hand* and can't stop thinking about all the ways he can use it.