



The Korranberg Affair

A One-Round DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Adventure
for 4th- to 7th-Level Characters
CRIMSON CODEX™ Faction Adventure 5 for the
XEN'DRIK EXPEDITIONS™ Campaign

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Adventure Background

The Crimson Codex was built from the ashes of a much older and widespread organization of powerbrokers and kingmakers, dating back to before the unification of Khorvaire by King Galifar I. After the organization's lapse, which allowed the Last War to occur, the remnants of the group reformed under the leadership of Ohnal Caldyn, a powerful adventurer and collector of ruminations on the nature and content of the draconic Prophecy.

The Crimson Codex has re-established its power base on Khorvaire, and it hopes to extend its influence and knowledge to Xen'drik and beyond. However, its true power only extends so far beyond Khorvaire, and several forces have damaged the group's power and stability on Xen'drik. Part of the reason why the Codex has not been able to offer more resources to its operatives in Xen'drik is because it has spent an excessive amount of influence and power to keep the nations of Khorvaire from slipping back into open hostilities. One of the direst threats to the peace on Khorvaire is the conflict brewing between the nations of Thrane and Karrnath.

Now the conflict has come to a head, and the Crimson Codex has exerted its power to bring the two nations together to discuss peace. The true leaders of both nations want peace, but powerful forces in both nations are longing to renew hostilities. A decoy peace meeting has been planned to draw the attention of potential saboteurs while the real meeting takes place in secret. The Codex needs competent and knowledgeable Serpents to take the role of the Thrane delegates in the sham peace talks to make sure the true talks go smoothly and without interference.

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs finally meet, in person, the leader of the Crimson Codex, Ohnal Caldyn. He explains to them the reasons behind the lack of support for Codex operations on Xen'drik, and he asks the PCs to take on a mission of great importance to the future of the nations of Khorvaire.

The PCs are sent to an airship under the command of renegades from House Lyrandar. The airship takes them off Xen'drik, while they receive a briefing and training from Crimson Codex experts. The PCs must take on the roles of members of the peace delegation from Thrane, and they must prepare to pay those roles as they talk to the Karrnathi delegation. In the middle of this training and preparation, air elementals controlled by House Lyrandar attempt to take back the airship.

Back on Xen'drik, the PCs are escorted to the meeting place for the peace talks: the House Kundarak enclave. The first meeting with the Karrnathi delegation does not go well, and the PCs should soon be aware that what seemed like a simple task of just keeping the talks going for three days could be almost impossible.

Outside forces, including a representative of the Harbor Lord of Stormreach, a nosy reporter from the Korranberg Chronicle, and an acquaintance of the PCs in Stormreach threaten to blow their cover.

Negotiations with the Karrnathi delegation come to a head when a Thrane spy is brought forth, with her execution threatened right in front of the PCs. The PCs must try to keep her alive without disrupting the peace process.

A representative of the daelkyr known as Virulence approaches the PCs and offers them some information that may help them in their current negotiations, as well as a promise of later information regarding the whereabouts of Crimson Codex member Zekeriff Brithlestone.

Finally, angered and frustrated at his inability to successfully sabotage the talks, the lead Karrnathi negotiator attempts to poison himself, hoping to frame the PCs and launch a new war.

If the PCs can succeed, they are rewarded by the Crimson Codex for their fine work in espionage and subterfuge.

Troubleshooting

A standard RPGA adventure is a relatively linear affair with a set number of combats and a clear set of goals and consequences. This adventure is nothing of the sort, and its success depends largely on the creativity, ingenuity, and fairness of the DM. In the adventure, the PCs are put into the position of having to not just pose as someone they are not, but also to try to reason with a group of delegates who are trying to sabotage the talks they are a part of. Couple with that some wildcards like a nosy reporter who searches for any bit of sensational news, and you are looking at an adventure that could go in just about any direction.

The central drama of the adventure is the irony of the situation: the PCs are trying to pull off the charade of negotiating in good faith when in reality they will give in to anything to keep the talks going, while the Karrnathi delegation must seem like it is negotiating in good faith when in reality they are trying to force the negotiations to fail.

While most of this interaction should take place through roleplaying, a rules mechanic called Negotiation Points is described in the adventure. For PCs that exhibit exemplary roleplaying, bonuses should be given on these checks, or the checks can be skipped altogether. The DM should use his or her best judgment to adjudicate the success or failure of the negotiations.

If any of the PCs have the Story Object called "Godparent of a Half-Drow Child" from the adventure "Forbidden Knowledge," that may come into play during the adventure. This Story Object may be documented either via the Character Tracker or simply written in the Adventure Journal. If multiple people at the table have it, choose one character to have it for the duration of this adventure. The other PCs are simply good friends of the Pinesky family.

Also, there is a call for several Sense Motive checks during the adventure, so have the PCs roll at least one before the adventure begins so you can keep those opportunities secret.

Adventure Start

Once the players are assembled and ready to begin, read or paraphrase the following:

The past few weeks have been more uneventful than you could have ever imagined when you became a Serpent in the Crimson Codex. The call by Codex leaders for all Codex operatives to disappear into the obscurity of their cover identities has been very effective: you have not heard of any more problems, raids, or disappearances. Of course, you haven't heard anything at all. Until this morning, that is. Out of nowhere your handler Fritz-Roy appeared, looking a bit haggard but safe and healthy. His instructions were simple. "We're back in business, it seems. Or at least you are, for the time being. At the sixth bell tonight, go to the Raging Wrestler Tavern and inquire after Mr. Thrane with the barkeep."

Fritz-Roy cannot answer any questions about the upcoming mission, because he doesn't have any answers. All he knows is what he told the PCs. PCs attempting to recall or research any information on a "Mr. Thrane" find very little. A **DC 5 Knowledge (geography)** or **Knowledge (history)** reminds them that Thrane is a nation on the continent of Khorvaire, but that is all they can ascertain. The PCs do not have the opportunity to speak to one another unless their cover identities allow them normal contact.

Assuming the PCs arrive at the appointed hour at the Raging Wrestler Tavern, they find the place eerily empty, save for the tavern owner, a hulking human named Goster, as well as Patrice, one of his half-elven serving maids. When the PCs enter, either together or individually (at your discretion), Goster speaks to the PC(s) in a rumbling voice:

"We're closed fer business this evenin'. Private party. But if ye come back on the morrow, I'll give ye a free round of drinks fer yer troubles."

If the PCs ask about seeing a Mr. Thrane, Goster nods and sweeps his hands across the whole of the tavern:

"If ye be lookin' for Mr. Thrane, then the private party be yers. Take whatever seat ye prefer, and yer eats and drinks are compliments of Mr. Thrane. I expect he'll be arrivin' shortly."

Goster and Patrice go about their business, serving the PCs the finest fare the Raging Wrestler can provide, which isn't saying much, but it is better than some other establishments in Stormreach. The pair knows nothing of Mr. Thrane, what he wants, or who he is. Roleplay this situation for just a few minutes, giving the PCs the opportunity to get to know each other's capabilities and personalities if they have not met before.

After some very brief roleplaying, the door to the tavern opens and three individuals enter. The first is an elderly human man, dressed in clothes much too fine to be practical in the rough-and-tumble milieu of Stormreach. His thinning white hair is neatly combed, and he walks with a slightly stooped gate, as if he once was spry but the years have slowed him down. The second is an incredibly massive warforged wielding a longsword and bearing a large steel shield. The final individual is a short female human of middle age with auburn hair just starting to show signs of gray. She wears no armor but carries a jeweled rapier in a sheath at her side.

"Do not stand on my account," says the elderly man in a voice that is more than a little cracked with age. "Enjoy your food and drink while we talk." He asks for some mead and a loaf of bread, sits wearily at a table near the PCs, and sighs. "Thank you for all the work you have done. I know it has been hard in this place."

