

Chapter 018 – One of Us

12 Calistril 4708
Korvosa, Varisia

Scene #1 – Korvosa – Into the City (Outside the Gray)

On and on this went for quite some time until the party eventually made it the Pillar Wall: the massive 100-foot-tall reminder that stretched across most of the southern end of Citadel Hill; a remainder of what once must have been a magnificent barrier in the city's previous life. Perhaps because of what lay on the other side, the riots rarely lingered in this part of the city.

Coming to one of the gates, the group found a few of Mazour's brethren standing guard around it. The gate was closed and oddly, they faced the gate instead of out a guard would typically do. At the party's approach, a human woman of middle years with short chin length hair with flowing black and white robes beneath a burnished breastplate turned and announced in a commanding tone, "The Gray is closed to visitors tonight. The dead stir tonight. Please cont- Mazour? Is that you? Where have you been!?!"...

"Souma? Souma! How are you my dear? On top of everything going on in the city, it's been an... interesting... evening," Mazour stepped forward to greet Souma first with a formal greeting of respect among the church, then with a friendly hug. **"I had some... personal... issues to address this evening. No dear, not that sort of business, you cheeky little thing. Actual serious business. Oh please, don't look so shocked."**

Chuckling, he motioned to the group with him, lowering his voice as he continued. His tone became more serious and more earnest, yet still breathy and deliberate. **"We served a cause of justice this evening, and in doing so freed these children. Souma, they were stolen children. Stolen. Children. You've heard of Gaedrun Lamm? These were some of his Lambs. I had hoped to find their homes, but the outside situation has... changed. I've brought them here for sanctuary, at least for the moment. They need safety, food, some clothes, and by all that stands as holy, a bath. They need a chance Souma. Please?"**

"I hear you..." Souma replied after the pleasantries were exchanged. But her expression quickly returned serious, **"...but, this I cannot do, despite the circumstances."** After quickly glancing at the children, she pulled Mazour to the side to speak quietly with him away from those not of the clergy. **"This incursion is worse than any we've seen in the years. All the negative energy released due to the King's death..."** she paused to sign for the King's safe passage to her patron, **"...must have stirred the Restless. For reference, Samazar herself is out there tonight..."** She left the rest unsaid, but if the Head of Defense for the Church of Pharasma was directly involved, things must be worse than the group guarding the gate were letting on. **"I am sorry Mazour,..."** Souma continued louder for the rest of the group's involvement, **"...but as much as it pains me, you must find another place for those children tonight. Perhaps the Guard can take them in for the night. Return tomorrow or the next day, and I am sure the Church will be able to shelter them until more suitable accommodations can be found."**

Mazour's mouth dropped open. **"Oh. Samazar's out? It's that bad? There's nothing to be done? You're sure?"**

The dwarf's expression grew impatient as Mazour and Souma conversed. It was apparent while traveling south that Brack was not at ease with the state of the city. His scowl throughout the trek had done well to inform the others of his mood as well as ward off and other potential chance encounters with the locals. It returned now as he perceived the resistance between the holy folk.

He gave a quick grunt, **"Not sure if yeh two are done chatting, but t'rest of us might 'ave a say on t'matter. Or at least request some clarification as to why yeh can't let us through and all."**

He shrugged his stout shoulders left and right, framing the current state of Korvosa with his gesture, before continuing, **"Yeh might 'ave a problem with yeh dead, but it's not like t'rest of the city is much more 'ospitable at t'moment. So unless yeh can give us a better reason why we should all turn around back in into that 'ell 'ole, I don't see 'ow continuing on to t'temple could be any worse than what we 'ad gone through in getting t'children all 'ere."**

Turning to Brack as he interjected with a grunt, Mazour motioned for Souma to hold for a moment, and moved back to the others. **"The restless dead are a bit riled up right now. It seems the unease goes further than we thought. The Head of Defense herself is out handling things. So that should indicate how dangerous it is. I don't like it either, but if Samazar is out working, it's trouble. Big trouble. And while you and I may be willing to run headlong into some undead nightmare, I'm not so sure it would be best for the children. So, enough of that... famous... dwarven doughiness, we need some of that dwarven practicality. We need options."**

Souma gave an un-approving look to Mazour as he spoke. He probably shared information - that in her estimation - should not have been shared with those outside of the Pharasman Order.

