

Session 50: The Pale Man

Date: Apr 28th, 2026

Summary

The aftermath of the dragon's assault left the Iron Helms dwarves in a grim state. More than three-quarters of their number had been killed or twisted by grotesque mutations — tentacles, extra eyeballs, and an eerie glow marking those who had survived. The siblings among them had fared better, and Eloise, their cleric, was revived by the party so she could tend to the wounded. With her magic and the party's healing potions, every surviving dwarf was brought back from the brink, though the Iron Helms made no secret of their resentment, blaming the party for attracting the dragon in the first place.

The party turned their attention to the two captured delivery men — Rabbit, a quick-witted creature who had once been a halfling librarian, and Grin, a towering, simple-minded man with a heart as big as his frame. Rabbit was pulled from the bag and confronted about the Pale Man deception. He admitted freely that he and Grin had been impersonating the Pale Man for some time, using cadaver arms as a puppet and stilts to sell the illusion, all to keep their customers happy while the real Pale Man remained too busy for errands. When Grin was revived and learned that his beloved animal companions, Elmer and Porky, had not survived the conflict, he broke into ugly, heaving sobs that drew uncomfortable silence from the party.

With the truth laid bare, the party decided their best course of action was to have Grin and Rabbit lead them directly to the real Pale Man. The dwarves, not wanting to further anger their supplier, insisted the party take the delirium delivery along with them. Grin, still sniffing, took hold of the levitating carriage and began pulling it with surprising ease, and the group set off on the long journey across the ruins of Drakenheim toward the noble estates district. Along the way, Ned recalled from his extensive reading that Dr. Everett Freed — a name Rabbit had casually dropped — was the former head of the Drakenheim Insane Asylum, a surgeon who had descended into radical reanimation and mutagenics on the very fringe of what anyone would call science.

The journey was long, but Grin filled the silence with cheerful chatter about his brother Teefy, his fondness for the estate, and his complicated feelings of fear and gratitude toward the Pale Man who had saved him. Rabbit, by contrast, proved to be a thoughtful and eloquent conversationalist, answering the party's careful questions about the estate's operations. He explained that the place had once been called the Kleinberg Estate, that it housed three dozen or more inhabitants, and that the Pale Man spent most of his time in the manor house conducting research alongside Dr. Freed. The group crossed a river and passed through a gatehouse manned by six enormous trolls who found Grin absolutely hilarious and waved the whole procession through without a second

thought.

The Kleinberg Estate rose before them atop a rolling hill — a grand but decaying mansion with steep terracotta roofs, shattered and boarded-up windows, and stone walls draped in years of neglect. Hooded figures wandered the grounds, watering dying flowers and lounging near a brackish pond, while one small, feathered figure perched in a tree and lobbed pebbles at the newcomers. Teefy emerged from the gatehouse, a toothier and balder version of his brother, and greeted Grin with warmth before eyeing the party with suspicion. He summoned Raven from the stables — a massive woman with dark blue skin, stringy black hair, and glowing white eyes who managed the delirium dust operation — and she stepped up to the gate with cautious authority.

Ned appealed to Raven's pragmatism, invoking the name of Dr. Freed and the Academy's awareness of the estate's work, and she agreed to bring them inside to speak with Henry. Henry emerged from the main building — a large, intimidating figure with a skeletal arm and ribs visible through his skin — and made his feelings about Academy visitors abundantly clear with a blunt and colorful greeting. After Ned hinted that the party carried word of someone more important than even the Pale Man himself, Henry relented and agreed to escort two of them inside. The party split: Ned and Tark followed Henry into the mansion, while the others were led by Raven on a tour of the stables.

The stables had been stripped of any trace of their original purpose and converted into a makeshift factory, thick purple haze pouring from every crack in the walls. Inside, mutated workers — some with three eyes, some with four arms, some with no eyes at all — pounded volatile delirium into dust within glowing spheres of magical containment. A massive, dome-helmeted figure with no discernible face watched over the operation in silence. Meanwhile, Ned and Tark were swept through the mansion's grand foyer, past marble horse statues and walls lined with pastoral artwork, and up a sweeping double staircase to an upper chamber where the Pale Man himself was at work.

