

RESCUES AND RIVALRIES

Dungeons and Dragons 5th Edition Campaign Adventure

DM's Notes

Setting:

The Lands of Shae Tahrane
The Sovereign Monarchy of Floreth and the Shattered Isles
Shyn-Valor and Environs

Premise:

The players are introduced; significant NPC's are introduced; the city of Shyn-Valour is the starting point of the campaign. The players are taught about encumbrance, movement, movement under unfavorable conditions, combat, and invited to participate in the intrigue of the Shattered Isles. Expose the characters to combat, a little prestige, earn capital and experience points; solidify the party.

Cities and Locations:

- *Shyn-Valour.*
- *Shyn-Khane.*
- *Wastes and Wilds.* The undeveloped wilderness between Shyn-Valour and Shyn-Khane is littered with barbarians, brigands, wild game, and several varieties of bears and wolves. It's an unpatrolled place that requires its own survival knowledge.

Non-Player Characters:

Khandice Hawthorne. First-Born. Daughter of Bridget, Amica, Beatrix, Reynilda, and Margharette. Matron of House Hawthorne.

Magistrate Theresa Cymorelle. First-Born of House Cymorelle. Daughter of Bria, Lysa, and Kand. Lawful Designate of her Sovereign Majesty, Rose Wrynn.

Symon. A Freeman of Shyn-Valour. Snowy Owl Company. Human Fighter (Eldritch Knight).

Beatrix. Academic of Ars Prima. A Freewoman of Shyn-Valour Though More Recently of Pax Arcana.

*Ehren of House Hawthorne**. Fifth-Born. Daughter of Gunnore, Juliania, and Christina. Purveyor of Wayward Landing. *Ward of House Hawthorne, not direct lineage.

Dhavid. A Freeman of Shyn-Valour. Purveyor of its General Stores. Concerned about trade.

Susyn. A Freewoman of Shyn-Valour. Cleric. Resident of the town's Abbey. She is concerned about unsettled dreams she is having. A rising sense of fear, to the north, in the White Stands (prelude to adventure).

Whik. Dwarf of the Kingdoms. Owned by Nobody. Weapons master and armourer. Talks about history and the Hawthorne family; reasons for staying; build up a sense of purpose and commitment to Shyn-Valour.

Augusta Pontius. Commmercium Merchant and Trafficker of Shyn-Khane. A fat woman who keeps well. Has two white huskies. The Commmercium ("right to trade") is the merchant guild throughout Floreth.

Magistrate Dhakma Song of House Song. Second-Born. Daughter of Katherine, Joan, and Khaterna. Lawful Designate of Her Sovereign Majesty, Dhyane Wrynn.

Peculiar Perceval. Apothecary of Shyn-Khane. Member of Ashes and Omens, thieves' guild.

Monsters:

- Human Guards. (MM 347). AC 16. HP 11. 25 XP. Perception +2, Passive 12. +3 to Hit. Short Sword (4 or 1d6 +1) or Spear (4 or 1d6+1).
- Human Barbarians. (*Tribal Warrior*, Spears, MM 350). AC 12. HP 11. 25XP. +1 STR. +3 to Hit with Spear (20/60ft). Hit: 5 (1d6+2) or 2-handed melee hit: 5 (1d8+1).
- Wolves. (MM 341). AC 13. HP 11. 50 XP. Perception +3, Stealth +4, Passive 13. Hearing or Smell. Bite attack (7 or 2d4+2); must succeed on DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.
- Human Thieves and Brigands. (*Spy*, MM 349). AC 12. HP 27. 200 XP. Deception +5, Insight +4, Investigation +5, Perception +6, Persuasion +5, Sleight of Hand +4, Stealth +4, Passive Perception 16. Cunning: On each of its turns, spy can use bonus action to Dash, Disengage, or Hide. Sneak Attack: 7 (2d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack, advantage on roll. x2 Attacks/Round. Melee +4 to Hit (5 or 1d6+2) shortsword. Hand crossbow +4 to hit, 30/120, 5 (1d6+2). Running jump +3 additional feet and climbing has no movement penalty. 1: Fingernail clippings, 2 bags of powdered stinging nettle. 2: Ashes. 3: Salt; 1 bag of powdered stinging nettle. 4: Pig Ear.

- Black Bear. (MM 318). AC 11. HP 19. XP 100. Perception +3. Passive 13. Bite +3 to hit, 5 (1d6+2) piercing; claws +3 to hit, 7 (2d4+2) slashing.

Awarded Items of Magic and Special Possessions:

Amulet of Vongur Rockhammer.

Diary of Correspondence.

Act One:

Where the party comes together in Shyn-Valour; some history of Shyn-Valour is revealed; the party is commissioned by Snowy Owl Company to reinforce the Magistrates' Guards and assist a House Matron; wandering through the countryside; skirmishes; and a big battle against the brigands. The Matron seeks answers.

