

Chapter 001 – At Sunset

12 Calistril 4708
Korvosa, Varisia

For a few individuals though, this day was not every other. For these few individuals, a simple meeting to repay an old grudge was on the horizon; forcing them to grow and change, for better or worse who's to say. For these few individuals, their lives first changed with a card and some stale bread...

Brack

It was yet another quiet night at the *The Margrave*. The tavern in the Midland always had trouble bringing in patrons during the quiet season, though lately the business had drooped lower than the expected. Having paid Brack for his performances in hopes of turning profits around, the Margrave proprietor's hunch on bringing in the dwarf appears to have backfired. And, at this rate, the owner could not tell whether it was that his luck had simply ran out or if word of Brack's recent past preceded him.

Regardless of the dwindling crowd, the dwarf performed earnestly to the half-filled tavern. The torches from the nearby sconces did well to hide the bags from under his eyes, though if he was truly exhausted, his dedication to his music and song did not seem to reflect this. He began the night on the viol by playing a few wistful popular amongst Korvosa locals before switching over to his mountain dulcimer to play more traditional fare. All the while, he kept his hood drawn, leaving only his long, light brown beard present to sway rhythmically to the beat.

As the night winded down, he prepared for the final tune. Putting away the other instruments, he grabbed his hand drum and got up from his seat. He could not tell before whether the patrons had enjoyed themselves during the performance. Removing his hood now for the first time, it would be hard to tell from his expression whether he truly cared. The crowd seemed equally nonchalant, continuing to enjoy their hearty drinks and vittles despite the entertainment.

Brack cleared his throat and began to beat the hand drum slowly. *Thrum... Thrum... Thrum...* What came next was a song dear to him, an old verse sung for generations amongst his family back in Janderhoff. He started singing in deep, solemn tones:

"Dorrooooooh seh goh bahck doh rhah yaeh!

Dorrooooooh seh goh bahck doh rhah yaeh!

Dorrooooooh seh goh bahck doh rhah yaaaaaaaaaeh... Ahhh yish dahn yahck dahn sholl yeh!"

He continued in dwarven verse, mesmerizing the audience with a song that plucked deep at the heartstrings of all present. The song took on meaning from person to person. Some heard it as joyful and determined, others as sad and longings, and still others as powerful and ancient. Brack too remained transfixed throughout the performance, focusing his gaze forward without paying any mind to the attention the song garnered as he slowly strummed along on his hand drum.

Once the song concluded, he received a modest ovation. He did not bow in return, though offered the crowd a small nod of his head as he put his hood back up. Laying out his drum upside down on the front of the tavern's stage for any tips from the patrons, Brack turned his back and began to pack up his instruments and belongings. When he finishes, he returned back to the drum to collect his haul, noting that much of the crowd had dispersed for their rooms or homes for the evening. A somewhat

disappointing handful of change lay in the drum, though that did not catch his eye as much as the small Harrow card that also laid within the drum.

Brack sat at the small table, absently spooning his porridge to let the heat out. Across from him sat the Harrow card, propped upright on his mug so that its features could be easily distinguished. He eyed the card with a mixture of disdain, confusion, and caution. A small squeak sounded next to him as his uncle Ondar pulled up a chair to sit next to him. The older dwarf placed his own bowl of porridge and mug of ale down, though Brack did not shift his gaze away from the card. His perceptive uncle caught on to this as he looks back and forth between the dwarf and card.

"Hmmm... Been starin' at tha' card all morning, eh?" Ondar pointed out.

"Yeh..." Brack responded.

"Wha' d'yeh think it means?"

