



XEN'DRIK EXPEDITIONS

Turn of the Page Crimson Codex Adventure #6 An Adventure for 6th Level Characters (Scaled for 4th to 8th Levels of Play)

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Sources: Complete Adventurer [Jesse Decker], Complete Arcane [Richard Baker], Eberron Campaign Setting [Keith Baker, Bill Slavicsek, James Wyatt], Races of the Dragon [X], Secrets of Xen'drik [Keith Baker, Jason Bulmahn, Amber Scott], Spell Compendium [x]

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Adventure Background

The daelkyr known as Virulence has put together a network of followers, spies, and informants throughout all of Eberron. As with any wide-ranging organization, especially one headed by a being of purely insane evil, rebellions and insurrections are an ever-present threat. This is the case with a lair of skum: once dedicated to Virulence, they are now acting of their own volition. Their defection from the daelkyr's forces does not mean they are trustworthy or good; in fact, they now pose an even larger threat than before, as they hold prisoner Zekeriff "Zeke" Brithlestone, the one-time leader of Crimson Codex operations on Xen'drik. Whereas Virulence and his lieutenants wanted to keep Zeke alive to extract from him all the relevant information they could concerning Crimson Codex operations and the draconic Prophecy, the skum are content to question him once and then eat him. Virulence is no longer interested in Zeke, and he is displeased with the skum, so he decides to reveal Zeke's location. He assumes the Crimson Codex can then deal with his skum problem.

At the same time, the division within the Crimson Codex forces continues to widen. Candle, the new director of the Codex forces on Xen'drik, is placed into power and tasked with putting the affairs of the organization into order as quickly as possible. The renewed purpose of the Codex brings some members who wavered back into the fold, but it also highlights and emboldens the traitors who wished to use Codex resources simply to bolster their own powers. The events of this adventure play out against the backdrop of the Crimson Codex putting internal affairs into order while mounting a mission to rescue Zeke.

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs meet with Candle, the new leader of the Crimson Codex in Xen'drik. She tasks the PCs to ferret out a particularly threatening traitor to the Crimson Codex's cause. The PCs must pose as traitors themselves to get close enough to capture the traitor.

After capturing or questioning the traitor, the PCs learn that a council of dragons known as the Chamber has some interest in the Codex's search into the draconic Prophecy. The Codex has already made contact with one member of the Chamber, the blue dragon bard called Stormrider. Stormrider can provide the PCs with information on what the Chamber is and what members of the Chamber might be supporting those who are rebelling against the Codex.

After speaking to Stormrider, the PCs are approached by a representative of Virulence. This daelkyr half-blood offers the PCs information on where they can find Zeke in the form of a cryptic bit of Prophecy from Virulence. When looked at in combination with some of Caldyn's fragments, the path to Zeke can be seen.

The PCs can use the Prophecy fragments to find the entrance to the skum lair. After getting past a puzzle lock trap, the PCs find Zeke imprisoned in the skum lair, and must fight to rescue him.

Troubleshooting

If the PCs have played *CDX-5 The Korranberg Affair*, the fifth Crimson Codex Faction adventure, then they have already met the new leader of Crimson Codex operations on Xen'drik, a female spellscale known as Candle. Also in that adventure, Abrinxenphyrinc, a beholder in the service of the daelkyr Virulence, informed PCs that it knew the whereabouts of former Crimson Codex leader Zekeriff "Zeke" Brithlestone. The beholder promised to contact the PCs in the near future and provide that location.

In the first Crimson Codex Faction adventure, *CDX-1 Prophecy's Unwitting Servant*, the PCs met a blue dragon known as Stormrider. Stormrider introduced himself as a member of a draconic group known as the Chamber, and he offered to share information with the Crimson Codex, asking that information be shared with him in return when he required it.

In the second Crimson Codex Faction adventure, *CDX-2 Forbidden Knowledge*, forces within the Crimson Codex may have approached certain PCs, looking for people interested in using Codex resources to achieve goals other than those held by the Codex. PCs who agreed to carry out a secret mission for this mysterious force may have a Story Object called "A Deal with Unknown Forces." Make a note if any PC has this Story Object, as that comes into play during this adventure.

All of these forces that the PCs may have encountered in the past play a role in the events of this adventure, so it is important that you get a feeling for the experiences of the PCs in previous Crimson Codex adventures. If none of the PCs have played any Crimson Codex adventures previously, or if they have not played the ones that introduced players to the NPCs, you can adjust the flow and information in the adventure so they understand these major NPCs and their roles.

Adventure Start

Read or paraphrase the following after the players are prepared:

The word has spread to the remaining Crimson Codex operatives on the continent of Xen'drik. Ohnal Caldyn is placing renewed focus on operations here, and a new director has been installed. No new operations have commenced as far as you are aware, but at least there is the promise of some excitement and increased activity in the near future. The new leader is a spellscale known as Candle.

If the PCs played *The Korranberg Affair*, they met Candle and may have impressed her with their fighting ability and resourcefulness. If so, they have a Story Object called "The Favorable Notice of Candle." PCs who have that Story Object, and only those PCs, should receive **Handout 1** right now, before you continue with the introduction. The potion given to these people is a *potion of cure moderate wounds*. Give those players a chance to read the handout, and then continue reading or paraphrasing for anyone who did not receive the handout:

Before sunrise on a clear Sul day, a Crimson Codex messenger knocks on your door or otherwise makes contact with you. He speaks quickly and quietly. "Empty the rain barrel at the brewery in eastern Stormreach. Immediately." Without another word he turns and leaves.

Allow the PCs to arrive at the rain barrel in whatever order you prefer, but they should arrive almost simultaneously so no one is left behind. If you prefer, they can find the address written on the bottom of the barrel separately and then meet for the first time at their first destination. The address leads the PCs to a place which should be familiar to them if they played *Prophecy's Unwitting Servant*. Happy Hubbard's Publishing House. Whenever the PCs do meet each other, you can give them the opportunity to introduce themselves.

Part One – A Happy Briefing

The PCs get a summary of the task at hand directly from their new leader, the spellscale Candle.

If PCs played *Prophecy's Unwitting Servant*, they know the address they found belongs to Happy Hubbard's Publishing House, as they have been there before. Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs approach the address they found written on the bottom of the rain barrel:

The address you found brings you to a less reputable part of Stormreach. Buildings are a bit more rickety than others in the city, and some are boarded up and abandoned. The building that you approach, however, is in much nicer repair. People are just beginning to fill the streets, on their way to or from their early morning appointments. A sign above the door, newly painted, reads in Common, "Happy Hubbard's Publishing House."

The front and back doors to Happy Hubbard's Publishing House are locked, but the PC can gain entrance by simply knocking. The gnome Happy Hubbard unlocks the door and allows them entrance. If the PCs want to pick the lock for some reason, it is a DC 21 Open Locks check, although there are people in the street watching if they try to pick the front door's lock. The bottom floor of the publishing house is one large library and workroom, approximately 40 ft. by 40 ft., with only a small mudroom in the back, leading to a back door. The top floor contains some storage areas and Happy's living quarters. When the PCs enter, read or paraphrase the following:

*The publishing house's ground floor is a breathtaking mess of books, scroll, parchment, ink, desks, and other tools of the trade. A gnome approaches you with his hand out. [PCs who have played *Prophecy's Unwitting Servant* have met Happy Hubbard already.] He says, "Welcome to my home and place of business." Behind him, seated in a comfortable chair, is a purple-tinged spellscale sipping from a teacup.*

After introductions and small talk, the spellscale Candle speaks:

"Let's get down to business. I am now in charge of the Crimson Codex operations in Xen'drik. We are going to start by putting our internal affairs straight. I have heard that you are some of the best Serpents we have in Stormreach. So I will ask you this bluntly. Have any of you had contact with anyone within the organization working against the goals of the Codex?"

At this point she stops talking and looks at all of the PCs in turn. Anyone who has the Story Object "A Deal with Unknown Forces" can make a DC 25 Sense Motive check. Those PCs succeeding at the check get the feeling that she knows that they have had dealings with these dissenting forces.

