

Session Notes

Set 915 P.D. 22nd day 1st month Neulyth

Prologue

The Study

Lucius Stormwind sits at a desk, he stares blankly at the document before him. His brow furrows as he looks at the missive in front of him. The arcane seal that burned away just before reveals the emblem of the King's Court.

He has examined the missive, learned what must be done. One last adventure.

There is the sound of a baby crying, Lucius' newborn's cries echoing throughout the long expansive hallways.

There is a knock at the door. **Orion Beck** enters the study for a conversation with Lucius.

There is dialogue between Lucius and Orion Beck about **Aurora Beck** becoming increasingly frustrated with Lucius regarding how often he is away on duties for the King.

Orion questions Lucius *"You're planning on resigning from your post? What about the [REDACTED]."*

Lucius smiles to himself; *"Well father, you know what they say. The pen is mightier than the -"*

Act

Chaos Across the Expanse

Lucius looks down at his bloodied weapon. The smell of burning flesh fills his nostrils as he begins to stand, reaching his gauntlet to his left shoulder where an arrow has embedded itself into his skin.

The thunder echoes in the distance as flashes of lightning are visible for a split second towards the northern mountains of Stahn.

Heavy rain pelts the terrain and it would have been a pitch black night if it were not for the brightly illuminating fire that has consumed the buildings and carriages of the recently razed military outpost.

The heavy rain has not been kind to this terrain as the mud does not allow Lucius' feet to find purchase. He stumbles, beginning to slide down a small hill only to see a Dwarf with red hair struggling to breathe, and an Orcish man in raider attire approaching his flank.

Aldus Leatherhands is introduced. Aldus fails two death saves and recalls an event from his life outside of the military.

The bloodied Orcish man approaches Aldus, Lucius chants an arcane command "*Farum Ingitia Lyveltha*" As the Glaive ignites and Lucius spins the Glaive above his head casting "Dance of Radiance". and in a flash travels across the battlefield in a ball of fire.

The Orcish man is burnt to a crisp. Aldus is brought up by 3d10 + 5 hit points.

There is an exchange between Lucius and Aldus as they inspect the outpost revealing no survivors. Lucius explains that he was dispatched as soon as Dannick got word that the outpost was under attack.

Lucius further iterates that there have been more incursions as of late that have become more organised; and invites Aldus to join him to regroup with the **Crimson Tempest**. An adventuring party that is stationed in the next town.

Aldus obliges and they begin to make their way into the town.

Eoar's Rest

Reconvening at the Last Drop

Lucius and Aldus make their way to Eoar's Rest's Tavern

The tavern stands at a bend in the cobblestone road, it has weathered oak beams and slate coloured roofing making it a landmark among the barracks and armories of the small military town. The tavern's sign is denoted with a tipped tankard with a single suspended drop which glows faintly by arcane means. It is currently nightfall but there is the sound of many folk inside.

Lucius and Aldus spot a middle aged Elvish man in clothes not befitting of a military man. **Gahn D. Alf** is introduced.

Gahn is shaking and jittery and it is revealed that Gahn does not enjoy being around liquor. Nonetheless, they enter the Last Drop.

The party finds that the tavern is crowded and lively, with empty tankards left on many tables. The staff look stressed, the barkeep is pouring drinks by the dozen, assisted by flying spectral hands.

The room is abuzz with various military personnel, merchants, travellers. The party has their attention drawn to the dartboard where **Chevy Campbell**, **Jean-Beau Finley**, and **Rufus Stronmeister** are drinking and playing darts.

After the introductions are made, one of the patrons asks the barkeep where the Tavern got its name.

“Well dear friend, this is often a place where fellows part ways.”

Ulster Rockmeadow is introduced.

A Dragonborn man approaches Ser Lucius with a letter in hand.

*“My name is Ulster Rockmeadow, and this is my companion **Agamemnon**. He was sent by the Crown to accompany me in guiding your party to **Caer Vaelys**.”*

Lucius is informed that he must return to Zenytha immediately on urgent business from the King.

Lucius turns to Gahn and asks him to retrieve the young boy from his room.

Upstairs, in complete silence. A young man sits kneeled on the floor with an ornate sword sitting before him. His eyes closed, but shifting.

Dinner with the Deity

Azriel Ashblossom awakens in a space unbeknownst to him standing on what seems to be nothing.

He hears the sound of music playing melodically from behind large golden double doors. A red carpet unravels in front of him beckoning him to the door. He makes his way to the doors and they begin to open as if they were expecting you.

