



ESCAPE FROM THE MISTS

PRELUDE & SESSIONS 1-2

Dungeon Master: Ultramyth

Starting Year: 757 B.C.

Starting Domain: Dementlieu

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Welcome to the Escape from the Mists campaign journal. This document recounts the events of my current running Ravenloft campaign.

The campaign focuses around the lives of four Swedish girls who find themselves drawn into the land of mists during Halloween festivities out in the dark forests of Dalsland.

Each girl (save Sara) was a first timer, so I decided to have them play themselves (in order to better roleplay the gothic horror situations of Ravenloft) in a modern world to ravenloft crossover. The girls ranged in age at the time from 19-25.

Prelude

Elin, Morris, Maria and Sara, along with Sara's husband Ben decided to celebrate Halloween by venturing out into the autumn forests of Dalsland along the western shores of lake Vanern to camp out and tell chilling ghost stories around the fire. Of the group, two were experienced in orienteering and wilderness survival.

They trekked into the deep forest and found the perfect spot to set up camp. As evening set in, so too did a light autumn mist and there was a chill in the air. The night was quiet and eerie, most of the animals and birds already hiding away for the coming winter.

Though the tales themselves were not truly scary, the stillness of the night and the low mist, illuminated by a full, blue moon, was disturbing.

Close to midnight, the group prepared to sleep when they began to hear a distant and strange music¹ coming from all around. Very quiet at first, but then louder and louder. It seemed to yawn from under the earth itself, and from the trees. Around

¹ Dark Soho - Unusual Ceremony

them, the damp mist receded back, drawing about in a circle.

As the music grew louder, a strong beat seemed to start playing. The trees themselves seemed to sway almost beyond notice to the beat and rhythm.

The group stood together stunned, waiting for what might come next. Emerging from the mists were tiny little figures, black shadows ill defined in the poor moonlight. They moved, swayed and stomped to the beat, seeming to move extremely fast and then in slow motion. More and more emerged from the mists, surrounding the camp. The girls stood hypnotized by the tiny figures dancing and the throbbing music. Compulsively, they began to rise and dance.

They themselves seemed to move out of time, and they could not stop dancing. None knew how time passed. It may have been minutes or seconds, or it could have been hours or even days. They just danced and danced, became a part of the rhythm and the pulse of the base which throbbed from the misty forest floor.

Suddenly the music stopped, and a black figure emerged out of the darkness. As she stepped forward into the moonlight, the girls saw she was a pale, fey-like woman² with long, dark raven hair and a crown of ivy. She pointed at the girls, who now cowered in a circle in the clearing. She spoke into their minds and said that they had violated an ancient and secret place sacred to the shadow fey. For their unforgivable trespass, they would pay dearly.

The girls heard the distant baying of wolves³ and began to panic. The mists rose, and the dark tiny figures receded into the mists. The last they saw of the dark fey woman was her piercing, preternatural eyes as they faded into the moonlit mists.

Moments later, the howls in the night were joined by others, louder this time, and the girls ran.

They ran onward, almost blindly through the forest, screaming. Several times they tripped, and their canine pursuers came ever closer. As the first light

² A queen of shadow fey, perhaps a dark nymph

³ A real danger even today in Dalsland, which holds Sweden's greatest populations of wolves, which can grow up to a metre at the shoulder (40").





of dawn began to creep over the horizon, they spotted and abandoned cabin in the mists.

They ran blindly inside, closing the rotting door just in time to bar out a massive, vicious grey wolf.

The growling and howling outside caused Maria to clutch her ears on the floor. Then they heard the sound of metal coming from outside. Through the window they could see a silver figure in the mists, swinging long silver blades at a number of wolves. Soon the howls were followed by whelps and the figure and the sound of the angry wolves faded into the thick mists.

One

For a long time the girls cowered in the cottage, until the dawn arrived and the mists receded. It was then they realized that someone was missing. Ben. None of the four girls could remember seeing him at all during the dancing. This was most distressing for Sara.

They left the building in the morning to get their bearings, calling out Ben's name. They saw the bodies of wolves away from the cottage, and that the dilapidated building was on the edge of a field. In the middle of the field was a road, unmarked, and little more than rocks and gravel.

They decided to find help, and get a search party out for Ben.

As they headed for the road, they started walking north. After a time, they heard the distant thunder of a horse at full gallop. They looked to the south, and saw a strangely dressed rider wearing clothes that went out of fashion two-hundred years before. As he came closer, he shouted out to the girls.

"A l'écart au nom du Roi!"⁴

The girls just leap out of the way as the horse would trample them. Confused they walk onward. Sara identifies the phrase as sounding French, and partially translates its meaning.

After a few hours of fast travel, the girls catch the scent of the sea, and then hear the distant sounds of a city. They arrive over a rise to see the sprawling

⁴ "Out of the way in the name of the king" or something to that effect. In my campaign, Dementlier is four times as large and the council of brilliance acts as the regent for a young king (Louis, 10 yrs old)

mass of Port-a-Lucine on the road before them, and beyond the sea of sorrows. The autumn day is brilliant, but even from outside the city, they can smell its repulsive stench.⁵

The girls come to a gate, and are met by a guard bearing a rapier and large musket. He asks them in French their names and business in Port-a-Lucine. Sara manages to understand him and asks a few questions (they already figured out they're some place else, but at the moment, they think it's the past). They go into the city to a dirty tavern, and take a seat. The patrons stare at their unusual clothes as the girls sit down and discuss their situation in Swedish.