He makes a "C" shape with his hand, and then unclaps the red brooch holding on his cloak. "I am Ohnal Caldyn."

Give the PCs a second to let this information soak in. They can say whatever they wish, and the old man replies with general small talk. When the conversation eventually turns to the mission at hand, or if the PCs remain silent, continue:

Ohnal Caldyn clears his throat and looks at his two companions. "I must speak with these fine Serpents privately. Please wait outside." The mammoth warforged does not move, and the female begins to protest, but she is cut off with a wave from Ohnal. "No arguments. Leave now."

At this point refer to the **Sense Motive checks** pre-rolled by the PCs. If any PC's check meets or exceeds DC 30, that PC gets the feeling this whole debate about leaving Caldyn alone with them is a bit staged. Continue:

The woman and the warforged leave, and Ohnal Caldyn turns his back to you, eating some of his bread and drinking his mead. An extraordinarily long moment passes, and it is not clear if Ohnal has forgotten you are there. Then he turns back, smiles widely, and says, "Excellent! I was hoping you could be trusted." He shouts, "Come back in!" The warforged and the woman re-enter the tavern, and when the door is closed, the warforged's head falls off . . . [Pause.] . . . revealing the stern face of a human man in his early 50s. The woman and the elderly man move toward the former warforged, and they begin disassembling him to reveal a human underneath. Now out of the confines of the wood and metal suit, the man stretches and bends as if trying to restore circulation to his extremities. "That's not nearly as fun as it looks," he comments dryly.

The man in the warforged disguise is the real Ohnal Caldyn. He tells the PCs that the deception was necessary to make sure they were who they said they were, and that they were still dedicated to the cause of the Crimson Codex. Once everyone is settled into place and calmed again, Ohnal tells the PCs why he has come to Xen'drik and called them together. Use the bullet points below to brief the PCs. Ohnal Caldyn is a no-nonsense leader who speaks and answers questions plainly and bluntly:

- Caldyn is aware of the problems the Codex has been having in Xen'drik. Factors beyond his control have left him and the rest of the Crimson Codex unable to do much about it up to this point, but that is going to change very soon.
- Back on Khorvaire, small-scale and isolated military conflicts between the nations of Thrane and Karrnath have threatened the stability of the area. The peace established at Thronehold to end the Last War is in danger of crumbling.
- Using their influence, the Crimson Codex has manipulated the leaders of Thrane and Karrnath into meeting for peace talks. This was not an easy task, taking a great deal of the organization's resources. Both leaders strongly desire peace, but forces within their governments are pressing for war.
- The talks are set to take place in a few days here in Stormreach, considered neutral ground. However, this is just the public understanding. The talks here in Stormreach are a decoy to throw off anyone trying to heighten the tensions or ruin the peace. The real talks are taking place in a secret location back on Khorvaire.
- Intelligence gathered by the Codex indicates that at least one group, and possibly more, are going to attempt to disrupt the proceedings.
- As part of the decoy, lower-level bureaucrats from each of the nations are coming to Stormreach as part of the charade. These delegations believe their missions are genuine. The representative ordered to attend on behalf of Thrane is actually a Crimson Codex member whose safety and placement is important to the organization.
- Caldyn wants the PCs to take the place of the diplomatic contingent from Thrane, including the lead negotiator. One PC is to act as the representative from Thrane at the meeting, while the other PCs can act as his or her assistants, bodyguards, advisors, valets, cooks, or whatever other role they prefer.
- During the course of the negotiations, the PCs are to act as bait for whatever attempts are made to disrupt the meeting without giving away their true identities. When an attack or disruption comes, the PCs should protect themselves, the Karrnathi representatives, and any innocents, as well as capture the instigators, alive if possible, for questioning.
- The PCs are going to be taken on an airship for more briefing and planning, then brought back to Stormreach in their roles as delegates of the nation of Thrane. They should get their gear together and prepare to leave this evening.

The PCs most likely have a variety of questions. If the questions concern their current mission, Caldyn says that details are still being worked out, and everything the PCs need to know will be answered on the airship. If the questions, on the other hand, have to do with Ohnal or the Crimson Codex in general, see below for a list of possible questions and answers:

- What's been happening with the Crimson Codex here in Xen'drik? *"Unfortunately, with the happenings on Khorvaire, our resources have had to be used there. Once the threat of war between Thrane and Karrnath is eliminated, my first priority is to fix the situation here. But another war on Khorvaire would make our work here moot."*
- Many Crimson Codex operatives have been killed or have disappeared, including Zekeriff "Zeke" Brithlestone. Our safehouses are under attack, and our libraries are being pillaged. What's going on? *"When I collected my interpretations and findings on the draconic Prophecy in the Caldyn Fragments, they were only supposed to be used by Crimson Codex agents. Unfortunately, other organizations got bits of the information in various ways, and now my work is being used against us. Our resources are valuable. And where there is valuable material, violence and mayhem surely follow."*
- There is some force called Virulence, associated with aberrations, that is causing trouble for us. What can you tell us about that? *"I have heard reports of this, and all I can say right now is that I believe on one of my forays into Khyber seeking parts of the Prophecy, I may well have caused something ancient and dark to stir. Continue to be vigilant in your work, and gather as much information as you can about this force known as Virulence."*
- We have heard that some within the Codex want to break away and focus on Xen'drik rather than the affairs of Khorvaire. Are you aware of this? *"Yes, I am aware that some well-meaning but short-sighted individuals think that what happens on Khorvaire is not tightly entwined with the fate of Xen'drik, and vice versa. If you come across these people, be wary. Some may be misguided but still trustworthy. Others may be trying to undo what we have done."*
- If the PCs have any other questions unassociated with the ones above, have Caldyn answer in a similar vein. If he does not know something, he freely admits it.

When the PCs are satisfied, Caldyn instructs them to travel west of Stormreach at nightfall to meet the airship he previously mentioned. From there, the PCs should plan to be in the air for several days, getting briefed and making plans. Proceed to Part 1.

Part 1: Airship Preparations

In this part, the PCs arrive at the airship, get specialized training and briefings, choose their roles in the upcoming mission, and then land back at Stormreach in their new guises. They must also defend the airship from air elementals sent by House Lyrandar to retrieve the airship.

Arrival at the Airship

The PCs can collect their gear and leave Stormreach heading west, soon coming upon their destination: an elemental-powered airship manned by a crew of exorciates from House Lyrandar. At the airship, the people tasked with preparing the PCs for their mission greet them.

In a clearing ahead of you, a gigantic contraption rests awkwardly on the ground, looking like a seafaring vessel that has been picked up and placed miles inland from the nearest ocean. A figure, dwarfed by the huge vessel, waves for you to approach. Strangely, the airship bears no name or other markings.

The figure waving to the PCs is the middle-aged woman whom the PCs met earlier at the Raging Wrestler Tavern. Her name is Pon, and she is a changeling rogue who acts as an assistant for Ohnal Caldyn. She spends most of her time in the form she has currently taken, although she can change appearance as required by the task at hand. Her personality is cold and matter-of-fact, and she is unflinching in her commitment to Ohnal and the Codex.

When the PCs follow Pon onto the deck of the airship, they see several half-elves, many of whom bear dragonmarks. A **DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) check** reveals that these are Marks of Storm, the dragonmark of House Lyrandar. A **DC 20 Knowledge (history)** or **Bardic Knowledge check** reveals that a couple years ago a crew of a House Lyrandar-owned airship mutinied and stole the ship, which they began operating as privateers. This is likely that crew and that ship.

Once the PCs board, the crew makes preparations to engage the vessel, which is a new design powered by air elementals. The take-off and flight are smooth. As soon as possible, Pon asks the PCs to follow her below deck, where the PCs meet the rest of the team and get their detailed briefing of the mission at hand.