Scene: A Wintery Ride.

- The Magistrate rides into Shyn-Valour and the main points of interest are described.
- The general layout of the city is explored, connection to dwarves, and so on.
- Indoor farming.
- Opportunity for introducing a player character or two during the ride.
- Spices: Saffron, Green Cardamom, Vanilla, Cubeb Pepper, Balsam Seeds, Galangal.

Scene: Polite Summons.

- The Magistrate delivers the sealed request from House Hawthorne to Symon at Wayward Landing, the Inn.
- The PC's are here. So is Symon.
- The Magistrate was stabbed with a spear in the leg. It's broken off. Still in her leg. She's hurt but totally doesn't flinch. She calls for Ehren to stable her horse, summon the Sisters, and a bottle of wine.
- The sealed request for Symon is a formal request for Snowy Owl Company to intervene in an attack made against a trade caravan flying House Hawthorne's banner, and, escorting the Matron. The attackers were the barbarians.
- Magistrate trusts Symon. The nearest garrison is 100 miles away by ship. Symon is the only man she trusts twice that. She's short handed.
- Symon's resources are tight at the moment. Feels PC's may be of use here.

Scene: A Brief History.

- Symon escorts the players outside and a walk to the main courtyard. The statue of Bridget Hawthorne and Amica Hawthorne are here; Bridget's hand is extended with a lantern.
- Bridget first highborn to settle and pioneer this region; worked hard, sacrificed much to create a deep-water port for the Isles. Helped guide in the first ships using her own lantern. Showing the way. All of this is her House. Good to earn favors from highborn.
- Symon offers to sponsor the party with a Snowy Owl Company chit. Collect their gear. They leave from the gate in two hours. Visit Dhavid and Whik. Show them the chit. Consider it a loan. Trusting you - come back when the work is done. I'll have more for you.
- Symon hands them the sealed writ to deliver the Matron.

Scene: Gathering Supplies.

- The party goes about gathering supplies in the town. We learn about encumbrance.
- Party meets Whik and Dhavid. May meet Susyn, Beatrix.
- Rest of party brought into the fold.
- No horses. Got to go by foot.

Scene: Travel and Combat

- The PC's travel into the countryside. Need a marching order.
- Learn how to travel; snowy; how to we tell our way?
- Searching for the brigands, surviving, traveling ... wandering monsters.
- We learn basic combat.
- Wolves perhaps, depending on time.

Scene: The Standoff.

- The three remaining Guards have taken the Matron and her trade convoy to higher ground.
- Three Guards attempt to protect her and nine others from the Barbarians, who're trying to muster forces and strategy to over-take the caravan's defenses.
- The party needs to assess the situation and engage the Barbarians in combat.
- Once vanquished, looting the bodies reveals gold coins. Money. What do barbarians need money for? They're being paid?

Scene: A Matron's Resolve.

- The sealed writ from Symon is delivered.
- The Matron feels this is more than coincidence. Somebody wanted her dead. Pridefully, she'd rather ride head-high right around the Bay of Sorrows and into Shyn-Khane, just to see who she disappoints.

- Would like to have the player characters take her banner through to the city.

Act Two:

Having convinced the party to take her banner to Shyn-Khane, the Matron looks for answers. Who wants her dead? Why? In Shyn-Khane, the party is introduced to a wealthy merchant aristocrat who may have a motive, or knows who might have a motive. But there are spiders listening, wondering if the real perpetrator can keep their promises. The thieves' guild is introduced. Rhackdalia is introduced. The party discovers a clue.

Scene: Arrival at Bay of Sorrows.

- Conversation between Khandice and the Halfling:
 - When she was younger, not older than Siegride, a little younger, she was accompanying her mother, Margharitte, on a trade expedition on the mainland. It was a sad time; her sister, Leslie, had died only a few months before.
 - They were south of Floreth. Beyond Evlyne Pass. Beyond the reaches of the Dwarven Kingdom. Beyond the ruins of Dhark Keep. It's the furthest south I'd ever been in my entire life.
 - It is an area much, much warmer and drier than Floreth. The map-makers of Floreth refer to that area of Shae Tehrane as Jherod's Scattered Vales and Hollows, but it certainly goes by other names abroad. Jherod was a crotchety, arrogant map-maker in the Port City that tended to embody his explorations.
 - She and her mother were on a less-traveled road and happened upon a small village of kind, jovial little people. They were entertained and well-fed. They made a dish for dinner called Sweet Rock Soup. It was her favorite.
 - The stars that evening were the clearest she'd ever seen them. The crickets were so loud. The families who hosted their stay so welcoming and warm.
 - She recalls seeing a bit of joy creep back into Marghariette's heart that day.
 - She's never been back but has always wanted to make the long journey.
 - The halfling character thinks she is referring to Aymes Parish, and the assorted hamlets and shires that're found there. That's where he is from.
- The Bay is described; a little history revealed with Khandice Hawthorne providing narrative.
- This place was to be a thriving port and rival Shyn-Valour but the bay proved too small and too shallow. Boats would crash against the rocks and sink and need to be excavated from the waters.
- Bigger ships moor off in deeper waters and smaller craft come into the bay. They climb ladders and ramps of switchbacks carved into the rock to get to the city. There are large and small cargo cranes positioned throughout the bay.
- Now it's a minor port for much smaller vessels. Difficult navigation. Trafficking of both legitimate and illegitimate business. Place of pirates.

