

MALEVOLENCE

A player's companion to macabre mysteries



My dear friend Het,

A most compelling painting has entered my shop here in Otari (*copy enclosed*). Yet, it seems its full complexity continues to grow. There, you see? At the top of the manor? A dome. A rotunda. An observatory. I'm beset now with dreams of converting the manor into a temple, a place where anyone can come to observe the wonders of our Cosmic Caravan zodiac - to return it to its proper glory.

Trouble is, the manor is located at the remote southwestern corner of your home country Ravounel, in the former settlement of Crooked Cove. Its provenance is a tangled mess - one made worse by Ravounel's secession from Cheliox. No one seems to know who rightfully owns the place, as no known descendants survive.

Oh, and it certainly doesn't help that the place is haunted.

I speak of course of Xarwin Manor in all its ruined glory. With my proximity to the vast city of Absalom, I've had the fortune to interview no fewer than four people who visited the ruins of "Crookcove" (as its damaged sign depicts it). They all agree that the painting is spot-on in its depiction of the gloom and menace the manor exudes today.

The part that bothers me about it isn't the brooding stance of the birds who seem to stand guard at the edge of the frame, or the eerie glow that rises from beyond the central dome, or even the mysterious light in the upstairs window (and we have had our fair share of mysterious lights in Otari as of late!)

No, the part that bothers me the most is the signature and date on the painting's reverse. The signature of Asethanna Xarwin, dated 4653 AR - **four years** before whatever doom left the manor abandoned over the ruins of a forgotten town.

Maybe you will be able to discover what the artist once foretold. What mysteries and cosmic secrets does Xarwin Manor hold? What potential could we unlock? Friend, *I must know*. I'm certain you'll understand my captivation.

Yours in starlight,
Wrin Sivinx

Coming Together

The *Malevolence* Pathfinder adventure begins in a remote region of Ravounel on the southern shore of the Arcadian Ocean. A long-abandoned coastal settlement known as Crooked Cove is the backdrop to a decrepit hilltop manor shrouded in mystery and tragedy. Intrepid investigations, hair-raising ghost hunting, and the unveiling of sinister secrets await those who dare venture to Xarwin Manor. Even the most fearless and resolute will find their mettle tested!

The heroes might or might not know each other, but all of them should have a common contact: **Hetamon Haace**, tailor and proprietor of The Devil's Threads in Ravounel's bustling capital city of Kintargo. Hetamon (who may or may not be more than he seems as a simple tailor) has been drawn into the matters and mysteries of Xarwin Manor by another tiefling entrepreneur, an eccentric oddities merchant in Otari by the name of Wrin Sivinxi. Her entreaty to Hetamon is what led him to assemble an adventuring expedition out to Crooked Cove.



Content and Themes

This adventure is centered on horror and as such contains many dark themes, including but not limited to: body horror, gore, mental and physical trauma, domestic violence, supernatural and paranormal events, and cosmic horror.

Proceed at your own risk...

Character Creation

Who are you? A dungeon-delver waiting for their next opportunity to plunder unexplored places forgotten to time? A scholar focused on occult and arcane mysteries beyond the stars? Perhaps you fought in the rebellion that won Ravounel its independence, grown restless in peacetime and looking for a new adventure.

Whoever you may be, the following is meant as a guide to making a 3rd-level character suited for this campaign.



WHEN AND WHERE ON GOLARION?

At present the year is 4721 AR ([Absalom Reckoning](#)). The heroes find themselves in [Kintargo](#), the capital port city of [Ravounel](#). Perhaps they hail from the city or are only passing through, but each of them is recruited in one way or another by the tailor Hetamon Haace as detailed above.

ANCESTRIES

Kintargo is a human city, and as such, the bulk of its citizens are humans, yet all of the races from the [Core Rulebook](#) can be encountered within the city's walls.

Other races such as [halflings](#), [half-elves](#), [strix](#), [tengu](#), and [tieflings](#) make up the majority of the more unusual races in the region, while travelers from all over Golarion abound, bringing even more diversity to this cultural capital.

In short, any ancestry makes a good fit for Malevolence.

BACKGROUNDS

The following [backgrounds](#) are suggestions - heroes are not limited to these!