If a PC with the story object admits it freely, she thanks them for their honesty and says that all is forgiven, as long as they pledge here and now to forgo any outside missions and focus solely on supporting the goals of the Codex. If a PC with the story object does not speak up, she continues:

"This is distressing. I want to know that I can trust each of you completely. We have made great strides in rooting out problems, and many have agreed to come back into the fold. So now I will give you all one more chance. Lying now means risking leaving the Codex on unfriendly terms, and possibly feet first."

Give PCs with that story object a DC 10 Sense Motive check, as she looks right directly at them when saying the above. If they still do not admit their connections to the dissenting forces, they are told to leave. They are no longer in the Crimson Codex, and their character is out of the campaign. Mark the character as dead on the Tracking Sheet. The player can create a new character at the current level bump (4th level) or use a fastplay to play this adventure, but that character gets no credit for anything in this adventure (since the tracking sheet must be used to mark the other character as dead). Note the character is not really dead—it is just dead as far as the Codex is concerned.

Once this has all been straightened out, Candle expresses her admiration for the honesty and skill of all the PCs remaining:

"Now that we have all that straightened out, let's talk about the future. As of now, you answer only to me. You are my special tactical team that will take on the most important missions. It's time to earn your reputation as the most cunning and skillful of all the Serpents. First on the docket, we finish putting our own house in order."

The details of the PCs' first mission working directly for Candle are as follows:

- Ohnal Caldyn has added a new section to the *Caldyn Fragments*. This information is supposed to be secret, but of course many groups are aware of this. These new fragments of his interpretations of the draconic Prophecy have already been given to Candle, as well as some of the other highest-ranking members of the Codex.
- A traitor in the ranks of the Codex, an elf named Altravel, was caught with these new fragments, and he has confessed to being about to turn them over to someone within the organization who is working contrary to the goals of the Codex. This person is a page, a male human who runs messages throughout Stormreach and northern Xen'drik for the Codex. Altravel doesn't know the page's name, but he knows that he is one of the Codex members planning to use the Codex resources for their own gain.
- Candle needs the PCs to capture the page alive, preferably at the meeting that Altravel was supposed to have with him. The meeting is to take place in the center of the most crowded marketplace in Stormreach at mid-morning tomorrow. The page instructed Altravel to wear a hat with two peacock feathers to their meeting so he could be recognized.
- This page knows Altravel is an elf and a member of the Codex, but nothing else. Altravel is not available to assist the PCs in this mission, so how they handle it is up to them. Altravel has not met the page, although he knows the page is a human male and not young.
- Candle entrusts the PCs with a real copy of Ohnal Caldyn's new text. Under no circumstances should this fall into the hands of anyone else, including others within the Codex. It is not the only copy, so destroy it if necessary. But the page may know the real text from a fake, so its authenticity is necessary to carry out any subterfuge.

With that, Candle answers any questions the PCs may have. She doesn't know much more than she has told them. She is counting on them to capture this page, secure him, and bring him to Happy Hubbard's for questioning. She gives the PCs 200 gold pieces to purchase manacles or anything else they might need in Stormreach.

Part Two – Turning the Page

A messenger meets the PCs at the marketplace instead of the traitor. The messenger delivers a message instructing the PCs to travel outside of Stormreach to make the exchange. At the exchange point, the PCs find a pair of sibling gnomes protecting the page.

A Short Marketplace Rendezvous

The PCs can show up for the meeting, but they find that plans have changed a bit.

Since they know when and where the meeting is supposed to take place, the PCs could try to stake out the meeting place, capture the page before he gets to the meeting place, etc. Despite these good plans, the PCs cannot do this, since the page, a human named Pserli, has not been in Stormreach for several days. He and two hired bodyguards left the city to camp in the wilderness until the time of the meeting. Before leaving the city, Pserli hired a messenger to deliver a missive to Altravel (in his peacock-feather hat) at the marketplace. The exact text of the message is provided as **Handout 2**. In essence, the PCs must travel to the Sculpted Stone Ring on the cliffs north of Stormreach to take part in the meeting with Pserli.

If the PCs arrive at the marketplace ahead of the proposed meeting time, describe the generic scene: dozens of makeshift stalls and carts around a central plaza in Stormreach, where merchants and vendors hawk all manners of crafts, goods, foodstuffs, and services. The marketplace opens at sunrise, hits maximum capacity in the early afternoon, and then slowly dwindles down to a few patrons by sunset, when everyone packs up and returns to their homes.

The PCs most likely make detailed plans for where they position themselves and how they hope to capture this page. Allow them to do so, but also move them along as quickly as possible, since the plans all go for naught when the messenger arrives.

At the appointed hour of the meeting, a young human girl of no more than 8 years enters the busy market alone. She wears simple peasant clothing, and she also wears a crudely stitched emblem of House Sivis on her tunic. A Knowledge (local) check of DC 10 reveals that House Sivis often hires these young messengers to carry relatively unimportant messages for unimportant clients. These unofficial messengers are paid a pittance, but that is more than they could make anywhere else. Part of their pay involves them forgetting the details of the message delivery if later questioned.

The girl, named Silbatha, weaves her way through the crowd until she spots someone wearing a hat with two peacock feathers. At that point, she confidently approaches, hands the wearer the message (written on a piece of cheap parchment), and waits patiently for a small token of appreciation in the form of a copper or two. If she is given at least a gold coin, she is willing to tell the PCs all that she knows: three days ago she was contracted by a tall human wearing gray clothing and a red belt to bring this message to someone in the marketplace wearing a hat with two peacock feathers. If the PCs push for more information and succeed on a DC 20 Diplomacy check, she remembers that two gnomes seemed to be waiting for the human while he talked to her.

Give the PCs **Handout 2** when they read the message delivered by Silbatha. Silbatha is a very smart and wary young person who would never be openly disrespectful to any of her clients, but she is not afraid to trade barbs with anyone who acts foolish or fails to treat her properly.

A Cliffside Exchange

After the PCs read the note, they can ask directions or search their memories for the location of the Sculpted Stone Ring. At the ring, Pserli and his two gnome bodyguards wait for the PCs' arrival. The PCs can capture the traitor if they can get past the gnomes before Pserli can escape.

Moving at normal speeds (between 20 and 40 feet/round), the PCs can get from the city of Stormreach to the cliffs to the north in just over two hours. Note that Pserli and the VonValloople siblings are already waiting for the PCs, as described in tactics.

The PCs might know of the area with a DC 15 Knowledge (local) or Bardic Knowledge check, or they can Gather Information (DC 20) to learn more. The Sculpted Stone Circle is a remnant of the giant civilization, eight towering stone obelisks obviously once carved into shapes representing humanoid forms. These statues, arranged in a rough circle on the cliffs overlooking the Thunder Sea, have been worn smooth by the constant raging wind. In fact, the whole area is rocky and overgrown with tall weeds.

Until very recently, it was a place where sightseers and archaeologists would take a day to visit, either enjoying the breathtaking view or studying the area for remnants of giant habitation. A month ago, however, the bodies of three humans were found savaged and partially eaten at the site. When no trace was found of any culprit in the deaths, and vigils by adventurers hoping to catch the creature that did it went for naught, the place became much less of an attraction for lovers on romantic picnics or nosy scholars.

The encounter at the Sculpted Stone Circle can be played out using **Map 1**. A well-worn path leads up to the stone circle, with a slight uphill gradient as the PCs approach. Both Pserli and Kerryrna are plainly visible within the stone circle as the PC approach, but Klyde is hidden at the spot marked “3” on the map. Allow the PCs to attempt to sneak up on the NPCs or use other subterfuge to gain an advantage, using standard rules to see if they are spotted. All of the terrain on the map, except for the path, is considered light undergrowth (2 squares of movement to move into, +2 to DC checks to Tumble or Move Silently). Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs approach, altering the text as needed depending on PC tactics and positioning:

When you get within 15 feet of the stone circle, the human standing within the stone circle shouts so as to be heard above the sound of crashing waves of the sea below, “Halt there. I told you to come alone. Just one of you brings the text forward. The rest of you stay back. When I am convinced the text is authentic, then I will supply you with the gold.” A female gnome in a chain shirt and wearing a dagger and several pouches on her belt stands next to the human and glares at you.

