

Chapter 069 – Changes

Thursday, 17 Pharast (March) 4708
Korvosa, Varisia

[Scene #1] Reunion Pt. 2

One by one arriving back at Citadel Volshyenek, each of the Harrowers came upon the same sight as they passed through the outer walls and down the halls that led to the High Marshal's office. A group of rather tired and ragged-looking soldiers reminiscent of their first time at the Citadel over a month ago. Though the city had settled – somewhat uneasily – over the past few days since the attack at the Amphitheater and elsewhere, the Guard were clearly being pushed to – and possibly beyond – their limits. Who knew how much longer they would be able to hold on without an extended break from chaos swirling around the city...

The first to arrive was Kurstin, who politely greeted the High Marshal and took a seat waiting for the others. Fargrim & Kaisaras were not far behind and quickly joined the young artificer. After an extended wait, Danse eventually strolled into the High Marshal's chamber as well in their typical languid manner. The wait for their final member, Radgar, was also rather long – and occasionally awkward – as the messenger was not able to reach the Cleric until well after most of the day had passed.

Eventually though, once Radgar walked into the office and took a heavy seat in the remaining chair, the High Marshal took a deep breath – and an even longer sigh – and began. "Welcome back. I'm glad you all could make it. Before we begin, I would like to take a moment to thank all of you for your actions on Sunday. You were all instrumental – in your own way – of helping to keep the people of this city safe, and for that I'm grateful."

After a brief pause, she continued, "After the events that occurred at the Amphitheater and – let's say the 'disturbance' at the docks – plus a conversation with the young Lord in the immediate aftermath, I've come to the conclusion that our city is in danger. The question is from who or what, and for what purpose...? The answer eludes me, and as is plainly evident, the Guard and I are stretched too thin to dig into the matter ourselves. With the Hell Knights, Sable Company and Brigade also in similar positions, I believe that you five – *The Harrowers* – might be our best shot at rooting out the truth. Though your notoriety has grown, your relative impartiality – well except for you of course Kaisaras – might help you get into places and gain information that I or one of the other city defenders would not be able to. So, I ask you, will you help me figure out who is trying to *fuck* with our city?"

"Look, I don't mind helping you do your job but I learned a long time ago not to do any favors without getting something in return. Now, as I see it, me and Danse here already saved your guards from that snake devil or whatever it was on the docks. Your Squad Leader promised a reward from you for saving them. You just did a lot of asking but not much offering. Don't get me wrong, I'm willing to help but I want to make sure we get started on the right foot."

Radgar's exhaustion was painted clearly across his face as they walked into the High Marshall's presence. As the beardless dwarf began negotiating, the cleric pulled his hammer from his belt and planted it on the ground in front of him. Folding both hands across the top of the haft, the dwarf leans forward, glaring at the High Marshall directly.

"Aye, happy to help, but seems we're doing lots of heavy lifting and can't even get the fools at the gate to listen, or decent supplies for the healers."

"Do not worry, you will be sufficiently compensated for whatever tasks I may ask you to assist with. I was an adventurer once myself if you recall and have no plans on skimping any of you as long as I'm in charge."

Kaisaras has little need to give a verbal reply, as he had already given his answer to the Marshall the day of the attack. Still, he offered a reaffirmation of his actions with a nod.

The raggedy performer saluted the High Marshal with more show than called for. "There is always something plaguing the city, which is why most people never bother with trying to fix it. Those who go try go mad eventually, though I suppose I'm mad enough to try."