In-Depth Briefing and Training

The PCs hear the details, get specialized training, and choose their identities for the upcoming mission.

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs follow Pon below deck on the airship:

Pon leads you below deck into a large room. Two other people wait below. The first is the elderly gentleman who pretended to be Ohnal Caldyn at your previous meeting. The other is a spellscale with scaly skin tinged reddish-purple. She stares at you for several seconds in silent contemplation. The scaly skin around her eyes ripples as she squints and relaxes in rhythmic concentration. Then she speaks, her voice little more than a whisper. "So you are the Serpents who we are relying on to save Khorvaire from certain disaster? No one can say Ohnal doesn't have a sense of humor. You may call me Candle. I believe you have already met Barthwell. Shall we get started?"

Give the PCs the opportunity to speak if they wish. As soon as the conversation turns to the mission, Candle begins her explanation.

"As you already know, hostilities between the nations of Thrane and Karrnath have boiled over, to the point where both nations are now considering declarations of war. This would be disastrous, possibly leading to what you might call the next Last War. The Codex is using all its resources to stop the fighting before it starts. Through our operatives within both nations, we have altered circumstances to convince the leaders of the nations to agree to a meeting, with the ultimate goal of working out these differences. This is where it gets complicated." Pon, Candle, and Barthwell all look at each other with glances that are hard to read.

Candle continues. "We were worried that certain forces within both Thrane and Karrnath, as well as forces outside those nations, may attempt to sabotage the peace talks. With that in mind, we arranged secret talks in Stormreach. However, we made sure the meeting wasn't too secret, if you catch my meaning. The real representatives are meeting in Korranberg. The only people who know about the real meeting are the leaders in Thrane and Karrnath, Keeper of the Flame Jaela Daran and King Kaius III, as well as their direct representatives attending that meeting. This means that many people think they have learned of a secret meeting, taking place in Stormreach, between the two nations. Anyone could show up to disrupt the event. Even the representatives of the two nations coming to Stormreach think the meeting is official. Well, at least the Karrnathi representative does. The ambassador from Thrane who was dispatched knows the truth only because he is one of us. So you are to take the place of him and his delegation. You are to act as the official delegation from Thrane, meet with the ambassador from Karrnath, pretend to go through the process of speaking toward a peace treaty, and be ready to foil any attack by those hoping to interrupt the process of creating a peaceful Khorvaire. I'm sure you have many questions."

Use the bullet points below to fill the PCs in on any questions they may have. If the PCs don't ask, they still need to know some of this information in order to prepare themselves for the roles they will play as negotiators for the theocratic nation of Thrane, center of power of the Silver Flame.

- The identities of the delegations were never revealed, so the roles the PCs can play are not limited. Only the leaders of each nation know the identities of the delegations, so there should be no suspicion. A delegation of all warforged or halflings or spellscales may be considered odd, but it is not inconceivable they would represent Thrane. Only shifters would be unbelievable as representatives of Thrane, giving the Silver Flame connections, so a good cover story would be needed for shifter characters.
- Magic should not be used to disguise if at all possible. Magic is easily detectable, prone to dispelling, and sometimes unreliable. Creating roles that use true appearances are preferable.
- The agenda and schedule of the meeting have not yet been agreed upon. The initial meeting has been arranged at the enclave of House Kundarak in Stormreach. That meeting is to be used to set the agenda and schedule for the entirety of the talks. Both delegations are to be housed in private quarters in the enclave.
- The three main points of contention, at least as far as anyone can ascertain, are as follows: (1) both nations are claiming ownership over the Scion Sound, the waterway that separates them and is an important waterway to the entire north-central area of Khorvaire; (2) both nations are supporting rebels and radicals within the other nation, and those groups are a real threat to the sovereignty of each; (3) the Thrane military is holding 33 Karrnathi soldiers (30 undead and 3 living)

who were found on Thrane soil in the Silverwood north of the town of Theliost. More were captured, but only the undead soldiers were kept. Three human soldiers refused to leave their unliving comrades and remain in custody.

- The Scion Sound issue is quite volatile. There have been at least 9 reported incidents of direct fighting between Thrane and Karrnathi forces. Both sides have initiated the attacks at one time or another, worrying that illegal goods being transported, or just attacking to steal the goods belonging to the other side under pretense of inspecting for contraband.
- The issue with civil war and revolutionaries being supported by each nation within the border of the other is also true. Thrane funds group of Silver Flame missionaries who open shrines within Karrnath and preach the overthrow of the Karrnathi government in support of a leadership subservient to the Silver Flame. Karrnathi warlords with connections to the Blood of Vol (although not King Kaius III) fund secret groups of Emerald Claw members to strike out at the government of Thrane from within, posing as Thrane citizens.
- The issue of the Karrnathi captive soldiers is tricky. The Thrane government has not been able to prove that the Karrnathi soldiers were invading their territory on purpose, but their presence there is indeed an act of war. [The real story is that originally the living Karrnathi soldiers shipwrecked on Thrane soil. However, the Karrnathi military decided to use this as an opportunity to send undead troops into Thrane, claiming it was accidental as well. Thrane does not know this though.]
- Whatever roles the PCs wish to play within the delegation, it is important that it be reasonable for those PCs to be close to the "action" at all times. An attack could come anywhere at any time, and the PCs should be prepared and not divided.
- The airship lands back in Stormreach in three days' time. In that interval, the PCs need to work together and prepare for the charade. There is no time limit for the talks between Thrane and Karrnath, but the PCs must make the talks last at least three days, but not go longer than seven. Do whatever it takes to make the talks last at least three days. No promises made are binding. Just don't cause an international incident that might certainly spark off a war.
- No magic should be used during the negotiations. Casting spells, using psionics, or using other types of magic will certainly be seen as hostility.
- It is important to remember that this negotiation is a ruse, although the Karrnathi representative and anyone else with an interest in the matter doesn't know this. The PCs are not expected to actually solve these problems. They are just expected to put on a good show and not cause an international incident, while at the same time setting a trap for anyone who might be tempted to attack, or disrupt or discredit, the peace talks.

Give the PCs the opportunity to ask questions. After their questions have been exhausted, Candle tells them it is time for them to talk amongst themselves and decide who should play which role in the delegation. Candle, Pon, and Barthwell leave the PCs to their own devices. Allow them to discuss roles, decide options, and lay out a plan. As the DM, try to allow PCs to work out any differences of opinion **in character**. Limit the amount of time this discussion takes, based on the amount of time you have available for the adventure. If you must hurry them along, use the NPCs on the airship (Pon, Candle, and Barthwell) to mediate rather than interjecting yourself into the adventure as the DM. If there are differences of opinion on how to proceed, don't let one player dominate. Let the table vote for a plan, and use Candle as the tiebreaker if any decision is split. If necessary, remind players that the skills of their characters are going to matter, so characters with interaction-based skills should be the ones doing the talking, martial characters acting as bodyguards, sneaky types acting as eyes and ears, knowledge-based characters acting as advisors, etc.

As the roles are being chosen, the PCs can ask for more information or specialized training in the mission. They should be allowed, and encouraged, to read the sections of the *Eberron Campaign Setting* covering the following topics: Karrnath, Thrane, and Church of the Silver Flame. The PCs are also given access to the several items to help them on their mission. These items can be used at no cost to the PCs, but they must be returned at the end of the adventure if not consumed in the use: **4 masterwork disguise kits, 6 potions of cure moderate wounds, 6 vials of antitoxin, 20 +1 arrows, 20 +1 bolts, arcane scroll of alarm, arcane scroll of expeditious retreat, divine scroll of shield other, divine scroll of detect poison, and an elixir of hiding.**

If the PCs are lacking in any area, the NPCs aboard the airship give them specialized training in that area. For example, if none of the PCs have any ranks in Diplomacy, Candle offers to give them pointers. They can receive training in any area you, as the DM, feel appropriate. The result of this training is a +4 circumstance bonus on skill checks for this adventure only. Each PC can get training in one skill only, and it can only be a skill that has intelligence, wisdom, or charisma as the keyed ability. Thus a PC can get training in sensing motive, but not in opening locks. Feel free to roleplay this training, but keep the timing of the adventure in mind.