Creatures: Kerryrna and Klyde VanValloople are sibling gnome mercenaries who were trained for war in the Zilargo military. With the end of the Last War, the two decided to sell their services as mercenaries. Kerryrna is obsessed with duty, and she would never leave a client behind. Klyde is not as dedicated to his benefactors as his sister, and he would not hesitate to abandon even her if the situation looks dire for him.

Pserli is an expert historian and archaeologist, with an affinity for all things related to dragons and the draconic Prophecy. He has made connections with a certain member of the draconic group known as The Chamber. This one Chamber member has helped Pserli infiltrate the Crimson Codex. In return for this help, Pserli shares all the information he gains with the Chamber member and actively works with the splinter group within the Codex that works against the Codex’s goals.

Pserli: male human expert 8: hp 34; Combat Statistics.

Kerryrna VonValloople: female gnome warmage 6: hp 38; Combat Statistics.

Klyde VonValloople: male gnome scout 6: hp 58; Combat Statistics.

Tactics: Until the PCs take an action to betray their peaceful intentions, Pserli and Kerryrna simply carry out their own plan. A sack with 500 gold pieces worth of gems is buried beneath a rock on the hillside. After the PC presents the text Pserli wants, he quickly scans the pages to confirm the authenticity. Then he instructs the PC who presented the text to wait outside the stone circle. Kerryrna is then ordered to retrieve the sack of gems, which is 15 feet directly south of the stone circle. Kerryrna carries the sack to the PC who presented the text, and then Pserli orders the PCs to leave. After the PCs have left, the trio plan to scale the 30 feet down the cliff to a rowboat waiting in the water at the bottom of the cliff using a rope possessed by Klyde.

If things go wrong, the plan for the NPCs is as follows: Pserli attempts to escape by jumping off the cliff into the water. Knotted ropes hang from the cliff all the way to the water below, but he knows better than to try to climb when hostiles are nearby. Klyde and Kerryrna cover the escape, trying to kill or drive off the PCs. If they cannot do that, the two gnomes also jump from the cliff into the waters below where their boat waits. Pserli does not attack the PCs except to break free or clear an escape route. He does take attacks of opportunity to defend himself, however; his Improved Unarmed Strike feat might fool some PCs into thinking he is defenseless. He also tries to use the *scroll of invisibility* (DC 23 Use Magic Device check to activate) if he can’t just run away. He continues to attempt escape until unable to do so.

Because of the size and positioning of the stones, it is counts as 15 feet of movement to move from a square within the circle to a square outside the circle and vice versa, and anyone inside the circle has cover from those outside and vice versa. Also, since Pserli is not much of an adventurous soul, he hesitates for a round on the edge of the cliff before jumping. He also drinks his *potion of water breathing* before jumping. The cliff’s edge runs roughly down the northern and western edges of the map.

Kerryrna blasts the PCs with her magic and refuses to leave until she is sure that she cannot win or is equally sure that Pserli is safe in the water below. Klyde can move normally through the light undergrowth of the hill, and he uses his skirmish ability to pepper PCs with daggers from the safety of the tall grass and rocky ground. He moves toward his sister as the battle progresses. Small creatures in the tall grass have no cover unless behind a trees, but there is a 20% miss chance because of concealment for small or smaller creatures in the grass.

Jumping the 30 feet from the cliff into the water below is covered in the DMG on pg. 303. If the PCs end up in the water with the rowboat, they can take the boat back to a beach easily enough. The water at the bottom of the cliff is 15 feet deep.

Developments: Capturing and questioning the gnomes yields some useful information. They really have broken no laws, since they believe Pserli is a legitimate client who is being attack by ruffians and thieves.

They reveal they have been working for Pserli for less than a month, generally acting as bodyguards. They can tell the PCs that in his meetings with various people around Stormreach, he has talked much about two things: the Chamber and the Codex. The gist of many of his conversations seems to imply that “he wants to leave the Codex somewhere so he can enter the Chamber, whatever that means.” Even if Pserli dies or gets away, this is enough information for Candle (and possibly the PCs) to take their next step. If neither the gnomes nor Pserli survive, the PCs can search the boat at the bottom of the cliff to find some random documents that pertain to dragons, the draconic Prophecy, and an organization called the Chamber. None of these documents reveal anything pertinent aside from the mentioning of those entities.

If the PCs manage to capture Pserli, a DC 10 Intimidate check is enough to get him to cooperate fully, although he makes open threats about what his associates are going to do to the PCs. Using other skills, such as Bluff or Diplomacy, requires a DC 25 check.

Below is what Pserli might reveal, but only if prompted with the proper question and the sufficient force to get the answer out of him. If the PCs take Pserli back to Happy Hubbard’s and cannot force Pserli to talk, Candle arrives to do the questioning, and she gets Pserli to talk. She allows the PCs to attend the questioning and participate if they wish:

- Pserli is indeed part of the splinter group using Codex resources to work against Codex goals, although he only wants more power and cares little for causes aside from power offered to him.
- Pserli has been funneling information to a representative of a dragon. That dragon works with other dragons that think lesser races mucking about in the matters of the draconic Prophecy can only lead to ruin. Those creatures of superior intellect and power, which the dragons believe they are but others are not, should be the only ones to study and manipulate the Prophecy.
- Pserli has never spoken directly to this dragon, instead speaking through a kobold representative. The kobold has revealed that his master is part of a loose organization of dragons known to humanoids as the Chamber. The Chamber does not hold one belief or goal. Indeed, they often debate the best way to pursue the fulfillment of the draconic Prophecy. Some welcome other races’ involvement, some detest it, and others don’t care.
- Pserli believes that his draconic contact, as well as others who hold the same beliefs as his contact, are going to crush the Crimson Codex for meddling in the affairs of dragons and the draconic Prophecy.

Treasure: In addition to the equipment used by the trio, the PCs can find the hidden 500 gp with a DC 25 Search check of the area. All the potions are labeled in Gnome.

Scaling the Encounter

4th- or 5th-Level Characters: Use the 4th-level versions of the VonVallooples.

7th- or 8th-Level Characters: Use the 7th-level versions of the VonVallooples.

Combat Statistics

PSERLI

CR 7

Male human expert 8

N medium humanoid (human)

Init +0; Senses Listen +1, Spot +1

Languages Common, Draconic, Giant, Elf

AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10

hp 42 (8 HD)

Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +9

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee unarmed +5/+0 (1d3-1 nonlethal)

Base Atk +6; Grp +5

Combat Gear *potion of water breathing* (2), *scroll of invisibility*

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

Feats Diligent, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Use Magic Device),

Skills Appraise +14, Bluff +9, Decipher Script +14, Forgery +12, Gather Information +11, Knowledge

(arcana) +12, Knowledge (local) +12, Listen +10, Sense Motive +5, Swim +8, Use Magic Device +12

(+14 for scrolls)

Possessions

“The dragons shall avenge me!”

Kerryrna VonValloople CR 6
 Female gnome warmage 6
 N small humanoid (gnome)
 Init +0; Senses Listen +3, Spot +1; low-light vision
 Languages Common, Draconic, Gnome, Halfling

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+4 vs. giants)
 hp 38 (6 HD)
 Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +7 (+2 vs. illusions)

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
 Melee +1 *cold iron dagger* +3 (1d3-1/19-20)
 Ranged +1 *cold iron dagger* +5 (1d3-1/19-20)
 Base Atk +3; Grp -3
 Atk Options Point Blank Shot
 Special Atk warmage's edge (+2 damage on spells)
 Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2), *potion of water breathing* (2)
 Warmage Spells Known (CL 6th):
 3rd (4/day)—DC 16 All Warmage Spells
 2nd (6/day)—DC 15 Gust of Wind + All Warmage Spells
 1st (7/day)—DC 14 Tenser's Floating Disk + All Warmage Spells
 0 (6/day)—DC 13 All Warmage Spells
 Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st):
 (1/day)—speak with animals (1 minute), dancing lights, ghost sound (DC 14), prestidigitation

Abilities Str 6, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 16
 Feats Combat Casting, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot
 Skills Concentration +11 (+15 defensively), Intimidate +12, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Spellcraft +13
 Possessions combat gear plus +1 *chain shirt*, *cloak of resistance* +1, +1 *cold iron dagger*, spell component pouch, 34 gp

"We gnomes can fight with just as much ferocity as any other race. Eat my fiery death magic!"