[Scene #1]

[Scene #2] Reunion Pt. 3

"Now, with that out of the way, let me share the second reason why I requested to speak with you. Korvosa's got enough troubles as it is without my own guards losing their way. Many have deserted their posts, more concerned about friends and family than the city. I can understand this, yet not all of the deserters have family – some of them are simply using the riots as an excuse for personal gain. One such man is Verik Vancaskerkin. Worse than a lone deserter, he's convinced a small group of fellow guards that Queen Ileosa is going to ruin the city. Whether she does or doesn't isn't the point – right now, we've got a city-wide crisis on our hands, and I need all of my guards working with me to see us through. A deserter is worse than a lost resource – it's an infection. I can't afford to pull any of my other patrols off duty to deal with Vancaskerkin, and I'd rather not expose any of them to him anyway, since I don't want Vancaskerkin to infect more guards with his talk of secession, nor do I want some overly patriotic guard killing Vancaskerkin outright. I need impartial, skilled talent. Talent like you.

"Vancaskerkin and his followers have holed up in an abandoned butcher's shop up in Northgate – a place once called 'All the World's Meat'. I need you there. Try to avoid killing any of the deserters if you can, but if you must, they brought it upon themselves when they threw in their lot with Vancaskerkin. I'd really prefer it if you could capture Vancaskerkin alive and return him to me for interrogation, but if he makes that impossible, I'll accept his body as well. Finally, see if you can find out why Verik deserted – if there's more to it than simple personal politics, I need to know immediately. Bring me Verik alive, and there's a 600 hundred gold in it for you. Dead, he's worth only half that..."

Fargrim clapped his hands together in excitement at the offer of becoming a bounty collector. "Now we're talking! Although, I gotta call you out again on your terrible business sense. I understand that you don't do this often so I'm going to work with you on this. Let's get this straight. You want us to take on a guard who is obviously seasoned and effective enough to inspire a group of other guards to betray their oaths and turn their back on their sworn duty. You want us to track him, deal with his soldiers, capture him alive, and transport him back here for 600 gold with no payment for the other members of his crew? After we pay our guild fees, we'll each walk away with 100 gold. Is that how little you value our expertise? That's not gonna fly with me. Here's my counter-offer. 600 for Vancorksoaker alive and 200 each for his party, dead or alive. I can tell you from experience that if you don't completely wipe out all traces of insurrection, it will continue to bubble below the surface until it hits you out of nowhere. Your team here is already hanging on by a thread. If word gets out that your authority is also being challenged by soldiers in your own ranks, it could be big trouble for the whole city. I truly want to help you keep that from happening."

Kurstin nodded his agreement at helping out the Marshall and the city. But as Fargrim jumps in to 'negotiate', the young man's dark eyes follow the conversation while GHOST hovers above and slightly behind him. You can hear a slight humming from whatever magical artifice keeps the small construct in the air - otherwise, the pair is silent.

As Fargrim chimes in to negotiate specifics, Radgar reaches over and clasps the dwarf on the shoulder. "He speaks with passion and wisdom"

Listening to the specifics of the man known as Verik and his deserters, Kaisaras offered a displeased look. Traitors didn't sit well with the young nobleman, more so those who would sow more chaos to an already chaotic situation. "We shall see him brought to justice, no worries."

Danse seemed to have a comment to say, though Fargrim's words seem to have spoken enough for him. Material wealth clearly meant little to Danse, and he struggled to understand Fargrim's fixation on coin. The swordsman placed a half-grin smile on his face and curiously awaited a response to Fargrim's negotiation.

"I understand where you're coming from Fargrim, I do, but Verik is the true goal." Cressida replied after a quick sigh. "And while I am not trying to short-change you, 200gp for the other – let's say less talented – deserters is a little more than I'll able – or willing – to offer." Pausing for a moment, she added, "There are (4) deserters that went with Verik: Baldrago, Malder, Karralo and Parns. I can probably spare 50gp for each of them you bring back, dead or alive, and I'll make it 300gp for all (4) if you can bring them all back alive. Do we have a deal?"