Inside, there is an empty. Azriel blinks. Suddenly, in the middle of the ballroom a man sits at a table wearing a fine tailored black suit. He begins to question Azriel, asking for his name.

Azriel responds in turn, and at the drop of his surname a vocalist gasps. The figure looks to his left in the direction of the vocalist. A low hum emanates from this individual, and in a flash he flicks his arm in the direction of the vocalist.

Azriel, succeeding by mere inches, notices the scythe of wind that results from the flick and manages to duck. The vocalist however, does not see this coming and her head is cleaved from below the eyes upwards. The top half of her head lands on the ballroom floor.

“Which generation and which whore did you spring from? It’s been an age since I have felt the presence of someone who could actually get things done. Your fool of a father attempted to dilute his seed and the curse but each of his bastards were unable to control but a fraction of my power.

“It worries me not, I seek my own freedom from this domain that your family has trapped me in. And if you should be the one to challenge me and free me, so be it. Seek me out, prove that you’re worthy of this gift. Or don’t, and die. Tick, Tick, Tick, Time is ticking, boy. “

Azriel blinks again, and the figure stands tall above him. He smiles, a low rumble echoes in the chamber around you. Where his teeth are, fangs. He blinks, emerald green eyes of a panther stare back. And from behind his head, 8 tentacle-like tails emerge from behind his head.

“Leave this place, and bring me food next time. I grow hungry, and your life force isn’t cutting it.”

Azriel awakens, shaken. But determined to kill this monstrosity. Realizing he must grow in strength, he takes a breath and steels his resolve. He then hears a knock on the door, and he and Gahn exit the room to reconvene downstairs. Azriel, wanting to show off, teleports using Misty Step. Gahn shakes his head, seemingly annoyed at this young prospect showing off his newly awakened magical prowess.

Lucius tells the party that he has received a summoning from the King, and that his party would continue on without him.

The party rests.

Trail to the Mountain

The party make their way up the mountain, Ulster provides them with various information regarding Stahn and the surrounding areas.

- *“So as you’re probably aware, Stahn’s capital city Eldahn was named after the rebel leader Eldahn the Great. There are other locations amongst the country such as Garris and Dracossa. It’s funny how important family is, right? I have a son who is just starting out in school.*
- *“Their government is currently led by a ruthless man named Tyrion Fisk. He rules over Stahn with a brutish fist. Their governmental body is organised by combat. How mad is that? In any case, it’s his fault you lot were summoned here to stop the encroaching attacks. He recently made an effort to expand Stahn’s borders which the King isn’t too happy about.”*
- *“I’m a bit surprised that we didn’t run into any martial art folk or merchants that regularly pass through here. We often get travellers and merchants that come through town in the*

hopes that they can train or trade at the Saving Grace Monastery. Quite a charitable lot there, the..." he scratches his head. "Salvador, Sellemore, I seem to have forgotten. In any case, they say there's a young woman there with a red ring around her eyes that fights with the elegance of a dancer. Can you believe that?"

- *"Make sure to keep a look out for giantfolk, they pass through the mountains sometimes. Tribal lot they are, like to keep to themselves. Although a few years back I did come across a poor bugger that was captured by the guard."*

Jean-Beau further questioned the presence of Dragonborn within Stahn. It was revealed that *"There's a large Dragonborn population in Dracossa, which contributed to unique Magic and foods."*

The party comes across a broken down caravan, with a recently deceased and rotting horse.

Jean-Beau accidentally steps on and destroys a Potion of Healing.

The party question as to why the caravan was destroyed. They begin to notice that the metal rungs of the carriage begin to give off an electrical impulse and then in a flash moment Azriel manages to tackle Jean-Beau to the ground before a lightning bolt descends from the clouds above striking the metallic portion of the carriage.

The party continues up the mountain until at last they reach a bending section that reveals a narrow ledge and a black iron bridge, its arches twisted like the ribs of some ancient beast. You hear howling winds whistle through the framework, making the structure hum with a hollow, eerie note.

The Black Iron Bridge

A marching order is established, and the party begins to make their way across the rickety bridge, but not before being surprised with an arrow flying towards them.

Ulster is hit by the arrow, his blood spraying across the face of Jean-Beau Finley. He begins to fall into a hole left by one of the destroyed planks. A battle ensues against a raider party consisting of three bandits, one bandit captain, and one stormcaller mage. The party manages to defeat the enemies with some teamwork and some environmental interactions.

