



The Shadows of Brimstone

A story campaign system created for the
Shadows of Brimstone boardgame

Introduction

Foreword

Welcome fellow Shadows of Brimstone player. If you are reading this you probably are looking for ways to expand the already really amazing gameplay of Shadows of Brimstone. What I can offer with this file is an attempt in tying together the various enemies, other worlds and pieces of background lore into a big story campaign. Let's face it: As fun as playing the varied random missions from the different adventure books are, some of us have been looking for something a little more...solid...for some time. Therefore I started writing this campaign to be played with my own play group at some point in the future. However, I decided to share this with the community in the hope that others might get something useful for their game sessions out of it as well. I do not know if what you find here is exactly what you are looking for. Maybe you don't like the mission structure, maybe there is something off with the writing for you. But if you find anything interesting, feel free to adapt it however you like for your own game. After all, one of the strengths of Shadows of Brimstone is the possibility to adapt the game to personal preferences in any way shape or form.

In any case I would be happy to contribute in some form or way. But enough rambling, let's get to business.

What this campaign is about

The purpose of this campaign is to tie together all game materials release for the Shadows of Brimstone system into a big story-driven campaign. The aim is to give every part of the world, be it any of the core sets, enemy expansions or other worlds a spotlight and give story based reasons for every mission played. To that end several features are included in this within:

Story-based missions

Every mission created in this campaign is either part of a main story arc or one of several side quest lines. Therefore there is a clear justification on why heroes go on their adventures and each mission progresses a storyline in some way. Many missions still retain a somewhat random nature with story progress only happening at certain milestones (e.g. when Clues are found). The idea is to preserve the weird situations that can sometimes occur, what many players really like. Other missions are more rigidly structured though.

Gradual Unlocks

The beginning of the campaign starts as a "vanilla" experience with most enemies as well as all other worlds not yet unlocked and unavailable to be played. This changes quickly however, with almost every mission introducing new enemies and other worlds as part of the story. The intention here is to introduce this massive game slowly to newer players (as my game group this campaign originally was intended for) and also allow newcomers to Brimstone to start this campaign with minimal investment.

Difficulty curve

A commonly encountered issue in Shadows of Brimstone is that many bosses become too strong at around level 4, removing the challenge from the game. It is attempted to counter this by gradually introducing the difficulty, for example by increasing number of enemies or introducing stronger variants of common enemies. This increase in difficulty will already begin in Chapter 1 and ramp up in Chapter 2. It is planned to level off the challenge in later chapters but to provide a set off missions with very difficult "Endgame" Encounters.

More varied enemy compositions

Due to the more scripted nature of the missions in this campaign, heroes now encounter many more enemy groups composed of different types of enemies. Darkstone Brutes fighting along the Scaffold Gang? Void Sorcerers leading cultists and assorted demons? Vampires commanding legions of the undead? Different types of Targa robots fighting together? All of this and more can be found in the missions found in this rulebook.

Enemy variants and custom made bosses

In order to increase the challenge and variety or sometimes simply because of storytelling reasons alternative versions of common enemies are encountered from time to time. In addition many missions feature custom made boss encounters (Random Epic Threats almost never being used) with an attempt to create a more unique and interesting climax to missions.

Introduction

Enemy variants and custom made bosses

Another feature is the introduction of enemy variants. This was sometimes necessary to fill out gaps in the story and to provide some more powerful foes as the campaign progresses. Especially for Targa and Jargono. However, with the new Viking and Conquistador expansions on the horizon this may not be necessary in a future version.

More importantly, custom made bosses can be found in many of the missions found within this campaign. They are usually based on some of the normal enemies found in the game and were given additional abilities in an attempt to create unique and challenging encounters. How well this turned out remains to be seen however (see Disclaimer Section).

A more in-depth lore

One of the best things about this game is the rich lore oozing from all corners of the game material. It was attempted to capitalize on this by giving everything a more in-depth background story: From the (persistent) towns, to the enemy factions, to the Other Worlds to Dark Stone itself. And speaking of which...

Recurring NPC characters

Some of the characters the players can meet during this campaign will be recurring parts of the story. From the grizzled leader of a military faction trying to defend the region from all kind of threats to a guild of inventors bent on researching Dark Stone and unlock its secrets to individual characters who request the help of the players. Some of them might even join the heroes from time to time on their missions, providing (more or less) valuable support. Maybe some enemy characters with their own agendas will also show up more than once.

Compatible (and encouraged) to play with Hex Crawl

The campaign was designed to be played with the Hex Crawl rules. To that end most missions are designed to encourage travelling across the map, for example by forcing the players to visit certain (persistent) cities or mine locations. The idea is to create some kind of "Open World" gameplay experience, where heroes travel around the area around Brimstone, solving problems all over the world at their pace. Of course a variant is provided to play without Hex Crawl. (But why would you want to). And thats why...