"He is right," Souma sighed as she followed-up. **"I do not know you, but Mazour seems to put some measure of trust in you, so I will do the same. The Gray is not the place to shelter on this night. There are many reasons why it is located where it is."** She paused to glance at the massive Pillar Wall behind her. **"Perhaps you,..."** she paused to generally point at Brack, Hutton & Redii, **"...might be able to handle yourselves, but I will not put children in unnecessary danger. I am sorry to be blunt, but I will not allow you access tonight, and neither will anyone else in the Order. If you seek shelter for the night, I recommend you traverse back to your homes or seek aid from the Guard at the Citadel."**

Hutton puts a hand on Mazour's shoulder and leans down to quietly say, **"Let's go. I wouldn't want to leave the children in begrudging care, anyway. Doubly so if there's as much danger inside as out. It's not much farther to the Broken Blade. At the very least, I can clear the place out and feed everyone. It won't be overly comfortable, but it'll be safer than most other options. Plus Miss Marni's a motherly sort and I'm sure she'd be willing to help us care for the children until things calm down. The Guard have enough trouble on their hands and I don't fancy going anywhere near the High Bridge at the moment."** He looks to both Maz & Brack for agreement.

Standing back to his full height, he nods politely to Souma. **"May the Lady keep and protect you,"** he says before ushering the children back away from the gate.

Brack gives a gruff nod, begrudgingly giving his acceptances towards the council of Mazour and Hutton. He shoots a pointed stare towards Souma though it's hard to tell whether it was in distrust of the guard's direction or the dwarf's discomfort in being wrong.

With a sigh, Mazour looked over to Souma. **"May the Lady keep us and bless us all. My apologies Souma, it's been a long night for all of us. Our concern is of course for the children. I know you would help them if it was possible. Many thanks to you, and may the night settle quietly."**

Placing his hand on Hutton's he looked at the angry mountain. **"I think that's for the best at the moment. Believe me, she would let us pass if she could. It's not... safe...tonight."** With that he gave a slow look back at the gates and beyond. A slight look of worry as he gazed back. **"We'd best go."**

"May the Great Mistress guide us all." Souma replied to the group in kind as they began to make their way away from the gates.

"What a day it's been so far..." Redii mused to both herself and the others as they started west towards the Broken Blade. Directing her next comment to Hutton, she added, **"I agree, it's probably for the best that we avoid the Gray for the night. We can try again tomorrow; hopefully things have settled down by then. And at this point, anywhere off the streets will do and I'm sure Broken Blade will feel better than Castle Korvosa in comparison to the nonsense happening on the streets tonight. I am almost at the point of just knocking on a stranger's door and inviting ourselves to stay the night... I'm only partially kidding."**

Scene #2 – Korvosa – Into the City (Traveling West)

As the party slowly made their way the short distance from the gates of the Gray to the Broken Blade, the sound of a large, gathered crowd could be heard slowly getting louder. Many citizens were walking in the same direction as the party - seemingly drawn in by the noise up ahead. Within minutes, the outer wall of the crowd in question came into view, blocking the intersection that led to Hutton's establishment. It appeared that the crowd had formed into a large ring - and slowly swelling - with folks seemingly calling out and yelling at something in the middle. While the group could try and turn around and detour, there was no guarantee what they would find on another path...

"I heard this was where they were goin' show them rich nobles what's what." The party overheard from a couple of passersby heading towards the crowd:

"Me too. I hope they get em good!"