KLYDE VONVALLOOPLE CR 6
 Male gnome scout 6
 NE small humanoid (gnome)
 Init +2; Senses Listen +10, Spot +8
 Languages Common, Giant, Gnome

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 19 (+1 when moving 10 ft.) (+4 vs. giants)
 hp 58 (6 HD)
 Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +1 (+2 vs. illusions)

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
 Melee +1 *dagger* +7 (1d3+1/19-20)
 Ranged +1 *dagger* +9 (1d3+1/19-20)
 Base Atk +4; Grp +0
 Atk Options Point Blank Shot, skirmish +2d6 (if attacking after moving 10 feet or more)
 Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of blur*, *potion of water breathing* (2)
 Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st):
 (1/day)—speak with animals (1 minute), dancing lights, ghost sound (DC 11), prestidigitation

Abilities Str 10, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 10
 SQ evasion, fast movement +10 ft., flawless stride, trackless step, uncanny dodge
 Feats Lightning Reflexes^B, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (dagger)
 Skills Balance +13, Hide +11, Jump +11, Listen +10, Move Silently +11, Search +10, Spot +8, Survival +8 (+10 when tracking), Tumble +13
 Possessions combat gear plus +1 *chain shirt*, +1 *dagger*, *ring of protection* +1, 6 daggers, 141 gp

"Nothing will stand between me and my employer's safety . . . except pain and fear."

KERRYNA VONVALLOOPLE**CR 4**

Female gnome warmage 4

N small humanoid (gnome)

Init +0; Senses Listen +3, Spot +1; low-light vision

Languages Common, Draconic, Gnome, Halfling

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+4 vs. giants)

hp 24 (4 HD)

Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +6 (+2 vs. illusions)

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee dagger +1 (1d3-1/19-20)

Ranged dagger +3 (1d3-1/19-20)

Base Atk +2; Grp -5

Atk Options Point Blank Shot

Special Atk warmage's edge (+2 damage on spells)

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds* (2), *potion of water breathing* (2)

Warmage Spells Known (CL 4th):

2nd (4/day)—DC 15 All Warmage Spells

1st (7/day)—DC 14 Tenser's Floating Disk + All Warmage Spells

0 (6/day)—DC 13 All Warmage Spells

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st):

(1/day)—speak with animals (1 minute), dancing lights, ghost sound (DC 14), prestidigitation

Abilities Str 6, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 16

Feats Combat Casting, Point Blank Shot

Skills Concentration +9 (+13 defensively), Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Spellcraft +11

Possessions combat gear plus +1 *chain shirt*, *cloak of resistance* +1, dagger spell component pouch, 34 gp

“We gnomes can fight with just as much ferocity as any other race. Eat my fiery death magic!”**KLYDE VONVALLOOPLE****CR 4**

Male gnome scout 4

NE small humanoid (gnome)

Init +2; Senses Listen +8, Spot +6

Languages Common, Giant, Gnome

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+1 when moving 10 ft.) (+4 vs. giants)

hp 40 (4 HD)

Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +0 (+2 vs. illusions)

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +1 dagger +6 (1d3+1/19-20)

Ranged +1 dagger +8 (1d3+1/19-20)

Base Atk +3; Grp -1

Atk Options Point Blank Shot, skirmish +1d6 (if attacking after moving 10 feet or more)

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of blur*, *potion of water breathing* (2)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st):

(1/day)—speak with animals (1 minute), dancing lights, ghost sound (DC 11), prestidigitation

Abilities Str 10, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 10

SQ fast movement +10 ft., trackless step, uncanny dodge

Feats Lightning Reflexes^B, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (dagger)

Skills Balance +11, Hide +9, Jump +9, Listen +8, Move Silently +9, Search +8, Spot +6, Survival +6 (+8 when tracking), Tumble +11

Possessions combat gear plus +1 *chain shirt*, +1 dagger, 6 daggers, 141 gp

“Nothing will stand between me and my employer's safety . . . except pain and fear.”

Kerryana VonValloople CR 7

Female gnome warmage 7

N small humanoid (gnome)

Init +0; Senses Listen +3, Spot +1; low-light vision

Languages Common, Draconic, Gnome, Halfling

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+4 vs. giants)

hp 42 (7 HD)

Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +8 (+2 vs. illusions)

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +1 *cold iron dagger* +3 (1d3-1/19-20)

Ranged +1 *cold iron dagger* +5 (1d3-1/19-20)

Base Atk +3; Grp -3

Atk Options Point Blank Shot, Sudden Empower

Special Atk warmage's edge (+2 damage on spells)

Combat Gear *potion of barkskin* +3, *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2), *potion of water breathing* (2)

Warmage Spells Known (CL 7th):

3rd (5/day)—DC 16 All Warmage Spells

2nd (7/day)—DC 15 Gust of Wind + All Warmage Spells

1st (7/day)—DC 14 Tenser's Floating Disk + All Warmage Spells

0 (6/day)—DC 13 All Warmage Spells

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st):

(1/day)—speak with animals (1 minute), dancing lights, ghost sound (DC 14), prestidigitation

Abilities Str 6, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 16

Feats Combat Casting, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Sudden Empower^B

Skills Concentration +12 (+16 defensively), Intimidate +13, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Spellcraft +14

Possessions combat gear plus +1 *chain shirt*, *cloak of resistance* +2, dagger spell component pouch, 34 gp

"We gnomes can fight with just as much ferocity as any other race. Eat my fiery death magic!"

KLYDE VONVALLOOPLE

CR 7

Male gnome scout 7

NE small humanoid (gnome)

Init +2; Senses Listen +10, Spot +8

Languages Common, Giant, Gnome

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 20 (+2 when moving 10 ft.) (+4 vs. giants)

hp 67 (7 HD)

Fort +4, Ref +9, Will +1 (+2 vs. illusions)

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +1 *dagger* +7 (1d3+1/19-20)

Ranged +1 *dagger* +9 (1d3+1/19-20)

Base Atk +5; Grp +1

Atk Options Point Blank Shot, skirmish +2d6 (if attacking after moving 10 feet or more)

Combat Gear *elixir of sneaking*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of blur*, *potion of sneaking*, *potion of water breathing* (2)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st):

(1/day)—speak with animals (1 minute), dancing lights, ghost sound (DC 11), prestidigitation

Abilities Str 10, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 10

SQ evasion, fast movement +10 ft., flawless stride, trackless step, uncanny dodge

Feats Lightning Reflexes^B, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (dagger)

Skills Balance +14, Hide +12, Jump +12, Listen +11, Move Silently +12, Search +11, Spot +9, Survival +9 (+11 when tracking), Tumble +14

Possessions combat gear plus +2 *chain shirt*, +1 *dagger*, *ring of protection* +1, 6 daggers, 141 gp

"Nothing will stand between me and my employer's safety . . . except pain and fear."

Part Three – Consulting Stormrider

Once the PCs learn that one of the dragons of the Chamber is involved, they may think to contact Stormrider. If they do not think of this, Candle asks them to search out and consult the blue dragon bard.

Stormrider's Network

If the PCs capture and speak to any one of the three foes at the Sculpted Stone Ring, they have the chance to hear about the Chamber. Any PCs who played *Prophecy's Unwitting Servant* automatically remember that Stormrider mentioned he was a member of the Chamber. Allow the PCs the chance to make this connection themselves. If they do not, remind them about the connection if they played *Prophecy's Unwitting Servant*. If none of the PCs at the table played that adventure, then Candle mentions the presence in Stormreach of a blue dragon who is a member of the Chamber who also offered to share information with the Codex. Whether the PCs remember it themselves, or if Candle informs them, she wants them to try to contact Stormrider again to learn about what possible threat these dragons might be to the Crimson Codex.