The Pale Man, Friedrich von Richten, wore a mirror mask that concealed his features, and he was in the middle of an experiment on a familiar face — Osiric, the wizard the party had previously encountered at the Black Ivory Inn, now trapped inside an arcane circle with a grotesque second being growing out of his side. Friedrich was displeased at the interruption, but when Ned mentioned Queen Leonora, the Pale Man went very still. Dr. Freed entered the room shortly after, wiping blood from his hand before offering it in greeting, and the mood shifted from irritation to cautious interest.

Henry gathered the rest of the party from the stables, and the entire group was seated at an elaborate dining table where mutated servants brought out an odd but edible feast. Friedrich donned his mirror mask for dinner and held court at the head of the table, railing against the Academy's fearfulness and praising the Haze as the future of Drakenheim. Dr. Freed, meanwhile, ate voraciously and peppered the party with enthusiastic questions about their mutations and backgrounds. Ned carefully positioned himself as a potential liaison, neither fully endorsing the Academy's position nor dismissing Friedrich's vision, and steered the conversation toward the Queen.

Friedrich explained that he could siphon mutations from one host to another — drawing the contamination out of a person and forcing it into a new vessel — but that restoring someone of royal blood, whose transformation had taken root over fifteen years, would require far better facilities than the estate could offer. What he needed, he said, was the Nexus: the heart of the city's power, deep within the Amethyst Academy's tower. The tower's doors, he noted, only opened for living Academy members bearing their rings — and he looked pointedly at Ned as he said it. His offer was simple: get him inside the tower, and he would give the Queen her mind back.

To prove his capabilities, Friedrich led the group back upstairs and demonstrated his power on Osiric. He removed his mirror mask to reveal pale skin with something writhing beneath it and lidless, unblinking eyes, then unleashed a torrent of crackling purple energy at the wizard. The mutation tore free from Osiric in a rush of octarine ooze and was forced into a half-dead dreg, which merged with it and collapsed into a bubbling, shapeless mass. Osiric, restored to himself for the first time in weeks, stared down at his own belly button in tearful disbelief, muttering that he'd had something like an umber hulk growing out of him and hadn't been sure he'd ever be rid of it.

The party negotiated to take Osiric back to the Academy as a living testament to Friedrich's abilities, and the Pale Man agreed without much fuss. He offered to sell one of his little mutated servants for an eye-watering sum, or suggested the party could take Birdbrain — the pebble-throwing creature in the tree — for free, an offer that was politely declined. Henry and Raven escorted the group out through the iron gates, and the party departed the Kleinberg Estate with Osiric in tow, the homunculus having silently observed everything throughout. Ned reflected on what he had witnessed: the Pale Man was the most powerful practitioner of his craft he had ever encountered, and — unsettlingly — everything Friedrich had said appeared to be the truth.

Memorable Moments

"Hey, dwarves, why don't you line up for healing? Just to make it easier, everyone get aligned and hold of this chain. It's a healing chain."
— Tark

Sarcastically suggesting the dwarves hold a chain so the party could 'cast lightning five times and then leave,' mocking the dwarves' ingratitude

"Silly rabbit, tricks are for kids."
— Ned

Deadpan response after learning it was Grin's idea for Rabbit to impersonate the Pale Man using cadaver arms as a puppet

"Grin ugly-cries upon learning that Elmer and Porky did not survive, sobbing loudly and mourning his lost animal companions."

—

Grin had just been revived and immediately asked about his friends; the news of their deaths devastated him completely

"Ned recalls from historical records that Dr. Everett Freed was the former head of the Drakenheim Insane Asylum — a surgeon turned reanimator and mutagenist on the very fringe of science."

—

Rolling a 26 on a history check after Rabbit casually mentioned Freed's name, revealing the disturbing background of the Pale Man's partner

"Welcome to the Kleinberg Estate, currently run by the Pale Man Friedrich von Richten, his esteemed academy retiree who no longer wants you purple cloaked sons of bitches at his place. Go home with you."

— Henry

Henry's blunt and hostile greeting to the party upon emerging from the mansion, making his feelings about Academy visitors crystal clear

"The Pale Man unleashes a torrent of purple electrical energy at Osiric, siphoning a grotesque spatial displacement mutation out of him and forcing it into a half-dead dreg, leaving Osiric restored while the dreg merges with the extracted mutation."

—

A chilling demonstration of the Pale Man's power, proving he can do exactly what he claims — at a terrible cost to the vessel receiving the mutation

"I have a belly button again. I had basically an umber hulk growing out of me."

