Session 61: Badge and Signet

Date: 2026-11-17

Summary

Fresh from routing the Silver Order and sending their forces fleeing in all directions — including their Hex Knight, who took an arrow in the back for his trouble — the party made their way through the ruined streets of Drakkenheim toward Shepherd's Gate. The Hooded Lanterns stationed there were visibly surprised to see the group approaching from inside the city rather than from without, but they recognized the party immediately. Word of the crew's exploits had spread far enough that they had become something of celebrities in the dying city. After a brief exchange with the guards, the party was escorted through the garrison and into the office of Lord Commander Elias Drexel.

They found Drexel standing over a map table of Drakkenheim, one hand tracing the etched seal of House von Kessel as though trying to hold onto something long since lost. He spoke quietly, almost to himself, about the Von Kessels being the spine of Westmar — flawed, but essential — before realizing he had an audience and collecting himself. He invited the party in and listened as they laid out their plan: to infiltrate Castle Drakken, close the dimensional rift within its walls, and begin the long work of restoring the city. Drexel was skeptical at first, citing the hundreds of Hooded Lanterns lost in the early days of the catastrophe, but his demeanor shifted entirely when the party revealed that Queen Leonor had been found — alive, in a manner of speaking — deep beneath Queen's Park Garden. His hands began to tremble. He asked them to prove it.

The party produced Queen Leonor's royal signet ring, and Drexel sat down heavily, a single tear tracing down his weathered face. He had spent fifteen years believing he had failed the royal family by surviving, guarding what he thought was a grave while the Queen waited in the dark. He declared that he did not care what the haze had done to her flesh or her mind — she had worn the crown of Westmar, and as long as breath remained in her lungs, the royal house endured. He pledged his service to her restoration and explained how the Seals of Drakkenheim functioned, noting that the castle's magical defenses could be commanded by those bearing the seals, though the haze had made their obedience unreliable. He also revealed that the Spymaster's body had been recovered without its signet ring, and that one of his men had spotted it on the finger of the Queen of Thieves during a pit fighting event. Drexel agreed that if the party could gather five of the six seals, he would temporarily lend them his Badge of the Lord Commander to complete the

set.

With their next destination clear, the party made their way to Buckledown Row, the lawless district of taverns and underground fighting pits that served as the Queen of Thieves' domain. They were waved through the gates by a giant and a bugbear, stepping into a street alive with the noise of dozens of people moving between five bars. Syndle was recognized almost immediately as the reigning champion of the fighting pits, and the crowd buzzed with excitement and mild resentment that he had won his title and then disappeared for weeks. Before seeking an audience with the Queen, the party stopped at the ancient moss-covered Wishing Well behind the first tavern — a tradition for anyone entering Buckledown Row. Xakarium dropped his Ioon Stone of Wisdom into the impenetrable gloom below as the party's tribute, a gesture significant enough to raise a few eyebrows.

The sound of a fight drew them underground to the fighting pits, where they found Syndle's mentor and uncle figure, Knuckles, being brutally beaten by the stone giant Yolmur — a former champion with a long memory and a grudge. Knuckles was a bloody mess, barely standing, and Yolmur was making a show of it. The stone giant spotted Syndle in the crowd and taunted him in broken Common, declaring what he intended to do to him next time — a mistake, as it gave Knuckles a moment to land a desperate punch. Syndle pumped up the crowd, leapt across the pit, and drove both iron-shod boots into the side of Yolmur's head, sending the giant crashing to the ground like a felled tree. He and Knuckles finished the fight together, though the crowd was left underwhelmed by the overall performance. From her throne at the edge of the pit, the Queen of Thieves offered a slow, deliberate, condescending clap.

Syndle approached the Queen's throne, knelt in a show of respect, and exchanged pleasantries before she invited the entire party into her private office. The room was tidy and luxurious — wood-paneled walls, bronze candelabras, a mahogany desk stacked with journals and fine fountain pens, large framed mirrors, and in one corner, a peculiar wingback chair that had been turned entirely to stone and fixed to the floor. Blackjack Mel, the Queen's lieutenant, warned the party not to touch it. Syndle sat in it immediately. The Queen settled behind her desk and made clear she already knew about their meeting with Lord Commander Drexel, holding up the Spymaster's Signet Ring on her finger like a deliberate provocation.