House Lyrandar Revenge

The privateers who stole the airship from House Lyrandar get a visit from air elementals, tasked by the leaders of House Lyrandar to kill everyone aboard the ship and bring it back.

Read or paraphrase the following text at the appropriate time. Perhaps the best time to do so would be in the middle of an intense role-playing session, when the PCs least expect to be interrupted by combat.

Suddenly, from the decks above you, shouting and screaming erupt. A half-elven body plummets by the window looking out into the clear blue skies you sail through. The airship rocks a bit as if being buffeted by severe winds.

When the PCs state their desire to get above and help, refer to **Map 1**. Place the PCs around the top of the ladder leading down into the hold. If any PCs do not state their willingness to get above deck, they must spend the time to climb the 10-foot-ladder onto the deck in later rounds, while the combat is occurring.

Foes: The leaders of House Lyrandar have been tracking the privateers who stole this airship for more than two years. The crew has had several close calls, but this time House Lyrandar have some creatures in the right place at the right time. The air elementals have been called from the Elemental Plane of Air and ordered to patrol the skies around northern Xen'drik. They were ordered to kill anyone aboard this particular ship. The elementals fight to the death.

Large Air Elementals (2): hp 58, 56; *Monster Manual* 96.

Tactics: The elementals have already tossed one crewmember to his death when the PCs arrive on deck, and they are moving around to the other crewmembers, attempting to bull rush the sailors from the ship. If the PCs do not interfere, the elementals manage to toss one crewmember every other round. As soon as the PCs act in a hostile manner toward either of the elementals, they both focus their attacks on the PCs. If any PC ventures next to the edge of the airship, the elemental attempts a bull rush. After the PCs defeat one of the elementals, the other uses its whirlwind ability to attempt to pick up a PC and carry him or her out into the sky, only to drop them and then come back for more.

Developments: The other NPCs, including Pon, Candle, and Barthwell, are busy trying to keep the airship from coming undone amid the air assault. They cannot help the PCs fight the elementals, but they can offer assistance in the most dire of situations, as described below.

The ship does have a ballista that remains loaded at all times, and the PCs can use that weapon against the air elementals. Rules for the ballista are on page 100 of the DMG.

The ship is sailing at 700 feet above the water north of Xen'drik. If a PC is tossed out into a free fall, Pon activates her *winged boots* and flies down to retrieve that PC before a certain death awaits. She is able to save that PC, although both are out of action for the rest of the combat. If a second and third PC goes overboard, Candle casts *feather fall* on those characters. As she is a 9th-level caster, the PC falls at 60 feet/round for 9 rounds. After that, the PC begins a fast plummet into the ocean (assume the PC falls the entire distance in one round if not being affected by any outside forces). Barthwell also carries a *potion of flying*, but he is not strong enough to fly while carrying a PC, so he offers the potion to another PC as needed. Page 303 of the DMG discusses falling into water.

In the event that the PCs do not help at all by staying below deck, or if they are unable to defeat the air elementals, the airship is taken back to Khorvaire by the elementals, to a House Lyrandar compound in Sharn. There is enough food and water on the ship for the PCs to survive the trip, and House Lyrandar releases them since they weren't part of the mutiny that took away the airship. However, the current mission is a failure.

Assuming the PCs do succeed in saving the airship and crew from the air elementals, the crew thanks the PCs profusely and offers them rewards for saving them (see Event Treasure). Candle also declares her admiration for the skills of the PCs.

Scaling the Encounter

4th-Level Characters: Use one medium and one large air elemental.

6th-Level Characters: Use one large and one huge air elemental.

7th-Level Characters: Use two huge air elementals.

Landing at Stormreach

If the PCs are successful in rescuing the privateers and their airship, the mission continues. The airship touches down near Stormreach, and the PCs begin their mission impersonating the delegation from Thrane.

Read or paraphrase the following as the airship descends to a landing area just outside of Stormreach:

The half-elves burst into a flurry of activity, and you can now see the city of Stormreach as you have never seen it before. From above, the ancient giant ruins within the city seem to grasp the newer constructions like powerful hands, threatening to crush them. The people below you buzz about their business like so many worker bees in a hive. Candle looks at your group, nods her head, and sighs. "Time to prove yourselves worthy. Remember to act wisely and with measured responses. Wisdom is foresight. Good luck." She leads Pon and Barthwell below decks, leaving you to your task. The airship descends slowly on the backs of the air elementals that power it, and soon you are resting on the ground. A walkway is lowered, giving your group access to the people awaiting your arrival.

Assuming the PCs leave, they are now officially in the guises of the Thrane delegation. Describe the scene at the end of the walkway:

A group of individuals waiting at the bottom of the walkway all stare up at you. As you descend, you see that five of the group are male and female dwarves, one is a female half-elf, and the last is a male gnome.

Below are the individuals who make up this welcome committee, along with notes for roleplaying:

- Rensellear Copperfist: Resellear is a LN dwarf, and a high-ranking (but non-dragonmarked) member of House Kundarak on Xen'drik. He is in charge of security for the talks. He is not aware of the details of the meeting—he only knows that House Kundarak is hosting a meeting between two disputing sides of a matter, that he is to host the participants and keep them safe while they are in Stormreach, and that House Kundarak is getting a great deal of money for the job. He goes about his business with a formality and gravity befitting his position. If he sees something he doesn't like, he objects once and only once, clearly stating that any deviation from his planned schedule means that he can no longer promise the safety of those in his charge.
- Abram, Bogrim, Corah, and Drummit Copperfist: All four N dwarves are members of House Kundarak, and they answer only to Rensellear. Hired bodyguards, they know their jobs well. They speak only when spoken to, and even then their answers are as brief as possible. They refer any decisions or complicated answers to Rensellear.
- Dizra Plement: This CN half-elven female is a political representative of Harbor Lord Jonas Wylkes. The Harbor Lord has heard that some sort of political meeting is taking place in his city, but he doesn't know the details, so he has sent Dizra to find out what is happening and offer the Harbor Lord's welcome. She uses all the tools at her disposal, including feminine wiles, to get the information for her lord. She is only looking for the basic information, and is satisfied as long as she has some information to take back to the Harbor Lord.
- Artie Poonjabble: Artie is a NE male gnome and a reporter for the Korranberg Chronicle. He received a tip that a meeting of incredible political importance was happening in Stormreach, and he is here to get the scoop. Artie is the type to spend a night picking through someone's garbage and bribing servants to get even the tiniest snippet of information. He is not above blackmail to get information, and he honestly enjoys ruining people's lives with his stories if he can. A DC 20 Bardic Knowledge or DC 15 Knowledge (local) recognizes Artie as an investigative reporter of no small renown and belies his reputation as a world-class snoop.

The rest of this scene plays out as follows assuming the PCs do nothing to change it: the contingent of House Kundarak dwarves greets the PCs and tells them that they are to come with them to the House Kundarak enclave. Dizra Plement welcomes the PCs to Stormreach on behalf of the Harbor Lord, and she asks them what their business is. Artie shouts questions, most of the more sensationalist variety, such as "Is it true that you have come to join Karnath in declaring war on Aundair?" or "Is it true the Keeper of the Flame is pregnant?"

How the PCs act toward the NPCs here has a great bearing on what happens later in the adventure. If the PCs brush off both Dizra and Artie, they join forces to get information. If this happens, Artie may later blow the PCs' covers by snooping with Dizra's assistance.