— Osiric

Overjoyed and slightly traumatized after the Pale Man siphoned his mutation away, marveling at his own restored body

Scenes

Aftermath at The Spokes

The party deals with the fallout of the dragon attack and the confrontation with the delivery crew, while the Iron Helms dwarves recover.

- The party assesses the damage to the Iron Helms dwarves, noting that more than three-quarters have been killed or mutated by the recent dragon attack, with various mutations including tentacles, extra eyeballs, and glowing.
- Eloise is revived and begins healing the surviving dwarves using her remaining magic, ultimately bringing all survivors back.
- The party discusses the captured delivery crew — Rabbit and Grin — and what to do with them next.
- Yazy and the party consider how to persuade the dwarves to leave the dangerous area and cut their losses.
- The Iron Helms blame the party for attracting the dragon and are not happy with their presence, though they refrain from open conflict.
- The group decides to use the captured delivery men to lead them to the real Pale Man rather than following them stealthily.

Interrogating Rabbit and Reviving Grin

The party wakes the captured delivery crew and learns the truth about the Pale Man deception before setting out for the estate.

- Rabbit is pulled from the bag and confronted about the Pale Man deception; he admits that he and Grin were posing as the Pale Man to keep customers happy, as the real Pale Man is too busy for errands.
- Rabbit reveals the hierarchy at the estate: Raven runs the delirium operation, Henry is the second-in-command, and the Pale Man's favorite is someone called the Lyssas.
- Grin is revived and mourns the loss of his animal companions, Elmer and Porky, who were killed in the previous conflict, sobbing loudly.
- The party learns that Grin's brother Teefy is manning the gatehouse at the estate.

- The party decides to have Grin pull the levitating carriage back to the estate, with the dwarves' delirium delivery left in the wagon.
- The dwarves, not wanting to anger the Pale Man further, insist the party take the delirium delivery with them.

The Long Trek to the Kleinberg Estate

The party travels across the ruins of Drakenheim with Grin and Rabbit, heading toward the Pale Man's domain.

- Grin pulls the levitating carriage as the party makes the long journey from The Spokes toward the noble estates district.
- Syndle rides alongside Grin and attempts to befriend him, learning that Grin loves his brother Teefy, is happy living at the estate, and is a little scared of Henry and the Pale Man.
- Ned recalls historical records identifying Dr. Everett Freed as the former head of the Drakenheim Insane Asylum — a surgeon turned radical reanimator and mutagenist.
- Rabbit, revealed to be quite intelligent and eloquent, answers questions about the estate, noting it was once called the Kleinberg Estate and has three dozen or more inhabitants.
- Rabbit reveals that the Pale Man cures contaminated and mutated people, giving them back their sanity and agency, and that he himself was once a halfling librarian.
- The group crosses a river and passes through a gatehouse guarded by six giant trolls who are friendly with Grin and let the party through without issue.

Arrival at the Kleinberg Estate

The party arrives at the walled Kleinberg Estate and negotiates entry through the estate's eccentric and mutated guardians.

- The party reaches the decaying Kleinberg Estate — a grand mansion atop a rolling hill with terracotta roofs, boarded-up windows, a large stable, and hooded figures wandering the grounds.
- Teefy, Grin's large and toothy brother, greets the group from the gatehouse and learns of the demise of the delivery bojhaks and pigs.
- Teefy summons Raven from the stables — a massive woman with dark blue skin, stringy black hair, and glowing white eyes who manages the delirium dust operation.
- Raven takes the delirium delivery from the wagon and orders Rabbit inside.
- Ned uses his Academy status and mentions Dr. Everett Freed to persuade Raven to grant them an audience, rolling a 16 on persuasion.

- Raven uses a piercing, whistle-like hum to summon Henry from the main building.
- Henry, a large man with a skeletal arm and visible ribs, emerges and initially threatens the 'purple cloaked' Academy visitors before agreeing to take a small group inside.
- A small, feathered, bird-like mutant named Birdbrain is spotted in a tree throwing pebbles at the party.
- Grin climbs into the guard house and falls asleep almost immediately.
- The party splits: Ned and Tark follow Henry into the mansion, while the others are led by Raven to tour the delirium dust factory in the stables.

The Stables and the Mansion Interior

While one group enters the opulent mansion, the others witness the grim reality of the delirium processing operation in the stables.

