Session 51: Pale Man Bugs Out

Date: May 5th, 2026

Summary

As the party cleared the deepest reaches of the haze surrounding the Kleinberg estate, the long-silent homunculus perched among them suddenly stirred to life. The voice of Eldrick Runeweaver crackled through the tiny creature, wanting to know what had transpired within the fog-shrouded grounds. After catching up through his familiar's witnessed memories, Eldrick's tone turned cold and resolute — no deal could be made with the Pale Man. Friedrich von Lichten had surrendered his humanity entirely, and the Academy would never allow a creature like him access to the Nexus or the Inscrutable Tower.

Eldrick's orders were clear: the Pale Man had to be neutralized, and his spellbook or his head was to be recovered. The Academy needed to understand the siphon spell, even if it had been born from the mind of a madman. A strike team was already being dispatched to the tower, and Eldrick himself promised to follow. The party, battered and low on resources, agreed they needed rest before walking back into the lion's den, and so they took the time to recover their strength before turning their boots back toward the estate.

Returning to the Kleinberg grounds, the party observed the dining room was a grotesque parody of a family meal, with delirium dregs seated around the long feasting table beneath crooked paintings defaced with crude drawings and words scrawled in food or blood. The solarium had been stripped of anything valuable, its bookshelves dismantled and its floors covered in dirty animal fur rugs, while more dregs milled about aimlessly. A young boy could be seen near the pond, tossing pebbles into the water and speaking to it as though it answered back.

The party approached the front gate with a carefully constructed bluff, presenting themselves as visitors returning with an answer for the Pale Man. Osiric lent his voice to the effort, convincing the dim-witted guard Grin that they were expected guests. The gate swung open, and the group walked the grounds with practiced calm — though as they passed the towering Teefyleaning against a tree, two members of the party felt the unsettling sensation of something probing at the edges of their minds. They pressed on, betraying nothing.

Inside the grand foyer, the massive guardian Henry waited at the top of the staircase, his enormous frame casting long shadows across the horse-themed artwork lining the walls. Yazzy

spoke smoothly, assuring Henry that they had come promptly with their answer, and the great creature led them through a winding path of narrow corridors and secret stairs toward the Pale Man's private chambers. As they moved, Ned quietly wove a protective aura around the group, preparing for what was to come. When a bird-like creature suddenly pecked open a window and slipped inside, the fragile pretense of diplomacy shattered — and the fight began.

Syndle was the first to move, charging across the room with a battle cry and burying his axe into the Pale Man with savage force. Yazzy conjured writhing shadowy tendrils that lashed out at the Pale Man and Henry, draining their vitality. Tark followed with a reckless, all-out assault that left the Pale Man staggering, already well past the point of easy recovery. The Pale Man retaliated by erupting into a swarm of biting insects that filled the room, restraining the party and sapping their strength before he slithered up the wall on his back like a serpent and escaped through a doorway. Yazzy unleashed a devastating psychic explosion using a delirium shard, catching the Pale Man and several others in a brilliant burst of mental force.



The Pale Man struck back with terrifying power, sending a bolt of chain lightning arcing through Tark and leaping to three other party members in rapid succession. Ned attempted to suppress the spell but could not contain it, and the lightning tore through the group. Before the party could recover, the Pale Man unleashed an even more catastrophic attack — a massive cone of prismatic delirium energy that fired rays of force, radiant light, and necrotic darkness in every direction. Xakarium, Oiroa, and Osiric were overwhelmed and collapsed, while the rest of the party was left battered and barely standing.

With the party reeling, Ned made a desperate gamble. He reached into his pack and drew out the delirium geode — a massive, potent crystal — and channeled every ounce of its power into a single, earth-shaking psychic blast. The explosion tore through the room, and the Pale Man simply ceased to be. His form dissolved into a dispersing cloud of insects that scattered through the hallways, and his dark cloak fell to the floor like a discarded robe. But before the party could draw breath, Dr. Everett Freed phased out of existence and was replaced by a monstrous new form — had he been a Haze Hulk in disguise all along?

What followed was a brutal, grinding battle against the estate's remaining servants. Grin and Teefycharged into the fray, with Grin slamming into Ned and knocking him to the ground. A horrific creature that had been restrained within the arcane circle began tearing chunks of its own necrotic flesh from its chest and hurling them at the party, dropping Yazzy, Xakarium, and Oiroa multiple times in rapid succession. Ned repeatedly called upon the protective Shield power stored in his ring to deflect blow after blow, while Tark raged through the room like a force of nature, cutting down enemies with each swing of Ignatius.

