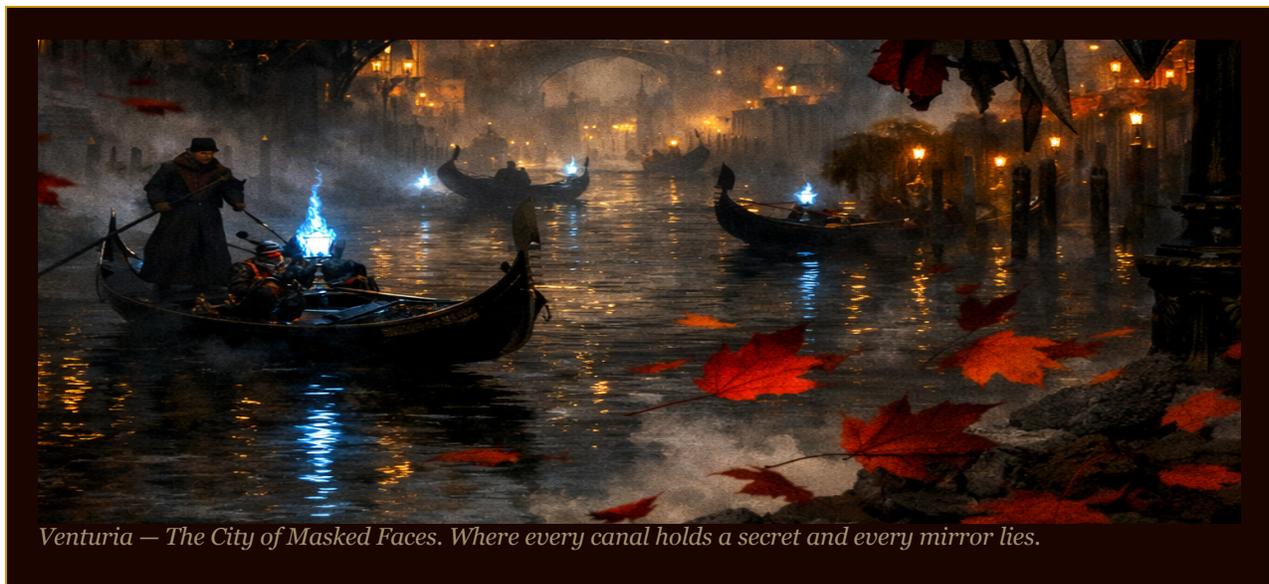


A T A B L E T O P R P G C A M P A I G N

V A L L E Y O F S H A D O W S

Where Beautiful Things Hide Terrible Truths



Dungeon Master: Dustin Amodeo
D&D 5e (2024 Edition) · Long-Term Campaign

THE PITCH



Imagine if Venice were haunted. Not by ghosts — ghosts would be simpler. Haunted by something that steals faces. That rewrites memories. That makes you question whether the person standing next to you is still the person you love.

“Valley of Shadows” is a long-term D&D campaign set in the sister cities of Venturia & Vallombrosa. Venturia is a breathtaking coastal city of canals, masquerade balls, and ancient secrets. Think *The Name of the Wind* meets *Interview with the Vampire*, wrapped in the aesthetic of a Venetian gothic fever dream.

Vallombrosa is the shadow Venturia has learned to live with — a dead zone of perpetual fog where the di Errante estates once stood, forbidden for a thousand years, swallowing anyone foolish enough to cross its boundary. Every Venturian has a favorite legend about what happened there. None of them are right. The truth is older, stranger, and considerably worse.

Your characters are people who live here. Who grew up with the fog on the horizon — that cursed dead zone called Vallombrosa — the way you grow up with a supposedly haunted house at the end of your street. Spooky, sure. Part of the landscape. Nothing to worry about.

This is not a dungeon-crawl. This is a story about identity, manipulation, love that crosses lifetimes, and what happens when the universe's deepest secrets start bleeding into your city's streets.

The Tone

Dark romantasy. Beauty and horror sharing the same room. Crisp autumn light filtered through perpetual fog. Elegant architecture built on buried crimes. Moments of genuine warmth and connection against a backdrop of mounting supernatural dread.

You will laugh at this table. You will also sit in stunned silence. The goal is both.

The Elevator Pitch

It's a mystery campaign where the city itself is the investigation. Strange disappearances. A comatose stranger covered in brands that shouldn't exist. A fog that's been behaving differently lately. The answers exist — they're just buried under a thousand years of people who didn't want them found.