The negotiation that followed was tense and layered. Tark subtly drew his sentient sword Ignatius just far enough from its scabbard to fill the room with a truth-compelling aura, and the Queen's eyes went wide as she felt it take hold. Blackjack Mel found himself physically unable to speak. The Queen, aware of what was happening but unable to fight it, became more forthright than she had intended — declaring plainly that the Amethyst Academy cared nothing for saving queens, that Drexel was blinded by loyalty, and that the party needed the seals to break the castle's wards before the Silver Order burned everything to the ground. She offered to lend the ring rather than force a bloody confrontation, presenting three demands in return: verifiable proof that Queen Leonor was alive and being treated humanely, a seat at the table for any decisions about royal succession, and safe passage into the throne room alongside the party when the time came. The party agreed to all three terms. Tark sheathed Ignatius, and the Queen — freed from the aura — blinked and immediately recognized the sword by name. Ignatius, for his part, communicated quietly to Tark that the Queen seemed somehow familiar, and asked to speak about it when they

were alone. The party left Buckledown Row with the Spymaster's Signet Ring in hand and a new mystery hanging in the air, their attention already turning toward the cistern and the Chancellor's Crest that waited within.

Memorable Moments

> "I don't care what the haze has done to her flesh. I don't care if her mind is wandering through shadows. She wore the crown of Westmar. She bled for this realm. As long as breath remains in her lungs, the royal house endures."
> — Elias Drexel

Overcome with emotion and shedding a single tear after being presented with Queen Leonor's signet ring as proof she had been found

Drexel's hands tremble as he holds Queen Leonor's signet ring, shedding a single tear — a man who believed he had failed the royal family finally receiving proof she survived.

A stoic commander undone by a small gold ring, years of survivor's guilt crashing down in a single quiet moment

Syndle launches a flying jump kick with his iron-shod boots into the side of the stone giant Yolmur's head, knocking him flat to the ground and saving his mentor Knuckles from certain death.

Syndle pumped up the crowd before leaping across the pit to interrupt an ongoing fight, WWF-style

After a tense and hard-fought negotiation, the Queen of Thieves offers a slow, condescending clap for Syndle's unimpressive pit fight performance.

The crowd was silent and unimpressed after Syndle's victory over Yolmur, making the Queen's slow clap the loudest sound in the room

> "You can spend the next six months bleeding in the ruins trying to pry it off my finger, or because I'm feeling remarkably generous, I could lend it to you."
> — The Queen of Thieves

Holding up the Spymaster's Signet Ring like a middle finger, the Queen pivots from defiance to pragmatic negotiation under the influence of Ignatius's zone of truth

After Tark sheathes Ignatius and the zone of truth lifts, the Queen immediately recognizes the sword by name — hinting at a mysterious past connection between her

and the sentient blade.

Ignatius also communicated to Tark that the Queen seemed familiar, suggesting a history neither party has yet revealed

> "We've been guarding a grave, and she's been waiting in the dark this whole time."
> — Elias Drexel

Drexel's anguished realization upon learning Queen Leonor was found underground in Queen's Park Garden, a place his men had patrolled for fifteen years

Scenes

Arrival at Shepherd's Gate

After a skirmish with the Silver Order, the party arrives at the Hooded Lanterns' garrison to seek an audience with Lord Commander Drexel.

- The party reflects on their recent victory against the Silver Order, noting that the Hex Knight managed to escape after being shot in the back.
- The group discusses the necessity of collecting the Seals of Drakkenheim to protect themselves and potentially restore the monarchy.
- Upon reaching Shepherd's Gate, the party is recognized by the Hooded Lantern guards as well-known figures in the city.
- Xakarium attempts a diplomatic approach with the guards, requesting a meeting regarding an artifact.
- The guards escort the party through the garrison, eventually meeting Petra, who leads them to the Lord Commander's office.