Freeform story progression

The campaign starts out rather linear at the beginning to not overwhelm new players. But very early on options are made available to choose between several missions, which at first mostly still are part of the main storyline. In Chapter 2 this opens up much more, with many side stories branching from the main quest. An addition options will be unlocked to play (most of) the "classic" missions from the adventure books as the campaign progresses. This allows players to play the classic randomized mission style but integrated into this campaign in a reasonable way. The idea is to give players always a choice to either progress the campaign stories by playing the more scripted missions found in this rulebook or to simply kick back and enjoy the full randomness of the "classic" missions. However, justifications will always be provided on why players do go on these adventures.

Adaptable Difficulty

As the strength of a Posse heavily depends on character selection, equipment and skill choices, some missions might be easy for one group and impossible to beat for another one. Both scenarios are not really fun. That's why each mission has an optional set of modifiers to increase or decrease the difficulty and adapt the challenge to an individual group's tastes.

Combination with HexCrawl

The campaign can be played with HexCrawl and it is highly encouraged to at least use the Overworld Travelling rules. All of the missions are designed with this system in mind with some of them featuring activities on the Overworld that need to be performed prior to starting the mission. The idea was to give a more immersive experience to players in this campaign.

However it is entirely possible to ignore HexCrawl entirely. Rules for handling both options are contained in the next section.

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Disclaimers

Before you dive into this book to start your own campaign I would like to provide a few heads up on what to (not) expect. After all this campaign so far was created by one person alone and will have naturally have some rough edges:

Missing and inconsistent rules

Many of the missions, enemies, boss encounters and even the overall campaign structure introduce various special rules. And even though everything was reviewed several times, it is in the nature of the thing that there might be errors, contradictions and other flaws within the campaign that I simply overlooked. If you encounter one of these I would therefore ask you to come up with a house ruling (I hope in most cases the intention of the rules were clear and a fix is easily applied). However I plan to update the campaign some time in the future for fixing these "bugs" and would be happy to receive feedback if anything glaringly broken is found.

Unbalanced mission difficulty and unfun missions

As said, there were attempts made to gradually increase the difficulty of the campaign in order to accommodate for increasing power levels of the heroes. In addition many mission structures, combat encounters and especially the bosses are custom made, sometimes with very experimental ideas behind them. This might result in some missions being way too hard and others laughingly easy. This issue is amplified by the fact that the power level of bosses can vary heavily, depending on character choices, level ups and items found. This makes it almost impossible to create a fully balanced campaign.

In order to accommodate for this, I provided a set of modifiers for most missions that increase or decrease the difficulty according to the needs of the group. However there still might be single combat encounters or whole missions that are completely broken by design and not fun to play. If this happens feel free to adapt to your needs, skip the mission and maybe provide feedback so I can fix the issue.

Unsatisfying Lore

What is presented here are my ideas on the lore for Shadows of Brimstone and it was attempted to flesh them out over the course of the story-campaign. From how life is in the region around Brimstone, over the factions active in the world to the background of notable characters (e.g. Scafford). These ideas might be completely different to yours, dear reader, and you might not like them at all. If this is the case please feel free to change and adapt the lore however you like it.

Bad writing

Please do not expect George R.R. Martin levels of writing in the stories found in this book. The author of this campaign is not a professional author and does not claim to be. Therefore a lot of the writing found in this campaign can be cheesy (sometimes intentionally, sometimes not), cringy or simply bad. Also there will sometimes be some more or less blatant adaptations from other stories be found in some of the stories. As said, not a professional author.

Even more, the author also is not a native English speaker, which could result in typos, bad grammar or wooden sentences. Not to start on names...

Again, if you find anything that could be improved please provide feedback that may be included in the next version of this campaign. And feel free to come up with your own narratives (or character names for that matter) as much as you like if you have some gripes with the writing as presented.

Unfun missions

Tastes differ and some missions provided may simply not be fun to play for you. Again feel free to adapt the mission or simply skip it. And provide feedback if you feel like it.

Work in progress

While Chapter 1 and 2 are considered to be more or less done, the campaign as a whole is not yet. This is predominantly as the Forbidden Fortress components have not shipped yet at the time of this writing, which will be a focus in Chapter 3. However the existing content should be enough to provide player groups with a prolonged experience. And there are plans to continue the campaign over the course of 2019. However this means that none of the current quest lines are concluded yet as this will happen predominantly in the next Chapters.

Introduction

Free Content(!)

This campaign is provided for free. All original rights to Shadows of Brimstone belong to Flying Frog Productions and the author has no intent on infringing on that copyright. There are no intentions to market this campaign in a commercial way. If you recieved this campaign from anyone who asked you to pay for it, that was not the intended use and you should file a complaint with that "vendor".

In summary: There are a lot of things that could have gone wrong with this rulebook. Therefore please feel free to adapt the content found here to your liking in any way shape or form. Again, feedback would be highly appreciated to improve the campaign in the future.