Brack paused, collecting his thoughts, before answering, **"Not sure, t'be 'onest. Didn't get a good look at whomever dropped it in."** Another pause, **"Did yeh read th'back?"**

"Aye." His uncle sighed, **"Yeh know yeh don't 'ave to get back involved with tha' business, eh? Yeh name's good now. Yeh can move on in yeh life."**

Brack snorted, **"Yeh, well, if yeh can tell Headmaster Toryr, I'd kindly appreciate it."**

His uncle returned the snort at the quip, but continued with quiet honesty, **"Really m'boy. This is not a path yeh need to tread."**

Brack reached over to grab the card, paying no attention to the caring advice from his uncle. He flipped it over to read the backside once more for the twentieth seventh time, all the while his grip tightened on his porridge spoon.

Eventually packing up his belongings – sans viol and dulcimer, leaving these at his uncle's – Brack made his way towards the establishment.

Mazour

Mazour looked into the mirror again. His long white hair fell in wisps around his shoulders. The deep dark blues of his long robes contrasted his ashy skin and white hair. Adjusting his belt again, he began the ritual. Muttering his evening prayers as he worked through his equipment. Double checking the belt and his weapons, he stows his shield on his back and grabs his cloak.

With a swirl of motion, he spins on his heels, sending the cloak spreading out behind. Mazor strolled from his room with a swagger. Boot heels echo off the walls as he made his way through the hall and out the main door to the Temple. The Temple to the Lady of Graves was large and imposing, very much like the goddess herself. Torches lit along the parapet sparkled like stars in the night sky, creating a ghostly image with the starry night behind it. The cool night air blew through Mazour's hair, flaring his cloak out behind him as he strolled out into the cemetery.

Flanked by other faithful, they patrolled the main paths of Grey District. Gravel crunched underfoot as the three clerics chatted along their path.

"There's a dwarf performin' at the Margrave. He's not bad actually."

"Dugan, you always did have a fancy for dwarf... music. Can't understand why. But we should go. The Margrave is a nice quiet spot for a drink." Mazour smirked as he glanced around the field of tombs. His voice was dry and breathy.

"Of all the places in Midland, you're going to that dump? I like my tavern's a bit more lively." Bjurn laughed, that rang out like chimes. The effect sending chills down Mazour's spine. **"Honestly, the Broken Blade is much more--"**

Bjurn's voice was cut off by the clanging of metal on stone. Creaking metal screamed out from the dark to their left. Mazour's eyes flashed silver as he called on the gifts of the Grey Lady. Casting his gaze into the night there was only the soft dirt, cool night air, and an open mausoleum with its metal gate swinging lazily back and forth. The shriek of metal on metal in desperate need of oil drew Mazour forward. The stone was well weathered, and the gate had seen better days. *I'll have to paint that gate I suppose.* Reaching out he grabbed the battered iron gate and latched it shut.

That was when he saw it. A Harrow card? Here? Mazour plucked it from the bundle of flowers it sat upon. He'd seen strange things left for remembrances of the dead. But this was a first. The Queen Mother stared up at him. On the back he sees the note, and his name.

"The Queen Mother? I'm... not sure how to take that," he muttered. Taking a moment, he reads over the card. On finishing the note, he glances around again, hearing only the patrols through the graves. Mazour pauses and reads the note again.

"Whazzat?" Bjurn asked, creeping close. **"Flowers? Maz, ya shouldn't have. Seriously, I'm allergic."**

Mazour chuckled and tucked the card into the folds of his robe. He ceremoniously hands Dugan the flowers with a wink and a grandiose bow. **"It's not much. Just my... plans for tomorrow evening."** The rest of the night and the following day were a blur. The card became part of his hand and stole his focus. The rest of his watch was spent silent, staring at the card. In the far distance, the voices of Mazour's companions fell away. In the haze of his dark thoughts he kept coming back to the reckoning he would bring. And there would be others. Other to share in the pain he planned on inflicting on that vile piece of shit. Gaedrun would pay, and he would send his ass to the boneyard. Mazour grinned at the thought of hand delivering Gaedrun.

His feet moved on their own and at sundown the next day he stood by the door. Nervous energy surging through him. Driving him on, and yet now that he's here he was unable to knock. **"If this is a joke, there will be blood."**

Hutton

"You'll mind your tongue before you lose it, deary," the comely dwarf says with a practiced smile as she plops another pair of pints on the bar and removes the empties.