- Rufus casts Guiding Bolt, incinerating a bandit with Holy magic, killing them.
- Jean-Beau Finley pierces a bandit through their eye with his Rapier, killing them.
- Agamemnon bisects a bandit with his greataxe, killing them.
- Gahn D. Alf sends a Scorching Ray, destroying a Lightning Orb.
- Chevy fires their shotgun, destroying a Lightning Orb. It detonates and also kills the Stormcaller Mage.

- Azriel casts Lightning Lure, wrapping it around the Bandit Captain and forcing them to fall to their death.

Entering Caer Vaelys

The first chamber is a wide stone hall carved directly into the mountain's heart. The age of the crypt has made itself known to you now. Dust has layered like sediment, the stonework that was once marvelous is worn soft at the edges, and there's a faint dry scent of air that has been long-disturbed. But that stillness has been broken.

Scattered across the floor are signs of recent raiders. The party notices bootprints pressed into the dust, splintered torch stubs, and a discarded leather wrapping from a ration. They also notice a toppled ceremonial urn that lies cracked open, the ashes within smeared across the floor as if someone searched it hurriedly. A half-burned torch flickers from a bracket, its smoke curling into a ceiling blackened by raider campfire soot.

The party splits and investigates the left side, to which they find the corridor caved in, and in the corner there was a spot where those that entered before stopped to rest. They reconvene and progress into the right tunnel.

The Hall of Guardians

A narrow passage leads deeper, its tiled floor split and uneven. The air grows colder, and the smell changes less of dust, more of old stone and faint traces of incense disturbed long ago.

There are steps leading up to a raised hallway. The party investigates these steps and determines there is an inert glyph that activates on pressure. The party strategize and carefully move around the glyph but Azriel instead decides to step on the plate.

On the third step, Azriel hears a "click" sound. One of the statues "clicks" and turns towards him. Its mouth "clicks" open revealing a small orifice. Nothing happens. He surmises that whatever magical mechanism was used to control this trap expired a long time ago.

As you continue forward, along each side stand alcoves containing stone statues in various poses of vigilance. Some remain intact, faces expressionless, hands wrapped around sculpted swords and other military paraphernalia. Others have been toppled, shattered, or defaced by raider tools.

On careful investigation, the party noticed that footprints are left in the dust, indicating travel occurred recently. They also found that a frayed rope hung from one statue's broken arm, implying the raiders tried to pull it free or pry something loose behind it.

Corridor to the Hall of Mirrors.

At the end of the hallway, the party notices that the architecture shifts noticeably. The rough-hewn stone gave way to polished surfaces, and the walls began to reflect any light. The corridor widens into an imposing threshold framed by an arch of dark marble veined with various metallic materials and glowing stone.

The party's attention is drawn to the surface above the arch where a single inscription glints faintly:

Those that speak Elvish would understand that the inscription read: *"Truth fractures where reflections walk."*

Further beyond, the floor beyond gleams like black glass, and the walls are aligned with tall, perfectly fitted obsidian mirrors each slightly angled, creating an uneasy cobweb of shifting reflections that stretch into apparent infinity.

Where the party once saw footprints, no more. Some end abruptly at the threshold. Others veer inside, where faint handprints streak across the mirrors as though figures pressed against them either searching for a way forward or trying desperately to escape.

The air feels unnaturally still.

Ahead the Crimson Tempest have made their way into the Hallway of Mirrors, where nothing reflects the way it should.

They continue into the hallway of mirrors, and look around at the infinite images of themselves. An infinitesimal number of possibilities and thoughts enter their minds at once. Almost as if to remind themselves that every decision they had made led them to being here today. They also notice that some mirrors are fitted with curvatures and imperfections that distort the reality of what's on the other side. Some mirrors are cracked in certain places, offering a multitude of different reflections within the same painting. Some mirrors are entirely shattered, their glass littering the floor in front of them.

Something catches the eyes of the party. They approach stealthily whilst Aldus sheepishly takes out his bagpipes and begins to play a tune.

The majority of the party investigate what appears to be a slumped body. Those who approach the body realise that the body looks like it has been wrung out like a wet towel. Its skin turned and twisted and devoid of any color. At its hand is a singular vial filled with a viscous red liquid that you are all familiar with. A potion of healing is pocketed.

Hall of Mirrors

Jean-Beau Finley moves towards a mirror, and Aldus follows in suit. They begin inspecting the mirror. Aldus gets close to the mirror, touching it. When he does, a ripple ensues that travels across the surface of the reflection.

His brow furrows, and as he looks closer, his body freezes with anticipation. The figure smiling back at you is your own. But wait - Aldus isn't smiling. Aldus' eyes begin to widen as the smile continues further stretching past the confines of what's human. It reaches out and long hooked claws grab you and attempt to pull you in.