Mazour moved to huddle the children closer together as they approached the crowd. **"Redii dear, could you scout ahead? You might be able to slip through the crowd easier. It seems like the city itself is fighting us tonight."**

"Seems like it." Redii agreed. **"Stay put, I'll be back in a flash"** she replied before sliding away from the group and joining the growing mass of people headed towards the crowd in front of them.

Stepping to the side, he reached out to someone near them in the crowd. **"Excuse me, what's going on?"**

"I heard from another bloke that us 'common' folk were gonna show em muckity mucks what we think of em up ahead. I just hope I didn't miss anything good." A middle-aged human man replied before hurrying on ahead.

Redii deftly moved her way through the crowd of at least 100 without attracting much notice. With so many people focused on whatever was ahead, Redii couldn't help but notice how easy it would've been to filch a few coins and other valuables as she moved. She was tempted – very tempted – but held off. Stealing at a time like this would make her no better than the rowdy crowds roaming the street. Realizing her train of thought, she silently cursed the group for rubbing off on her in a way that was "bad for business".

Jostling her way to near the front of the crowd, while she didn't have a great view of what lay in the center of the ring, she heard what was going on plainly enough. Chants of **"Die Dandy"** and **"Death to the False Queen"** were echoed by many in the crowd and more than a few of them wielded torches or makeshift clubs by their sides. At the center, of the ring, Redii was able to see a smaller group of what she assumed were laborers carrying shovels, hammers and clubs and encircling a clean-shaven yet dirtied young man sitting on the ground. It was clear from his clothes that he was a noble of some sort, though she didn't recognize him at first glance. One of the laborers, a burly woman with greasy strings of hair framing her rotund face, jeered and addressed the young man in a booming voice, **"Bet'cha never worked an honest day's wage in your life, eh, Queen's Man? M'brother had his arm crushed by a barrel on the docks when he was younger than you. Never raised a mug of ale with that wrist"**

again. Wanna know what it feels like?" Many in the crowd were egging her on to show the man just what exactly that might feel like. Things were escalating quickly and about to get quickly out of hand.

With much more force than her trip into the crowd, Redii quickly moved out of the crowd and back to the rest of the party, drawing a few scowls - and cat calls - along the way. **"A group of commoners have a noble surrounded."** Redii relayed quickly when she reached the others. **"They plan on making an example of him. Soon."** Pausing for a moment, she added, **"I'm not looking to play hero, but even to me, I don't like where that was headed. They don't even know the guy besides the fact that he's got coin. They're just using him as a way to release their anger and the crowd is lapping it up."** Redii gulped. **"Do we... help?"** The words felt both wrong and right at the same time as conflicting parts of herself felt differently on the matter...

As if on cue, Brack gave his gruff harumph to Redii. However, underneath the cowl, it was apparent the dwarf was visibly shaking. Unsure of what exactly set the dwarf off, it was evident to onlookers that a nerve had been struck.

"Stay 'ere. I'll be back." The dwarf muttered as he began to push his way through the crowd.

Reaching toward the center of the commotion, Brack began to speak in uncharacteristically loud tones, attempting to drown out the background chatter from the onlookers.

"I KNOW..." He pauses to ensure he caught the attention of the crowd. **"I know exactly what it feels like. To 'ave yeh 'ands broken. To see them go lame and t'pain that follows. To 'ave yeh life suddenly go sideways on account of misfortune."** As he speaks, he rolls up the sleeves, letting the light of the torches highlight his wrists. Where his hands met his arms, deep scar tissue covered the skin in thick, fleshy blankets. A tinge of purple could be seen in contrast to incisions made long ago.

"I know what it feels like after too." His voice cracked as he spoke next, **"To see yehself unable to carry on t'family tradition at t'forge. To shoulder the burden of yeh family's worry and laments about yeh future. To watch yeh legacy slip right through yeh very fingers."**

A moment of silence, **"Yeh know what choice I made then?"** He huffed, **"I left Janderhoff. I left my clan, my 'ome behind. I sought opportunity to make a living on t'fragments of the life I 'ad left. I came to this city. I came to ply what trade I could and make an 'onest day's wage. Didn't let t'politics, t'situation, or even t'crown stand in t'way. T'city takes care of its own, I know yeh all believe that. And like yeh all, I poured my 'eart into this city, 'ell even 'ad a chance to let it forge t'fragments into something new."** There was a pang of sadness in that last line, though the dwarf didn't elaborate further.