BACKGROUND	DESCRIPTION
Acolyte	You spent your early days in a religious monastery or cloister. You may have traveled out into the world to spread the message of your religion or because you cast away the teachings of your faith, but deep down you'll always carry within you the lessons you learned.
Artist	Your art is your greatest passion, whatever form it takes. Adventuring might help you find inspiration, or simply be a way to survive until you become a world-famous artist.
Barrister	Piles of legal manuals, stern teachers, and experience in the courtroom have instructed you in legal matters. You're capable of mounting a prosecution or defense in court, and you tend to keep abreast of local laws, as you never can tell when you might need to know them on short notice.
Cultist	You were (or still are) a member of a cult whose rites may involve sacred dances to ensure a strong harvest or dire rituals that call upon dark powers. You might have taken up adventuring to further your cult's aims, to initiate yourself into the world's grander mysteries, or to flee unsavory practices or strictures.
Cursed	You are the victim of a personal or hereditary curse. Through great effort and occult study, you have learned to fend off the curse's worst effects and, by extension, you can protect yourself against other harmful magic. However, the curse still hangs over you and sometimes manifests in dangerous ways.
Farmhand	With a strong back and an understanding of seasonal cycles, you tilled the land and tended crops. Your farm could have been razed by invaders, you could have lost the family tying you to the land, or you might have simply tired of the drudgery, but at some point you became an adventurer.

BACKGROUND

DESCRIPTION

[Guard](#)

You served in the guard, out of either patriotism or the need for coin. Either way, you know how to get a difficult suspect to talk. However you left the guard, you might think of adventuring as a way to use your skills on a wider stage.

[Nomad](#)

Traveling far and wide, you picked up basic tactics for surviving on the road and in unknown lands, getting by with few supplies and even fewer comforts. As an adventurer, you travel still, often into even more dangerous places.

[Pilgrim](#)

In your youth, you made several pilgrimages to important shrines and holy sites. You might have been a mendicant friar, a seller of holy relics (real or fraudulent), or just a simple farmer following the dictates of your faith. Whatever the aims of your wanderings now, your faith still protects you on the road.

[Root Worker](#)

Some ailments can't be cured by herbs alone. You learned ritual remedies as well, calling on nature spirits to soothe aches and ward off the evil eye. Taking up with adventurers has given you company on the road, as well as protection from those who would brand you a fake—or worse.

[Scholar](#)

You have a knack for learning, and sequestered yourself from the outside world to learn all you could. You read about so many wondrous places and things in your books, and always dreamed about one day seeing the real things. Eventually, that curiosity led you to leave your studies and become an adventurer.

[Tinker](#)

Creating all sorts of minor inventions scratches your itch for problem-solving. Your engineering skills take a particularly creative bent, and no one knows what you'll come up with next. It might be a genius device... or it might explode.

[Warrior](#)

In your younger days, you waded into battle as a mercenary, a warrior defending a nomadic people, or a member of a militia or army. You might have wanted to break out from the regimented structure of these forces, or you could have always been as independent a warrior as you are now.

CLASSES

Members of any class will have plenty of moments to shine in this adventure, but keep in mind that dungeon-delving makes up a significant part of the campaign. Characters who can handle themselves in a fight with bizarre and monstrous foes will excel, but so will knowledgeable characters who can unlock some of the mysteries encountered by the party.

As this is an exploration-based adventure that generally takes place indoors in close quarters, classes that excel at wilderness themes, such as druids and rangers, should focus on choices that will allow them to function well outside of their usual environments.

LANGUAGES

On the continent of [Avistan](#) where [Ravounel](#) is located, the primary language spoken is [Taldane](#). This language is referred to as Common in this Player's Guide and throughout the adventure.

Although Common will likely suffice for most heroes, certain other languages might prove useful to know. [Aklo](#), a language thought to have otherworldly origins that is spoken in remote pockets of the Darklands below Golarion, would be useful for at least one character within the party to have.

More specific languages that aren't as useful for the entire adventure but might become situationally important for a small number of encounters include [Abyssal](#), [Celestial](#), Chthonian and [Necril](#).

SKILLS, LORES, AND FEATS

The heroes will perform best if the party contains a well-rounded selection of [skills](#), [lores](#), and [feats](#).



Skills

Acrobatics and Athletics are important for the physical mobility required in dungeons, while Arcana, Occultism, and Religion can particularly help to identify the strange creatures and decipher the clues that await them there. Society and Diplomacy are highly versatile and applicable, as is Thievery.

Lores

Useful Lore skills include Astronomy and Library Lore. More specialized but still situationally useful Lore skills include architecture, art, engineering, heraldry, [Desnan](#), [Thassilonian](#), and [Cheliox](#) Lore.

Feats

As far as good feats to take, consider any of the following or browse more at [this link](#) (filtered by primary rulebooks, General and Skills, levels 1-3).