If the PCs explain the situation up front to Dizra and promise to keep her updated on the progress of the talks, she is content and leaves them to their own devices, only occasionally showing up at the enclave for an update (and to give a tour, as stated in Part 2).

If the PCs let Artie in on what is happening with regards to the negotiations, and if they promise him exclusive interviews and insight, he is content as well. He stops digging into the PCs' identities and does not blow their cover because he has no reason to snoop. Artie can also be eliminated as a threat through other means, as he is only an expert 4 (AC 11, hp 12) with no combat experience. If ignored or treated rudely, Artie can be a thorn in the PCs side later in the adventure. The PCs can make the checks stated above to understand that Artie has the skills and connections to make their jobs much more difficult.

Part 2: Saving the World With Words

The PCs begin the process of negotiating a peace with the Karrnathi delegation, which is comprised of some unusual individuals who are not necessarily interested in peace between Karrnath and Thrane. Issues are complicated by unwanted attention from a variety of sources.

Meeting the Bone Knight

The PCs get their first interaction with the Karrnathi delegation.

The liaison provided by House Kundarak for the Thrane delegation is Rockland d’Kundarak, an inexperienced but eager and promising dragonmarked member of the House. He is as enthusiastic a contact as the PCs could hope to make. Although his manner is professional, a **DC 15 Sense Motive** check reveals that his shaking hands and cracking voice indicate extreme nervousness. Rockland’s job is to make sure the delegation’s every need is met, and he does everything in his power to fulfill that mission.

After the PCs have settled into their quarters at the House Kundarak enclave, they are told by Rockland that the Karrnathi delegation is ready to meet with them. They await the PCs in a secure meeting room deep within the enclave. The room is displayed as Map 2.

Rockland leads the PCs there and shows them into the room. When the PCs enter, read or paraphrase the following:

The large meeting room is decorated with attractive and comfortable furnishings. Tables with food and drink line the walls, while a large meeting table with chairs dominates the center of the room. Another dragonmarked dwarf of House Kundarak stands just inside the doorway as you enter, and within the room are what can only be the Karrnathi delegation. A tall, powerfully built human stands as you enter, but more striking than his raven-black hair and dark, penetrating eyes is his armor. No less than six skulls, as well as several large humanoid arm and leg bones, adorn the armor. Speaking of bones, the creature already standing behind the armored figure is not much more than skin and bones. Empty eye sockets dominate a face with cracking leathery skin pulled taut over the skull. Beyond this horrific figure are two elven women in breastplate. Both wear a chain around their necks bearing a pendant in the form of red gem surrounded by a stylized skull. Finally sitting in the corner and looking extremely ill at ease is a halfling. He is dressed in simple robes and nods when you enter.

The members of the Karrnathi delegation are as follows:

- The leader is Sir Thirslow Malachi, a veteran of the Last War and high-ranking Bone Knight. He was a paladin originally, but his service to Karrnath at the end of the last war led him to use his powers to lead the undead into battle, and he is now a Bone Knight. A ruby ring on his finger (**DC 10 Spot check**) marks him as a member of the Order of Rekkenmark, one of the most prestigious military organizations in all of Khorvaire. His stats are provided below.
- Sir Thirslow’s personal assistant is a Karrnathi zombie called Major Svenson. The Major served under Sir Thirslow in the Last War while alive, then again when he died and Sir Thirslow was assigned to lead a company of undead troops. His stats are provided below as well. A **DC 14 Knowledge (religion)** check reveals this creature is a Karrnathi zombie, an intelligent form of undead used by Karrnath as soldiers.
- Two NE female Blood of Vol clerics, Uri Castile and Zelma Sansimone. A **DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check** reveals the pendants are holy symbols of the Blood of Vol.
- Ambassador Noonette, a LG halfling diplomat and economic advisor asked by King Kaius III to come to the negotiations and keep an eye on things. He is not sure why he is here, and he understands that he has practically no say in the proceedings. He has seen the toll that war has taken on the people of Karrnath, and he is strongly opposed to both war and the use of undead troops.

Rockland introduces the PCs to the Karrnathi delegation, and then the two dwarves leave the room. This initial meeting has been called to set a schedule and an agenda for the rest of the peace talks. The Karrnathi delegation is described in more detail below. Talks break down almost immediately, for no matter what the PCs say, Sir Thirslow disagrees and makes unreasonable demands. For example, if any of the PCs are wearing a certain color, he insists that no Thrane representative wear that color, because he does not like that color and finds it offensive. Roleplay a long, torturous session where the PCs have to deal with an obviously hostile diplomat just to get the simplest of points agreed up. Use the descriptions below to guide the talks.

Sir Thirslow's one greatest desire is to restart the war so that he may kill more Thrane citizens. He feigned a desire to see lasting peace in order to get this appointment, and now it is his one hope that he can force the Thrane delegation to attack him, thus giving one final reason to resume the war. With that in mind, Thirslow should be played with great care. He is insulting, unreasonable, provocative, and unbending, yet he needs the Thrane delegation to open the hostilities in order to be able to justify the return to war. He points out, for example, that all of the skulls and bones in his armor are from Thrane soldiers (and perhaps civilians) whom he cut down in battle. He makes veiled threats and insults at every opportunity, although he must continue to put forth the illusion that he is working toward peace. On any issues discussed, he makes demands that are unreasonable. If the PCs give in to those demands, he adds stipulations that are even more unreasonable. However he can't overplay his hand, for that would anger his king.

Thirslow's assistant, the Karrnathi zombie Major Svenson, chuckles in a guttural laugh at the insults and barbs hurled at the PCs by Thirslow. He does not speak to the PCs directly, but refers to them as "fleshbags" and "wormfood" when speaking with the rest of his delegation.

The two clerics of the Blood of Vol remain silent throughout, unless Thirslow speaks to them directly. Their presence should lend an air of menace to the meetings.

Ambassador Noonette is the only Karrnathi representative who is taking these talks seriously. Although he has no direct authority, he speaks in a conciliatory manner, pointing out to Sir Thirslow when he is being unreasonable. If approached by the PCs directly outside of the presence of the rest of the delegation, Noonette expresses his desire for peace between the two nations, but he fears that the hawks within the Karrnathi government and society are too powerful a force.

After a great deal of excruciating debate, allow the PCs to set an agenda and timetable for the rest of the discussions. Then they can retire for the evening. If open violence breaks out between the PCs and the Karrnathi delegation, use the stats below. Neither side is allowed to use magic during negotiations. Any magic used is considered a hostile act and is justification enough for Thirslow to close down talks and return to Karrnath and declare war.

If fighting does break out with the Karrnathi delegation, it is an untiered encounter.

Combat Statistics

SIR THIRSLOW MALACHI

CR 6

Male human paladin 4/bone knight 2

LE Medium humanoid

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

Aura courage (10 ft., allies +4 vs. fear)

Languages Common

AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed 18

hp 50 (6 HD); DR 2/bludgeoning

Immune disease, fear

Fort +11, Ref +2, Will +4

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +1 *bonecraft greatsword* +10 melee (2d6+5)

Base Atk +5; Grp +8

Atk Options Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack

Special Atk rebuke undead 5/day (+4, 2d6+5, 3rd)

Paladin Spells Prepared (CL 2nd):

1st—divine favor

Abilities Str 16, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14

SQ bone march (8 HD total, up to 2 HD creatures), lay on hands, share spells, *summon skeletal steed*

Feats Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword)

Skills Craft (armorsmithing) +6, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (religion)+5, Ride +5, Sense Motive +6

Possessions +1 *bonecraft full plate*, +1 *bonecraft greatsword*, *gauntlets of ogre power*, *amulet of health +2*

Bone March (Su) As a standard action, Sir Thirslow can assume control of up to 8 Hit Dice of animated undead from a willing caster, provided the caster and the undead are within 60 feet of him.

