

Session 1 - Traveling to Drakkenheim

Date: Feb 11th, 2025

Recruited by Obsidian Compass

The party is recruited to take on a mission to Drakkenheim

- **Leethis Corvus** calls a special meeting of the Obsidian Compass, the fledgling adventurer's guild that has broken the spell of the walls and began the exploration of the outside world, to discuss Drakkenheim. Westmar has always been an isolated Kingdom unto itself at the far inland location of the River Kingdoms Basin Canyon. But now 15 years after an eldritch storm destroyed the capital and plunged the region into civil war, the chaos has allowed the doors to be opened for outsiders to travel there.

You are part of the dozen Obsidian Compass members chosen to become the guild's boots on the ground, so that we can learn what is really happening there, as so far the stories are too unbelievable to be true.

- **Leethis** arranges each of your undercover stories - gainful legit employment in the region:
 - **Ned:** Sponsored by the Amethyst Academy to receive graduation ring. (Contact: **River**)
 - **Tark:** Hired as a bouncer at the Sword and Skull, owner **Frida Longhorn**
 - **Oiroa:** Hired by the local magistrate office for legal consultation work.
 - **Syndle:** Sponsored by a fight promoter named "**Knuckles**" for gladiator performance.
 - **Xakaris:** Hired by the harbormaster to work the River Drann docks.
 - **Yazzy:** Hired by Gilded Lily for a one-night performance, extended residency possible based on ticket sales to the one-night show. Owner: **Mr. Killian Vandire**

Tark Shares His Quest

Tark shares that his quest is to find those that murdered his bugbear tribe. His only evidence was the slash wounds and a broken finger from a clawed gauntlet. The metal of the claw is suspected to be something from the Darakkenheim area but it's not a lot to go on.

River Arrival

From there the journey took three weeks, first by land, then by large riverboat, before changing to a cargo longboat for the final stretch. Besides cargo there was a family of four, the **Hammersteins**, who had sold all their worldly possessions to bring their young children on a pilgrimage to “witness the salvation of The Falling Fire”.

The longboat sliced through the water, its weathered hull groaning with each ripple. A motley crew, a band of adventurers bound by fate and fortune, navigated the winding river. As the sun began its descent, casting long shadows across the water, the air grew thick with anticipation.

The river widened, and the first signs of civilization emerged. Towering stone walls, crowned with crenelations, loomed against the twilight sky.

- After a THOUGH investigation of the cargo and everyone onboard’s paperwork and lots of insults from **Captain Rein Highsworth**, of the 4th Provisional Expeditionary Force to Reclaim the Capital, you were then also inspected by a man requiring you declare any magical items and reviewing the mage licenses for the casters aboard. He used a monocle that Ned determined was casting Detect Magic.
- Once cleared through the gate to the docks, the Hlghmiths meet up with their contact, a zealot named **Joel of Osteen** that invites you to come share in the experience the wonders revealed to the flock by their prophetess Lucrica Mathias. Party takes a hard pass, except Syndle who says he will visit them later.

The Road to Emberwood

Irwin Marlow takes the party onboard a large covered wagon pulled by two draft horses after the dock hands loaded the wagon with cargo

- The party quickly accepts the wagon ride with the chatty yet professional Marlow who shares his folksy opinion about everything. Including:
 - Punishing storms are frequent across the land, foreshadowed by howling winds and then drenching rain. Areas where the sun never dries the ground, mud is a constant fact of life.
 - Most farms and villages within one hundred miles of Drakkenheim have been abandoned. Crops and livestock don’t grow anymore as the water and soil are contaminated by foul magic. The crops that do still grow are strange and bitter.
 - They are bound for Emberwood Village, which is the only settlement within two weeks’ travel of Drakkenheim that hasn’t been abandoned. It is about five miles south of the dark city.

- The increasing number of fortune-seekers, mercenaries, and prospectors exploring the ruins has turned the sleepy village into a boom town again.
- **Hooded Lanterns** are the local law, but they got bigger fish to fry than deal with highwaymen, or other criminals running rampant. They are stretched thin with their efforts to take back the city and keep the broader peace.
- The folk of **Emberwood Village** rely on outside supplies entirely. **Flamekeeper Hanna**, a priest of the **Sacred Flame**, provides seed funds to attract the caravanners.

Highway Men Fail Robbery

The wagon comes to a halt as a group of men on horses appear seemingly out of nowhere and block the roadway. (SHOCKER)

The lead rider approaches the wagon and you see he is pointing a heavy crossbow that sits across his lap.

(In a british gangster slang)

"Oi, oi! Hold there, friends... you're traveling on a royal road, eh? In these troubled times it falls to loyal servants like ourselves to keep these highways free of reprobates and outlaws, innit? I'm afraid we'll need to collect a fee to ensure your safe passage to the capital, eh?"

The party forces the leader to flee and they kill the other 4 thugs. One of which has a red diamond tattoo on his hand. Marlowe says there was a tattoo parlor in Emberwood and **Ludwig von Graff** later identifies this as something to do with the **Queen's Men** - a loose affiliation between a hundred gangs of brigands, outlaws, and scoundrels, all who swear fealty to the enigmatic "Queen".

Night Guests

With a half-day travel left ahead of them to Emberwood, the party camps in well-used campsite clearing. After dinner and some mead provided by Marlowe - a trio of harrowed adventurers approach the characters' campsite on the last night of their journey. They are tired, hungry, and hoping for a place to rest.

- **Ludwig von Graff**, a now penniless human noble who was trying to find the deed to his ancestral estate.
- **Endra Jansen**, a human scout who was seeking fortune to pay off an old debt.
- **Rikard Vos**, a human veteran who survived the civil war and had returned to Drakkenheim searching for lost family members.

They are leaving Drakkenheim after failing their quests and losing two of their other companions. They are bitter, defeated, cynical, and never plan to return, but share a few rumors about the city as they sit and share stories by the fire. They are hesitant to talk about their fallen friends, but

suggest watching out for the skratlings in Drakkenheim (“cross between giant rats, ratfolk and fucking demons or something!”

Rikard is suffering from severe “contamination”, he is delirious, mouth gaping open, his nails have fallen off, and his hair is coming out in patches. He is missing his tongue and mouth is inky black.

Before dawn, a commotion in the visitors tent wakes everyone except the sound-sleeper Syndle. When it becomes clear the commotion is the tent has turned violent, a tentacled abomination bursts forward standing over the half-eaten Ludwig and grappling Endra off the ground in one of its many tentacles.

The party uses Dissonant Whispers to render the beast ineffective as they hack it to death, only to be splattered by its acid blood, Unfortunately the creature ate Endra in its final moments

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