Oiroa, even while lying wounded on the ground, managed to release a wave of restorative energy that washed over the entire party, pulling multiple allies back from the edge of death at once. Yazzy, who had been knocked unconscious more times than anyone could count, suddenly stirred on her own — some deep reserve of will pulling her back into the fight. Syndle downed a healing draught and threw himself back into the melee, using his magical boots to send enemies sprawling before finishing them with his axe. Tark cleaved through the grotesque flesh-hurling creature and the last of the mutated dregs, finally silencing the room.

Ned turned his attention to the Pale Man's spellbook, which sat on a table amid the wreckage of the workshop. He reached out carefully with a conjured magical hand to retrieve it — and the moment his invisible fingers made contact, a hidden arcane trap triggered. The book vanished in a flash of dimensional energy, teleporting away to some unknown location before anyone could stop it. The Academy's primary objective, the siphon spell, had slipped through their fingers entirely. Oiroa knelt beside Xakarium's still form and, using a shard of delirium as a focus, poured her power into a desperate act of restoration that pulled him back from death itself.

The party stood amid the wreckage of the Pale Man's estate, surrounded by fallen enemies and the faint dispersing traces of insect swarms. The Pale Man was gone, his body dissolved and his spellbook lost to the winds of magic. Dr. Everett Freed had revealed his true monstrous nature and escaped into the chaos. The estate's remaining dregs still roamed the grounds, and somewhere out in the city, a strike team was fighting its way toward the Inscrutable Tower. The party had won the room — but the war for Drakkenheim was far from over.

Memorable Moments

> "Ned channels the power of a delirium geode into a massive psychic blast, obliterating the Pale Man. His body dissolves into a cloud of dispersing bugs as his cloak falls to the floor like Obi-Wan Kenobi's robes."
> —

The party had been battered by chain lightning and a prismatic spray; Ned went all-in with the geode to finish the fight

> "The Pale Man unleashes his Octarian spray in a massive cone, dropping Xakarium, Oiroa, and Osiric simultaneously while dealing devastating force and radiant damage to the rest of the party."
> —

The party thought they had the upper hand after wounding the Pale Man heavily; the spray turned the tide in an instant

> "The party realizes mid-planning that they have been casually carrying fifteen delirium shards in their pockets the whole time, with Syndle admitting he had been using one large geode to clean his teeth."
> —

The group was panicking about lacking resources to fight the Pale Man before the accidental pocket-check revelation

> "Dr. Everett Freed is revealed to be a Haze Hulk in disguise, phasing into a monstrous form after surviving the psychic blast that destroyed the Pale Man."
> —

The party believed the battle was nearly over after killing the Pale Man, only to discover their trusted collaborator was a monster

> "Yazzy miraculously regains consciousness after rolling a natural 20 on a death saving throw, coming back to life on her own in the middle of the chaotic melee."
> —

Yazzy had been knocked unconscious multiple times throughout the fight and was on her last death save

> "Ned attempts to claim the Pale Man's spellbook with a mage hand, only for a glyph of warding to trigger, teleporting the book away to an unknown location before the party can study the siphon spell."
> —

Recovering the spellbook was a primary objective given by Eldrick Runeweaver; losing it this way was a bitter end to a brutal fight

> "Operation Hide Behind Osiric is a go."
> — Tark

Reacting to the reminder that Osiric, a powerful Academy wizard, was accompanying the party into the dangerous confrontation

Scenes

A Message from Eldrick Runeweaver

As the party leaves the Kleinberg estate, Eldrick Runeweaver communicates through his homunculus to deliver new orders regarding the Pale Man.

- The party exits the deep haze of the Kleinberg estate, causing Eldrick's homunculus to awaken.
- Eldrick Runeweaver speaks through the construct, questioning if the party found Friedrich von Lichten.
- Eldrick declares that the Pale Man cannot be trusted and refuses to grant him access to the Nexus or the Inscrutable Tower.
- The Academy orders the party to neutralize the Pale Man and recover his spellbook or his head to study the siphon spell.
- Eldrick promises to dispatch a strike team to the tower and eventually join the party himself.
- The party discusses their lack of resources and decides to take a long rest before returning to confront the Pale Man.

Planning the Infiltration

The party discusses their strategy for re-entering the Kleinberg estate to confront the Pale Man.

- The party debates whether to use social skills and bluffing or a direct assault to enter the estate.
- Syndle expresses an interest in acquiring a squire from among the child servants at the estate.
- Yazzy proposes a plan of subterfuge to get close to the Pale Man before launching a surprise attack.
- The group considers how to protect their minds from magical detection during the approach.

