

Campaign/Game: The Sanguine Succession: D&D 5e

Date: June 10th, 2021

Episode 1: Sanguine Shambles

Campaign Date: Verdance 25th 931 (Summer)

Characters

Barackus "Boomer" Doomhammer, Dwarf Wizard Evoker - 6 (Tim)

Bo, Human Beast Conclave Ranger - 6 (Chel)

Arro, Canine Animal Companion (NPC)

Desdemona, Dragonborn Moon Druid - 6 (Camille)

Taurianus the Bull, Human Berserker Barbarian - 6 (Jamin)

Shae, Changeling Lore Bard - 6 (Ryan)

DM: Andrew

Log:

The city-state of Sanguine in the southeast of the continent of Radavan is one of the most ancient in all of Kyor. It is a place of mystery, power, dark forests, haunted mountains, black crypts, gloom, horrors, and treasures. Yet it is also a place of life ruled by kings and feuding nobles populated by sturdy peasants and cunning city-folk ravaged by bandits, defended by mercenaries and armies alike.

Sanguine's troubles are growing. Childless King Valdric is dying; his physicians have found no cure. He has faith in their powers to restore him and refuses to name an heir, fearful that any heir might be eager to hasten the king's departure. His nobles are sure that no cure will be found and that the country will soon be left without king or heir. They maneuver for the throne, amassing private armies and plotting. No noble has yet dared to kill another, but you have ridden past burned villages and fields past plundered warehouses, past murdered captains lying in stained fields while vultures circled overhead. The king's army hides while bandits raid freely, and the Sanguinites become refugees within their own lands, fleeing for the safety of the city. The roads are thick with refugee carts piled high with the few humble goods which escaped flame and bandit.

It is through this troubled land the heroes journey. They have come because they have heard the reports of good work for privateers like them. This story finds the heroes a half-day northwest from the gates of Sanguine, light on cash but full of determination. As they round a bend in this forest-darkened road ahead they see the remnants of a small caravan. Hooded bandits amuse themselves taunting survivors including a female tiefling warrior with horned helmet to accentuate her two natural horns and her companion, a green elf berserker with a wicked war axe and a crooked smile.



Kitian



Lady Julia

They do their best to protect two plainly dressed halflings, one of which sprawls unconscious between them with a gushing head wound.



Katos



Darios

On the far side of this melee, a red-haired tiefling with piercing green eyes spots the privateers. She is dressed in feathered robes and flanked by two more hooded warriors. A giant troll that stands over nine-feet tall armed with a vicious spiked club follows her commands. She shouts out at the heroes in anger, "This is not your fight, ratcatchers! Move on or else you too will face the wrath of the Red Hawk and my men!"

The conscious halfling cries out to the privateers, gesturing to the tipped caravan cart filled with rare foods, wine, cloth and art. "All these goods are yours if you save us!"

The battle is joined. The hooded bandits are in fact orcs - the conjured spawn of the abyss. These monsters are not born and raised as mere mortals. Instead just as all other evil humanoids on the face of Kyor they are conjured in dark rituals. They are demons made flesh.

Desdemona magically transforms into a giant spider and advances on the right flank. Bo sends Arro to help the tiefling warriors. Bo sends several arrows sheathed in arcane scripture that entangles their target in debilitating barbed vines. Taurianus advances on the troll, exchanging enraged insults and blows. Shae empowers the barbarian, giving him a haste to his blows. Boomer launches a fireball, vaporizing several of the orc bandits.

"By the Mariner's wet beard you'll live to regret meddling with the Red Hawk!" the red-haired tiefling sneers. She turns on her heel and quickly disappears back into the forest.

Spider-Desdemona webs up an orc and poisons several with her deadly bite. Taurianus trades blows toe-to-toe with the troll, bolstered by Shae's magic and encouraging music. Boomer continues to lob fire magic at the orcs including another fireball, a gout of agonizing flame, and a trio of scorching rays of deadly fire. Bo engages the bandits in melee combat, drawing steel to cut down the villains. Shae's magical healing words wake the halfling, but is too late for the green elf berserker. The bard takes turns simultaneously encouraging his allies and whispering truly disturbing arcane threats at the orc bandits. The dissonance between those two magics shocking everyone who witnesses the bard's power.

Following the battle, the heroes are introduced to the members of the caravan. Katos, the conscious halfling, thanks Shae for healing his halfling companion, Darios. They in turn introduce Lady Julia who quietly mourns the death of her companion Kitian. Darios briefly argues with Katos, and is disappointed to find that a clearly magical silver urn among the caravan was already offered to the privateers but relents. In addition, the salted fish, silks, and tapestries from the inner sea of Radavan that were in the caravan could easily fetch 200 gold crowns in the markets of Sanguine. Katos slides a gigantic, gaudy ruby ring featuring four horns off one finger and gives it to Julia. She reluctantly accepts the ancient jewelry.