- A haze of smoke and pollution covers the city. Maybe 800 people at most. Much smaller than Shyn-Valour.
- Symon wants to run ahead. Business in Shyn-Khane. Wants to secure some additional muscle for the return trip.

Scene: Meanwhile, at the Howling Hag

- Two Dwarven characters are introduced.
- The characters wanted to book passage to this island because they heard of the opportunities. They booked to the wrong place.
- They hear a Rumor and Lie.
- Symon walks into the Howling Hag. Notices the Dwarves. Takes a seat.
- Symon engages in conversation.
 - He introduces himself as Symon.
 - He realizes that they're not from around here. Not too many Dwarves come through these parts. Usually stay away from the water. What brings you here?
 - He knows a Dwarf in Shyn-Valour (Whik). An honorable man. Is that true for all Dwarves?
 - Nice weapon. Better arms? May I? ... Touchy touchy.
 - It looks like they're looking for an opportunity to use them.
 - Interested in a little business? I'm in need of some muscle for a caravan escort back into Shyn-Valour. Good pay but even a better reason. We'd be safeguarding a very important Matron. You're heading that way anyhow, and, if you're as honorable as I've heard Dwarves are ... (winks)
- If they're in, he passes a Snowy Owl chit to them and instructs them to gear up. Meet him in front of the Croupier's Tower in two hours, oh, and by the way, a little advice .. careful what people tell you around here. This Shyn is full of secrets, rumors, and lies.

Scene: Triumphant Arrival and the Apartments of Augusta Pontius.

- Banners at the ready, the party enters Shyn-Khane.
- Conversation with Khandice when the party enters the city and encounters the statue of Matron Song
 - A House is power.
 - It represents history. Legacy. Longevity. Wealth.
 - Building a *good* House means laying *good* foundations.
 - Thinking of things larger than oneself and your offspring. It means investing in your neighbors. Trusting your friends. Establishing and growing community. Should all connected to you be healthy, sheltered, fed, and prosper, so will your House grow and blossom.

- House Song has long had different ideas about what makes a *good* House.
- Their arrival is noted and communicated through Ashes and Omens, the thieves' guild.
- The city is described.
- Lots of decaying wood. Fish. Fires. The city has many small homes or apartments built side-by-side. Natural formations don't allow the sea winds to blow here.
- As the party passes the city seat, Magistrate Dhakma Song leans against a column of the crumbling architecture. Spear in hand. Watching. Makes no move to make formal introductions. Khandice politely nods.
- The party stays in Augusta Pontius' apartments in Shyn-Khane; they're to be here for two nights and to depart on the third day, to escort the Matron to Shyn-Valour.

Scene: Exploring the City.

- Matron Khandice instructs the party to find the apothecary called Peculiar Perceval. Deliver a sealed writ. Return to the apartments for dinner mid-afternoon.
- Matron meets with children.
- Party is followed by thieves of Ashes and Omens.
- Peculiar receives the writ. Recovers specialized drugs for the Matron.
- Peculiar tries to learn more about the party. He trades in secrets.
- In fact, Peculiar Perceval offers an exchange. Make him a promise.
 - Percy has lost touch with an associate of his. Silas Crane. Not a very sociable type. He hasn't returned for months. Fears the worst. Maybe the Barbarians got to him.
 - Master Crane was rooting out a very important fungus for Percy. He really needs that fungus.
 - Go north, find Master Crane, and/or, return within two cycle's time (four weeks), go to north of the island to recover Allum Nightshade, a very rare mushroom.
 - He offers 100 crowns (gold) for each pound.
 - Bring me a map of the region and where I might find them on my own. That would be ... an extraordinary boon commensurate with almost any favor.
 - He also offers information upon their return. Concerning Ashes and Omens interest in the Matron.
 - He offers a writ. "*i* for AN - 1 LB/100c."
 - Welcome to the Shattered Isles. Everyone owes somebody a debt.

Scene: Discussion With Augusta.

- A dinner scene on the first evening. Augusta is revealed.
- Matron doesn't feel well and retires to her quarters in the apartments. She takes the apothecary's brew.