Return to the Kleinberg Estate

The party arrives at the front gate and successfully bluffs their way past the guards, observing the estate's changed state.

- The party observes the dining room and solarium, noting they are now overrun with delirium dregs and vandalized with crude drawings and blood.
- They notice a dozen dregs working in the stables workshop, grinding delirium and creating suppositories.
- A young boy named Brendan is seen throwing pebbles into a pond and seemingly talking to it.
- The party approaches the front gate and is greeted by Grin, who is stationed in the guard house.
- Osiric assists in the deception, convincing Grin that they are returning with an answer for the Pale Man.
- Grin opens the gate and allows the party to enter the grounds.
- As they walk up the path past Tifi, Ned and another party member feel a magical probe attempting to penetrate their thoughts.

The Foyer and the Ascent

The party enters the manor and is escorted by the massive Henry toward the Pale Man's private chambers.

- The party enters the foyer, noting the grand chandelier, marble horse statues, and horse-themed artwork.
- Henry, a large and ominous guardian, meets them at the top of the stairs.
- Yazzy convinces Henry that they have a prompt answer for his master.
- Henry leads the party through the house, squeezing through narrow doors, toward a set of secret stairs.
- Ned casts Aura of Purity as a protective measure as they move through the corridors.

Audience with the Pale Man

The party reaches the Pale Man's workshop, finding him in the middle of a dark experiment, and prepares to strike.

- The party enters a cramped room where the Pale Man is working on a mutated creature within an arcane circle.
- Dr. Everett Freed appears from a southern door to greet the returning visitors.
- The party notices a human skull in a jar, which they suspect might be a demi-lich.
- The Pale Man expresses annoyance at being disturbed but prepares to hear their answer.
- Tark prepares his magical sword, Ignatius, keeping it partially sheathed to hide its radiant glow.
- A bird-like creature pecks open a window, signaling the start of combat.

Ambush at the Kleinberg Estate

The party launches a surprise attack on the Pale Man and his associates within his estate.

- Syndle initiates the combat by charging fifteen feet toward the Pale Man and entering a rage.
- Yazzy conjures shadowy tendrils that lash out at enemies in the room, harming the Pale Man and Henry.
- Syndle delivers a series of brutal axe strikes against the Pale Man, leaving him severely wounded.
- Tark enters a rage and recklessly attacks the Pale Man, dealing massive damage.
- The Pale Man retaliates by erupting into a mass of swarming bugs that restrain the party and deal necrotic damage.
- The Pale Man slithers up the wall and across the ceiling to escape into an adjacent room.
- Xakarium unleashes a powerful delirium blast using a delirium shard, catching the Pale Man and several other creatures in a psychic explosion.

The Pale Man's Counterattack

The Pale Man retaliates with devastating magical attacks, dropping several party members.

- The Pale Man retaliates with a chain lightning spell that arcs through Tark, Xakarium, Yazzy, and Syndle.
- Ned attempts to counterspell the Pale Man's chain lightning but fails to stop it.
- Oiroa provides vital healing to Tark as the party struggles under the magical onslaught.
- The Pale Man unleashes a prismatic delirium spray — an Octarian spray — in a massive cone, hitting everyone in the room with various rays of energy.
- Syndle is struck by a force ray, suffering significant damage, while others narrowly avoid levels of contamination or extra-dimensional displacement.
- Xakarium and Oiroa are overwhelmed by the magical rays and fall unconscious.
- Osiric is also caught in the blast and falls unconscious.
- The Pale Man follows up with an electric jolt that shocks Tark, limiting his ability to attack on his next turn.

The Destruction of the Pale Man

Ned channels the power of a delirium geode into a massive psychic blast that obliterates the Pale Man.

- Ned channels the power of a delirium geode into a massive delirium blast, maximizing its destructive potential.
- The psychic explosion obliterates the Pale Man, whose body dissolves into a cloud of dispersing bugs that scatter throughout the hallway.
- Dr. Everett Freed survives the blast but is revealed to be a Haze Hulk in disguise as he phases into a more monstrous form.
- The Pale Man's cloak falls to the ground like a discarded robe as his form disperses.

The Battle Continues Against the Pale Man's Servants

With the Pale Man destroyed, the party must now contend with his remaining mutated servants, including Grin, Tifi, and a horrific Gutbuster creature.