It's a slow-burn conspiracy thriller wrapped in masquerade costumes, with a cosmic horror problem lurking underneath.

THE WORLD



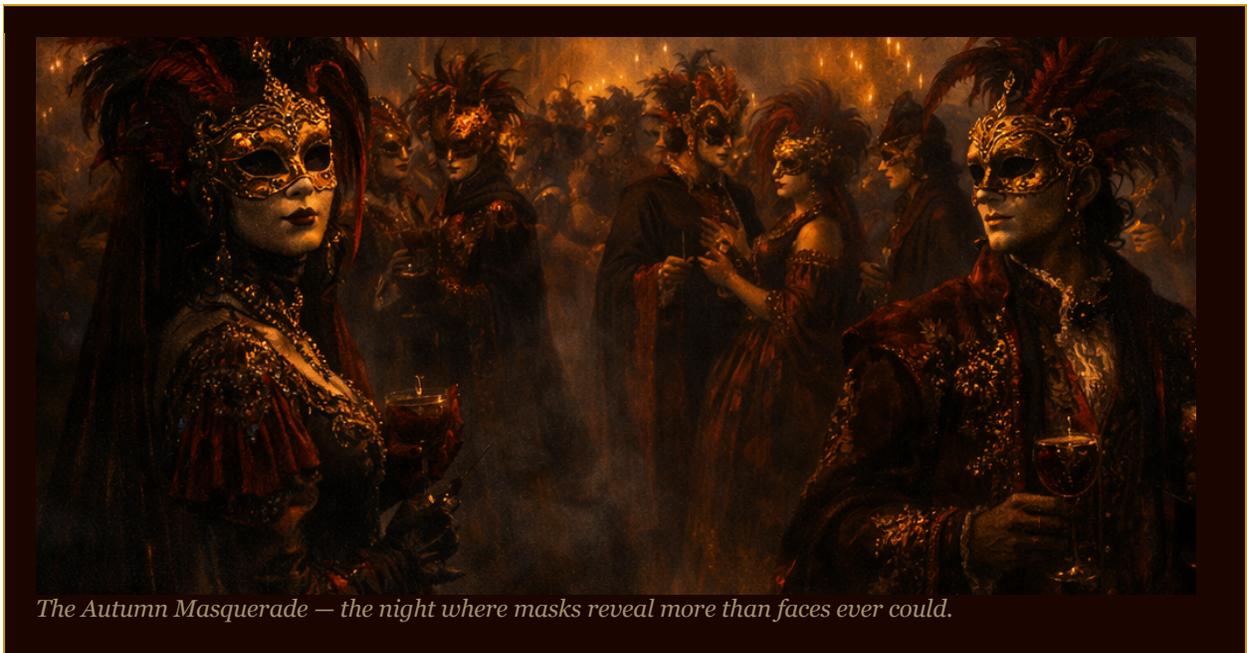
Venturia, City of Masked Faces

Built in tiers on the cliffs of Seravalle island, Venturia is a city in love with its own performance. Harbor districts hum with salt and commerce. The High Quarter gleams with gilded towers and exclusive salons. And everywhere — on feast days, in storefronts, hanging from iron posts in the lamplight — masks.

Mask-wearing in Venturia isn't costume — it's culture. The Masquers' Sodality has been crafting them for centuries. The annual Autumn Masquerade is the most important social event of the year. And the city's famed Veil Court knows something others don't: in Venturia, when you genuinely commit to wearing a different face, reality becomes... slightly more willing to cooperate.

The city has other quirks that everyone accepts as normal. Mirrors sometimes show your reflection a half-second late, as though it needed time to catch up. Promises feel heavier here — more binding than they should. Coincidences happen with uncanny frequency. Colors are more saturated in autumn than they have any right to be.

Venturia is weird, but every city has its character. Nobody thinks too hard about it.



The Autumn Masquerade — the night where masks reveal more than faces ever could.

Vallombrosa — The Forbidden Zone

At the city's edge, where the streets end and the fog begins, there is a boundary no one crosses.

Vallombrosa was once the great estate of the di Errante family — the most powerful noble house on the island. A thousand years ago, something happened there. Something so complete and so terrible that the estate became a dead zone, the di Errante name became a cautionary tale, and the fog that swallowed everything never lifted.

People have gone in over the centuries. They don't come back. There are a hundred legends about why. They contradict each other completely.

You grew up with Vallombrosa on the horizon. It's just there. Like a mountain. Like a scar.