"Oh! Sorry, Miss Marni! Jus' scatterin' the scuttlebutt as it were. Didn't realize we was bein' overheard. No harm intended or nothin'!" the first man quickly responds, one hand over his heart, the other held up in an oath.

"All the same," Miss Marni quips. **"Such talk's best saved for betwixt the walls of your own home or otherwise away from ears that could propagate such harmful rumors. I'll have none of it here."** She dips the mugs in a bucket of tepid, soapy water, then another of cold, slightly less soapy water, and drops them back on the shelf with the rest of the empties awaiting further service.

The second man turns to the first and whispers, **"Think she'd really do it? Cut out a man's tongue for speakin' ill of her boss? Seems a bit harsh..."**

"Not a doubt in my mind," the first answers as he takes a large gulp of his freshly poured brew. **"Man like Hutton Crowcreek tends to elicit an overgrown sense of loyalty amongst friends and neighbors. I know you haven't been here long, but that's somethin' you learn quick on Pillar Hill. Or in the Midlands in general, really. Man's done his due, if uh, *cough* other rumors are to be believed. Even beyond that, he and Brennan (may he rest in peace) did wonders for this neighborhood. You'd be hard-pressed to find a fault in either of them short of Hutton keepin' to himself more than many'd like."**

The talkative man drains the rest of his pint at once, tosses his coppers on the bar, and pats his companion on the shoulder as he stands. **"I'd best get a move on. Heard the Margrave is actually letting that murderin' Thrunhart play tonight and I wanna be there for any fights or juicy gossip what might spring up. Nothin' that fun happens at The Broken Blade. Miss Marni sees to that."** He throws a wink in the direction of the dwarven woman and leaves as the second man looks on in bewilderment.

Marni Glowhill removed the empty mug and coppers from the bar just as the man turned back. **"Don't think on it too much, deary. Local drama's a bit of a pastime for Tem, there. Drinking and telling stories is one thing, but I'd advise you be wary of any trouble that one might help you find."**

Across the river, on the East Shore, a huge man leans against a wall in an alley between an apothecary and a butcher. The long shadows in the late afternoon sun obscure his features a bit but it's hard to miss someone his size at any time short of a cloudy night when every torch has gone out.

A much smaller, hooded figure approaches silently from around the back of the apothecary. The giant of a man notices the movement out of the corner of his eye and turns to greet the newcomer with a silent nod.

A female halfling pushes back the hood of her cloak, revealing a pockmarked and scarred face. She looks up at the towering man standing over twice her height and smiles.

"Hutton Crowcreek. Never thought I'd see the day you'd be slinkin' around in alleys."

"You picked the place to meet, Brekath, not me," he states flatly in a rumbling baritone as she lets out a sharp hiss and glances around.

"You should know better than to use my name!" she whispers harshly.

"Relax," he responds with a smirk. **"You started it. Anyone who'd wish you ill wouldn't be hanging around here and anyone paid by those who wish you ill won't find you so randomly as that. Besides, no one's going to bother you while you're with me and by the time you go back around that corner, you'll be untraceable again. As usual. Now,"** the mountain of a man says as he pulls his back from the wall and shifts his vast weight to the other foot. **"Do you have what I asked for?"**

A vexed sigh of resignation answers his question as she withdraws an envelope from a pocket hidden within her robe and holds it up to him.

Hutton's brow furrows as he looks down at the folded parchment sporting a red wax seal, unmoving. Seeing his hesitation, she shakes it lightly to encourage him to take it. Huge hand eclipsing both the object and some of the halfling's forearm, he lifts the envelope to peer at the seal.

"What the hell is this? I asked for a location and you bring me fancy letters? If there's calligraphy inside, so help me..." he trails off.