"Point is, when my life suddenly went sideways, I didn't choose to do something stupid like yeh all might be about to do. And if yeh haven't noticed," Brack gestures to the discord about the block, **"t'city's looking real sideways right about now, eh? Best not to do anything yeh may regret..."**

Finishing his declaration, the resolute dwarf stood motionless against the crowd.

Brack's impassioned words quieted the once rowdy crowd, everyone momentarily captured by his words. More than a few in the crowd looked at each other shame-faced or as if chastised by an elder. While a large majority remained in place, some of the crowd dropped their makeshift weapons and left the area. The laborers in the middle had unsure looks on their faces and seemed conflicted whether to stop or continue. The burly woman who seemed to be leading this particular mob blubbered in place, unable to form a coherent reply. Lastly, the noble stayed still on the ground, eyes wide and seemingly frozen in place as well.

As the silence began to stretch for an awkwardly long amount of time, Brack noticed Redii push her way to the center of the ring. Brack watched her eyes linger momentarily on his exposed forearms

before stepping towards him as she scratched at her own. "I'm sorry you've had to go through that..." she said quietly to him when he was in earshot, "But, we should probably grab him and go before they get riled up once again." Turning towards the noble on the ground, she began to make her way over to him to help him up.

With a quick word to Mazour, Hutton temporarily leaves the children in the holy man's care and walks directly to the center of the crowd. Not once does he sidestep a member of the mob or turn to fit between two; gently displacing them as he pushes past at a slow but steady pace, he makes his way to join the others.

After a protracted stare, scanning the faces in the crowd and briefly meeting the gaze of any individual with the gumption to look him in the eye, the big man speaks up for the first time in a while and he addresses the crowd on the heels of Brack's speech. Words carefully measured and eyes narrowed.

"Does your occupation make you worth more than the person next to you? Do riots and lynchings make Korvosa better? Stronger? Do they make our streets safer? How will your families react when they find out about what you're doing today? Will they be proud...or horrified?" He pauses to straighten his posture and square his shoulders. "If you live around here, you know me. You know that I've devoted myself to making our community stronger and I'm telling you the dwarf is right: This is not how it's done. Korvosa has enough trouble right now without this mess adding to it. Go home and be with your loved ones. Reassure them that they're safe. That you're safe. That Pillar Hill is and will remain safe. Leave the cutthroat politics to the cutthroat politicians and leave the honest work to honest folks like you and me."

With that, he turns and offers a huge hand to help the young noble up and nods to the others that they should rejoin Mazour and the children.

The crowd continued to murmur as Hutton Crowcreek made his way to the center of the ring. With the crowd's attention focused on the center of the ring, he was - somehow - overlooked despite his size. That was no longer the case.

After Hutton's speech, most of those that had seemed conflicted before clearly were fully chastised. The majority of the crowd quickly dispersed in a myriad of directions leaving only those in the center of the ring and a few stragglers left within minutes. Redii - who at this point had gotten the shaken nobles upright and back on his feet - casually watched the crowd disperse, though it was clear that she was ready to grab one of her many hidden sai at the first sign of trouble.

The ringleader of the mob stared in frustration and disbelief as the crowd dispersed, before turning an angry glare at Hutton and Brack. "I thought you were you one of us, **Hutton Crowcreek.**" She eventually commented, drawing Hutton's name out snidely. "Come on, you lot. Let's get out of here." She then barked at the others who were in the center of the ring before walking off northward without looking back. The group jumped at her command, quickly following after her, glancing back at Hutton and Brack a couple times before turning a corner and disappearing from view.