He cannot control any individual undead creature with 3 Hit Dice or more.

Lay on Hands (Su) Sir Thirslow's lay on hands ability heals 12 points per day, and heals undead as well as living creatures.

MAJOR SVENSON

CR 4

Karrnathi zombie fighter 1

LE Medium undead

Init +0; Senses Listen +6, Spot +6

Aura evil, undead

Languages Common

AC 22, touch 10, flat-footed 22

hp 30 (4 HD); DR 5/slashing

Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +3

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +1 *longsword* +8 (1d8+4/19-20)

Base Atk +3; Grp +6

Atk Options Power Attack

Abilities Str 16, Dex 11, Con --, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 1

SQ Darkvision 60ft., undead traits

Feats Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (*longsword*)

Skills Climb -1, Jump -1, Listen +6, Search +4, Spot +6

Possessions half plate armor, +1 *longsword*, light steel shield

A Tour of Stormreach

Both delegations are invited to join the representative of Harbor Lord Wylkes in a tour of the city of Stormreach. While on the tour, the PCs run into an old friend at the exact wrong time.

The initial meeting, where the two sides come to an agreement on a schedule and an agenda, should take an entire day. The following morning, Dizra Plement calls the two delegations together and insists that they allow her to give them a tour of Stormreach. Pleased with the prospect of stalling the peace talks even further, Sir Thirslow agrees and insists that both delegations go on the tour together. If the PCs resist, Sir Thirslow threatens to end all talks right now if the PCs do not agree.

As the DM, you should feel free to run the tour as you see fit. Both delegations, Dizra Plement, and a contingent of House Kundarak guards comprise the tour. Artie Poonjabble is also present, constantly yelling questions to the delegates and making insinuations, unless the PCs have already removed him from the adventure, either by force or by other less violent means. Some of his insinuations and questions should be outlandish, but some should show that he is not necessarily on the wrong track. The PCs should get the idea that Artie's discovery of their ruse could be very bad for the peace process—both this fake one and the real one taking place at Korranberg.

Although no attack takes place during the tour, the PCs are probably expecting one, so play it up. Draw a scene of a bustling market that the PCs are approaching during the tour. Ask the PCs to place themselves on the map. Describe a shady character or two watching them. Then spring the following surprise on them.

At some point during the tour, as the PCs are being shown one of the bustling markets in Stormreach, the PCs may come into contact with someone who knows them: specifically, the half-drow child that may be the namesake of one of them. If any of the PCs completed the adventure "Forbidden Knowledge," the half-drow child born of the scholar Pinesky and his wife may have named their child after a PC. As they tour through Stormreach, they cross paths with Vistola Pinesky and the baby.

First, give the PCs a DC 20 Spot check, modified by distance. The marketplace is busy, and it is hard to see anyone clearly. If a PC makes the check and if they have played "Forbidden Knowledge," tell them that they recognize the half-elf Vistola Pinesky and her newborn baby, and she is moving directly toward them.

You must then determine if Vistola recognizes her daughter's godparent. She automatically does unless the PC is disguised. If the PC has made an attempt to disguise himself or herself, Vistola gets a +2 modifier on her Spot check to see through the disguise.

If she does recognize one or more of the PCs, she calls out a greeting and approaches the group, excited to see them and wanting for them to see her daughter and their namesake, proudly declaring that the little half-elven girl is now crawling on her own and causing no end of mischief. This, of course, tips off Artie, Dizra, and the Karrnathi delegation that something is amiss. Let the PCs roleplay this awkward situation. How they handle themselves here affects circumstances later in the adventure.

Starting Negotiations

The negotiations start in earnest, and it becomes clear that the Karrnathi delegation is not going to be easy to work with.

After the tour, the PCs and the Karrnathi delegation return to the House Kundarak enclave to begin their first round of serious negotiations. Use your discretion on how much you want to roleplay this. The issues to be discussed, and the attitude of the members of the Karrnathi delegation, are described above.

If you don't want to roleplay the negotiations, figure the progress and tenor of the negotiations using the following rolls:

- The PCs must make one Sense Motive, one Bluff, three Diplomacy, one Intimidate, one Knowledge (geography), one Knowledge (history), one Knowledge (local), one Knowledge (nobility), one Knowledge (religion), and one Perform (oratory) check. Only one PC can make each check, although others can assist. Checks can be made untrained for this purpose. Action points can be used.
- For each check that is DC 15 or lower, the PCs lose one Negotiation Point. For each check that is between DC 16 – 20, no Negotiation Points are gained or lost. For each check that is between DC 21 and 30, one Negotiation Point is gained. Any checks above DC 30 gain two Negotiation Points.
- Give a bonus or penalty to any checks you feel are deserved based on roleplay.
- Figure the final Negotiation Point total. If the total Negotiation Points are less than 0, the talks have broken down and the Karrnathi delegation leaves for home, confident that they can now declare war. If the Negotiation Points are between 0 – 6, the talks are at a stalemate. If the Negotiation Points are more than 8, the PCs are doing an outstanding job keeping the Karrnathi delegation on their heels. The PCs, in this case, are very aware that the negotiations are never going to be brought to a successful conclusion, but they are doing more than enough to keep the talks going until the real talks can be concluded.
- These checks must be made once for each session of talks. If one session results in failure (less than 0 Negotiation points) or two consecutive sessions of stalemates (between 0 and 6 points), the talks have broken down completely and the Karrnathi delegation leaves. This failure greatly increases the possibility of war.
- Negotiations go for a few hours each day, and then a break is called. Most days have two negotiation sessions: one in the morning and one in the afternoon/evening.

Heated Negotiations

The PCs are forced to deal with a tense hostage negotiation while lacking a proper knowledge of the situation.

Assuming the PCs are able to keep the negotiations going for four separate sessions (two days after the initial meeting, and three days total), they are doing their jobs very well. This is frustrating Sir Thirslow, and he decides the time has come to escalate the confrontation. At the beginning of the next session, the PCs enter to find the following scene:

You enter the room as always, but something is very different now. Standing at the far end of the room, held between the two female elven clerics, is a red-haired human female in manacles. She has one small bruise under her right eye, but otherwise looks unharmed. Behind her, the undead soldier stands, longsword drawn. Sir Thirslow studies you, a sneer playing across his lips. "Now the talks begin in earnest," he hisses. "This person, this Thrane dog in the employ of your vile church-run government, was apprehended attempting to assassinate our ruler, the mighty Kaius. What do you have to say to that?"

Allow the PCs to respond. Here is the situation:

This woman is Gharma Lillyfield, a LN rogue dedicated to the Silver Flame. She was sent into Karrnath as a spy for the Thrane government, posing as a merchant, to try to ascertain what channels were being used to support the Emerald Claw operatives fomenting civil war in Thrane. She was captured a month ago and interrogated quite brutally, until she was forced to admit her role and provide the Karrnathi government with vital information regarding Thrane security. She was not involved in any plot to assassinate anyone, but she was forced to admit this as well.

Sir Thirslow plans to execute her right here in front of the Thrane delegation, hoping to provoke an attack. This would be exactly the incident Sir Thirslow needs to be able to return to Karrnath and show that war is inevitable. The PCs, of course, have no way of knowing if Gharma is a spy or what her story is. If

questioned, Gharma admits she is a Thrane spy (which is true), as well as being an assassin (which is false). Sir Thirslow refuses to let her be questioned outside of his presence, and he doesn't give the PCs the opportunity to free her.

Unless the PCs can come up with some way to stop it, Sir Thirslow informs the PCs that this woman has been found guilty of various capital crimes by the Karnathi criminal justice system, and her sentence was execution. Then he orders Major Svenson to carry out the sentence right there.