This campaign is about what happens when the scar starts bleeding.



Vallombrosa. It's been forbidden for a thousand years. Everyone has a theory about why. No one is right.

THE MYSTERY



Something is wrong in Venturia. People are disappearing. The fog is moving in ways it shouldn't. And someone appeared at the fog line covered in scars that shouldn't exist — brands burned into flesh by something that lives between the world you know and whatever lies beneath it.

The campaign begins close to home: your fiancé didn't come back from his shift last night, your friend is missing, the stranger your colleague is caring for won't wake up. Neighborhood-level problems. The kinds of things you could explain away. If all of the explanations didn't point in the same direction.

The threads your characters pull on will lead deeper — through the city's political factions, through its secret societies, through the buried history of a family that used to own everything — and whatever is at the bottom of that history has been waiting a very long time to be found.

What You'll Be Doing

Investigating. This is a mystery campaign. You will find clues, form theories, talk to people with competing agendas, and discover that almost everyone is hiding something.

Building relationships. Your connections in Venturia matter. The people you protect, mentor, befriend, or betray will shape what this story becomes. NPCs here are people, not furniture.

Navigating politics. Venturia has factions — harbor lords, guild masters, religious authorities, secret societies, artists, criminals — and they all want something from you or want to use you for something. Choose your alliances carefully.

Confronting impossible choices. The truth at the center of this campaign is not a locked door with a key. It is a situation where no one is clean, no resolution leaves everyone standing, and the best outcome still costs something. You will decide what you can bear to pay.



The moment before everything changes.

THEMES



Identity & The Faces We Wear

Venturia is obsessed with masks. This campaign asks what that actually means. Who are you when you take the mask off? What if someone could steal your face — your memories, your relationships, your very sense of self? What do you owe to the person you used to be?

Memory & Truth

Memory is not a recording. It is a story we tell ourselves. In Vallombrosa, that story can be rewritten. The campaign will ask you to grapple with what happens when documentation vanishes, when the people around you remember things differently than you do, and when the historical record has been carefully managed by someone with a very long life and specific interests.

Beauty That Hides Rot

Venturia is gorgeous. It is also rotten underneath in specific and deliberate ways. The campaign does not pretend otherwise. Wealth built on exploitation, love that curdles into possession, institutions that protect themselves over the people they serve. The beauty is real. So is the rot.

The Cost of Knowledge

Some truths in this campaign are devastating. Some of them will change how your character sees relationships they've already built. The decision about whether to keep pulling threads — whether knowing is worth what it costs — will be genuinely yours to make.

Impossible Justice

The campaign's final question is not 'defeat the villain.' It is 'what does resolution actually look like when victims can be dangerous, when justice requires harming someone who has already suffered, and when the best outcome still costs something?' There is no easy answer. That's the point.



The mask and what's underneath. This campaign asks which one is the truth.

FOR PLAYERS



What to Expect at the Table

This is a long campaign. Not eight sessions long — years long. Your character will grow up in this story. Their relationships will deepen. Their choices will echo. There will be callbacks to things that happened twenty sessions ago that make the room go quiet.

There will be sessions that are investigation-heavy: talking to people, parsing clues, forming theories. There will be sessions that are combat-heavy. There will be sessions that are almost entirely roleplay between two characters in a room, and those will sometimes be the most memorable nights of the whole campaign.

The DM will not railroad you. Your choices will change things. NPCs will live or die based on what you do. The ending is not written — it depends on what your characters decide is worth fighting for and what price they're willing to pay.

Character Creation Philosophy

Your character lives in Venturia. Ideally, they were born here. They know the canals, the festivals, the gossip. They have opinions about the Masquers' Sodality and a favorite spot to eat near the harbor and an uncomfortable memory from the last Autumn Masquerade.

They do not know about the supernatural elements of the setting. They know the legends — everyone knows the legends — but they treat them the way you treat ghost stories: entertaining, not literal.

Give your character someone they love who isn't in the party. Give them a wound that hasn't healed. Give them something they want that has nothing to do with adventure. The campaign will find a way to make all of that matter.

What Makes This Setting Distinctive

Masks are a social institution here, not a costume. The Autumn Masquerade is the biggest event of the year. Promises carry cultural and possibly literal weight. The city's canal system has its own politics and its own mysteries. There are things the gondoliers know that nobody talks about.

Mirrors in Venturia occasionally lie. Colors are too vivid in autumn. Time feels strange sometimes. Everyone considers this perfectly normal.

