

Uncharted Territory

An adventure for 4-6 Heroes in the world of Théah . . .

The Tale

This adventure is based around the loss and subsequent recapture of Synchron artifacts, surrounded by the political maneuverings of the Vendel Merchant League, the Vodacce Princes and the Inquisition. The Heroes are employed to regain Synchron artifacts lost in transit by the Vendel Merchant League. These have to be found and wrested from the hands of otherworldly beings. It's then a race against the Vodacce Merchants who become aware of the treasure carried by the Heroes and make their move to obtain them. Once they've battled off the heroes locate the treasure on a remote Isle, unfortunately the captain of their ship is dragged off into the night by supernatural creatures and it's up to the heroes to make a rescue attempt. Combating the Zombie Villain and his minions the heroes rush back to port with the goods. However, the Inquisition try to claim such Sorcerous items and imprison the heroes, luckily the Explorers Society show up in the nick of time and a chase ensues, culminating in membership for the heroes and a nemesis in the Inquisition.

Background Plot

The Vendel Merchant League (VML) is seeking to gain favour over the Vodacce within the courts on Montaigne. Since Synchron artifacts are currently in vogue a reliable contact has informed the VML of a very promising site for excavation. The only drawback is that it's located inside Cathy. A secretive group of expeditionary's was put together and successfully unearthed some wondrous items. After weeks of digging various pieces were catalogued and sent back via a ship, l'Misadventur. The voyage came to a ghastly end when the vessel was dashed upon the reefs and shore of the Mandrill Isles, 400 miles south of Vodacce. A lone sailor survived and managed to bring news of the fateful tale to the VML.

The VML are unwilling to leave a cache of Synchron artifacts unclaimed after such great expense has already been laid out. Especially as they are so close to Vodacce. To this end, Kurvik Mannsen, the original Vendel merchant backer has decided to charter a vessel in an attempt to salvage what treasure they may. Then take the artifacts directly to Montaigne in time for the next Imperial birthday. Kurvik has spied out the heroes at those best likely to succeed in this undertaking and so invites to his residence to discuss patronage. Additional complication comes in the form of the Inquisition who are trying to injure the Invisible College through other means. Namely harming those who trade in Synchron artifacts without the correct documentation stating exactly what the devices do. Obviously without investigation into said artifacts little is known of their potential uses. I.e. without documentation they can't bring in artifacts to research and without doing the research they can't obtain the paperwork. One such Inquisitor turns her attention toward the heroes and their expedition.

Overview

Theme ~ Adventure & Exploration

Story ~ Seek out lost artefacts on uncharted isle whilst avoiding Vodacce pirates and supernatural minions

Act I - Proposition

Scene 1 ~ Meeting with a Vendel Merchant

Scene 2 ~ Finding a ship

Scene 3 ~ Rumors in the taverna

Scene 4 ~ Inquisition at the docks

Scene 5 ~ The ship and it's departure

Act II - Travel to the Isle

Scene 1 ~ Meeting the crew

Scene 2 ~ An enemy sail is spotted

Scene 3 ~ Vodacce raiders attack

Scene 4 ~ Flee to the Isle

Scene 5 ~ Land sighted

Act III - Uncovering the treasure

Scene 1 ~ The wreck spotted

Scene 2 ~ Battle with sirens

Scene 3 ~ Uncovering the artefacts

Scene 4 ~ An evenings entertainment

Scene 5 ~ The captain is captured

Act IV - Rescuing the captain from a Zombie

Scene 1 ~ Following the trail

Scene 2 ~ Exploring the haunted ruins

Scene 3 ~ Locating the captain and his captor

Scene 4 ~ Rescue & Flee to the ship

Act V - The voyage home and repercussions

Scene 1 ~ An uneventful trip

Scene 2 ~ Inquisition at the docks

Scene 3 ~ The Explorers Guild show up

Scene 4 ~ Escape & rewards

Act One Scene 1 - Meeting with a Vendel merchant.