Mazour swept the children forward as the mob dispersed. He looked on with a raised eyebrows as his new found compatriots chastised the crowd into submission. Arriving as the woman began to turn her gaze at Hutton. Something seemed off. **Lady, grant me your sight.** The normally violet eyes of the pale elf, took on a silvery sheen as his senses expanded to find...

As Mazour's gaze swept across the ringleader of the now dispersed crowd and her companions, he did not feel the taint of un-death upon any of them, or anyone else in the vicinity for that matter; an always welcome discovery.

Nothing. Not satisfied, he watched her intently for a moment.

Eyeing the ringleader more closely in an attempt to discern her motives, while he only saw her actions briefly, she seemed to be someone using the mess around her as an excuse to get "justice" for whatever personal grievances she had with the city.

"May you soon find yourself in the Gray Lady's embrace," he proclaimed loudly, with a smile and a wave. **"She seemed nice,"** he said flatly. **"Shall we move along then?"**

"Tha-Thank you..." The noble shared with the group in a strong Chelish accent once the crowd had mostly departed. He was still quite shaken. **"If you hadn't had come when you did... I don't know what would have... Thank you!"** His eyes glistened slightly with unshed tears.



"It just didn't seem right was all... Anyway, you're good now." Redii replied as she awkwardly patted him on the back, looking slightly abashed. **"What's your name? And can you make it back to your home or somewhere else safely?"**

"I'm Amin Jalento. And I was trying to head home to North Point when ended up caught in all... this..."

Redii grimaced and looked back towards the others, remembering that North Point was one of the areas of the city said to be faring worst this evening...

"North Point? Oh dear sweet soul, I think you may want to wait until daylight to go wandering. It seems the streets aren't... safe... tonight." Mazour placed his arm around the young noble's shoulder and swept him away with the children. He gave Redii a look of worry behind Amin's view as he passed, quickly returning his face to it's usual mischievousness. **"How about you come with us? I can't promise much, but it will be safe. Oh, how rude am I? I am Mazour Gwun'Tir, your saviors are Brack and Hutton, and then there is our own Redii."**

With that, he kept walking toward Hutton's tavern.

Brack gave a deeper-than-usual snort at the Mazour's mentioning of saviors, **"Make no mistake Mister Jalento, I wasn't about saving yeh 'ead as much as I was making sure t'good people of Korvosa don't get their 'ands dirtied on account of all the upheaval about t'city. If yeh looking for any kindness from me beyond what t'others 'ave offered, well..."** the dwarf let's his voice trail off, leaving the noble to ponder the untold implications Brack was hinting at.

Hutton nods down at Amin and further adds to Brack's sentiment as they walk.

"Aye, I've no fondness for the aristocracy, myself. But wrong is wrong and making a spectacle of attacking an undeserving sod doesn't sit right with me." He clears his throat quietly. **"Nothing like that's happening in my neighborhood if I've got anything to say about it."**

As they strolled further, Brack regards the others with a few questions of his own, **"Yeh know Priest for being t'font of sunshine and 'appiness like yeh usually are, yeh keep some pretty dour**

company." Though he made no mention of her name, it was clear the dwarf was implying the stoic Souma that he had a spat with not too long ago.

Looking on as Brak spoke, Mazour raised an eyebrow. He reached out to pat the dwarf gently on the shoulder. **"I do indeed. But how could I say no... to you?"** His eyes glimmered with mischief and he smiled as he reached out to boop Brak on the nose. **"Souma got me used to dourness. But she's only as hard as she needs to be. What you saw was heartache, well for her anyway. Not only have I fought and bled with her, I've also met her children. She would have helped if she could."**

"And you, 'utton, what was that all about back there with Miss 'One-of-Us'? Yeh know her or are we going to 'ave a nice surprise later on?" Though the dwarf's words seemed harsh and sarcastic, his tone conveyed a bit of respect.

He frowns and shakes his head.