- Syndle unleashes a draconic cry to bolster the party's morale and attacks a mutated giant.
- Tark activates the magical sword Ignatius and strikes down Henry.
- Grin and Teefycharge into the fray, with Grin slamming into Ned and Tark, knocking Ned prone.
- A mutated creature in the arcane circle begins tearing flesh from its own chest and hurling it at the party, inflicting necrotic damage.
- Syndle's wild magic manifests a flump that explodes behind the mutated creature.
- Ned uses Misty Step to escape his prone position and administers a healing potion to Oiroa.
- Syndle consumes a superior healing potion and continues his assault on the mutated giant.
- Tark administers a healing potion to Yazzy, bringing her back into the fight.
- Dr. Everett Freed uses necrotic magic against the party while hiding behind the massive form of Tifi.
- A death ward prevents Dr. Everett Freed from dying when Syndle's axe throw nearly finishes him.
- Tark cleaves through several mutated dregs with powerful strikes, clearing a path through the crowded room.
- Ned repeatedly uses his ring of spell storing to cast protective shield spells, deflecting numerous attacks.
- Syndle's wild magic surges again, causing bolts of radiant lightning to shoot from his chest at his enemies.
- The Gutbuster creature throws chunks of its own necrotic flesh at the party, knocking several members unconscious multiple times.
- Oiroa casts a mass cure wounds spell while prone, reviving multiple fallen allies simultaneously.
- Yazzy miraculously regains consciousness after a critical success on a death saving throw.
- Ned unleashes a lightning bolt that arcs through the room, striking Teefyand the mutated Dr. Everett Freed, finally downing Tifi.
- Syndle uses his magical boots to knock a creature prone before finishing it off with his axe.
- Tark cuts down the Gutbuster and the final remaining mutated dreg.
- Oiroa uses a delirium shard to cast revivify on Xakarium, bringing him back from death.
- Ned attempts to retrieve the Pale Man's spellbook with a mage hand, but a glyph of warding triggers, causing the book to teleport away via a dimension door effect.

NPCs

Eldrick Runeweaver

A high-ranking member of the Amethyst Academy who communicates via a homunculus familiar. He is adamant that the Pale Man cannot be trusted, refuses to grant him access to the Nexus or the Inscrutable Tower, and orders the party to neutralize him and recover his spellbook or head.

The Pale Man

Formerly Friedrich von Lichten, a powerful and mutated wizard who has abandoned his humanity. He possesses a unique siphon spell and defends himself with swarms of bugs, wall-crawling, chain lightning, and a devastating Octarian spray before being obliterated by a psychic blast.

Dr. Everett Freed

A collaborator of the Pale Man who was present during the confrontation. He survived multiple magical blasts and was protected by a death ward, before being revealed as a Haze Hulk in disguise when he phased into a more monstrous form.

Henry

A massive, large-sized guardian who stands ominously in the foyer and escorts visitors to the Pale Man. He was struck down by Tark during the battle.

Osiric

An Academy wizard accompanying the party, known for possessing a powerful version of Eldritch Blast. He helped the group bluff their way past the gate guards and was knocked unconscious by the Pale Man's Octarian spray during the battle.

Grin

A guard at the Kleinberg estate who is easily swayed by Osiric's influence to let the party pass through the front gate. He later charges into the battle as a mutated hostile, slamming into Ned and knocking him prone.

Tifi

A large mutated servant at the estate seen leaning against a tree as the party enters. During the battle, he wields a rusty blade, regenerates wounds, and attacks multiple party members before being struck down by Ned's lightning bolt.

Brendan

A young boy found on the estate grounds throwing pebbles into a pond and seemingly talking to it as if it were responding.

Gutbuster

A horrific mutated creature that attacks by tearing chunks of its own necrotic flesh from its chest and hurling them at enemies, causing necrotic damage and contamination. It knocked several party members unconscious before being slain by Tark.

Locations

Kleinberg Estate

The residence of the Pale Man, surrounded by a persistent and thick magical haze that interferes with familiar links. The estate is now heavily populated by delirium dregs and shows signs of magical decay and vandalism throughout its rooms.

Dining Room

A room with a long feasting table and a throne-like seat at the far end, now covered in crude drawings and blood, where dregs eat in a mockery of a family meal. Paintings hang crooked and faces have been drawn over the portraits.

Solarium

A once well-appointed drawing room now filled with cobwebs, broken furniture, dismantled bookshelves, and dirty animal fur rugs, with five delirium dregs milling about.

Foyer

A grand entrance hall featuring a huge golden chandelier holding 100 candles, marble horse statues flanking the grand staircase, and walls lined with horse-themed artwork. A large stained-glass window fills the room with colored light.