Brekath chuckles and shakes her head as she turns and begins to leave. **"Open it. You *do* know how to read, don't you? Would be a shame for a body like that to waste away without a mind that can support it."**

"Har har," Hutton retorts as he breaks the unfamiliar seal. He withdraws a Harrow card and stares at it, dumbfounded. **"Just what are you trying to pull here, imp?"**

"Read the *back*, you old ogre," comes the reply as she replaces her hood, not even turning to meet his gaze, and turns the corner to disappear.

Standing alone, once again, in a dark alley, Hutton Crowcreek, proprietor of The Broken Blade, stalwart pillar of his community, lets his shoulders droop as he reads the message and simply mutters, **"Shit..."**

Not recognizing the seal, script, or address, Hutton hurries back to the Midlands to find the house before sunset.

Redii

Redii – crouched down flat, her long, kinky black hair tied into a tight bun – stared intently down at the townhouse across the street. She'd barely moved in the past hour and could feel her body begin to ache as it rested against the hard shingles of the adjacent roof; but she held strong and stayed still. She could sense it was just about almost time. Five minutes later, her intuition was validated when she watched a couple and a rather large guard leave the home and walk off to the West; most likely for lunch somewhere in the Heights. Hand signing to Whixa to hold a little longer, she waited until they were out of sight before beginning a count to 300. Feeling fairly confident that they were truly gone for the time being – but not too confident, you can never be 100% sure on anything – she rose to her knees and signaled to Whixa: **"It's Time..."**

A common misconception about thievery is that it always occurs in the dead of night. While many thefts do take place then, in actuality though, a large portion of them take place brazenly in broad daylight. Scratching at the handwraps hidden underneath the fancy jacket she currently wore - "borrowed" from a North Point banker - she moved towards the alley-side roof edge and made her way down to the streets. While most people would've needed a rope or hand holds to safely make their way down, Redii simply jumped; or at least that's what it looked like to others. It was much more complicated than that of course - involving a series of acrobatic leaps and wall jumps - but the end result remained the same: Redii safely on the ground. Whixa joined her on the ground moments after, having taken a more conventional approach down; she signed **"Show-off"** as she walked out of the alleyway. Grinning, Redii straightened up her jacket and followed her out.

Exiting the alleyway and crossing the street as casually as could be, the pair made their way to opposite alleyway and towards the rear entrance of their mark. Leaning casually against the wall that also conveniently blocked any passerby's view, Redii waited while Whixa worked the lock. She could've worked the door herself of course, but her partner was new and needed the practice.

"Got it..." Whixa whispered after hearing the click of the lock.

"Well done," Redii signed, **"Let's move. In and out in under five..."** she added before opening the door and entering the space.

Moving quickly through the multi-storied home, the two thieves split up to look around for valuables. They prioritized small objects that were easy to carry, hide and eventually sell that also wouldn't draw attention when they left the scene of the crime. As Whixa searched the ground floor, Redii moved upstairs to the bedroom, hoping to find easily grabbable jewelry or coin. Finding an unlocked jewelry box in the master bedroom, she quickly picked out a few choice pieces before moving on. She liked to only take enough so the owners wouldn't notice anything missing right away. By then, she'd be long gone and the stolen goods already handed off to a seller for a tidy profit.

As she moved towards the closet to check there next, something near the window caught her eye: A Harrow Card. **Random**, she thought to herself before dropping it from her mind and continuing her sweep.

An hour later, Redii & Whixa sat back at the Lofties hideout by themselves sorting through the loot after the successful job. As she emptied her pockets, Redii felt something unexpected mixed in with the rest. Pulling it out slowly, she was generally surprised to see the same Harrow Card in her hand: a Peacock card with an odd-looking bird that looked more lizard than avian. It also had her name written on the front. Her *real* name. Turning the card over in her hand, her eyes widened as she read the note over, then three more times just to be sure.

"What's that?" Whixa asked in her heavy Chellish accent.