Audience with Lord Commander Drexel

The party meets with Elias Drexel to discuss their plan to infiltrate the castle, the Seals of Drakkenheim, and the fate of Queen Leonor.

- Lord Commander Drexel is found reflecting over a map of Drakkenheim, tracing the seal of House von Kessel etched into the table, mourning the fall of the city.
- The party explains their goal to close a dimensional rift within the castle to help restore normalcy to the city.
- Drexel expresses skepticism about the mission, citing the heavy losses the Hooded Lanterns suffered in previous attempts to reclaim the palace.
- The party reveals that Queen Leonor has been found in the city, though they clarify she has been altered by the haze and delirium.
- Drexel is overcome with emotion and survivor's guilt upon hearing the Queen might still be alive in some form.
- The party describes finding the Queen in an underground area of Queen's Park Garden.
- To prove their claims, the party presents the Queen's royal signet ring, causing Drexel to shed a single tear and sit down in disbelief.
- Drexel pledges his service to bringing the Queen back to the throne.
- Drexel explains the historical function of the Seals of Drakkenheim, noting they were used to command the magical defenses of Castle Drakken but have become unreliable due to the haze.
- Drexel reveals that the Spymaster's body was recovered without the signet ring, and rumors suggest the Queen of Thieves now possesses it.
- The party proposes a deal: if they can collect five of the six seals, Drexel will temporarily loan them his Badge of the Lord Commander to complete the set for their assault on the castle.

Arrival at Buckledown Row

The party travels to the lawless district of Buckledown Row to seek an audience with the Queen of Thieves.

- The party arrives at the gates of Buckledown Row and is granted entry by the giant and bugbear guards.
- Syndle is immediately recognized by the locals as the reigning champion of the fighting pits, with the crowd murmuring about him returning to defend his title.
- The party approaches the Wishing Well, an ancient moss-covered stone structure behind a tavern where visitors are expected to leave a portion of their loot as tribute.
- Xakarium drops his Ioon Stone of Wisdom into the impenetrable gloom of the well as a significant offering on behalf of the party.
- The group notes the absence of the well's bucket and the presence of a skeleton nailed to a nearby tree with a sign reading 'Make a wish'.

Interruption in the Fighting Pits

Syndle enters the fighting pits to rescue his mentor, Knuckles, from a brutal beating by the stone giant Yolmur.

- The party enters the underground arena where the stone giant Yolmur is brutally beating Syndle's mentor, Knuckles, leaving him a bloody mess.
- The stone giant spots Syndle and taunts him in broken Common, declaring what he will do to Syndle next time.
- Syndle pumps up the crowd before launching a flying jump kick with his iron-shod boots into the side of the stone giant's head, knocking him prone.
- Syndle helps the bloodied Knuckles to his feet and the two proceed to defeat Yolmur together, though the crowd is left unimpressed by the overall performance.
- The Queen of Thieves, watching from her throne alongside Blackjack Mel and the Rat King Prince, offers a slow, condescending clap for the performance.
- Syndle, wearing his Luchadore mask and red velvet clothes, approaches the Queen's throne and kneels in a show of respect.
- The Queen invites the party to her private office to discuss their goals more discreetly, revealing she already knows about their meeting with Lord Commander Drexel.

Negotiations with the Queen of Thieves

The party enters the Queen of Thieves' private office to negotiate for the Spymaster's Signet Ring.

- The party is escorted by Blackjack Mel into a luxurious, wood-paneled office illuminated by bronze candelabras, featuring a mahogany desk, bookshelves, large framed mirrors, and a peculiar petrified wingback chair fixed to the floor.
- Syndle immediately sits in the petrified wingback chair, which Blackjack Mel warns is a bad idea.
- The Queen of Thieves reveals she is aware of the party's previous meeting with Lord Commander Drexel and their intent to acquire her ring, holding up the Spymaster's Signet Ring on her finger like a middle finger.
- Tark and the Queen engage in a tense verbal exchange regarding the fate of Queen Leonor and the restoration of Drakenheim.
- Tark subtly activates the magical properties of his sword, Ignatius, creating a zone of truth within the room.
- The Queen of Thieves realizes she is under the influence of a truth-compelling effect, her eyes going wide, and becomes more forthright in her speech.
- Blackjack Mel attempts to speak but finds himself physically unable to utter a lie due to the magical aura.
- The Queen, compelled toward honesty, declares that the Academy doesn't care about saving queens, that Drexel is blinded by loyalty, and that the party needs the seals to break the wards on Castle Drakken before the Silver Order burns the city down.