Very little can stop the execution from taking place, short of direct physical or magical intervention. Unfortunately, the best option the PCs have is to let the Karnathi delegation kill the prisoner, because that denies Sir Thirslow the provocation he is expecting. It is not an evil act to let the prisoner die, as she is indeed a spy and was tried and sentenced legally. (The forced confession about the assassination plot was not the only reason her sentence was death.) Many PCs, however, are not going to let that happen.

The only way that the PCs are going to save Gharma's life is to promise just about everything Karnath wants: the unconditional release of all the Karnathi soldiers being held in Thrane, exclusive rights to the Scion Sound, and a promise from the Thrane government to send no more aid to Silver Flame pilgrims operating within Karnath. These promises, of course, never have to be fulfilled. They just have to be made. If they are made, Gharma's life is spared for the moment. Sir Thirslow tells the PCs that they have 24 hours to contact the Thrane government and get these promises in motion. When the Karnathi government contacts the delegation and tells them that all is well, the spy can be released into the PCs' custody. The PCs can only hope to buy time.

This session ends either with the death of Gharma, or with her being taken back into Karnathi custody while they wait to hear that their demands have been met. Either way, if the PCs have not yet attacked the Karnathi delegation and have managed to keep the talks going, Sir Thirslow's frustration grows, and he soon plans to take matters into his own hands.

Help from an Unexpected Source

The beholder Abrinxenphyrinc appears to provide the PCs with a clue that something sinister is in the offing. [Note that if the negotiations have already failed, Abrinxenphyrinc still appears to the PCs AFTER the adventure is completed to mention having information about Zekeriff Brithlestone.]

When the PCs arrive back in their suite of rooms within the House Kundarak enclave after the incident with Gharma, the current circumstances could be different depending on how the game has played out thus far. Regardless of the situation, an old "friend" has arrived to offer the PCs assistance. Read or paraphrase the following:

As you settle into your suite, an inhuman voice rumbles in the corner. "Do not panic. If I were here to injure you, you would all be dead already. I am going to reveal myself now. If you make any attempt to attack me, I will kill you all. Try to let your feeble intellects understand that I am here to help you."

Assuming the PCs do not do anything hostile or offensive, continue:

In the corner, where the disembodied voice spoke, a creature winks into existence. The huge floating sphere has one large central eye, with multiple eyestalks on the top of the creature pointing at you. Sharp teeth covered in a thick mucus fill its grinning mouth. "I am Abrinxenphyrinc, and you have drawn the interest of my master. I honestly do not know why he has taken such an interest to you and your master, but he must have his reasons. So I am here now to offer you assistance."

Allow the PCs to converse with Abrinxenphyrinc. If they attack him, he teleports away. He has been specifically ordered not to attack the PCs, so his stats are not provided. He is much more than just a simple beholder, however. Below is listed the various forms of help that he can offer:

- If Gharma is still alive and being held by the Karnathi delegation, Abrinxenphyrinc tells the PCs of a secret passage into the holding cell. They can use this passage to get into the cell and remove Gharma. [This is true. You can play out the rescue, call for checks to heighten the suspense, but she is rescued easily, as the secret passage goes right into her holding chamber, and no one is in there guarding her.]
- If the PCs have not dealt with Artie, by removing him from the equation either through physical force or by making him promises of an exclusive story, Abrinxenphyrinc tells them that the gnome is currently speaking to people in Stormreach with knowledge of the PCs' identities. Within the hour the gnome should have enough information to completely blow their covers and throw the whole charade into an international incident. [This is true. The PCs can find Artie before he reveals the PCs' mission, and they can either kidnap him, reason with him, bluff him, or use some

other method of keeping the gnome quiet. If they do not deal with him, the Karnathi delegation learns of the deception and breaks off negotiations immediately.]

- Sir Thirslow is growing desperate. He wants war more than anything. The reason for this is because his secret lover, another knight in the Karnathi army named Larennta Umbridge, disappeared while in a battle against Thrane forces during the Last War. Thirslow wants war so that he can march into Thrane as a conqueror, hoping she is a captive there. [True. Larennta is dead, but no one knows that, nor does anyone know that she and Thirslow were lovers.]
- The final piece of information Gharma passes on is that Zekeriff Brithlestone is still alive, and he is being held somewhere within Stormreach. If the PCs want to know that location, Abrinxenphyrinc can supply them with that information within two weeks. He will contact the PCs with a time and a place where this information will be passed to them. [True. This is covered in the next Crimson Codex adventure.]
- If asked how he knows all this information, Abrinxenphyrinc simply states that the network of his master Virulence is wide-ranging and well informed. If asked why he is providing this information, Abrinxenphyrinc says that his master must have his reasons for helping these pathetic humanoids, but Abrinxenphyrinc does not know those reasons. [True. Abrinxenphyrinc would be just as happy eating or enslaving the PCs, but he has his orders.]

With that, Abrinxenphyrinc answers any more questions the PCs ask, and then he disappears. A DC 21 Spellcraft check reveals that the beholder teleported, but he did not actually cast the spell himself.

From here, the PCs may need to spend part of the evening freeing Gharma or dealing with Artie. Neither of these tasks is overly difficult, and as the DM you can handle them as you wish. As mentioned above, you can play out these tasks to heighten the tension and extend the session. If time is running short, you can also just have the PCs explain their plan, and you can report their success to them.

Part 3: Foresight is Knowledge

Frustrated in his attempts to goad the Thrane delegation into war, Sir Thirslow attempts to poison himself and frame the PCs.

At this point in the adventure, many circumstances are going to depend on the actions that the PCs have taken up to this point. The best-case scenario is that the talks are still ongoing, and that Sir Thirslow has failed to bait the PCs into attacking or doing something else to give him the excuse to call off the talks.

If the talks have been ended before this point, go directly to “Ending the Adventure” and ignore Part 3. If not, read or paraphrase the following when the PCs arrive for talks the next morning:

As opposed to the other meetings, Sir Thirslow has a smile on his face this morning. The other members of the Karnathi delegation simply look tired.

When the PCs enter, Sir Thirslow asks to speak to the main PC negotiator in private. He refuses to speak further until he has the opportunity to speak to just the leader of the delegation, alone. The other members of his own delegation protest vehemently, but he orders them from the room, and they obey.

When he and the PC are alone, read the following:

Sir Thirslow grins sheepishly, and he bows to you. “I know I have put you in a difficult position, and I have to apologize. I came to these talks hoping only to instigate war as soon as possible, and I now see the error of my ways. From this point forward, I will put my foolish pride behind me, and with luck we can make some true progress in these negotiations. Please raise a glass with me, confirming our renewed vision of peace.” Thirslow walks to the table, picks up a bottle of wine, and pours two glasses. He hands one to you.”

Thirslow has already treated the glass he plans to drink from with powerful poison (DC 20 Fort save; 2d6 Con damage/2d6 Con damage secondary). The rest of the wine and the PC’s glass are safe. Unless the PC stops him physically from drinking (by attacking the glass or grappling) or mentions Larennta Umbridge before he can drink, Thirslow drinks the poison and collapses. One minute later he dies unless something is done. (Thirslow chooses to fail his saving throw.) At this point, the people outside the door hear the happenings and can enter the room. Ironically, with Thirslow incapacitated, control of the delegation passes to the halfling ambassador Noonette, who immediately orders the rest of his delegation to stand down while things are sorted out. If the PCs can prove to him what happened, he finishes the negotiations more reasonably and all ends well. If he cannot be convinced that Thirslow is to blame, he ends all negotiations and returns home. Being a reasonable individual, Noonette can be convinced quite easily of the innocence

of the PCs in the poisoning. Evidence of the poison is all over Thirslow if the PCs make a DC 28 Search check, or if any of the PCs have the Investigate feat.

