

Drakkenheim: Resurrection

A Campaign Guide by O;N

Chapter 10: The Fate of Drakkenheim

Introduction

I have said it many times: Drakkenheim is designed to have four endgames:

- The Amethyst Academy endgame with or without the Hooded Lanterns
- The Silver Order endgame with or without the Hooded Lanterns
- The Falling Fire endgame with or without the Hooded Lanterns
- The Queen's Men endgame.

What I have long felt is weak about these options is that in the original conceit of the Drakkenheim campaign lie two dramatic questions: *What should be done about delerium?* And *what should be done about the throne?* When we see these endings, we realize that the throne is meaningless in the face of the end of the world. The throne is only useful, rather than central, to the campaign's plot.

I've made some changes in the campaign in order to modify that - adjustments to the Crater in order to make the apocalypse not so pressing, adjustments to the factions to make them more comfortable with working with one another.

The goal of this design is to make the campaign more open-ended and player-facing. As I've said before, the question is no longer "*What's the ideology that's best-equipped to overcome a magical disaster?*" It's instead a more open-ended question of "*How does the world react and change in the face of a magical disaster?*"

As such, here are a few modified endings to consider:

The Good Queen - HL / QM

By rewriting the Queen's Men as more sympathetic and less malevolent, we can see the Queen's Men and Hooded Lanterns team up as "the little guys" to reject the long overreach of religious dogma, foreign interference, and Academy scheming. The Queen might reveal herself to be the true heir, and the Hooded Lanterns may fall in line behind her; or perhaps the two work together to crown an heir, the Queen content to abandon her desire for the crown if she can remain a power behind the throne and achieve her other goals.

The Magic Corps - AA / SO

Perhaps the Academy realizes the impracticality of trying to control delerium on their own. Perhaps the Silver Order are willing to compromise in exchange for the magical weapons the Academy grants them. The two form an unsteady alliance to destroy the city and extract all the

delerium, a portion to the Academy for their research, and one to the Order in the form of weapons.

Arcano-Theological Compact - AA / FF

Unable to secure all the delerium on their own, unwilling to reinstate the monarchy that might hold them to account, the Amethyst Academy and the Falling Fire reach a cease-fire compromise to drive out threats against the delerium itself.

Soft Power - AA / QM

The Queen of Thieves knows the subtle power of the Amethyst Academy, and the Academy comes to learn of her own talents. The Prismatic Barrier can never truly work as long as she escapes the long arm of the law. Rather than a bug, the two come to see it as a feature: a balance of power whereby the Queen holds the power to sabotage the barrier, but chooses not to in exchange for the Academy's good graces. Or perhaps the Academy vouches to crown the Queen in exchange for extraction rights. Player Characters who choose this path should be prepared to use diplomacy, political maneuvering, assassination, and magic to achieve a subtle yet decisive surprise victory over the other factions.

Our Home - QM / FF

The Queen's Men and Falling Fire are new arrivals to the city, and they can relate to the struggle to find a new purpose and home amidst the ruins of the old order. The others here are the remnants of an old ideology that holds us in contempt for us trying to do what's right for us. This is a multicultural alliance of people of all backgrounds that will prevail against jingoists, zealots, and academic planners. Our truth is far more real than our opponents' pathetic scrabbles to grab the power they've lost. They might even destroy the monarchy of Westemar altogether!

In the Garden of Delerium - SO / FF

The Silver Order (or Brazen Legion) come to understand that the Falling Fire aren't dangerous, they simply have a difference in their understanding of the Flame. The Silver Order comes to trust them as satisfactory caretakers of the delerium (over the Academy). The two burn the city, kill all the monsters, and all that remains are the Falling Fire and their Crater, a sacred site for this offshoot cult to live in peace. The orthodoxy of the Church remains, the Academy is halted, and the spread of delerium is cut off and entrusted to the Followers from letting it leave the city, and the Order in cleaning up what got out.

Some Men Just Want to Watch - QM / SO

The destruction of the city means chaos in Westemar, perfect for the return of "the true Queen." The Queen's Men support the Silver Order in their quest to destroy the city, and the group

serves as scouts and guides. They systematically go district-by-district: the Silver Order kill the monsters, the Queen's Men recover valuables and prepare the buildings for demolition, and then the block is burned. In the ashes of the capital, Westemar may yet rise again, and they might now have a scapegoat for their problems: these dastardly Elyrians. Even as she allies with them, the Queen is actually creating an enemy that Westemar can rally behind, with her at the head.