Katos offers to accompany the privateers to the city gates. "Come to Sanguine. There we have more treasure, coins more suitable to adventurers such as yourselves. Also our lord Baron Timeon is in need of such excellent help. I'm sure he could be persuaded to take you into his service."

The group, a little worse for wear, takes a short rest before continuing on along the road to the city. As they cross a hill, they witness a brooding, gaunt, flat-topped mountain. Dark clouds loom over its severe slopes. The road circles this dark peak on its way toward Sanguine. In the

distance, the Red River flows just south of the city and catches the flaming colors of the sunset as it churns east toward the sea. Lady Julia gestures, "That is Alkir Mountain. Old wives say a god once made his abode there."



"Old wives oft speak idly," Darios snaps dryly.

Katos smiles at his halfling companion, hoping to cheer him up and pass along some more information about the city of Sanguine. "Welcome strangers and friends to our adopted home. She is ancient but her face is ever changing. A contradiction of the old and new. She is full of life yet stinks of death. The placid fools within take no notice of the chaos besieging them. The fat merchants, bearded scholars, ragged peddlers, stinking beggars, and accursed footpads all go about business in the usual way as if nothing has changed."

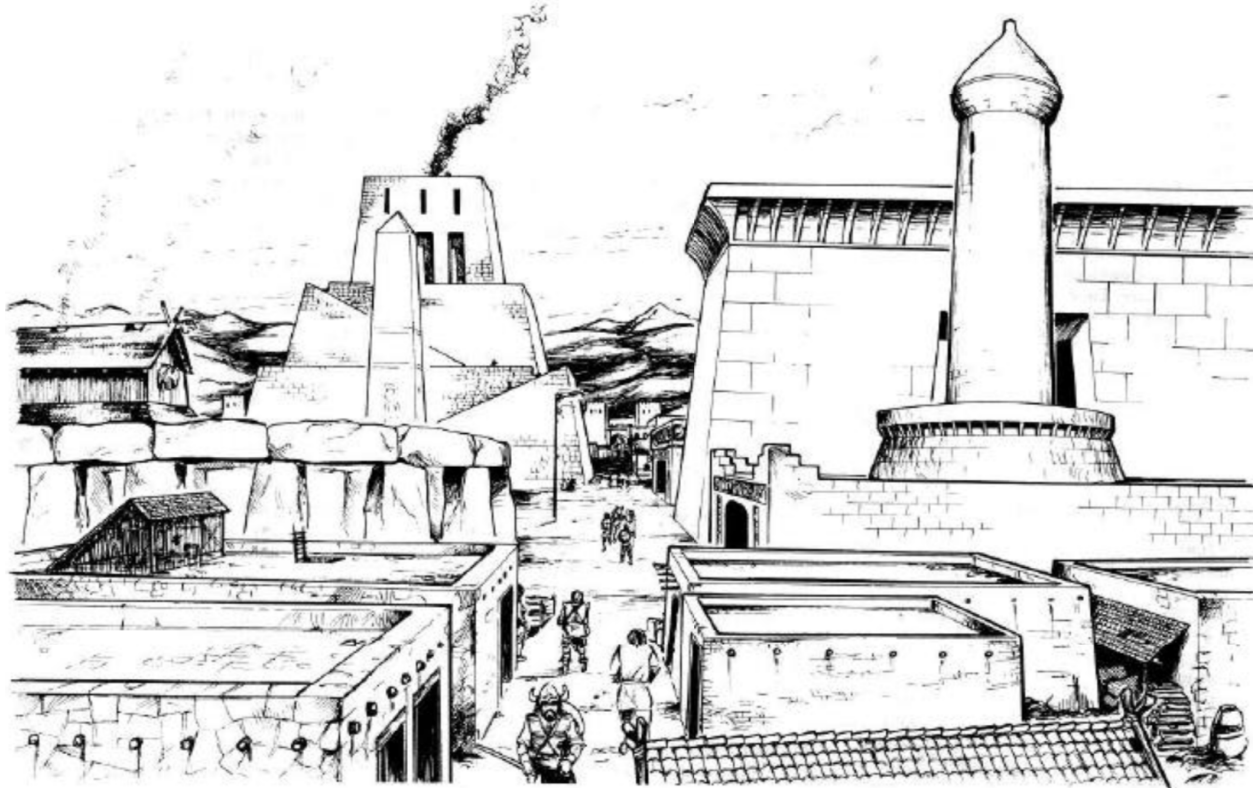
Katos warns the privateers to watch themselves in the city as foreigners are never trusted and justice is severe. The city guard will tend to believe the word of the simplest Sangunite over that of a mercenary. Despite its rich history of famous magi, actually practicing magic within the confines of the city is particularly damning. This change in popular opinion is one many city-states in east Radavan have done following the horrible wars against Corvax almost eighty years ago.

Darios warns the privateers about going about the city at night as well. Only the disreputable are out once the sun has gone down, and the guards won't hesitate to kill and ask questions later. "Speaking of night we'd best make haste the gates are barred at the setting sun"

The heroes arrive at the north gates of the city. There, the gate sergeant questions the group. "What is your business in Sanguine? Which noble house do you work for?"

