

Land of Vampires: Introductory Adventure

A level 1-2 duet 5e campaign arc for one PC and their GM

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Introduction

Several thousand years ago, the land of Steymhorod disappeared from the surface of Eldura. What had once been a prosperous region descended into the Shadowlands, its borders separated from the rest of the plane by impenetrable mist. At all times, Steymhorod remains under gray clouds, lit only by weak sunlight even at the brightest times of day. The forests teeter on the cusp between autumn and winter, a state of living death. And over the land, a dark vampire lord, Draego, rules.

It is toward this land that our adventurer's destiny leads, though Steymhorod has not yet cast its pall over their fate.

In Chapter One, our journey begins in the seaside city-state of Linolynn, where beneath the sun and the sound of crashing waves, a disturbing string of disappearances has begun to unfurl. Children have gone missing from their beds, vanished from late walks home after the fall of dusk. The city watch have uncovered a few clues as to what may have transpired, but as of yet, they have no leads that show true promise.



Over the course of the chapter, the PC follows leads and makes three new allies, each of whom would make a great adventuring companion to take with them on their journey to Nocturne. Their search concludes in the catacombs of Io Keep where they find evidence of a vampire.

In Chapter Two, the PC concludes their business in Linolynn and proceeds across the rolling Caldaran hills and into the Stormside Forest, climbing toward the roots of the Frostmaw Mountains in search of the Nocturne estate and their quarry, the vampire Lord Nassarq.

We hope you're excited to weave a dark, exciting tale! Following this adventure, you can proceed to Part One of the Land of Vampires campaign after the PC has caught the trail of Lord Nassarq and followed him to the shadowy land of Steymhorod.

How to Use this Adventure

This adventure assumes that you have access to the 5e SRD. Items or creatures that are not part of the SRD can be found in the appendix.

Text box example: Text that appears in a box like this may be read aloud, paraphrased, or omitted as you prefer. It is intended to help describe scenarios and environments.

Sidebar example

Text that appears in sidebars is also optional and/or intended to provide extra background information or lore that may be helpful as you flesh out the adventure.

Creatures with stat blocks appear in bold, magic items appear in italics.

[GM's note: tips on scale or RP appear in brackets. In this adventure as well, you'll find information for GM's eyes only in brackets.]

Adjusting Combat

Regardless of whether you are running this adventure 1-on-1 or for a group, one of the most important roles of the GM is balancing and tweaking encounters to suit the PC. The combat should feel weighty, but fun. Some strategies include reducing or raising hit points or changing the number of combatants before the session begins or making adjustments during combat.

For more information and resources about playing this one-on-one style, please see dndduet.com.

A Note on Scale

Even more so than with group adventures, individual stats such as hp and damage-per-turn play a critical role in a duet game. As the GM, it's likely that you'll need to make some adjustments for your PC. We've done our best to point out moments where you may need to pay particular care with the GM's notes throughout the adventure.

In terms of scale in particular, we assume that the PC will be traveling with at least one other party member and that the PC is a bit more powerful—either in terms of extra spells, magic items, or another special bump of your choosing—than most individual PCs would be at their corresponding level in a group game. We use the terms PC and party relatively interchangeably for variety, though we do suggest that the story narrative center around the PC as much as possible.

Acquiring a Companion

One of the goals of this introductory series of adventures is that the PC finds a traveling companion to accompany them on their journey. Depending on the PC's backstory, they might already have someone they trust and plan to adventure with, or they might find that person along the way. This introductory arc introduces five possible adventuring companions, three in Chapter One and two in Chapter Two, who would make great allies on the PC's adventures.

Though the PC does not know it yet, this arc ends with them stepping through a portal into Steymhorod. The PC and any and all of their surviving companions have to decide if they want to set aside everything they've ever known to pursue Nassarq or not. Some tables may wish to heighten the stakes for the PC with the death of one of their companions during their confrontation with Nassarq at the adventure's close. This is the sort of thing we leave to GM discretion and what seems the most fun.

Adventure Premise

A disturbing series of disappearances, primarily of children, has eroded the trust of Linolynn's Water Ward. People are afraid to leave their homes, to go to work. The city watch are anxious to uncover who or what is snatching children from their beds and off the streets.

As the adventure develops, the PC takes on the task of discovering where the children have gone and

who has taken them. They might take up this mission at the behest of the city watch or on their own. You can find inspiration for adventure hooks in the section that follows.

The PC scours the city of Linolynn for signs of the children, eventually making their way to the catacombs beneath the castle, Io Keep. There, they find clues that point to the workings of a foul creature, a vampire, responsible for the disappearances... and deaths. Further digging reveals that the vampire masquerades as a Linolynnian nobleman, Lord Nassarq, who has just left the castle and traveled north to his estate.

It will take several days for Stormguard Basha to organize Linolynn's troops and mount an attack against Nassarq's mountain estate, Nocturne. But in that time, there's a high likelihood that the vampire could escape. The PC also uncovered evidence that suggested several of Nassarq's victims were still alive... for now.

If the PC hurries, they may catch Nassarq before he flees. But long-dormant dangers stand between them and the vampire's second lair. If they can survive the tests of the forests and mountains and their encounter with the vampire, a blood portal opens before them. It leads to the land from which all vampires originate—Steymhorod.

Adventure Hooks and PC Backstories

Several possible adventure hooks and PC backstories follow. We want the adventure to be as personalized to the PC as possible; this customization highlights one of the best aspects of one-on-one gaming. Feel free to adjust, adapt, or mix the prompts that follow to suit your player, their character, and the campaign the two of you will co-create.