The first Act of the heroes Story should be straight forward. A Castillian serving girl hands the collected or individual heroes a note of invitation. They are to meet a potential patron at the home of iKella Marethia (a.k.a. Kurvik Mannsen) where a business deal is to be negotiated. After initial discussions they are given the brief: Charter a ship, navigate to the Mandrill Isles, salvage what Surneth artefacts they may and return to the Castille port of Rialf. They can barter and seek advantage where able, though Kurvik is a skilled and wily merchant. He'll offer them a letter of credit to cover the cost of chartering a vessel for an 8 week voyage. This will have a hidden penalty clause stating that the heroes will agree to stump up the entire fee if this period is exceeded. He'll supply all stores since his business involves common such supplies. He will pay 50 guilder (GL) per man per week. They may complain but since for 6 out of 7 weeks they'll be sitting around on deck it's easy coin. With a good argument and the skill to back it he'll go up to 100GL. Once agreed they are to begin by finding a vessel ready to set off on the morning tide. The heroes should realise the man's integrity when he stumps up half in advance, a sum up to 2000GL.

Act One Scene 2 - Finding a ship

Searching around the docks and quayside the heroes spy several Castillian and a few foreign vessels, two of which should appeal to the heroes in particular. The first is the Noble Dame, a solid 85t Tartanne sailing under the flag of Avalon. The second, a modified 60t Castillian Sloop, the Raging Bull.

Under Captain Jon Jameson, the Noble Dame is currently finishing a cargo contract from the Explorer's Society. Jameson is nobility and likes to impress, and with his seamanship is well able to, plus his crew are well deposed toward him. His vessel is a fair size and well decked, though she does have a heavy draft, the Noble Dame is certainly able to ride out bad weather. Besides, a Montaigne (!) Sorcerer forms part of the crew complement.

Captain D'erica Matain of the Raging Bull seems a competent though harsh man, his crew are well trained but sullen. His vessel, however, is sleek and agile. Perfect for shallow water activity or fast navigation, she also boasts an Eisen Priest on board.

The first ship will fair them well in storms and under cannon fire, her brave crew is let down by average skill & a cowardly sorcerer. The second is faster and more agile, it's efficient crew is bolstered by a Priest, though is in trouble should it come to a fight. It's up to the Heroes which they choose. Neither is ultimately better, though each makes a difference to the Story. Dealing with the Captains should be no trouble; unless the Heroes do anything particularly silly they should have a vessel ready to sail by morning.

Act One Scene 3 - Rumors in the taverna

iKella Marethia recommends a fine Taverna for the heroes to stay the night in. If there are any lady's or gentlemen of distinction amongst the group they will be invited to spend the night at his abode. During their stay at The Silent Siren the players should get the impression they are being watched. A member of the Clergy is interested in any talk of Surneth artefacts, inventions or expeditions. He can be seen talking to the waiting staff and is keenly observing all travelers, i.e. the heroes. This man is Tomas Juan, a low ranking member of the Inquisition, on the look out for those who would deal with members of the

Invisible College. He's not a brave man and can be considered a henchman, perhaps he'll raise to become a Nemesis of a hero later on. Any hero asking of him will here tell how he has just arrested a courier in the employ of the Invisible College (½ true it was Constanza Ferrera).

There are a few rumors about; A Vodacce Fate Witch is aiding the Inquisition; El Vago is in fact King Salvador's older brother in disguise; strange sea harpies are haunting merchant voyages; a Montaigne spy is in port and the Invisible College is about to reveal a radical new invention. Whether these are true or not is up to each GM, though some can be woven into the plot to spice things up. No one seems to know much about either the Mandrill Isles or iKella Marethia, unless the heroes use some wayward and specialised resources. They may be able to find out something about l'Misadventur though from either the docks or the disreputable places about the port. It was a 50t Sloop, under captain Julio Heort, a Castillian. It often traded with the ports of Empire of the Crescent Moon, cargo unknown.

Act One Scene 4 - Inquisition at the docks

The next morning the heroes are to meet their patron down on the docks along with their chosen captain. iKella Marethia has some of his men bring along cargo crates to be taken on the journey, unfortunately Tomas Juan has noticed this Vendel merchant and wants to know more, besides which he's brought along Constanza Ferrera with him and 6 Vaticine Inquisitorial guards turn up to have a ferret through the crates and check documents etc. iKella wishes the voyage to begin and is not prepared to wait for the lengthy inspection. The Heroes must intervene and appease both parties somehow.