The creatures all simultaneously make attempts at clawing and biting at the party members. They succeed in drawing blood from a few party members and then run their long tongue across the gathered blood. They then begin to transform into the party members one by one. The party discovers throughout the fight that attacking their own doppelganger reflects a portion of damage back to them. They also come to realise that the doppelgangers are able to travel through another plane of existence via the mirror's surfaces.

Throughout the fight, several party members are severely injured. However, they manage to defeat the enemies with key positioning and some lucky rolls.

- Gahn kills multiple doppelgangers with the use of Finger Guns, and isn't damaged through clever use of Mirror Image.
- Aldus with his two-weapon fighting slashes at a doppelganger furiously, killing them.
- Rufus casts Guiding Bolt, incinerating a doppelganger with Holy damage and killing them.
- Chevy blasts a doppelganger's head clean off, killing them.
- Agamemnon cleaves at a doppelganger, removing their limbs and killing them.

After killing a doppelganger, Agamemnon sprints to his next target only to fall through a mirror and finds himself in another chamber.

He hears a cacophony of voices enter his head. A familiar voice to him, but it is drowned out by the screaming and crying of others as they rush through his senses.

"Please free me. I am so cold"

He sprints towards the familiar voice.

After a difficult combat encounter, the remaining party members gather themselves. They begin to search for Agamemnon, who is nowhere to be seen.

Agamemnon, cutting across the various corridors he dashes faster than he has ever before. Then, reaching a set of large iron double doors, he reaches out and feels its cool touch

"Enter" The voices speaks again.

He feels compelled, he has to open the door.

Aside

A Letter on the Wind

The wind was calmer here, no storm clouds, no thunder, just the rustle of canvas over the market stalls in the quiet town of Darrowfield. Lucius dismounts off his horse slowly, his boots crunching on gravel as he ties his steed outside this modest town's tavern.

Inside, there is warmth. Firelight. The low murmur of travelers. The kind of peace that doesn't last.

The innkeeper looks towards Lucius and nods in recognition, sliding an envelope across the counter without a word. Lucius inspects it, it is marked with the King's seal.

Lucius breaks the wax with a gloved thumb, his eyes scan the parchment.

"Ser Stormwind,

I trust this finds you on the road home. I regret to inform you we have received word from scouts posted near Caer Vaelys...

The bodyguard who was meant to protect your companion was found slain near the Terick border.

We do not yet know what became of your party.

I pray for their safety, as I know you do.

Your service remains invaluable. Return swiftly."

King Terick Vaena II

Lucius folds the letter once, and then again. His jaw tightens. He says nothing, and just stares into the hearth as the wind outside picks up once more.

"Hold fast," he muttered to no one. *"Gods be with you all."*

He turns and rushes out the door.

Calm Before The Storm

The rest of the party collects themselves, bloodied and bruised from the previous fight. You begin to wear and wane.

They suddenly hear a distant "THUD" of a large door opening. Following this noise, a cacophony of voices creeps into their minds.

"We offer power, beyond your wildest imaginations." The voices say.

The members of the Crimson Tempest continue forth in response and find themselves in a secluded room with stone benches and what remains of a fireplace. Looking around at each other, they deduce that this is the last place you will be able to collect yourselves before moving forward.

After drinking their Potion of Long Rest, and leveling up, the party make their way forward to the centre of Caer Vaelys and the mountain it inhabits.

Inside they find that the ground is littered with stalactites and the ceiling with stalagmites. Rocks appear to be suspended in mid-air by what can only be described as magic or some other unseen force. They look upwards to find the ceiling is encrusted with various gems and the same glowing crystalline material they saw earlier.

And before them, Agamemnon stands. His eyes facing forward to a body suspended before him.

What Agamemnon sees before him is a raised plinth in the centre of the cavern. Where it looks someone has ripped open a stitched up wound. Inside it, what you can only describe a blackened galaxy to look like. The body suspended in front of it twitches.

“Brother, run...”

It breathes as a snap echoes throughout the chamber and like a rope going taut, the body stretches and then rips at the midsection.

Agamemnon looks around urgently, and notices a light bouncing off a surface in front of him. In an instant, he realizes what he has set foot in.

It wasn't supposed to go this way. He looks to the left and right, and then upwards. And above him, he notices eight ruby coloured “gemstones” that begin to move in unison.

An Unraveling Web

Before anyone goes, what can only be described as a colossal Spider Matriarch drops from the ceiling onto Agamemnon and what appears to be hundreds of mouths he now sees underneath the thorax all bite into him. The immediate crushing blow coupled with the gnashing of the teeth and the poison that resides within the mouths immediately contribute to downing Agamemnon. He feels the necrotic energy fill his veins as it travels to his nervous centre. In his head he hears the words;

“Give into me.”