- [Arcane Sense](#)
- [Assurance](#)
- [Battle Medicine](#)
- [Canny Acumen](#)
- [Diehard](#)
- [Fast Recovery](#)
- [Incredible Initiative](#)
- [Intimidating Glare](#)
- [Magical Crafting](#)
- [Oddity Identification](#)
- [Quick Identification](#)
- [Shield Block](#)
- [Skill Training](#)
- [Toughness](#)
- [Trick Magic Item](#)
- [Unmistakable Lore](#)

Ravounel Gazetteer

Ravounel is a burgeoning confederation located in southwestern [Avistan](#). Formerly the northernmost archduchy of [Cheliox](#) named the Archduchy of Ravounel, it seceded and became an independent country in 4717 AR (merely five years before the events of this adventure).

This new nation is bordered primarily by Cheliox to its south, while shadowy [Nidal](#) lies to its east. North and west lie the rough waters of the [Arcadian Ocean](#). The tourist destination [Vyre Island](#) lies off Ravounel's northern coast.

Ravounel's summers are warm and humid, its winters chilly, rainy and foggy.

[Chelaxian](#) humans make up a majority of Ravounel's population followed by [Varisians](#). Halfling and tiefling refugees from Cheliox make up another significant percentage of the population. The [Menador Mountains](#) are filled with orcs and half-orcs who are most common in the nearby communities, while the forbidding [Ravounel Forest](#) is populated by strix, fey, hags, and changelings.

Ravounel is still in the process of establishing lasting trade relations; its primary trading partner is Cheliox, exchanging goods like fish, marble, lumber, salt, silver, and other natural resources.

KINTARGO

The capital city of [Kintargo](#), also known as the Silver City, is situated on Nisroch Bay at the mouth of the Yolubilis River. Under Cheliox, Kintargo was part of the Archduchy of Ravounel. Unprotected by any natural barriers, the city and its citizens were among the most cosmopolitan in Cheliox, and the infernal influence so prominent in other Chelish cities was not nearly as noticeable in Kintargo. This also made the city a convenient home for those looking to overthrow the Chelish government.

Kintargo is a cultural capital famed for its art and entertainment and has long been known as a haven and draw for artists, particularly composers, directors, and musicians eager to expand on Cheliox's operatic traditions. Its skyline is dominated by three structures: Castle Kintargo, the Temple of Asmodeus, and the spires of the Alabaster Academy, although the central dome of the Kintargo Opera House is likely the city's greatest pride.

While the Church of Asmodeus remains Kintargo's most prominent, Temple Hill also houses temples for a few other faiths, including Zon-Kuthon, Abadar, and Shelyn. Under the rule of House Thrune, the worship of deities aligned with freedom or rebellion - including Calistria, Cayden Cailean, Desna, Milani, and Sarenrae - were strictly outlawed. In the few years since Ravounel won its independence, these deities are seeing a resurgence of worshippers.

Much of Kintargo's past is unknown, in part due to suspected tampering with historical documents and records by agents of House Thrune, but scraps of information do remain for those who know where to look.

THE FORMER ARCHDUCHY OF RAVOUNEL

Starting at the onset of the [Age of Lost Omens](#) in 4606 AR, the Chelish Civil War tore Chelias apart. By the time the dust settled several decades later, the diabolical ancient noble House Thrune had seized control of the nation and soon set about assigning new nobility to its lands. Due to its remote nature the Archduchy of Ravounel was viewed as an undesirable backwater posting.



CROOKED COVE

Not long before the Age of Lost Omens began, the small mining and lumber town of Crooked Cove sprung up on the shore of the Arcadian Ocean in the southwestern corner of what is now Ravounel.

After the Chelish Civil War, House Thrune appointed a man named Ioseff Xarwin as Paracount of the region with Crooked Cove as his seat. In 4642 AR he constructed Xarwin Manor as his family's residency - yet by a mere fifteen years later, the manor (and all of Crooked Cove) was mysteriously deserted.

At some point either the weather or perhaps a fleeing resident vandalized the town's sign, breaking off the "e" and "d" so that it simply read "Crookcove."

Now and then as the years rolled by, adventurers and explorers visited the region to explore the ruined town, but those who visited Xarwin Manor either vanished or remained quiet about their experiences therein. The years turned to decades, and Crooked Cove remained largely ignored. However, among certain circles, Xarwin Manor cultivated a reputation as one of Chelias's "most-haunted forgotten places."

What mysteries and fates await those who next explore "Crookcove...?"



Credits and Acknowledgments

ART

Cover image and content illustrations: Paizo

Map of Ravounel: [Imgur link](#) by [@evendarkergrey](#)

Map of Old Cheliax: [Inkarnate](#) by [@Danscath](#)

CONTENT

[Tales of Lost Omens: Adumbration](#)

James Jacobs

[Abomination Vaults Player's Guide](#)

Paizo

[Hell's Rebels Player's Guide](#)

Paizo

[Season of Ghosts Player's Guide](#)

Paizo