The PCs might have unique or ingenious ways of finding the whereabouts of Stormrider. The first is using a Gather Information check (DC 15). If the PCs have the Story Object called "Stormrider's Network," they automatically succeed at the Gather information check. In this case, their questioning alerts one of Stormrider's Network about the PCs looking for the dragon. Not long after they begin their questioning, Pfilo the Filch approaches them. Continue with **An Underground Meeting** below.

If the PCs played *Prophecy's Unwitting Servant*, they might remember that they previously met Stormrider in an underground cavern in that adventure. If so, they may choose to go there directly. In that case, just move the meeting with Pfilo the Filch into the underground chamber where they met Stormrider previously. The Filch is delivering some ink and parchment to the chamber when the PCs arrive. Continue with **An Underground Meeting** below.

If the PCs try any other means of finding Stormrider, play along as you see fit. If their plan is a good one, let it succeed. If it doesn't make any sense or is doomed to failure, let it fail. Only after they have exhausted all other options should you provide assistance in the form of Pfilo the Filch coming to find them, having heard from an informant that they are seeking Stormrider.

An Underground Meeting

The PCs talk to Pfilo the Filch, and he arranges a meeting with Stormrider.

Pfilo the Filch is one of Stormrider's main assistants, acting as the dragon's eyes and ears in Stormreach. Stormrider has a deal with the Crimson Codex to trade information and help each other decode and manipulate the Prophecy. Alter the following read-aloud text to fit the situation:

A smiling halfling stands before you with his arms crossed. "Searching for Stormrider, eh? He don't speak to many people, but he likes you. Tell me what you want to talk to him about, and I'll make sure you get your chance. Wait here."

If the PCs are up in Stormreach, Pfilo scampers away. Fifteen minutes later he returns and tells the PCs to use a secret passage beneath a fountain in one of the plazas of Stormreach at nightfall. This takes the PCs to the cavern where Stormrider can meet the PCs.

If the PCs go directly to the cavern, Pfilo meets them there, then leaves after speaking with the PCs. Stormrider arrives 30 minutes later.

When the PCs are alone in the chamber waiting for Stormrider, read or paraphrase the following:

The huge chamber is roughly square with a large hole in the floor. The hole is deep enough that the bottom, if there is one, is well beyond your field of vision. A slight rumbling begins, and soon the horn of a blue dragon pokes from the hole, followed by an enormous head. A flicker of panicky electrical energy surges through the room, but then all is calm. "I hear you want to speak to me," says a deep but amused voice.

Stormrider is cordial, and even witty, as long as the PCs do not threaten or attack him. He is a very powerful bard and an adult dragon. PCs should be warned before they try anything against him. He does not detect as evil. Assuming the PCs speak to Stormrider about the news that a dragon associated with the Chamber might be involved in Crimson Codex affairs, use the bullet points below to guide the conversation:

- The Chamber is a very loose association of dragons and their followers. However, there is no overarching and unified goal for the Chamber, aside from wanting to actively pursue and study the fulfillment of the draconic Prophecy.
- Certain members of the Chamber strongly believe the lesser races have no place in studying or manipulating the draconic Prophecy. Stormrider is not at all surprised that dragons might be actively attempting to destroy any of the lesser races that are gaining power from their interaction with the Prophecy.
- Stormrider thinks there are three likely candidates for dragons who would be eager to crush the Crimson Codex: a red dragon that travels frequently between Argonnessen and Xen'drik studying the Prophecy, a black dragon that has established a lair on Xen'drik, and a brass dragon who recently joined the Chamber and is rumored to be in Xen'drik. All three have spoken vehemently against "lesser races" being permitted to interact with the Prophecy.
- If asked, Stormrider promises to seek out information on which member of the Chamber might be the one who is working with the splinter group to try to eliminate the Codex. He also offers to keep tabs on the doings of the splinter group.
- As a parting piece of assistance, Stormrider offers the following prediction: "The Prophecy indicates that a group of humanoids in Stormreach, once secret, will soon be pushed into the open. This group will face much danger, but their success is important to the survival of their kinds. Your organization may be that group."

Part Four – The Virulence Fragments

The PCs encounter a half-daelkyr messenger, who offers to provide them with the location of Zeke Brithlestone. The messenger also gives the PCs some text, an interpretation of the draconic Prophecy written by Virulence himself.

The Charming Miss Melia

As the PCs travel back to the surface after their meeting with Stormrider, they notice a new tunnel where one did not exist before. Rocks and dusty debris reveal that the tunnel was just created within the last hour, since they passed by here to meet with Stormrider. A DC 21 Spellcraft or Knowledge (arcana) check reveals the tunnel was made with magic, such as a *disintegrate* spell. A DC 15 Knowledge (engineering) check reveals the tunnel was definitely not created by any normal means.

An arrow made of piled stones rests on the floor, pointing up the new tunnel. If the PCs follow the tunnel for just a few hundred yards, they round a bend in the 10-foot-wide hallway and see the following:

Ahead of you stands what at first seems to be a human female, but something about her seems odd. It takes you a second to realize that her body is covered with crawling and skittering objects. Some appear to be beetle-like, others worm-like, and another possibly a leech. Soft slurping and popping sounds echo to you from the parasites. The figure smiles shyly when she sees you, and she looks down. Her voice whispers, "I am glad you found me. I've been longing to meet you. Father is most interested in you and your peers. He sent me to get to know you a little more . . ." She pauses, and her smile widens to reveal teeth shaved to points. ". . . more intimately. And, of course, to offer you some assistance with your current problems."

A DC 15 Knowledge (dungeoneering) reveals this creature is a daelkyr half-blood, the abomination that results from a humanoid child being born too close to the influence of a daelkyr's maddening corruption. In this case, the PCs are meeting Melia, a female daelkyr half-blood drawn to the service of her "father" Virulence.

Melia is a creature that has what can be called an "unhealthy obsession" with humanoids. She knows that her mother was human but that she is different, so she wants to know as much about humans and other humanoids as possible. No topic is off-limits because she has no sense of propriety, having grown up among aberrations. While Melia has information that can help the PCs find Zeke, the PCs should be made to feel uncomfortable at best, and completely freaked out at worst.

The following is what Melia was sent to tell the PCs, with some extra details that Melia can supply if asked. Note that some of this is not quite true, but Melia believes what she says to be the truth:

- People wanting to learn what the Crimson Codex knows about the draconic Prophecy captured Zeke. They are some sort of Cabal. He is being held in a cave complex on the waterline of the Thunder Sea northeast of the Stormreach docks. [This is not quite true, but Melia doesn't know that. Virulence's forces captured Zeke but the skum have rebelled against the daelkyr.]

- Virulence has taken an interest in the draconic Prophecy, and he has started to compile his own interpretations and analyses. He wants to offer this fragment, which he believes may offer some guidance regarding the current situation. [Give the PCs **Handout 3** if they can read Daelkyr.]
- Melia was born in an illithid slave camp to a pair of slaves. When she exhibited the corrupting influence of the daelkyr, she was taken and schooled in the honor her new “father” had bestowed upon her. She was trained in the arcane arts, and she traveled throughout Khyber as Virulence’s emissary.
- Melia has never seen Virulence in person, nor has anyone Melia knows. The daelkyr makes his will known through telepathic communication with his minions. He sits in the middle of a colossal hierarchy that does his bidding.

Melia begins the encounter as Friendly, and she remains so unless the PCs do something to injure or insult her. She is genuinely fascinated with the PCs, and she asks them personal questions that display this curiosity. A DC 15 Sense Motive check reveals that she is currently not a threat to the PCs; she simply has an insatiable thirst for knowledge about them.

If the PCs insult her, she fails to realize their slight the first time. The second time, however, she acts very hurt and her attitude changes to Indifferent. If she is insulted or slighted again, her attitude changes to Hostile. She does not attack, but this bodes ill for the players in later adventures. They can use Diplomacy to try to get her back to Friendly if she is insulted.

If the PCs attack her, she flees. Her guardians, two normal beholders, are waiting 100 feet up the corridor and around a corner. They come to investigate any battle. They have been ordered not to kill the PCs, but that doesn’t mean they won’t incapacitate them. Stats for Melia are not provided, as she appears in later Crimson Codex adventures, possibly as a friend or a foe. Suffice to say that she is a powerful arcane caster who has the means to easily escape the PCs (using *dimension door*, *fly*, *swift fly*, *expeditious retreat*, etc.). She immediately retreats if possible to the safety of the beholders, who hold off the PCs while she escapes.