- The Queen offers to lend the Spymaster's Signet Ring rather than forcing a violent confrontation.
- The Queen presents three demands: proof of life and humane treatment for Queen Leonor, a say in the royal succession, and safe passage into the throne room for the coronation ceremony.
- The party agrees to the Queen's terms, and she hands over the Spymaster's Signet Ring.
- Tark sheathes Ignatius, and the Queen, freed from the zone of truth, recognizes the sword as Ignatius.
- Tark confirms the sword's name without lying, and the Queen seems intrigued by this revelation.
- Tark suggests the Queen might want to assist in any future battle against the Silver Order, hinting at a powerful scroll that could destroy Camp Dawn, but the party remains non-committal.
- Ignatius communicates telepathically with Tark, noting that the Queen seems familiar and asking to speak when they leave.

Planning the Next Move

The party discusses their strategy for acquiring the remaining Seals of Drakkenheim.

- The party deliberates on the sequence of their next objectives, considering a trip to the cistern to find the Chancellor's Crest.
- There is a brief discussion about visiting Lucretia Mathias at the meteor site to retrieve the High Flamekeeper's Phylactery.
- The group decides to prioritize the cistern as it is located within the city.
- The party reflects on their current progress, noting they have secured three of the necessary seals and need three more to satisfy Lord Commander Drexel's requirements.

NPCs

Elias Drexel

The Lord Commander of the Hooded Lanterns, a stoic man burdened by survivor's guilt and a deep oath to the Von Kessel line. He was found tracing the seal of House von Kessel on his map table. He was moved to tears when presented with Queen Leonor's signet ring as proof she had been found. He agreed to temporarily lend his Badge of the Lord Commander to the party if they could first gather five of the six seals.

Petra

A member of the Hooded Lanterns who greeted the party at the garrison and escorted them to Lord Commander Drexel's office.

Knuckles

Syndle's mentor and uncle figure, found in the fighting pits being severely beaten by the stone giant Yolmur. He was a bloody mess by the time Syndle intervened, barely able to fight back.

Yolmur

A stone giant and former champion of the fighting pits who speaks broken Common. He views Syndle as his arch-nemesis and was in the process of brutally beating Knuckles when the party arrived. He was defeated by Syndle and Knuckles together.

The Queen of Thieves

The enigmatic and cocky leader of the Queen's Men who resides in Buckledown Row. She is well-informed, possessing knowledge of the party's meeting with Lord Commander Drexel. She wore the Spymaster's Signet Ring and negotiated with pragmatic self-interest, ultimately agreeing to lend the ring in exchange for three demands. She recognized the sword Ignatius by name.

Blackjack Mel

A lieutenant of the Queen's Men who stood at the Queen's right side during the pit fights and escorted the party to her private office. He was silenced during the meeting by the effects of Ignatius's zone of truth.

The Rat King Prince

A noble figure who, along with his henchmen, was seen in attendance at the fighting pits watching the combat.

Locations

Shepherd's Gate

A garrison and gatehouse where the Hooded Lanterns maintain a presence. It serves as the headquarters for Lord Commander Elias Drexel. The party arrived here from inside the city, surprising the guards who were used to people approaching from outside the wall.

Lord Commander's Office

A room within the garrison featuring a map table of Drakkenheim etched with the seal of House von Kessel, illuminated by a hooded lantern. Drexel was found here tracing the seal with his hand when the party arrived.

Buckledown Row

A bustling, dangerous district filled with five taverns and fighting pits. It is the seat of power for the Queen of Thieves and her followers, with dozens of people moving between the bars.