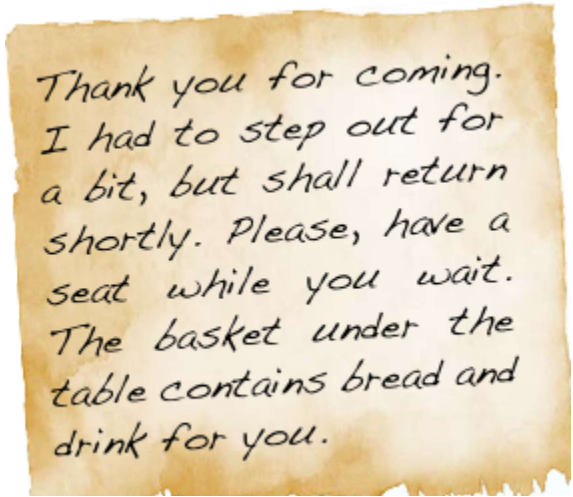
"Nothing. Just an interesting card I found today." she lied back before flashing the image for Whixa's benefit. She conveniently covered the name with her fingers as she did before palming it. **"Can you handle the rest here?"** Redii added as she rose.

"Sure. Have somewhere else to be" Whixa replied

"Yea, I just remembered I had something I wanted to do tonight... If Kitty or anyone else asks, just tell them I probably won't be back till late." Redii added before starting to peel off the "fancy" get-up she'd worn for the job in favor of her usual attire. Her hands and forearms itched fiercely beneath the heavy black wrapping, but she ignored the discomfort; her mind still focused on the card. ***I finally found you, Gaedren...*** Redii thought darkly, ***and I can't wait to see the look on your face when you see me again...***

Action 1 – Zellera's House

When you all arrive at the designated address, you find a rather unassuming house with the front door open and unlocked. On the interior of this small, humble home consists of a single cozy chamber filled with a fragrant haze of flowers and strong spice. The aroma comes from several sticks of incense smoldering in wall-mounted burners that look like butterfly-winged elves. The smoke gives the room a dreamy feel. The walls are draped with brocaded tapestries, one showing a black-skulled beast juggling human hearts, and another showing a pair of angels dancing atop a snow-blasted mountain. A third tapestry on the far wall depicts a tall, hooded figure shrouded in mist, holding a flaming sword in a skeletal hand. Several brightly colored rugs cover the floor, but the room's only furnishings are a wooden table covered by a bright red throw cloth and six elegant, tall-backed chairs. A basket covered by blue cloth sits under the table. In a basket on the table partially covered by a blue cloth sits a few pieces of bread and a bottle of wine. On top of the cloth sits another small note weighed down by a small paperweight.



Thank you for coming.
I had to step out for
a bit, but shall return
shortly. Please, have a
seat while you wait.
The basket under the
table contains bread and
drink for you.

Out of Character:





Scene 1 – Zellara's house

Please RP your arrival at Zellara's home. Feel free to start interacting with each other once other PCs have arrived. For simplicity's sake, the order of arrival at Zellara's will be the posting order. It is assumed that anyone arriving after the first poster can see everyone else (unless they've chosen to hide etc.)

Also note, the bread is a bit stale and the wine is nothing special but serviceable 😊

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
			
10/10 hit points Inspiration	13/13 hit points Inspiration	9/9 hit points Inspiration	10/10 hit points Inspiration
1/1 hit dice; 4/4 Bardic Inspiration; 1/1 Joyful Verse; Spell Slots: 2/2 1 st ,	1/1 hit dice; 1/1 Second Wind; Service Tattoo: 1/1 Protect; 1/1 Heal; 1/1 Strike	1/1 hit dice; 4/4 Eyes of the Grave; 2/2 Blessing of Raven Queen; 1/1 Gifts of the Faithful; Spell Slots: 2/2 1 st ,	1/1 hit dice;
	20 Arrows	20 Arrows	5 Sais

Items	Held By