They are astounded to see Halflings and now realize something is terribly wrong. A burly dwarf approaches them and greets them in a crude form of old Swedish⁶

He recognizes the girls as outlanders and introduces himself as Lauradin Gunhammer, a dwarf who was sucked up by the mists while traveling on Midgard⁷ with his brother. He explains about the place they call Ravenloft and how on occasion its misty tendrils reach out into foreign worlds and draw outsiders in.

He informs the girls unfortunately he has been trapped there for 53 years, and tells them there is no hope for escape. He generously offers the girls a place to stay for a while until they can get their bearings;

"Welcome to Port-a-Lucine and Dementlieu. My name is Luradin Gunhammer." He says. "This world is called Ravenloft. And I feel sorry for your miserable souls to have been drawn to this terrible place."

"I don't mean to frighten you, but there is much that is unnatural about this realm. I came here myself by the very same way you mentioned. Well, minus the faeries and all that, never new them in my day. My cousins and I were on the way back from a campaign in the south. We heard that the King of the Svear⁸ captured the smith

⁵ I really emphasised the conditions of 18th century life in comparison to the 21st.

⁶ Dwarven is close to Old Norse/medieval Swedish in the campaign, so it can be vaguely understood by the party.

⁷ Actually Sweden in viking times. The dwarves are from a more magical time in Scandinavian history.

⁸ Old word for Swedes in viking times.





Volund and thought we might have a piece of his treasure. We got away with some too, but the King's men tracked us down in the Forests near Uppsala. The mists rolled in any my cousins and I ended up here. By Odin's Spear, I do miss Midgard. It's been fifty-three years."

"Look, its better you find out now, there is no way out of Ravenloft. I feel sorry for your poor souls. I can offer you a room for the night, or even till you find some place to stay and make some coin, if one of you will but aide me by the forge for a few weeks while my Apprentice Regin is away."

He also says that there's a good chance their missing friend/husband never was drawn into Ravenloft, and that is a good thing.

Two

Over the course of the next month, the girls, with Lauradin's aid, learn new skills to aid them in the new world. Their spirits also fall as they realize the gravity of their situation and yearn for home. They hate the stench of the city and its utter foreignness. They sense the menacing evil just beyond their sight, hiding in the dark shadows just around the corner.

Morris volunteers to aid the dwarf by the forge, and also learns how to properly wield a sword and axe as well as handle one of Lauradin's fine muskets.

Discovering latent magical talents, maria is guided by the wise woman Ceredwyn, an old woman and some say, witch, and learns the secrets of herbs as well.

Elin begins to dream of the old gods of Asgard, and a visit from Lauradin's cousin, a cleric, reveals that the goddess Freja is speaking to her through her dreams. She embarks on the path of a devotee to Freja and learns to receive her blessings.

Sara has a feeling in her heart that Ben is somehow here, and spends days wandering the dirty, stinking city. One day, she comes upon a door at the end of a dark alley and somehow knows her husband has been here. She is however assaulted by thugs, but is rescued by a silver adorned elven maiden - the same that killed the wolves in the forest. The elf, Laiquhendi, agrees to apprentice Sara as a ranger.

Characters

Now that the characters are introduced, some description is in order. The following is an extract from my printed campaign notes, describing to the girls how they now look.

It is evening now. Morris has just finished work for the day in the forge, and is washing herself in a fresh water trough used for cooling metal. Luradin has left for the local Tavern, and you are left alone in his home. Elin stokes the fire as Maria arranges some fresh herbs she has brought home. Sara joins you, walking through the door from a long day spent in the nature of the nearby forest.

[Morris is athletic, tall and muscular, but also attractive with light brown hair. She is the strong silent type, and reliable. She is a level 1 fighter]

You look each other over.

You each look the part of the careers you have decided to pursue. You long ago stopped wearing your dresses, feeling the cold too much.

Sara's hair is longer now, and lighter too, from long days exposed to sunlight, though strangely she hasn't developed a tan. Her figure has slimmed, being replaced with more muscle than before, and she looks the part in her well-worn hide boots, leather leggings and corset. A woollen overcoat with a crossing leather strap and belt completes her costume. She wears a tri-cornered hat.

[Sara is blonde, blue eyed, above average height for a woman and the eldest of the group. She is strong willed, direct and an authority figure. She is a 1st level ranger]

Elin gets some stares when she walks down the street with her extensions in. Curious nobles have approached her on several occasions asking her how it is done, including a hair mistress who styles for the noblewomen. Elin wears the same basic outfit, long boots with leggings worn over stockings, which help keep her warm. Then a light sleeved corset and scarf worn with a longer coat than Sarah's. Her clothes are lighter than hers too, and finished with the embroidered symbology of Freja, which Elin has painstakingly rendered by candlelight.

[Elin is athletic, but petite, with short hair with braided extensions. She jokes often and has a perverse sense of humour and troublesome curiosity. She is a 1st level cleric of Freja]

Maria wears a much lighter version of the same, for her freedom of movement is very necessary to the workings of magic.





[Maria is half Finnish and consequently is very pale in complexion with near white-blonde hair, blue eyes and an innate shyness. She is a 1st level sorcerer]

Stats were (poorly) derived from the girls actual abilities. I was in hindsight, way too generous both with experience, finances and abilities, but we'll come to that in later sessions.

Most of the girls have high mental faculties but average or slightly above average physical abilities. I justified that modern education and training gave them a lot of knowledge and modern medicine helps too.

They use standard d20 character classes and sheets, and I add synergy bonuses to skill checks they knew in their previous lives, such as swim bonuses, or knowledge checks about general science or their individual educations.

More to Come Soon.