The Wishing Well

An ancient moss-covered fieldstone well located on a terrace behind a tavern in Buckledown Row. It is surrounded by an atmosphere of impenetrable gloom and features a skeleton nailed to a gnarly tree with a crudely painted sign reading 'Make a wish.' Visitors are expected to drop tribute into it.

Fighting Pits

An underground arena beneath the taverns of Buckledown Row where combatants fight for the entertainment of nobles, criminals, and the Queen of Thieves. Syndle interrupted a fight here between Knuckles and the stone giant Yolmur.

The Queen's Office

A tidy and luxurious wood-paneled office within Buckledown Row, illuminated by three bronze candelabras. It contains a mahogany desk, bookshelves, large framed mirrors, a model globe, and a peculiar petrified wingback chair fixed to the floor. The party negotiated with the Queen of Thieves here.

Red Lion Inn

A local establishment mentioned as a potential meeting place for arranging proof of Queen Leonor's condition, and noted as where the mage River stays.

The Cistern

An underground location within the city where the party believes the Chancellor's Crest can be found, identified as their next destination.

Items

Queen Leonor's Signet Ring

A royal signet ring that also functions as a ring of protection. It served as undeniable proof to Elias Drexel that the Queen had been found, causing him to shed a tear and pledge his service to restoring her to the throne.

Eleven-Emerald Captain Green Caspian Necklace

An eleven-emerald necklace that had been worn by Queen Leonor when she was found. It was mentioned alongside the signet ring as proof of the Queen's identity, though it appears to have been sold by the party prior to this session.

Badge of the Lord Commander

One of the Seals of Drakkenheim held by Elias Drexel. It historically allowed the bearer to command the defenses of Castle Drakken. Drexel agreed to temporarily lend it to the party once they gathered five of the other seals.

Inscrutable Staff

One of the Seals of Drakkenheim currently in the party's possession, associated with the Archmage of Drakkenheim.

Magistrate's Medallion of Chancery

One of the Seals of Drakkenheim mentioned as part of the collection needed to enter the castle, currently held by the party.

Spymaster's Signet Ring

A fancy gold ring worn by the Queen of Thieves and one of the Seals of Drakkenheim. It grants the wearer the ability to cast disguise self at will and turn invisible once per day. The party acquired it from the Queen of Thieves through negotiation.

Chancellor's Crest

A Seal of Drakkenheim believed to be located in the cistern, identified as the party's next target.

High Flamekeeper's Phylactery

A religious artifact and Seal of Drakkenheim held by Lucretia Mathias at the meteor site, which the party plans to retrieve.

Ioon Stone of Wisdom

A magical stone that enhances the user's wisdom. Xakarium dropped this item into the Wishing Well as a tribute offering on behalf of the party.

Iron-Shod Boots

Heavy, metal-reinforced boots used by Syndle to deliver a powerful flying jump kick to the stone giant Yolmur, knocking him prone.

Ignatius

Tark's sentient magical sword and partner in war. When partially drawn from its scabbard, it creates a zone of truth that prevents those nearby from speaking deliberate lies. It communicates telepathically with Tark and expressed a sense of recognition toward the Queen of Thieves. The Queen of Thieves recognized it by name.

Vitruvio's Phylactery

A holy relic and one of the Seals of Drakkenheim, capable of enhancing clerical spellcasting ability and casting clerical spells.

Petrified Wingback Chair

An oddity in the Queen's office — a wooden chair that has been turned to stone and is fixed permanently to the floor. Blackjack Mel warned the party not to mess with it. Syndle immediately sat in it.

Spells

Zone of Truth

A magical effect produced by the sword Ignatius when partially drawn from its scabbard. It prevented creatures within range from speaking deliberate lies, though they could remain evasive or silent. The Queen of Thieves made her saving throw and was aware of the effect, but was still compelled toward honesty. Blackjack Mel was unable to speak at all under its influence.

Disguise Self

A magical property of the Spymaster's Signet Ring that allows the wearer to magically alter their appearance at will, revealed when the party learned the ring's abilities.

Invisibility

A powerful effect granted by the Spymaster's Signet Ring, rendering the user and all their worn or carried equipment unseen for up to one minute, usable once per day.

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