Ultimately, ½ days lost time won't matter, but a ruck with the Inquisition certainly will, as they'll find out upon their return. Whilst everything is perfectly in order, iKella has no wish to delay the journey or pamper some church official. This is where the choice of vessel starts to become important. Constanza look well upon those doing business with Castillian ships and their captains, especially those with a Priest on board. Though an Avalon captain who has renounced the faith, harboring a Montaigne spy and a sorcerer of Legion will find himself on a lee shore and no mistake.

Act One Scene 5 - A ship and it's departure

Once on board their ship of choice the journey should be relatively untroubled. The crew work hard and keep their distance from the passengers, whilst the captain is engrossed in serious matters. The only points of interest that may arise is if some of the rumors arise or there was special trouble at the dockside.

Act Two Scene 1 - Meeting the crew

During this scene the players get up to relatively little, they find out a little about their vessel and it's captain. The heroes may be able to supplement some of the positions on board and bolster the ship. After a week at Sea, the Heroes come across a rascal trying to rummage through their possessions. Up until this point the crew have treated them with indifference, they're just passengers. But after lights out one member of the crew, Estaban Toro, chooses to find out some more about this mixed group of travelers, he's after anything which looks useful or incriminating. Such as an invitation or letter, but not money, he'll wait until the return journey before he makes any sort of move on that.

Two of the Heroes are descending into the cabin and open the door to go in. As they do so Estaban is stepping out towards them, one hand clasping something behind his back. He hastily says he's placed a bottle of fine red wine in their cabin as it's a celebration day, as the players walk in they get a chance to spot his hidden hand in a mirror and accost him. His reaction and that of the crew depend solely on the players actions.

Act Two Scene 2 An enemy sail is spotted

After three weeks at Sea a sail is spotted on the horizon, belonging to a Vodacce ship called the Red Wych captained by Julius "Blood" Vito. Julius is under orders from a Vodacce Prince to capture and sink any ship making for the Mandrill Isles. The Vodacce Prince questioned a washed up sailor from the l'Misadventur, and knows all about it's Surneth artefacts. And their purpose. So it's up to Captain Vito and The Red Wych to steal Kurvik Mannsen's thunder for his Prince. As a Vodacce he'll be as duplicitous as possible. They'll trail the Heroes for two days to confirm their destination, then slowly gain speed, trying to lull the Heroes into a false sense of security.

Act Two Scene 3 Vodacce pirates attack

Two Days before land is spotted Captain Vito will put on sail at the last moment and come up at dawn on the offensive. Stage sea battle and boarding action.

Act Two Scene 4 Flee to the Isle

During this scene not much on consequence takes place. The heroes main course of action is to tend to their wounds and head for the Mandrill Isles, this may mean they've defeated Captain Vito or are on the run for him.

Act Two Scene 5 Land sighted

During this scene the Heroes are to drop anchor off their destination and make Landfall. The Mandrill Isles are in fact 3 Islands of rough terrain and tropical climes strung out just off the trade routes between Castille/Vodacce and the Empire of the Crescent Moon. See map for details of their layout. It's up to the Captain where they lay up but the players can advise. The best place is probably a beach cove on the main Isle. A large number of strange fish like remnants and various crude tools can be found strewn about in a near-subterranean cave. Siren's once dwelt here.

Act Three Scene 1 The Wreck Spotted

The Heroes duty is to find the Syrneth artefacts and to do this they need to find the wreck of the ship carrying them. This shouldn't be too difficult to locate around the shallows of the Isles. The ship is mainly intact though gashed open on one side and half below the rough waves. The hard part is getting the to the artefacts and retrieving them. The hold has been smashed open, meaning they have easy access to them, but even when the measly tide goes out they'll still be submerged. Added to this some Sirens have taken up residence in this wreck. The Sirens will fight fiercely to defend their new hunting ground, though flee after losing ½ their number.

Act Three Scene 2 The Siren's Attack

The Sirens attack the Heroes, initially disguised as dead sailors caught in the rigging and wreckage.

Act Three Scene 3 Uncovering the Artefacts

It's possible to use several methods to get at the artefacts. They can dive and attach ropes, then use the capstan to haul them up. Or perhaps go down and float them to the surface using the air pump and sail cloth. The artefacts are kept in four crates, only three of which are among the ruined vessel. The fourth crate was smashed and it's contents litter the shoreline. The artefacts are hard to comprehend, most light in weight and bronze or turquoise in colour. At present none works due to a lack of charge. Only one of the crates has a warning stamped on it, the rest having washed off. All should remain closed according to the Sorcerers and Explorer's among the crew.