Combining Fragments

The PCs can use the document provided by Virulence, and one of the new fragments recorded by Ohnal Caldyn, to figure out where Zeke is being held and how to get past a puzzle lock trap guarding the way to the skum lair.

Handout 3 is written in Daelkyr. The PCs can either translate it themselves, use magic to read it, or find someone in the Codex who can, which is easy enough. When the PCs read **Handout 3**, they should see they must study Ohnal Caldyn’s new fragments for information on where Zeke is being held, starting with any mention of the Great Dragons. A DC 10 Knowledge (history) or Bardic Knowledge check reveals that the Great Dragons are Khyber, Siberys, and Eberron. If the PCs ask Candle to see Caldyn’s newest fragments, they can skim them quickly to find the only mention of the Great Dragons. When they do this, provide them with **Handout 4**, written in Common.

If the PCs are stumped after looking at **Handout 3**, and cannot figure that they need to consult the newer fragments penned by Ohnal Caldyn, give them a DC 10 Intelligence check to figure it out. Needing to give them this clue counts as taking too much time, and you should use the harder combat with the skum in **Part Five**.

Once the PCs compare **Handouts 3 and 4** (they are on the same page at the end of the adventure), they should see that the lines from Virulence and the lines from Ohnal actually compliment each other. The first line of Virulence’s fragment says to look in Caldyn’s new work for anything regarding the Great Dragons. The second line says to look for numbers that are not numbers. In the verses, the words “too, for, ate, one” appear in that order. This is the answer to the dragonshard puzzle lock in **Part Five**. The third line refers to the entrance to the skum lair, which is at the foot of the Tower of Kol Korran, the god of Trade and Wealth. The locals sometimes refer to the area where the tower is located in Stormreach as “Old Wealth’s tooth.” A DC 15 Knowledge (local) or Knoweldge (religion) check reveals the god named and location of the tower. The fourth line reminds the reader again to refer to the words of Ohnal Caldyn.

When the PCs look at the remaining verses of each handout, they should see that the lines go together as rhyming couplets. If they put the couplets together and find the words that are homophones for numbers, they have all the information they need to rescue Zeke in the skum lair.

If the PCs have access to an Adventure Secret, they can use that to instantly understand how the fragments fit together and where to find the entrance to the skum lair.

Part Five – Skum and Villainy

The PCs assault the lair of the skum in order to rescue Zeke Brithlestone.

Approaching Doom

Based on the clues garnered from combining the fragments from Virulence and Ohnal's new text, the PCs can find the entrance to the skum lair. It can be found with a DC 22 Search check or a DC 15 Survival (Track) check. The footprints heading into the vertical pages are certainly not humanoid. While the tunnel is natural and slopes sharply downward, it is easy to traverse at half-speed.

After traveling down into the subterranean passage for several minutes, the PCs come across a roughly 10-foot-square room with a pedestal in the center. On the pedestal are 9 small circular dragonshards. They each contain small lines scratched into them. The first shard contains 1 line, the second 2 lines, the third 3 lines, etc. Also, the first three are Khyber shards, the second three are Eberron shards, and the final three are Siberys shards.

The only way out of the room, aside from the southern passage the PCs entered, is another passage heading north. A shimmering wall of force, though, blocks this passage. A DC 15 Search or Spot check reveals four small holes on the floor in front of the wall of force, going left to right. It is obvious that one of the circular shards would fit perfectly into each hole.

If the PCs touch the wall of force or put the wrong shard in the wrong hole, the person doing so takes 1d6 points of sonic damage (no save). The second time they touch the force wall or place the wrong shard in the wrong hole, the person takes 2d6, then 3d6 the next time, adding 1d6 each time. Spells like *mage hand* cannot be used to manipulate the shards as they are magical, but *unseen servant* works. However, if a servant takes 6 points of damage or more, the spell ends.

The wall of force can be brought down by putting the shards into the correct holes in this sequence from left to right: 2, 4, 8, 1. It doesn't matter when they are placed in, as long as they are in that order from left to right. The PCs may also bypass the puzzle entirely by chipping away at the wall around the force field. This, however, takes so long that by the time they do it, Zeke has been killed. If the PCs think of other ways to bypass the puzzle and continue, use your best judgment as to the success or failure of their plans. If it is a plan that would take too long, remember that Zeke only has a few hours before he is to be killed.

Zeke in a Cage

The PCs can rescue Zeke from his impending doom at the hands of the skum.

After solving the puzzle lock and moving up the corridor, the smell of sea air grows much stronger. Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs approach the room holding Zeke's cage.

The corridor continues for several hundred yards, and soon the smell of salty sea air grows powerful. Moisture on the floor and walls of this natural passage indicates that you must be approaching the sea.

The sea cave holding Zeke's cage is detailed on **Map 2**. A submerged 5-foot-wide circular tunnel runs from the bottom of the east wall of the room out to the open sea 250 feet away. This cave is just one of several the skum use to lair, but right now it holds their prized possession. The water is murky enough that the depth is impossible to gauge by sight alone. There is not light in the cavern.

Zeke is alive but unconscious in the cage on the island in the center of the cave. He is dehydrated, exhausted, and starting to die from starvation. He normally has 45 hit points, and right now he has 45 points of nonlethal damage. For calculations of being carried, Zeke weighs 150 pounds. Even if healed with hit points, he is still incapable of moving on his own because of weakness. A *lesser restoration* or similar magic would allow him to manage his own escape, assuming he could get out of the locked cage.

The cage door is held shut with tightly tied twine that is impossible to untie because of the material. Five points of damage from a slashing weapon or a DC 22 Strength check breaks the twine and allows the door to be opened.

Foes: The number of skum currently in the cave depends on how quickly the PCs were able to translate the fragments, find the cave, and solve the puzzle lock. Subtract one normal skum if the PCs accomplished the tasks relatively quickly, not needing any help and moving immediately from one step to the next. Leave the numbers as is if the PCs took a bit more time in dealing with the tasks. Add one more normal skum to the numbers if the PCs took longer than normal, requiring extra help or spending extra time to get past the obstacles.

A skum lieutenant called Skooloob is guarding the prisoner. She swims in the deeper water around the island, joined by the normal skum.

Skooloob: female skum fighter 5: hp 58; Combat Statistics.

Skum guards (3): male and female skum: hp 13, 11, 10; *Monster Manual* 228.

Tactics: The skum begin the encounter swimming in the deep part of the cave (unless otherwise noted). Anyone in the cave must make a DC 18 Spot check to see the skum. The normal skum move to engage the PCs, while Skooloob throws javelins from the safety of the water. If the PCs easily dispatch the normal skum and target Skooloob with ranged weapons or spells, Skooloob threatens Zeke with harm. Skum are amphibious and can fight equally well on land or in water; however, they are smart enough to know that fighting in the water is most likely beneficial to their cause.

Developments: Skooloob fights to the death, and when he dies any other skum flee. Following the skum does not do much good, as any escapees take five minutes to swim to the other rooms of the lair, and come back with many reinforcements. Allow the PCs to make a dramatic escape if this happens.

Scaling the Encounter

4th-Level Characters: Use only the CR7 version of Skooloob and no other enemies. If the PCs get to the cave quickly, they get a surprise round on Skooloob, as he is concentrating on tying the cage shut.

5th-Level Characters: Use the CR7 version of Skooloob and one normal skum.

7th-Level Characters: Use the CR9 version of Skooloob and three normal skum.

8th-Level Characters: Use the CR9 version of Skooloob and six normal skum.

SKOOLOOB CR 7

Male skum fighter 5

LE medium aberration (aquatic)

Init +1; Senses Listen +9, Spot +10; darkvision 60 ft.