It is not perfectly normal.



The relationships you build here are the stakes. Invest in them.

FACTIONS AT A GLANCE



You will encounter all of these. Some will want your help. Some will want to use you. Some will want you gone. Most are more complicated than they first appear.

The Masquers' Sodality

The master maskmakers of Venturia. They have been crafting faces for nearly a thousand years and they understand something about identity that the rest of the city only partially grasps. Their third-floor workshop is not open to the public. The masters who go in are not the same people who come out.

The Veil Court

Semi-secret society dedicated to the art of masked performance. They know that in Venturia, wearing a mask and truly committing to a different identity makes reality briefly more cooperative. They have been documenting this phenomenon carefully. They have not shared what they've found.

The Gondoliers' Confraternity

Every canal in Venturia falls under their jurisdiction. Their boats are unmistakable: black hulls, bronze fittings, blue-tinged lanterns. They do not speak while passing under bridges. They do not ferry passengers after midnight during Masquerade week. They have been navigating these waters since before the di Errante tragedy, and their oldest charts show things that no longer exist — and some things that shouldn't.

The Liminal House

An institution that has been caring for people found wandering out of the fog for centuries. They call them 'fog children.' They have records going back generations. They are not sharing everything those records contain, and some of the people who work there are beginning to notice a pattern.

The City Council

Harbor lords, guild masters, & the temple authority. Three factions that nominally govern together and actually war constantly. They all know something is wrong in Venturia. They disagree violently about what to do about it and who is responsible.

The Covenant Archive

A family-run institution that handles binding contracts and formal agreements. In a city where promises carry unusual weight, this is not a minor business. Their records contain agreements dating back centuries that some very powerful people would prefer stay buried.



Venturia has many secret societies. Most of them know more than they're telling you.

THE PROMISE



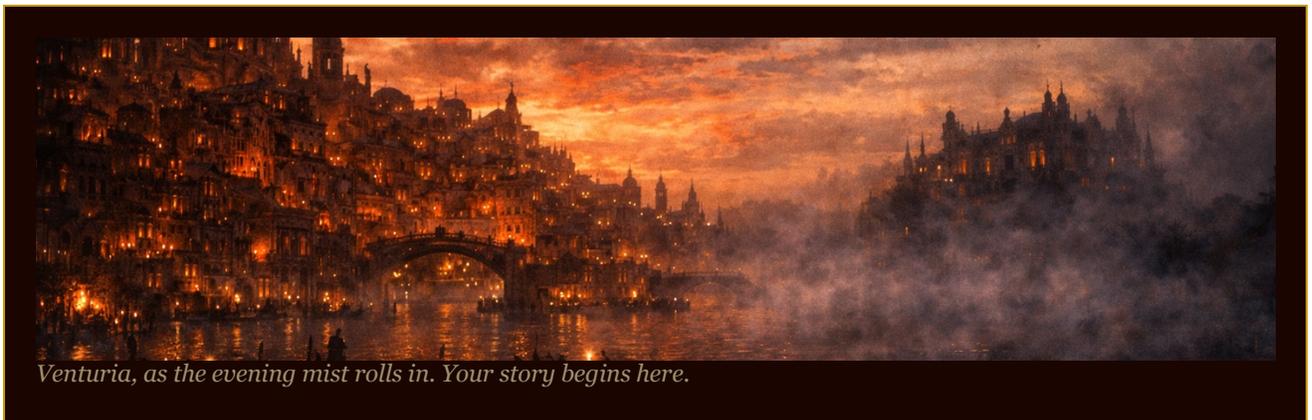
This campaign will give your character a home worth fighting for, relationships worth risking everything for, and a mystery deep enough that when the truth finally comes it will be exactly as terrible and exactly as earned as you hoped it would be.

Vallombrosa is designed for players who want their choices to matter, their characters to feel like real people with history and relationships, and their story to be genuinely surprising — not random, not arbitrary, but the kind of surprising that makes you go back through what you remember and realize the clues were there all along.

The themes are dark. The story earns its darkness by caring about the people inside it. Your characters will not be swept along by plot. They will be the reason the plot goes the way it goes.

Venturia is waiting. The fog is at the edge of the city. And somewhere in the city, something ancient and broken is quietly deciding that this time, things will be different.

It won't be.



Venturia, as the evening mist rolls in. Your story begins here.

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A Campaign by Dustin Amodeo • D&D 5e 2024 Edition