[Scene #2]

[Scene #3] Farewell Pt.1

Once terms were agreed upon, "Now that that has been settled, I will leave the rest to all of you and I look forward to your safe return with Verik in hand." Cressida began. "Before you all depart though, Kaisaras, stick around for a private word if you would..." Ushering the rest of the group out into the hallway to wait, nearly 10 minutes passed before Kaisaras exited the High Marshall's chambers with a pensive look on his face. Turning to Kurstin, he added quietly, "Kurstin, she would like to speak to you as well..." With a puzzled look on his face, he nodded in acknowledgement before entering the High Marshal's office and closing the door behind him.

"It looks like I've been given a separate assignment from the rest of you." Kaisaras began after a pause. Clicking his tongue, he added, "There are elements that she would like for me to monitor that only someone 'of my station' would be able to do. Her words not mine. I'm not sure how long this will keep me away, but we'll reconnect at some point I'm sure. If you ever need anything in the interim, leave a message with a Brigademen and it will eventually get back to me on East Shore." With a nod to the three remaining, the young lord turned and began to take his leave before pausing and turning around, "Oh, and tell Kurstin what I've just shared would you?"

[Scene #3]

[Scene #4] Farewell Pt. 2

About five minutes after Kaisaras made his exit, Kurstin left the High Marshal's office as well, holding an envelope with a broken seal. "Oh, hey... so it looks like you'll have to be Harrower's without me for a little bit." Pausing to turn his head side to side conspiratorially to make sure he couldn't be overheard, he leaned in close and said more quietly, "I'm not supposed to tell you this, but I got an invitation to join the Acadame after everything that happened in the Amphitheater on Sunday. Normally I'd just burn the letter or ignore it, but the High Marshal wants me to accept and snoop around. She thinks something fishy is going on in there. Hopefully I don't have to stay there too long and I can join you all again soon!"

[Scene #4]

[Scene #5] On the Move Pt. 1

Once all the goodbyes were said, the remaining Harrowers were left to their own devices on what to do next regarding the situation with Verik Vancaskerkin...

[Scene #5]

Out of Character:

General Notes –

- Braden – your new party member!! – will be popping in/ joining in the next chapter or two depending on how you want to move forward with the task you've been given.
- There are some leftover items on the treasure chart below – highlighted in yellow – that need a new owner. Let me know who wants to hold onto each of them.

Scene 2 –

- Let me know how you respond to her counter-offer...

Scene 3 –

- Feel free to say your goodbyes – if you'd like – to Kai's character! They may reappear at some point as an NPC 😊

Scene 4 –

- Similarly, feel free to say your goodbyes – if you'd like – to Kurstin's character! They may also reappear at some point as an NPC 😊






Scene 5 - Please let me know what you'd like to do next...

- o It's currently mid-afternoon, and the location of Verik is to the North in Northpoint District (see the map below). It would take you less than an hour to get there.



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.

Braden	Leonard	Danse	Fargrim	Radgar
				
28/28 hit points Inspiration	20/20 hit points	27/27 hit points Inspiration x6	34/34 hit points Inspiration x5	30/30 hit points Inspiration x5
3/3 hit dice; Spell Slots: 3/3 1 st ; Summon Drake: 1/1 2/2 Harrow Points	3/3 hit dice;	3/3 hit dice; 1/1 Second Wind; 1/1 Arcane Recovery; 2/2 Bladesong; Spell Slots: 3/3 1 st ; 2/2 Harrow Points	3/3 hit dice; 1/1 Second Wind; 1/1 Action Surge; 4/4 Superiority Dice; 2/2 Harrow Points	3/3 hit dice; 0/1 Blessing of the Forge (Armor); 1/1 Channel Divinity; Spell Slots: 3/3 1 st , 2/2 2 nd ; 2/2 Harrow Points
		20 Arrows		20 crossbow bolts

Items	Held By
Giggle's Chainmail & Flail	Radgar
(1) Potion of Healing	TBD
Light Crossbow	Danse
7 pinches of Dust of Dryness	Radgar
Silver chest (50gp)	TBD
(3) Sacks of Gold holding 630.8gp converted treasure	Each Party Member
(1) Potion of Disguise	TBD

Tracker	Count	%