Act Three Scene 4 An Evening's Entertainment

Once the artefacts have been successfully reclaimed the Heroes can sit back and relax with bawdy singing, dancing, the horn pipes. Tale telling and much drinking. The Heroes are free to gamble or compete in knife throwing contests or even swinging in the rigging, if they choose.

Act Three Scene 5 The Captain's Captured

During the night the Zombie Lord exerts his will to capture the Captain of the Heroes vessel. At the last minute the Heroes will here a muffled cry and splashing as the Zombie makes it ashore. It's possible to give chase, though in the dark several Ghouls ambush them to allow the Zombie to escape. Leave off till the morning.

Act Four Scene 1 Following the Trail

The Heroes need to find their captain and quickly, before the Zombie takes him over completely. Without him it'll be virtually impossible to sail back to Rialf with any degree of competence and safety. The terrain is temperate and undulating, climbing gradually towards the island's summit and the Syrne ruin. The trail has one trap, hastily placed by the retreating Zombie and his Ghouls. The ground has some natural hazards, a slippery scree slope, some fallen large trees, and quicksand are all possible obstacles. Though eventually they'll reach the centre of the isle and it's hidden secret.

Act Four Scene 2 Exploring the Strange Ruins

The Syrne Ruin is a manipulated natural spire, some 600 yards high. It looks like a spiral, layer upon layer wrapped around it as it rises. Strange archways and pentagonal corridors form it's makeup. The walls are a dull lemon in colour, etched with grooves running floor to ceiling. There are few traps that the Heroes will encounter, the trail of the Zombie leading them to their goal. The ruins are crumbling, dark and stuffy. Feel free to have numerous traps and Ruin Monsters attack the players if they are not both quick and cautious in their task. The site is obviously huge and in need of proper exploration - but not the job of the Heroes.

Act Four Scene 3 Locate the Captain and his Captor

Only through the scuffed corridors and rotting remains are they able to discern where the monster has headed. Eventually the Heroes find their way into a central pit area with a slope leading to a central dais and a stream running through it, in the centre of which is the Zombie and his captive, their Captain. The area should be as dangerous and exciting as possible. I suggest a large central cavern area, which is listing to one side due to earth tremors, through which runs a natural stream. The central area should be a dais like affair with odd controls and openings, in the centre of which resides the Zombie and his Ghoul minions.

Act Four Scene 4 Rescue & Flee to the Ship

The Heroes fight to save the captain and steal away with some powerful Syrne artefact and various treasure that the Zombie has amassed. This sees the Heroes heading back to their ship having won through.

Act Five Scene 1 An Uneventful Trip

The Heroes should now be able to return to their vessel and heal up upon the return journey to Port Rialf. Of course there are a few matters to deal with first. Namely the Inquisition and the Vodacce Prince.

Act Five Scene 2 Inquisition at the Docks

Upon the Heroes return to the Port of Rialf they find Inquisitor Constanza Ferroa awaiting them, along with her companions from the church. The Heroes may well be sensible and head to another location, or even charter a different vessel in another port before sailing back to Rialf. Let them. Just have the Inquisition turn up at the home of iKella Marethia instead, which should annoy him to say the least. Constanza wants the Heroes to hand over the artefacts for their destruction and the characters to 'accompany her' - they are obviously in league with The Invisible College, The Explorer's Society or both.

Act Five Scene 3 The Explorer's show up

As a scrap or chase ensues from the above scene the Heroes should feel desperation set in has more Brutes show up to aid the Inquisition. However as all seems lost, The Explorer's Society turns up to aid them out. Tipped off by previous losses to the Church they show up to aid out the characters in the hope that some major finds might fall their way. A fair sized chase and fight should now ensue, with the Heroes and their wagons of goodies get clean away from Constanza.

Act Five Scene 4 Escape & Rewards

When all the swashbuckling is over and done with the Heroes are free to kick back and relax, looking upon the success their adventures have brought them. All in all they have done quite well for themselves. A large sum of money, Surneth artefacts, a new patron and possible contacts in The Explorer's Society. But don't forget the possible enemies; the Inquisition will certainly make things hot for them, and the Vodacce Prince will not take their actions lightly.