With that, the party all see Agamemnon convulse and then breathe his last breath.

During the battle, the party fights the Spider Matriarch and encounters its various abilities such as the ability to phase and teleport while doing area of effect damage, trampling and causing violent shockwaves, creating an afterimage effect after teleporting, and shooting its web whilst attempting to restrain various members. After a few rounds of combat, Agamemnon begins to convulse and then reanimates, posing another serious threat to the party. Further during the fight, it is revealed that web sacs from the ceiling drop to the floor, revealing reanimated corpses who all seem to be afflicted by a hive-mind.

During the fight:

- Aldus is damaged by a critical hit that almost brought him down.
- Azriel utilises his weapon "Falx Eternus" to perform a Moonlight Slash, doing damage to the Matriarch and killing two reanimated corpses.
- Aldus is downed by the Matriarch.
- Rufus constantly heals the party, rejuvenating them when possible whilst avoiding the barrage of webs shot at him.
- Jean-Beau Finley occupies Agamemnon, coming to the aid of Gahn D. Alf who finds himself in close proximity with the raging corrupted barbarian.
- Gahn is downed by Agamemnon by a furious blow.
- Lucius prays to Lascyan, the Scaled Saviour. The Crimson Tempest is slightly healed, bringing Aldus up from the brink of death.
- Gahn casts a Fiery Chromatic Orb, managing to chain the spell and killing Agamemnon and the remaining reanimated corpse.
- In a final act of desperation, the Matriarch sends voices howling through the minds of the party. It makes a mad dash for the stitch but not before Rufus and Chevy get an attack of opportunity against the Matriarch.
- During the desperation, Rufus feels the necrotic damage inflicted to him by the Matriarch and is unable to find purchase with his weapons. Chevy Campbell however, loads up his shotgun for one final strike.
- Chevy hits an incredible "Meets It, Beats It" roll to hit, and a "That's Exactly What You Needed" damage roll to finish the Matriarch off by putting a well placed shotgun spread into the Matriarch's abdomen, its viscera exploding all around it.

The party then watches dark hand-like tendrils emerge from the Unraveled stitch, wrapping around the Matriarch and Agamemnon before sucking them back into the Plane before sealing entirely.

The party, once again bloodied and worn-out, inspect the room around them. They ponder the consequences of their actions. Jean-Beau Finley and Rufus however, decide to walk to the other side of the plinth and find an old ornate wooden chest. With expertise in looting, Jean-Beau pops the lock open with little trouble and with some investigation finds an old leather-bound book sealed with a blood red sigil. He inspects the book whilst hiding it from Rufus.

"Power, take our power, release us..." A voice creeps into Jean-Beau's mind

Jean-Beau Finley's eyes glaze over, and he quickly and stealthily pockets the book in his breast pocket. Rufus begins to question Jean-Beau but is quick to believe his friend in good earnest.

They reconvene with the rest of the party and then make their way out of the crypt, taking a short rest and begin to head back down the mountain path.

Aside

The Soldier That Got Too Close

"My party, they need me" Lucius begins to walk out of the establishment and momentarily distracted by the sound of a glass tankard shattering on the floor.

A woman's voice returns in response *"Oh goodness! My sincerest apologies dear Ser"*

Lucius turns, and looks up only to feel the touch of soft feminine hands placed on his right temple.

The woman leans forward, and in a hushed tone whispers:

"You will forget about the Crimson Tempest,

You will forget they ever existed.

You will return to the Capital with news that your party was successful".

Lucius' eyes glaze over momentarily, before taking a breath and recouping some form of consciousness.

"I must return to the Kingdom, where I am needed." He says, as he turns towards his horse and rides off into the distance. A single tear falls from his right eye.

Finale

On their descent, the party come across a familiar turned over carriage.

Only Gahn D. Alf is able to notice the large dark raven circling them above. His attention is drawn to the ridgeline of the hills surrounding them as countless archers in black leather outfits ready their bows and crossbows at them.

Gahn takes one quick breath as a bag is put over his head.

"They have seen the powers we wish to harness, they have seen the Unraveled. They will be useful to us." A gruff voice says.

The Crimson Tempest were once a legendary group of adventurers under the leadership of Ser Lucius Stormwind, who all seemingly perished on their expedition into Caer Vaelys. The body of their guide was never recovered, and their leader is nowhere to be found.

And that's where the session ends.