Languages Aquan

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 14

hp 58 (7 HD)

Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +6

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares), swim 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee bite +13 (2d6+8) and

2 claws +10 (1d4+3)

Ranged javelin +7 (1d6+6)

Base Atk +6; Grp +12

Atk Options Power Attack, rake 1d6+3

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potion of mage armor*, *potion of magic fang*

Abilities Str 22, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 6

SQ Darkvision 60 ft., amphibious

Feats Alertness, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Specialization (bite)

Skills Hide +6, Listen +9, Move Silently +6, Spot +10, Swim +20

Possessions combat gear plus *gauntlets of ogre power*, *ring of protection* +2, 3 javelins

Rake (Ex) Attack bonus +10 melee, damage 1d6+3. A skum also gains two rake attacks while swimming.

Hook "You may defeat me, but the human in the cage will not live to see the light of your surface world!"

SKOOLOOB CR 9

Male skum fighter 7

LE medium aberration (aquatic)

Init +2; Senses Listen +10, Spot +11; darkvision 60 ft.

Languages Aquan

AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 14

hp 78 (9 HD)

Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +7

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares), swim 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee bite +16 (2d6+9/19-20) and

2 claws +13 (1d4+3)

Ranged javelin +10 (1d6+7)

Base Atk +8; Grp +18

Atk Options Power Attack, rake 1d6+3

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potion of mage armor*, *potion of greater magic fang*+3, *potion of haste*

Abilities Str 24, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 6

SQ Darkvision 60 ft., amphibious

Feats Alertness, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Grapple, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Specialization (bite)

Skills Hide +7, Listen +10, Move Silently +7, Spot +11, Swim +23

Possessions combat gear plus *belt of giant strength* +4, *ring of protection* +2, 3 javelins

Rake (Ex) Attack bonus +13 melee, damage 1d6+3. A skum also gains two rake attacks while swimming.

Hook "You may defeat me, but the human in the cage will not live to see the light of your surface world!"

Ending the Adventure

If the PCs are able to defeat the skum and rescue Zeke, he is grateful beyond words. He tells the PCs that he was investigating the disappearance of some Crimson Codex members when he got a tip that some might have been taken to some sea caves. When he approached the caves via the sea on a small boat, he was captured by some skum, a beholder, and two mind flayers. If the PCs say they were informed other humans, part of some Cabal, had captured him, he says that some operatives that disappeared were certainly captured by enemy humanoids, but many have also been taken by aberrations as he was.

Although saved, Zeke is going to join Ohnal Caldyn back on Khorvaire for a while. Candle has things in order here, and Zeke wants to share with the leadership of the Crimson Codex there what has happened and what he knows.

If the PCs were unable to rescue Zeke, the skum kill and eat him. The Crimson Codex continue their work, but there is a certain sadness that permeates the organization at the thought of losing such a valued member and friend.

Event Treasure

If the PCs are playing another session of Xen'drik Expedition at this event with these characters, they can take with them the following items: a potion of water breathing, three potions of cure serious wounds, and 2000 gp worth of equipment that they could normally purchase with their equipment value.

Adventure Questions

1. Did any PCs get kicked out of the Crimson Codex for not coming clean to Candle about past actions?
 - a) No, everyone was either innocent or admitted past mistakes.
 - b) One PC was forced out of the Codex.
 - c) Two PCs were forced out of the Codex.
 - d) More than two PCs were forced out of the Codex.
2. How did the PCs fare against Pserli and the VonValloople siblings?
 - a) The PCs were defeated.
 - b) Pserli was killed or escaped, but the gnomes were questioned.
 - c) Pserli was captured, but it was a terrible battle that cost the PCs dearly.
 - d) Pserli was captured and questioned with little problem.
3. Which best describes the PCs' handling of the interpretation of the various fragments?
 - a) Brilliant! They got it relatively easily.
 - b) Very good. It took them a while, but they eventually figure it out.
 - c) Poor. They only figured it out after a long and painful discussion.
 - d) Terrible. They basically had to be told the answer.
 - e) They never made it this far.
4. What happened with the puzzle lock trap in the skum lair?
 - a) They never made it this far.
 - b) They were stumped and ended up taking lots of damage or getting it wrong several times.
 - c) They figured it out eventually through trial and error.
 - d) They had no problem.
 - e) They thought of an alternative method to get past the force wall.
5. What happened in the skum lair where Zeke was held?
 - a) The PCs defeated the skum easily.
 - b) They never made it this far.
 - c) The skum defeated our heroes.
 - d) It was a hard-fought battle, but the PCs finally persevered.
6. Were the PCs able to rescue Zeke?
 - a) No.
 - b) Yes.
7. How would you rate the group's roleplaying?
 - a) Fantastic. Everyone had interesting and engaging characters that interacted with the adventure in very fun ways.
 - b) Good. Most everyone had interesting and engaging characters that interacted with the adventure in very fun ways.
 - c) Okay. There was some roleplaying.
 - d) None. They treated the adventure as a set of objectives. There was no roleplaying.

Story Objects

Object ID: EXCC19

Object Name: Advice of Zeke Brithlestone

Object Description: You have rescued Zeke from certain death at the hands of skum. Before he leaves for Khorvaire, Zeke shares some stories with you and gives you some advice on how to handle yourself on Xen'drik.

One time only, you can spend action points to gain the following benefits: use an action point as a standard action to recall a spell you just cast, though you must spend one action point per spell level; use one action point to gain an extra turning attempt, bardic music, rage, or wild shape; use an action point to take 10 on a skill check where you otherwise would not be able to.

This can only be used once, and then it is no longer usable.

Object ID: EXCC20

Object Name: Ire of an Unknown Chamber Member

Object Description: A certain dragon is not at all happy with you. You defeat Pserli, a pawn that this dragon spent valuable time getting into a favorable position in the Codex. You have ruined these plans, and now a dragon has a particularly cold spot in its draconic heart especially for you.

New Rules

Warmage [Base Class]

Warmage is a new base class appearing in *Complete Arcane*. Warmages can cast any spell on their spell list. If you have access to *Complete Arcane* or other supplements that contain warmage spells, use them for Kerryana's spell list. The following are the spells from the Player's Handbook that are on the warmage's spell list:

0-level: *acid splash, disrupt undead, light, ray of frost*

1st level: *burning hands, chill touch, shocking grasp, true strike*

2nd level: *continual flame, fire trap, flaming sphere, melf's acid arrow, scorching ray, shatter*

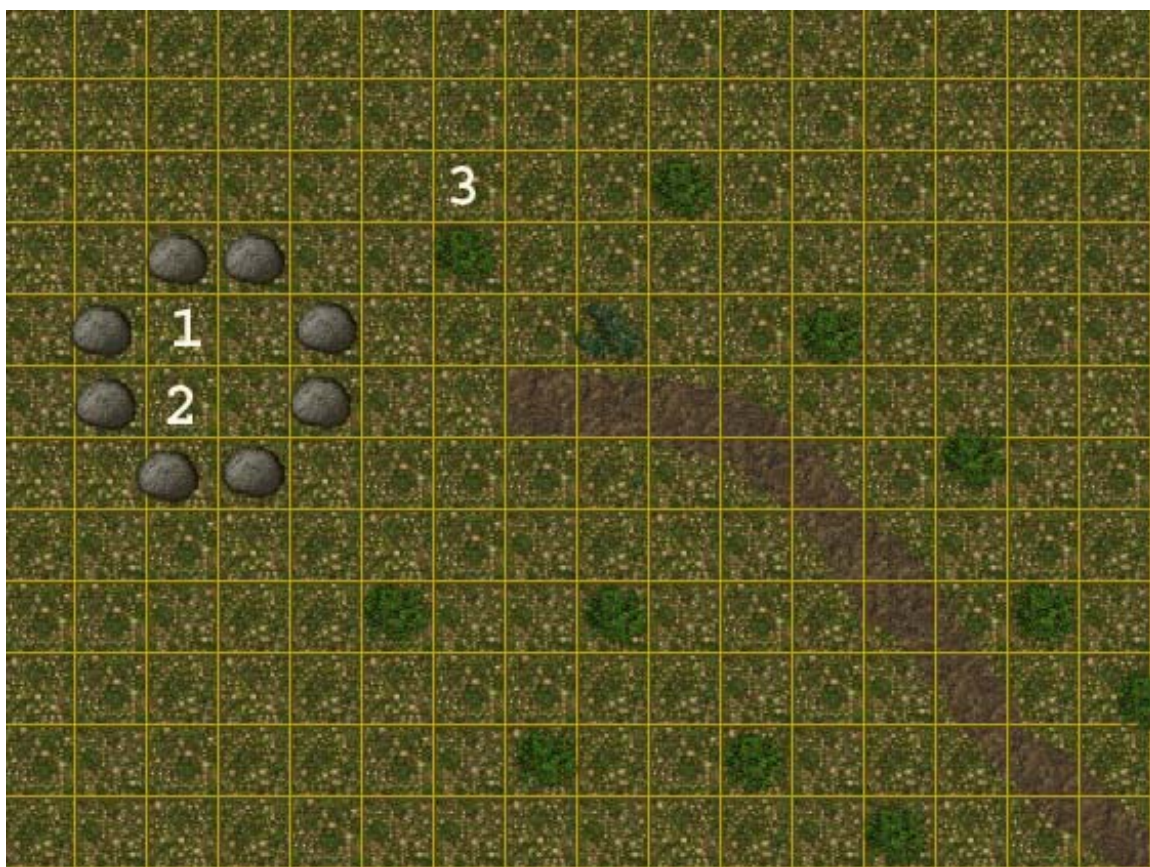
3rd level: *fire shield, fireball, flame arrow, gust of wind, ice storm, lightning bolt, sleet storm, stinking cloud*

