

The Raven Prince – chapter 8 – The Saffron Plain

By Martin S. Beckley

Olivia wanted to warn Prudens that Corvidae would open the portal soon. She closed her eyes, focusing on Corvidae's memory of Prudens' last known location. Her forehead tingled and she felt a translucent cord snaking out from her head. Suddenly she was floating outside her body, the barely-visible cord providing her with a link back to her body. Everything in the chamber was an orange yellow, and each object had its own pulsating aura. Olivia was aware of three entities in the chamber with her: a vibrant purple silhouette of a bird she knew to be Raymond; a black foreboding cloud that she instantly recognised as Corvidae; and the trapped lavender, slightly fuzzy, silhouette of herself. Olivia floated through the wall into the yellow stairwell; her mental umbilical stretched easily giving her free movement. As she passed through the castle, she noticed that areas she had not physically been in before were muddy yellow, and fragmented as if viewed through a bathroom window. She left the confines of Carcer castle and ventured into the disjointed world; in the distance, she noticed a group of grey blobs. Within the two seconds she took deciding to investigate them, she had crossed the couple of kilometres and was floating next to them. The thirteen grey-silhouetted men strolled towards a gathering of hundreds. Olivia could not sense who they were so she tried accessing a couple of their minds at random. None knew of Prudens, but they all chanted the same thing to her, 'The unkindness must gather.'

Edward curled under the shield but a couple of guards prised it off him and marched it to the opposite end of the hall. The remaining guards gathered around Edward. 'Nina, help me.' Nina smashed her sword into a guard's chest and he staggered

backward into two other guards; as they hit the flagstone floor their armour burst open.

'They're empty!' exclaimed Nina. Edward ran to the table and dragged it under the second shield. As he removed it, another garrison of ten guards appeared. The fallen armour reassembled into three guards and they all stood up. Edward charged them using his shield to knock them down again. 'Nina, get the last shield,' he called as he ran at the second garrison. Nina dropped her sword and dragged the heavy table. Edward crashed into the guards, knocking all ten down. 'Strike!' he yelled and headed for the first shield. Nina removed the last shield and a third garrison appeared. Thirty guards now stood between Edward and Nina. Edward held up his two shields and called to Nina, 'You have to believe you are safe.' Nina clutched her shield close to her body, 'I'm safe, I'm safe,' she muttered. Fifteen guards marched toward her. 'I don't think it's working,' she yelled. The other fifteen guards advanced on Edward. 'Concentrate,' he called back. The crystals glowed bright and the guards stopped. Nina smiled, 'I can't believe it is working.' The crystals dimmed and the guards ran forward.