- Ned and Tark enter a grand foyer featuring a massive golden chandelier with 100 candles, marble horse statues flanking a double staircase, and walls lined with horse-themed artwork.
- Raven leads the rest of the party into the stables, which have been converted into a hazardous delirium dust factory emanating a thick purple haze.
- Inside the stables, mutated dregs work within glowing magical barrier spheres, pounding volatile delirium into dust with hammers.
- The party observes various mutated dregs living in the stalls — some with three eyes, no eyes, or four arms — overseen by a massive, helmeted figure with a dome-like metal head and no discernible face.

Audience with the Pale Man

Ned and Tark are brought before the Pale Man, finding him in the middle of a disturbing experiment on a familiar face.

- Henry leads Ned and Tark to an upstairs chamber where they find the Pale Man, Friedrich von Richten, wearing his mirror mask.
- The party discovers Osiric, the wizard previously encountered at the Black Ivory Inn, trapped inside an arcane circle with a second mutated being growing out of his side.
- The Pale Man explains his philosophy of advancing and transcending through contamination rather than curing it.
- Dr. Everett Freed, a blood-stained surgeon and mutagenist, enters the room and introduces himself.

- Ned hooks the Pale Man's interest by mentioning Queen Leonora and the possibility of restoring her mind.
- The Pale Man agrees to a dinner meeting to discuss a potential collaboration regarding the Queen.

Dinner and Negotiations at the Kleinberg Estate

The entire party gathers for a strange feast hosted by the Pale Man and Dr. Freed to discuss the future of Drakenheim and the Queen.

- Henry gathers the rest of the party from the stables for an elaborate dinner served by mutated dregs.
- The Pale Man briefly removes his mirror mask, revealing pale skin with worms crawling beneath it and lidless eyes, before donning it again for the meal.
- Dr. Everett Freed introduces himself as the former director of the Drakenheim Asylum and current reanimator and mutagenist.
- The Pale Man criticizes the Amethyst Academy for their lack of vision and expresses his desire to embrace the Haze rather than hide it.
- Ned positions himself as a potential liaison between the Academy and the Pale Man, suggesting collaboration to help restore Queen Leonora.
- The Pale Man explains that he can siphon mutations from one being to another, but restoring the Queen would require better facilities — specifically, access to the Nexus within the Amethyst Academy's tower.
- The Pale Man states that the tower door only opens for living Academy members with their rings, and proposes a deal: the party gets him inside, and he will restore the Queen.
- Ned notes that the Silver Order has seized the cathedral and threatens to burn Drakenheim to destroy delirium, adding urgency to the discussion.
- The Pale Man mentions his favorite creation, the Lyssas, whom the Silver Order would call a demon.
- The party is led back upstairs to witness a demonstration of the Pale Man's power.

The Siphoning of Osiric and Departure

The party witnesses the Pale Man's mutagenic siphon demonstrated on Osiric before departing the estate with the wizard in tow.

- The Pale Man removes his mirror mask and unleashes a torrent of purple electrical energy at Osiric, siphoning the spatial displacement mutation out of him and into a half-dead dreg.
- The mutation crumbles away from Osiric, leaving him restored to normal, while the dreg merges with the extracted mutation and becomes a bubbling mass.
- Osiric is overjoyed at being freed from the mutation that had been growing from his belly for a month, repeatedly marveling at having his belly button back.
- Ned negotiates to take Osiric back to the Academy as a living demonstration of the Pale Man's capabilities.
- The Pale Man offers to sell one of his little mutated servants for a steep price, or suggests the party could take Birdbrain from the tree for free.
- The party departs the estate with Osiric, escorted out by Henry and Raven.
- The party's homunculus, which had been silently observing throughout, communicates telepathically with Eldric Runeweaver about the Pale Man's proposal.
- Ned assesses the Pale Man as the most powerful caster he has ever witnessed, potentially a peer to Eldric, and confirms that the Pale Man appeared to be telling the truth throughout their meeting.

NPCs

Eloise

A cleric and one of the Iron Helms siblings who was revived by the party and used her remaining spells to heal the surviving dwarves.

Gertrude

One of the Iron Helms siblings who survived the dragon attack without a scratch.

Rabbit

A clever and eloquent rabbit-like being who was once a halfling librarian, transformed by the Pale Man. He had been impersonating the Pale Man during deliveries and served as a guide and source of information for the party on the journey to the estate.

Grin

A large, simple-minded man who pulled the party's levitating carriage to the estate. He mourned the loss of his animal companions Elmer and Porky and spoke fondly of his brother Teefy and the Pale Man who saved him.