Warmage Edge (Ex) Whenever a warmage casts a spell that deals hit point damage, he adds his Intelligence bonus (if any) to the amount of damage dealt.

Sudden Empower [Feat]

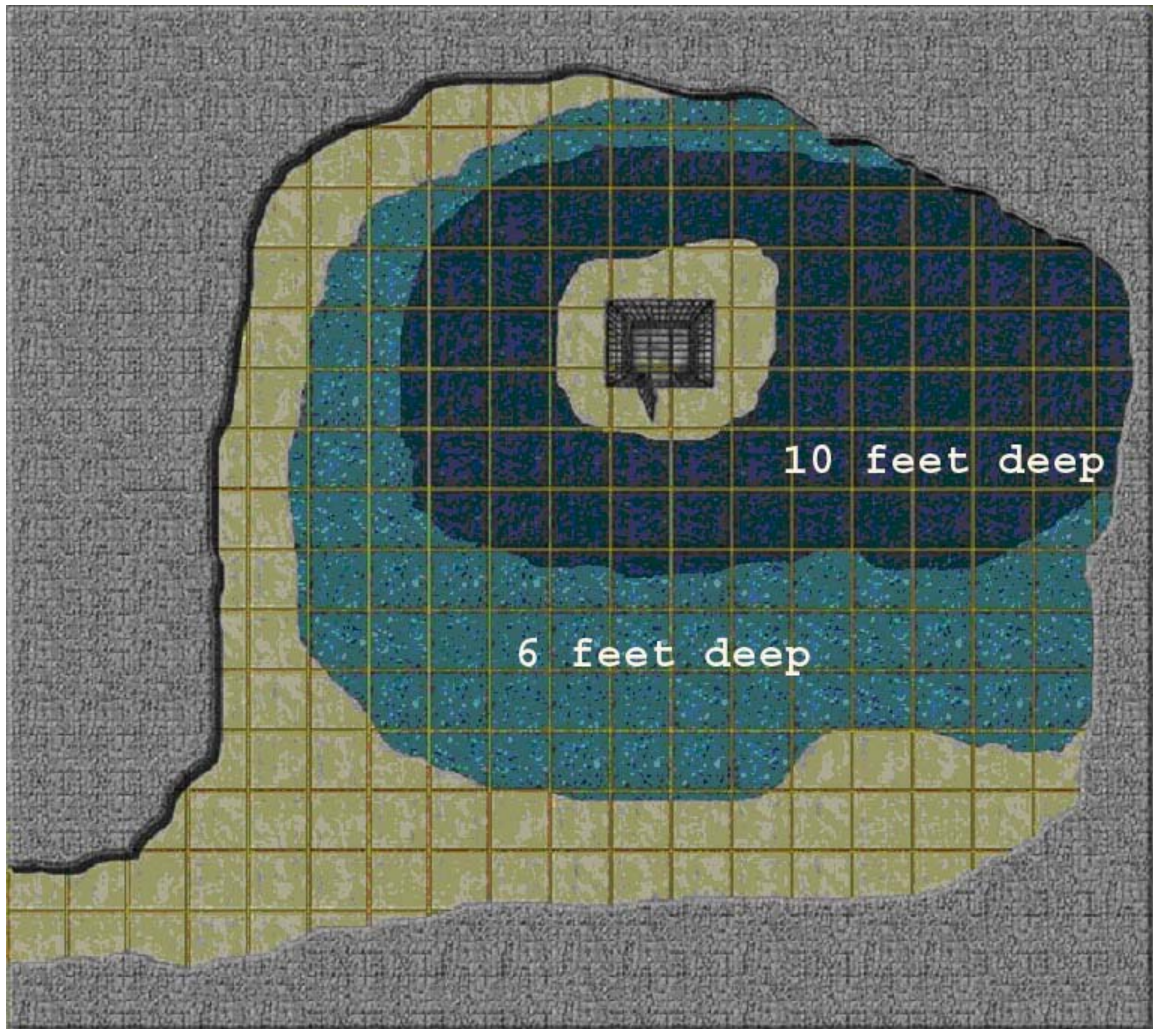
Once per day, you can apply the effect of the Empower Spell feat to any spell you cast without increasing the level of the spell or specially preparing it ahead of time.

Map 1 – The Sculpted Stone Circle



- 1 = Pserli's location
- 2 = Kerryrna's location
- 3 = Klyde's hiding spot

Map 2 – Water-Filled Skum Cavern



Handout 1

[A low-ranking Crimson Codex operative whom you have seen before delivers this message to you. He also presents you with a belt pouch containing a potion marked "For Healing". The message is written in a neat script in your native language.]

Greetings Brave Serpent,

As you have certainly heard by now, our esteemed leader Ohnal Caldyn has placed me in charge of Codex operations in Xen'drik while Zeke Brithlestone remains missing. He has also placed at my disposal resources that, before your successful handling of the Korranberg Affair, were not available for operations here in Xen'drik. I will be calling on you shortly to undertake some of the most important missions facing our humble organization at present.

As a token of my appreciation for your talents, I want to present you with this equipment. For too long you have been asked to operate with a lack of proper equipment in a hostile environment. I hope to rectify that in future missions. Use the equipment as you see fit.

On the break of dawn of the next Sul, you will find an address on the bottom of a rain barrel positioned on the north side of the brewery on the eastern edge of Stormreach. Find that address as soon as possible, and you will be provided with instructions regarding your next mission. I look forward to meeting you again.

Your peer in foresight, I am,

Candle

Handout 2

Altravel,

I am sure you understand the need for caution, especially since the Codex fools are starting to purge us. Come immediately to the Sculpted Stone Ring at the cliffs two hours north of the city. Bring the new text and come alone. I will pay you most generously for your troubles.

If I see any sign of betrayal on your part, or any sign that you were followed, you will never see me again. If you are not at the Stone Ring within three hours of reading this note, you will never see me again.

Your interested buyer

Handout 3

[This is written in Daelkyr in craggy handwriting on a loose piece of parchment.]

New words about Great Dragons reveal old truth
and numbers that aren't numbers blaze the path.
Search beneath the tower of Old Wealth's tooth.
Trust your wise leader's words or feel their wrath.

When the Great Dragons battled at the start of the world

Siberys into the beastly maw flew

For dominion of time and of space they fought

Though devious Khyber broke Siberys asunder

The trio rest now where our lives have begun

Handout 4

[These five lines take up an entire page of text in Caldyn's new fragments. In the margins is written hastily "What am I missing?"]

Khyber her awesome tail she unfurled.

while Eberron entered the fracas too.

the destruction of their siblings they sought.

Eberron ate both and let them both thunder.

although they lost it is we who have won.