"Don't think I've ever seen her before. But I see a lot of people at the Blade, so who knows... I've handled more than my fair share of rabblers with mouths bigger than their fists. I don't think she'll be a problem...if she knows what's good for her, anyway. Let's hold on to the misplaced hope that everyone had the sense to head home. We're almost there now so at least there's that."

Scene #3 – Korvosa – The Broken Blade (Arrival)

Having broken up the gathered crowds that were blocking their way, the party – now with a shaken noble in tow, made the remainder of the short trek to the Broken Blade without issue. Situated on a long street in the heart of Pillar Hill, the street was full of mix-use housing that on other days would've given the area a pleasant and homey feel.

As the party approached the entrance, it was clear immediately that the bar was still open, or at least had occupants inside. The lights from the interior lit up the immediate areas adjacent to the bar and sounds of people talking or making other types of noise could easily be heard from the street. From the party's perspective though, it was difficult to tell at first glance exactly what was happening inside...

Out of Character

Scene #2 – Korvosa – Into the City (Traveling West)





- Feel free to add anything additional here as we travel the last distance to the Broken Blade

Scene #3 – Korvosa – The Broken Blade pt.1

- @Hutton, please give us a description of what the Broken Blade looks like on the exterior. I'll ask for an interior description of the place as well once we make it inside.

Health Status

100% hitpoints:	Healthy
75% to 99% hitpoints:	Light Wounds
50% to 75% hitpoints:	Medium Wounds
25% to 50% hitpoints:	Serious Wounds
0% to 25% hitpoints:	Critical Wounds

Brack	Hutton	Mazour	Redii
			
17/17 hit points Inspiration X3	22/22 hit points Inspiration	15/15 hit points Inspiration X2	17/17 hit points Inspiration
2/2 hit dice; 4/4 Bardic Inspiration; 1/1 Joyful Verse; Spell Slots: 3/3 1 st ,	2/2 hit dice; 1/1 Second Wind; 1/1 Action Surge; Service Tattoo: 1/1 Protect; 1/1 Heal; 1/1 Strike	2/2 hit dice; 3/4 Eyes of the Grave; 1/1 Channel Divinity; 1/2 Blessing of Raven Queen; 1/1 Gifts of the Faithful; Spell Slots: 3/3 1 st ,	2/2 hit dice; 2/2 Ki
4/4 Harrow Points	4/4 Harrow Points	4/4 Harrow Points	5/5 Harrow Points
		20 Arrows	5 Sais

Group LootItems	Held By	Location Found
<i>A narrow teak cigar case inlaid with tiny bits of jade (25 gp)</i>	TBD	Gaedren's Lair
<i>A 2-pound gold ingot bearing the Cheliox coat of arms (worth 100 gp)</i>	TBD	Gaedren's Lair
<i>A miniature gold crown (worth 150 gp)</i>	TBD	Gaedren's Lair
<i>A fist-sized scrimshaw carving of a kraken with garnets for eyes (worth 150 gp)</i>	TBD	Gaedren's Lair
<i>A silver ring bearing the inscription "For Emmah—the light in my nights" (worth 100 gp)</i>	TBD	Gaedren's Lair
<i>A highly realistic and highly scandalous ivory figurine of two entwined succubi (worth 250 gp)</i>	TBD	Gaedren's Lair
<i>A masterwork dagger with a strange blade shaped almost like a key bearing the inscription: "For an inspiration of a father" (worth 400 gp)</i>	TBD	Gaedren's Lair
<i>An abalone-shell holy symbol of Shelyn (worth 300 gp)</i>	TBD	Gaedren's Lair
<i>(5) Potions of Healing</i>	TBD	Gaedren's Lair
<i>(8) pinches of Dust of Dryness.</i>	TBD	Gaedren's Lair
<i>Queen Ileosa's bejeweled brooch</i>	TBD	Gaedren's Lair
<i>Zellara's Harrow Deck</i>	TBD	Gaedren's Lair