Pale Man's Workshop

A cramped upper-floor room containing an arcane circle used for experiments on mutated creatures. It became the site of a chaotic and deadly magical battle, including prismatic energy, psychic explosions, and the final destruction of the Pale Man.

Items

Homunculus

A small construct used by Eldrick Runeweaver as a familiar link to communicate with the party remotely. Its connection was hampered by the persistent haze around the Kleinberg estate, causing it to remain silent until the party moved clear of the deepest part of the fog.

Delirium Shards

Small fragments of eldritch meteorite crystals worth approximately 500 gold pieces each. The party realized they had pocketed fifteen shards, which can be used to power potent magical effects and spells.

Delirium Geode

A large, potent cluster of delirium crystal used by Ned as a powerful arcane focus to amplify his delirium blast to its absolute maximum, resulting in the destruction of the Pale Man.

Ignatius

Tark's magical sword that can be activated to emit radiant light and create a zone of truth. Tark kept it partially drawn before combat to have it ready, and used it to strike down Henry and other mutated enemies.

Human Skull in a Jar

A skull kept in the Pale Man's workshop, referred to by the party as 'Horatio' and suspected of being a demi-lich.

Ring of Spell Storing

A magical ring used by Ned to store and rapidly cast multiple protective shield spells during the heat of combat, allowing him to deflect numerous attacks throughout the battle.

Superior Potion of Healing

A potent restorative tonic used by both Syndle and Ned to recover from near-fatal wounds during the battle, restoring significant hit points.

Greater Potion of Healing

A healing draught used to revive Oiroa after she was incapacitated during the battle.

Shard of Delirium

A glowing meteorite crystal used by Oiroa as a material component to fuel a revivify spell, bringing Xakarium back from death after the battle.

The Pale Man's Spellbook

A tome of forbidden knowledge that was protected by a glyph of warding. When Ned attempted to retrieve it with a mage hand, the glyph triggered a dimension door effect, causing the book to teleport away before the party could claim it.

Spells

Aura of Purity

Cast by Ned as the party was escorted through the manor, providing a protective magical aura to the group before the confrontation with the Pale Man.

Shadowy Tendrils

Cast by Yazzy at the start of combat, these dark appendages lashed out at all enemies of her choice within thirty feet, draining their life force with necrotic damage and granting her temporary hit points.

Delirium Blast

A powerful area-of-effect spell cast multiple times during the session using delirium shards and a geode as catalysts. It deals psychic damage to multiple targets in a radius. Ned used a geode to maximize its impact, successfully obliterating the Pale Man.

Chain Lightning

A high-level evocation cast by the Pale Man that sent a bolt of lightning arcing to Tark as the primary target, then leaping to Xakarium, Yazzy, and Syndle, dealing significant lightning damage to all of them.

Counterspell

Attempted by Ned to interrupt the Pale Man's chain lightning, but the enemy's magic proved too powerful to suppress and the spell went off.

Octarian Spray

A delirium-infused prismatic spray cast by the Pale Man in a massive cone, firing multiple rays of force, radiant, necrotic, and contamination energy that incapacitated Xakarium, Oiroa, and Osiric, and severely damaged the rest of the party.

Electric Jolt

A magical attack used by the Pale Man to shock Tark, leaving him in a restricted state that prevented him from making more than one weapon attack on his next turn.

Healing Word

A quick restorative prayer used by Oiroa to keep Tark standing amidst the barrage of enemy spells.

Toll the Dead

A necromantic cantrip used against Dr. Everett Freed during the battle, though it failed to take effect.

Shield

Employed repeatedly by Ned using his ring of spell storing to create an invisible barrier, successfully deflecting numerous radiant, physical, and magical attacks throughout the battle.

Misty Step

Cast by Ned to instantly teleport a short distance, allowing him to reposition away from dangerous enemies while prone and reach fallen allies to administer healing.

Wild Magic Surge

A chaotic magical effect triggered by Syndle multiple times during the battle. It manifested an exploding flump behind enemies and later caused bolts of radiant lightning to shoot from his chest at a chosen target.

Mass Cure Wounds

A powerful healing wave released by Oiroa while injured on the ground, restoring health to up to six party members simultaneously and pulling several allies back from the brink of death.

Lightning Bolt

Cast by Ned to send a crackling arc of electricity through the doorway, striking multiple mutated enemies at once and finally downing Tifi.

Revivify

Cast by Oiroa using a delirium shard as a material component to bring Xakarium back from death immediately following the battle.

Glyph of Warding

An arcane trap placed upon the Pale Man's spellbook that triggered a teleportation effect when Ned attempted to retrieve the book with a mage hand, sending it to an unknown location via a

dimension door.

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