If the PC stops the suicide by using physical or magical coercion, Thirslow goes mad and attacks. This alerts everyone outside, and the PCs may fight the Karnathi delegation. Only Thirslow and Major Svenson take part in the melee.

If the PC stops him by mentioning his former lover, Thirslow can be talked into hearing reason with a DC 10 Diplomacy check or Bluff check. The mention of his lover shakes the Bone Knight, and the PCs can use this to their advantage. If they can convince him that she might still be alive, and that they can check into getting her released, a Bluff check vs. his Sense Motive check can be used to make him pliable to the peace process. Failure here drives him into a rage, and he attacks. But since he attacked first, Ambassador Noonette can take over the proceedings and bring them to a more reasonable conclusion.

Ending the Adventure

As the adventure could have many possible outcomes depending on the actions, choices and luck of the PCs, the DM should use his or her best judgment in how to end the adventure, using the following points as guidelines:

- The real peace talks, which take place in Korranberg and are instantly dubbed “The Korranberg Affair,” go very well. The two nations come to an understanding that neither truly desires war at this time, and the issues are worked out amiably.
- If the PCs are dealt with Artie peacefully through promises of exclusive stories or interviews, he never shows to collect on that promise. His corpse washes up on the shores near the docks a couple days later. No cause of death was evident. If they dealt with Artie through violent means, the same thing happens but there are inquiries into his death. The PCs are not contacted directly, but they hear rumors that the authorities were snooping around and looking to question people fitting the PCs description.
- If the PCs are able to draw the talks out at least three days, sending the Karnathi delegation home at least somewhat happy, they are called before Ohnal Caldyn one more time. He tells them that their contribution to this peace on Khorvaire will never be recorded in the history books, but it will not be forgotten and it brings some of the draconic Prophecy into very positive alignment with the goals of the Crimson Codex. He tells them that until Zeke’s situation can be resolved, the spellscale Candle is going to be taking over Crimson Codex operations on Xen’drik. Since they have worked with her before and know of her, their position within the organization is going to be much more important than it was previously.
- If the PCs are unable to see the talks through for at least three days, they receive a message from Candle telling them that she is now in charge of the Crimson Codex on Xen’drik. Even though they were unable to complete their mission, she still expects them to be prepared to succeed if called upon again.

Event Treasure

If the PCs saved the airship, they are each offered 700gp worth of potions to take into their next adventure. The potions must be taken from the charts in the DMG, and since they are consumable items, the cost is 5 times DMG cost (campaign cost). If the PCs succeed in keeping the talks going for the required three days, the Crimson Codex allows each PC the use of a 5-charge wand of any spell of 2nd level or lower, as long as that wand is listed in the DMG.

Adventure Questions

1. How did the PC's fair against the air elementals?
 - a. The PCs were defeated and never got to the rest of the mission.
 - b. The PCs won the battle, but only with major help and multiple deaths.
 - c. The PCs won the battle, but there were casualties.
 - d. The PCs won the battle, and they did so easily.
2. Did the PCs work together well in coming up with their roles within the delegation?
 - a. Yes, good roleplaying and good teamwork.
 - b. Reasonably well. There was a little out-of-game tension, but it worked out.
 - c. No. The players did not work together well.

3. Were the PCs able to succeed in keeping the talks going for at least three days?
 - a. No. Talks broke down early.
 - b. Yes. The PCs held it together and got through the talks.
4. What was the fate of the Thrane spy Gharma?
 - a. The PCs allow her to die to keep up the talks.
 - b. They save her life through negotiation, and then rescue her.
 - c. They attack the Karrnathi delegation to save her, thus ending the talks.
 - d. They never made it that far.
5. When Sir Thirslow tried to poison himself, how did the PCs handle it?
 - a. Never made it that far.
 - b. They let him die and then dealt with Ambassador Noonette.
 - c. They attacked him to keep him from poisoning himself.
 - d. They talked him out of it by mentioning his lost lover.
6. Rate the group's roleplaying.
 - a. Excellent. They had engaging characters and played them well.
 - b. Good. They remained in character most of the game.
 - c. Fair. They made an attempt to play the game in character.
 - d. Poor.

Story Objects

Object ID: EXCC16

Object Name: Favorable Notice of Candle

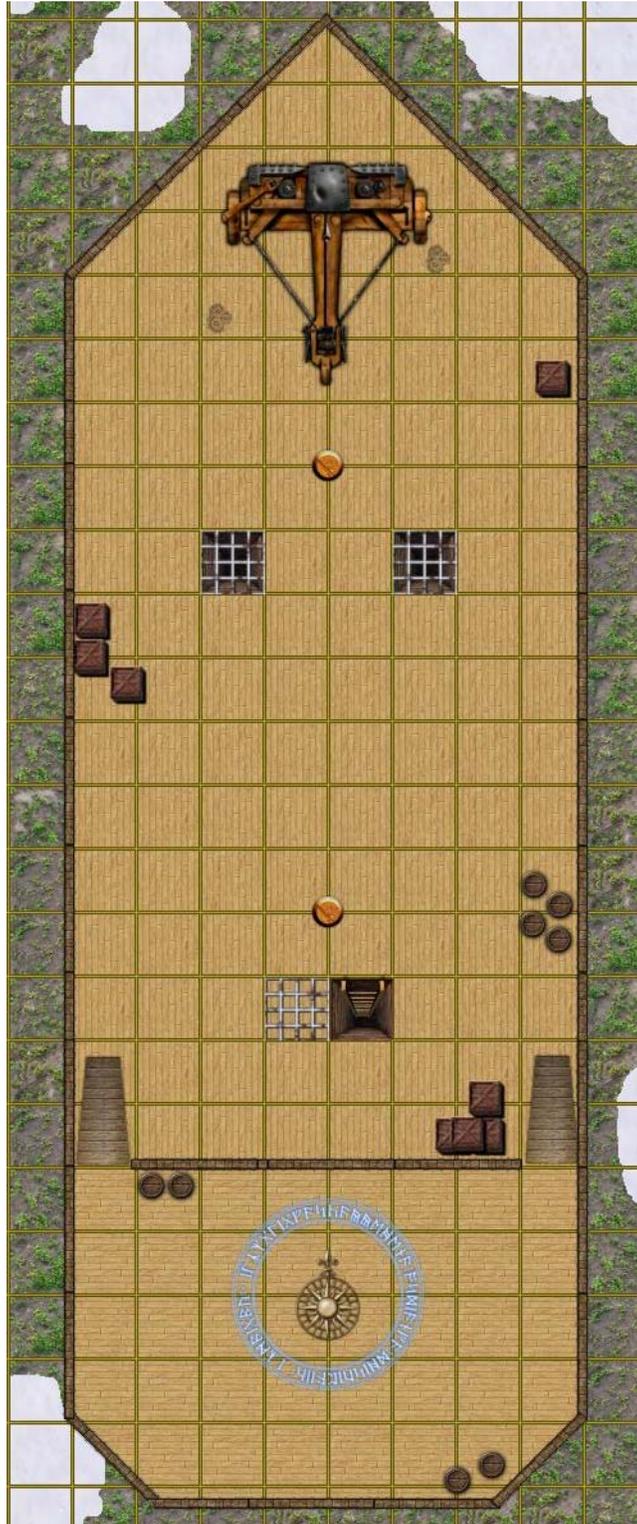
Object Description: By saving the crew of the airship and completing the mission successfully, the PCs have gained the favorable attention of Candle, the new leader of Crimson Codex in Xen'drik. Having the favorable notice of your new leader can't be a bad thing.

Object ID: EXCC17

Object Name: Specialized Training

Object Description: Part of the specialized training you received for this mission has made you more skilled. You gain a permanent +1 circumstance bonus to the skill in which you received specialized training for this mission.

Map 1 - The Privateer Airship



Map 2 - The House Kundarak Meeting Room