Teefy

Grin's large, toothy brother who mans the front gatehouse of the Kleinberg Estate. He is similar in size to Grin but with more teeth and less hair.

Raven

A massive woman with dark blue skin, stringy black hair, and glowing white eyes who manages the delirium dust grinding operation in the estate's stables. She is cautious with visitors and reports to Henry in a business sense.

Henry

A large, intimidating figure with a skeletal arm and visible ribs who serves as the butler and second-in-command of the Kleinberg Estate. He is the primary gatekeeper to the Pale Man and threatened to slay the party if they wasted the Pale Man's time.

Birdbrain

A small, feathered, beaky mutant who lives in the trees on the estate grounds and throws pebbles at visitors. Described as a lovable nuisance by Rabbit, and offered to the party for free by the Pale Man.

Friedrich von Richten

Also known as the Pale Man, a former Amethyst Academy researcher who was cast out for using apprentices as test subjects. He has pale skin with worms crawling beneath it, lidless eyes, and a green stone flickering between his teeth. He wears a mirror mask and seeks to transcend humanity through delirium-induced mutations. He claims he can siphon mutations from one host to another and wants access to the Academy's Nexus to restore Queen Leonora.

Dr. Everett Freed

The former head of the Drakenheim Insane Asylum, now a blood-stained surgeon and mutagenist working alongside the Pale Man. He is enthusiastic about meeting new subjects and introduced himself with a blood-covered hand. Ned recalled him from historical records as a surgeon turned reanimator and mutagenist on the very fringe of science.

Osiric

An Academy wizard previously encountered at the Black Ivory Inn, found trapped in an arcane circle at the Kleinberg Estate with a spatial displacement mutation — a second being growing out of his side. The Pale Man siphoned the mutation out of him, restoring him to normal, and the party negotiated to take him back to the Academy.

Locations

The Spokes

The dangerous area where the session begins, with the party recovering from the recent dragon attack alongside the battered Iron Helms dwarves.

Kleinberg Estate

A grand but decaying mansion atop a rolling hill, surrounded by stone walls, featuring a gatehouse, a brackish pond with dying trees, and stables converted into a delirium dust factory. Home to the Pale Man and three dozen or more mutated inhabitants.

The Stables

A makeshift factory on the estate grounds filled with a thick purple haze, where mutated dregs pound volatile delirium into dust inside glowing magical barrier spheres. Some stalls serve as living quarters for the dregs.

Kleinberg Mansion

A large two-story property with a grand foyer featuring a golden chandelier with 100 candles, marble horse statues, a double staircase, and walls lined with horse-themed artwork. The upper floor contains the Pale Man's experimental chamber with arcane circles.

Items

Delirium Shooters

Concentrated doses of delirium in shooter or syringe form, used by the Iron Helms dwarves every eight hours to stave off mutations. The delivery contained approximately 400 doses, which the party brought along to the Kleinberg Estate.

Levitating Carriage

A transport vehicle enchanted with levitation magic, making it easy for Grin to pull despite its size. The carriage was used to transport the delirium delivery to the Kleinberg Estate.

Mirror Mask

The signature headwear of the Pale Man, used to hide his mutated features — pale skin with worms crawling beneath it and lidless eyes. He briefly removed it during the siphoning demonstration.

Homunculus

A magical construct belonging to Eldric Runeweaver that accompanied Ned to silently observe the party's negotiations with the Pale Man, communicating telepathically with Eldric throughout.

Spells

Purge Contamination

A third-level spell discussed by the party as a valuable service they could offer the mutated Iron Helms dwarves. It was noted that the Pale Man's associate Reginald might have access to it, but could only cast it once or twice per day.

Levitation

A spell used to keep the delivery carriage afloat, making it easy for Grin to pull on the long journey to the Kleinberg Estate.

Illusion

Magic previously used by Rabbit and Grin to disguise themselves and their mounts as the Pale Man and horses during deliveries, as admitted by Rabbit during interrogation.

Zone of Truth

Cast by a party member during the interrogation of Rabbit to help ensure he was providing honest information about the estate and the Pale Man's operations.

Magical Barrier Spheres

Glowing spheres of magical force used in the stables to contain the explosive energy of delirium while dregs pound it into dust with hammers.

Mutagenic Siphon

A powerful technique demonstrated by the Pale Man involving a torrent of purple electrical energy used to draw a spatial displacement mutation out of Osiric and force it into a half-dead dreg, leaving Osiric restored while the dreg merged with the extracted mutation.

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