- Doesn't surprise Augusta.
- Small-talk on commerce and trade, the *Commercium*, business is booming. She thinks barbarians are hungry. Need to take more than barter. Smell of war.
- May elude to trade with associates north of the island. Iron ingots. Copper, gold, platinum.
- In private audience, she reveals that the Matron's womb is barren. All the best breeders have been worked through. She'll never have offspring.
- The Matron's sole sister died at the age of nine; drowned. Khandice is the last Hawthorne; no more heirs and descendants.
- The estate will go the way of the Queen, property and assets seized, turned over to Her Majesty's Designate. Leading the party on, this would be Magistrate Cymorelle.
- At some point in this conversation, the Thieves will be discovered eavesdropping on this conversation.

Scene: Defending the Matron.

- In the apartments on the second evening, four thieves of Ashes and Omens are trying to break in and steal from the Matron.
- Elaborate combat. Rooftop fighting. Parkour! Defending the Matron.

Scene: A Culprit Captured!

- One of the thieves will be captured. He calls himself Kherk. No house name. Doesn't belong to a house.
- His possessions searched, the party will find a totem (dried withered hand of a pixie on a chain), and a small leather bound black book of old, tattered parchment. This is the Diary of Correspondence. It will show correspondence between someone and this thief. The entries discuss minor hits and assignments, looking for traffickers, certain ships, deliveries, captains, and cargo. Last four entries seem suspicious. The last entry is from the sender. It says, "Learn who carried her banners. Report only to me. Double your efforts."
- *Kherk* won't talk. He's there to spy on the Matron.
- Surrendered to the Designate, Magistrate Dhakma Song.
- Augusta feels dishonored. She promises that the party is always welcome in her home and apartments when traveling to Shyn-Khane. Passes them a writ.

Scene: Returning Home

- The Matron has to be returned but the party fears the worst. An ambush perhaps? Will the party do exactly what they're expected to do?

Act Three:

The fight home. Secret ways, graveyards, and omens. Brigands attack! Peculiar's lead? The book inquires. Symon has a boon.

Pass around the omens in advance.

Scene: Sickly Matron.

- She's not feeling so well. Should return to her home. She has her medicine.
- Party should feel a sense of foreboding here. Like they're walking into a trap.

Scene: Frozen Gardens and Cold Cemeteries

- The party may be convinced to use a non-conventional route back to Shyn-Valour.
- Through freshly fallen snow on gardens and the cemeteries at Shyn-Khane.
- Many unmarked graves of the poor
- Women have more ceremonial presence than men.
- Many of the Song family.
- One of these omens happens
 - A person must hold their breath while walking through a cemetery or they'll breathe in a spirit of someone who has recently died.
 - Tuck your thumbs into your fists to protect your parents.
 - People who lived a good life will have flowers grow on their graves; if they were evil, weeds would grow.
 - Never speak ill of the dead or their spirit will come back to haunt you.
 - If a dog howls three times it means someone is going to die. If a dog howls at night when someone in the house is sick it is a bad omen. This omen can be reversed by reaching under the bed and turning over a shoe.
 - Bodies were watched over every minute for 3-4 days after death to prevent a premature burial for someone who might simply be in a coma rather than actually dead.
 - When you experience a chill up your spine someone has just walked over your future grave site

Scene: Brigands Attack!

- This time, it's brigands/thieves and not barbarians, or, working in cahoots with a handful of barbarians. Cross-bows. Blocked path with fallen tree. They'll attempt to attack the party and kill the Matron on the travel back to Shyn-Valour.
- The party may be able to avoid this scene if they decide on some alternate route or course of action.
- One of the brigands has a ship schedule. There are two pages ripped from a larger book. One page is from a month ago; another from two weeks ago. Names of ships and arrival times. The pages show ship names. One ship name appears on both papers. "The Chepstow Castle".
- They'd need the manifests and records to see where they're coming from. That may be difficult to come by or gain access to. May need to ask around.

Scene: The Book Inquires.

- The messaging book has a new entry. "Your progress?"
- Somebody wants the Matron dead. But who? Why? More inquiries might be had in Shyn-Valour; Ashes and Omens might have the answers.

Scene: Symon's Boon.

- Symon is grateful that the Matron has returned safely to Shyn-Valour. The party did the Snowy Owl Company well. Compensation. He has another assignment.
- In the White Stand (the creepy forest of white birch to the north), there's an old village. Maybe witches. Haunted, maybe. More likely just rumors. A patron wants soil from that place. Rich, earthy soil. 100 pounds of it. But there's a lot more up there. Artifacts from the first settlements, old weapons. The party keeps what they find. He has a map. Offers the party the work; a crown a pound. 100 Crowns/pound; bonus 100 Crowns on their return within a cycle.
- Could be some training before the next session.