"This is new. Why must we tell you this?" Katos asks. "We were free to come and go as we pleased before!"

The sergeant explains that any foreign mercenaries must be under writ of a noble patron or suffer imprisonment or impalement depending on the severity of the offense. Katos and Darios reveal that they are on the payroll of Baron Timeon. Shae easily convinces the city guard that the privateers are also already working for Timeon, but Bo goes a step further to reveal that she is in fact an Inquisitor of the Black Hound Fellowship, an organization of detectives famously dedicated to finding those who are lost or kidnapped. Bo specifically has skills and powers aimed at making sure lost souls are not converted into the hungry dead. The guard sergeant provides Bo with a writ of patronage under the condition that she return the next afternoon to help with some cases of missing persons.



Katos and Darios describe the various sections of the city of Sanguine to the Privateers as they walk down the main Promenade from the Gate of Avanrakash located on the north side of the city. Katos offers to lead the privateers to a good tavern for the night. Baron Timeon does not greet any guests this late. On the way to their destination, the privateers smell tension. The regular folk all keep focused on their goal, and don't make eye contact. People mind their own business, making sure not to get involved in any madness that might be ready to consume them along with the less fortunate. As the night falls, only the desperate or foolhardy stay on the streets.

The privateers arrive at the tavern located in the Market district. It is named the Bull and the Boar. Inside, a modest crowd does their best to enjoy themselves during this challenging time. Five off-duty soldiers play liar's dice at one table. At the bar, a fat tiefling named Fablio argues with the bartender about the proper way to prepare fish stew. A buck-toothed tiefling sits alone in a shadowy corner, while a shy tiefling teenager named Torali stands quietly in a corner with thick makeup.



Fablio



Torali

Katos and Darios take a corner booth. They speak quietly in a conspiratorial manner, and keep to themselves. Julia takes some time with the shy teen. Torali is actually a desperate farmer's daughter who was left homeless. Lady Julia decides to take the young tiefling under her wing.



A fair serving wench with long, dark hair wrapped in a tidy bun serves the patrons. Bo decides to engage her in conversation, looking for some rumors of the city. Unlike the native tieflings, Alandra is a human native to the city of Highport on the west coast of the continent. She is clever and resourceful, and the privateers soon learn that she is in fact the owner of the establishment. Alandra shares that Lady Julia is in fact a Sanguine noblewoman driven to adventuring because she was penniless. Alandra is clearly impressed by the tiefling. Bo also learns that "There have been assassinations of various courtiers and kidnappings of nobles' spouses and children to insure the noble's cooperation." She continues to reveal that "The City Guard has been mostly powerless to stop them and General Iskandrian refuses to do anything."

Shae plays some rousing tunes for the bar in exchange for a meal. The bartender is wary at first, but the crowd quickly warms up to the tunes. Boomer joins a game of liars' dice with the five off-duty guardsmen. If it weren't for the dwarf's magically enhanced strength and the steel he packs, he might have been attacked and arrested because he was so good at winning the soldiers' money. Buying a round of drinks for the sore losers also assuages their suspicions.

Taurianus joins a quiet conversation with Fablio. Apparently, until recently he was the cook for Baron Timeon. He reveals that "Baron Timeon is looking for some good troops. His last ones rode off to seek their fortune with Tiberio. Timeon is willing to pay well for so I say the ones who left are fools. Tiberio will give them naught but glory and death."

Desdemona and Bo join Taurianus to chat up Fablio. Fablio tells the Privateers that he was fired because of a lie told by Timeon's chamberlain Vanemoth. By Fablio's telling, Vanemoth dropped a dish of food before serving it to the Baron then blamed the ruined meal on Fablio. In exchange for some of the exotic salted fish from the halflings' caravan, Fablio tells them more about the situation in Sanguine.

"The Baron may be fat but don't let his looks fool you. He's no slouch. He's set up an alliance with Count Antimedes, the biggest of the nobles and the king's favorite. I heard it straight from the Baron's curvaceous consort, so I know it's true." Fablio also reveals a bit about

"Timeon and Count Valentius are worst of enemies. I gather that the Baron insulted Valentius' good friend, the Countess Synelle. If you're thinking of working for Tieone, stay out of Valentius' way."

As the night wears on, the soldiers leave and Alandra offers some rooms to the Privateers. They ask her about the two halflings. She replies, "Katos and Darios are reasonable men, friends of Timeon's. They both have rooms in Timeon's palace and stay there a good deal, but they're a bit odd given to wandering abroad at night or disappearing for weeks. They say they're caravan merchants, but I say there's more there than meets the eye. I say they're spies from Juntandria to help Timeon to the throne."

The halflings abruptly leave the tavern just as the Privateers ascend the stairs to their rooms. Shae and Boomer observantly note that the buck-toothed tiefling shortly follows right after them into the night. They deftly cut the tour of their rooms short. Shae calls to the other privateers and bolt out into the night where they find the two halflings once again in mortal peril!