Bad Moon Rising - Pale Man

The Pale Man succeeds in his plan to unite the Small Council and crown himself King, and uses the three wishes to create a new world. Perhaps he dies, but his plan carries on to the player characters, who believe that the delerium launch is a viable solution to the problem. The evil moon shines its octarine light across the countryside, and mutations start to appear the whole world over - few, in the grand scheme, but enough to gnaw at the fabric of civilization itself. The monsters of Drakkenheim manage to leave the city and find new homes thanks to the evil moon's influence. While the Pale Man's goal of creating a new super-species to rule over humans never truly comes to fruition, in a generation everyone will learn to fear the new Chaos-Moon, and the Silver Order will be at their wits' end in trying to slay the evil mutants that lurk in the dark places of the continent. Nevertheless, Drakkenheim will be clean, and will be ready for the great rebuilding to begin.

Three Factions

The joining of three factions together should be difficult; in fact, it should be practically impossible at the outset, but there are tools throughout the adventure to make it work.

Supplanter. If a PC completes the *faction aspirant* personal quest, or otherwise engrains himself in the hierarchy of the faction, and the faction leader is removed, the PC has a good chance of taking over as a new head of the faction, and bend the existing faction to their will. This is most obvious with the Hooded Lanterns, where Elias Drexel is deliberately given a release-valve to justify him stepping down as Lord Commander. This is also most practicable in the Queen's Men and the Followers of the Falling Fire, where death or dishonor from the faction head could entrust the future of those factions to the PCs.

While the PCs as the head will undoubtedly allow the faction more flexibility, the rank-and-file shouldn't just obey the PC out-of-hand. For instance, a PC who has come to lead the Falling Fire may find a good justification to work with the Silver Order, but probably only if they have a good explanation for the Followers, and have spent time over the course of the campaign developing an understanding with both factions that can be bridged.

Crisis of Belief. The PCs may be able to find a way to bridge divides in the factions by challenging the very foundations of their ideology. This should be considered truly "hard mode". It would be to convince the Hooded Lanterns that they must give up hopes of reclaiming Drakkenheim, convince the Queen of Thieves that she shouldn't aim for power, convince the Silver Order that the destruction of delerium is impossible, convince the Academy that containment is impossible, or convince the Followers that their efforts are fruitless and their religion vain. This task should be monumental, and even if you manage to convince some of the

faction leaders, rather than converting the entire faction, it should splinter into civil war. Evidence can be gathered, arguments can be made, but ultimately, these ideologies grip these factions. Any such effort should make the players feel like they're ramming their head against a wall, but enough effort on their part can be rewarded.

Maybe the Academy could be shown that containment is impractical and risky, and they're better off allying with a faction so that they can have legitimate extraction. Maybe the Silver Order can see that it's impossible to destroy the Delerium Heart (or in my rewrite, realize there is no "final boss" they can defeat), and they can see that the Followers' beliefs are not dangerous. Maybe the Hooded Lanterns can be convinced to build a new capital elsewhere in Westemar. In each of these cases, it should require great effort on the part of the players, deft negotiation, understanding and appealing to core ideologies, and good will and trust between the party and the faction.

Even this may not fully convince the faction to join the wider alliance, but may take them out-of-the-fight so-to-speak, as the faction devolves into its own civil war. Causing crises of this nature might also lead to an upset in the Edicts of Lumen, and a belligerent Silver Order or Academy that is pushed too far may declare that the Edicts of Lumen are undone, casting the entire continent into chaos.

Oppose an Endgame. If one faction is on the verge of achieving its endgame, another faction might bend to accept the PCs' will. For instance, if the Silver Order has resurrected Argonath, The Academy might be ready to cut a deal with the Hooded Lantern / Falling Fire alliance that your PCs have built. Even in such dire circumstances, factions whom the PCs have slighted or antagonized will not go hat-in-hand to offer their help; such a faction should have been actively helped by the PCs throughout the campaign, only for ideology to stand in the way of an alliance up until now. Normally, an endgame is accomplished by the PCs, but this can be deployed by a DM if the late game grows too stagnant, or you'd like a final boss beyond the Castle.

Four or Five Factions

Four or five factions teaming up runs so contrary to the game as to completely depart from the theme that lies at the heart of a Drakkenheim game: that ideologies are the driving force in the world, and people hold to them more than they grasp sense or even self-preservation. Even if you have a five-man party where each was a faction aspirant of each of the five factions, and all of the faction heads die, you still shouldn't have a case where all five (or even four out of five) will ally. The faction conflict is designed to be an unsolvable puzzle, and not even as though it's a puzzle with pieces missing. Instead, it's a puzzle with too many pieces, meaning all of them literally can't fit together.

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Afterword

And that's all there is to it! I want to thank you so much for taking this journey with me. If you have any questions on the guide, feel free to message me over Reddit or Discord. Feel free to follow me on Reddit, I drop a little something every now and again in the Drakkenheim subreddit, like [Drakkenheim Achievements](#) or [how a party of four level 10 characters can beat the Delerium Heart](#). If you still haven't tired of my voice, I have some thoughts on Sebastian Crowe's Guide to Drakkenheim, you can find them [here](#). I warn you, they're not very positive. Other than that, thanks again for taking this journey with me, and I wish you all success in your Drakkenheim game!