The trajectory of this opening adventure points toward Lord Nassarq. Once they find and track him down, the PC pursues him into Steymhorod, potentially leaving behind everything of life in Azuria that they have known. At this point in the adventure, of course, the PC is not yet aware of this.

The other backstory goal we have for this introductory adventure is for the PC to develop a hatred for Lord Nassarq that will drive their pursuit of him through Steymhorod.



Chapter One: A Dark Destiny

Prologue: Snatched

With classic flair, the adventure opens in a tavern. While there, the PC overhears rumors about children going missing across the city. No one seems to know the cause. The PC can react to this as they wish. Then, on their way home, without warning, a child vanishes before their eyes. Are they courageous enough to give chase and discover where the child has gone?

The Three Sisters' Pub

The Three Sisters' is a two-story inn and tavern located in the Earth Ward near its intersection with both the Air and Water Wards. Imelda, Rosalind, and Guinevere inherited the building from their mother Evaline, a prominent herbalist and apothecary for Linolynn's citizenry. Guinevere still carries on her mother's work, while Imelda and Rosalind see to the daily running of the inn and tavern.

You can find a map for the area around the Three Sisters' Tavern and for the tavern itself in the Appendix.

As your adventure begins, read or paraphrase the following:

Lantern light shines from the mottled glass windows of the Three Sisters' Pub, casting a faint glow on the cobblestone streets and the two-story structure's gray exterior stones. You catch sight of Rosalind through the window, her signature red apron and curly brown hair making her easy to distinguish from the weary postures of her guests. The heavy wooden door creaks on its hinges ahead of you as a few smiling patrons step out of the tavern and into the twilight.

The PC's backstory and personality shape how they're received in the Three Sisters'. A few things to consider as you set the scene:

- Does the PC have any allies here? Is this a tavern they've frequented before, or have they only just arrived in the city?
- What's brought the PC to this tavern? Do they come every day after work?
- What do they already know about Linolynn, and what might they be trying to pick up?
- How well do they blend in to the hard-working, primarily human populace having an ale or two following their day's labor?



Chapter Two: The Blood Portal

Prologue: Preparations

Before the PC sets off in pursuit of Nassarq, they should finalize any business they have in Linolynn. This may mean choosing which of their new companions they'd like to accompany them to Nocturne and/or saying goodbye to family and friends in the city. The PC should also purchase any supplies they might need on their journey. [They won't have the chance to restock until they reach St. Sebastian in Steymhorod.]

The PC and any companions they choose to accompany them should also level up to level 2 before they leave Linolynn.

Linolynnian Businesses

Some tables enjoy Rping shopping excursions while others prefer to take care of restocking out of game. We suggest doing whatever is the most fun for you. The list below outlines a few possible businesses and their proprietors should the PC wish to visit them. Unless otherwise specified, business in Linolynn use the prices

outlined in the Equipment section of the 5e SRD. So long as their negotiations are reasonable, characters attempting to bargain with tradespersons in the Earth and Water Wards make their Charisma (Persuasion) rolls with advantage. At GM's discretion, characters attempting to haggle in the Air Ward, the wealthiest of Linolynn's outer wards, roll with disadvantage.

Herbalist. The PC can restock any herbs or potions they need from Guinevere at the Three Sisters' Pub in the Earth Ward or from Evony's mother Leilena at The Happy Herbalist in the Air Ward.

Hostler. The sisters of the Three Sisters' work with a passionate stable master, a middle-aged half-elf named Fernand. Fernand charges 3gp per day of contract for a riding horse, 5gp per day if the client wishes to contract out two horses.

Tools. Reina can direct the PC to Sienna Brubeck, a resourceful shopkeeper down the street from The Flame and the Forge. Sienna stocks a wide variety of equipment packs and tools.

Weapons and Armor. In the Earth Ward, Irial, the keen-eyed smith of The Flame and the Forge and Reina's mentor, is pleased that his protégé has found a powerful friend to work alongside. If the PC brings Reina with them on their adventure, Irial agrees to forge any non-

Appendix

Creatures and NPCs



Evony Ferne, Apothecary Adventuring Companion

Half-elf female in her mid-twenties; walnut-hued skin and dark brown eyes; black-brown hair worn tied back in a kerchief

Evony Ferne has learned much working at her mother's side at The Happy Herbalist, but the young half-elf has begun to chafe under the lack of variety and adventure to be found inside the walls of Linolynn's Air Ward. Evony is certain that somewhere, out in the wider world, there are people, plants, and experiences just waiting for her discovery. And when she finds them, she intends for her burgeoning powers as an apothecary to grow to heights she cannot yet even imagine.

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Character's Goal: Evony is anxious to get out of The Happy Herbalist and to do something, anything, important. Yes, she is happy to aid her mother in curing colds and other uncomfortable ailments, but the wonders of the natural world, enhanced by cleverness and magic, hold so many intricacies and inventive surprises. When the call to adventure sounds, she plans to be ready to answer.

*Evony uses the **crafter adventuring companion level 1** stat block.*

Crafter Adventuring Companion, Level 1

Medium humanoid, any alignment

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+0)

Saving Throws Dexterity +4, Intelligence +4

Skills Arcana +4, Medicine +2, Sleight of Hand +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common and one other language

Ritual Spellcasting. The crafter is a 1st-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following ritual crafter spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash*, *light*

1st level (2 slots): *alarm (ritual)*, *detect magic (ritual)*

ACTIONS

Light Hammer. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Maps

Below, you'll find the GM's reference maps for The Three Sisters' Pub and its surrounding region, the city-state of Linolynn, the world of Azuria, and the catacombs beneath Io Keep. Full-sized versions of each map follow at the end of the adventure PDF.

The Three Sisters' Pub