Current Status

The campaign currently features

- 34 missions spread out over two chapters.
- Almost all content released until the end of 2018 as part of the campaign
- A main storyline that will continue in future chapters
- Several branching storylines over several missions that will also conclude in future chapters
- NOT any content from the Blasted Wastes as that expansion was ordered within the FF kickstarter and not yet recieved
- Only one mission in the Derelict Ship as that expansion also was ordered within the FF kickstarter
- Only one story mission in Trederra as this is seen as a higher level Other World

Future Plans

Short term (e.g. in Mid 2019)

- Write Chapter 3 that focuses on the content from the Forbidden Fortress
- Update Chapter 1 and 2 according to Feedback
- Introduce some artwork (when I can find out how to not violate copyright laws)

Long term (2020)

- Write Chapter 4 that concludes many storylines and puts a stronger focus on the Trederra and Blasted Wasted other worlds
- Write Chapter 5 that concludes the main storyline(s) and provides very difficult endgame missions
- Implement the contend of the announced Viking and Conquistador Expansions into the campaign (Chapter 1-5)
- Implement new currently unknown content into the campaign (e.g. Hell Train, new main expansion (Egypt themed?))

These timelines are not set in stone and reflect current planning. However this depends on a lot of other things (e.g. available free time by the author) and may change accordingly.

New Rules

Introduction

The basic rule structure is untouched and special rules for single scenarios are written in the individual missions. However, a few general concepts are presented here that are applied for the whole campaign.

New rules

Campaign structure

To start the campaign simply go to the Prologue Section of Chapter 1 and start reading. As the story progresses more missions will automatically become available after certain milestones. However, some of these missions might not initially be playable as a previous section in the storyline has not yet been completed. Therefore two keywords are introduced to track progress

Unlock

When a mission becomes **Unlocked** it is generally becomes available to be played. However it might be missing a Prerequisite (e.g. completing a previous part of the storyline) that first needs to be fulfilled before the mission actually can be started.

Prerequisite

Missions are part of a storyline and previous parts might first have to be completed. Therefore at the beginning of each mission the **Prerequisites** are listed that have to be fulfilled before the mission can be played. Also, you can find a list fulfilled prerequisites for its completion at the end of every mission.

Please take note that players might fulfill all prerequisites for a mission but have to wait until the mission is actually **Unlocked**.

Campaign Tracker

In the Annex section you can find a **Campaign Tracker**, where the status of every mission (Unlocked? Prerequisites met? Completed?) can be monitored.

Adaption to number of players

As many combat encounters are scripted and do not use random threat cards they are adapted manually to the number of players. To that end you find three numbers (e.g. 1/2/3) in front of every enemy (or some other things), with the first applying to 1-2, the second to 3-4 and the third to 5-6 players.

Example:

The heroes must fight a group of 1/1/1 Void Sorcerer, 2/4/6 Crimson Hand Cultists and 1/2/3 Void Hounds.

This would result in the following enemy compositions

1-2 Players: 1 Void Sorcerer, 2 Crimson Hand Cultists and 1 Void Hound

3-4 Players: 1 Void Sorcerer, 4 Crimson Hand Cultists and 2 Void Hounds

5-6 Players: 1 Void Sorcerer, 6 Crimson Hand Cultists and 3 Void Hounds

Persistent Towns

Just like in the Hex Crawl Rules, all towns are persistent in this campaign and all of them are outfitted with a short background story. In addition, some town locations as well as the type of the town are **pre-determined**. Therefore a **Town Tracker** is provided in the Annex where players can note down the (randomised) town size as well as locations and read the background story of the town. Every town will be **encountered naturally** over the course of the campaign and heroes can write down characteristics gradually. However, heroes are allowed to visit all towns in the campaign early and then can establish them before they come up in the campaign.

Also, town characteristics can change during the campaign as new locations are built or others are destroyed, all of it being tracked in the Town Tracker.

New Rules

Narrative content

All missions feature narrative content that drives the story forward. Whenever something is written in *italics*, it is story content and should be read before further steps are undertaken. Sometimes the italic text is interrupted by non-italic text outlining additional steps to be performed in between story sections. First perform these steps before continuing reading.

Mission Structure

Each mission features several sections to be gone through in order:

Prerequisites

Lists the number of prerequisites that must be completed before the mission can be played. Most of the time this refers to older missions, but sometimes the heroes must be at a certain location first.

Prologue

This section features a story focused introduction to the mission. This always starts with a narrative section and most of the time followed by instructions to perform additional tasks before starting the mission proper.

Mission Goal

Describes the goal of the mission. This can be sometimes a bit vague to allow for surprises during the mission (if you decided not to spoil yourself).

Set Up

Explains the Set-Up rules like in the "Classic Game".

Special Rules

Lists all special rules for this mission and can sometimes be an extensive section. Sometimes additional special rules appear during the mission, usually header with a blue headline.

Objectives

This section features milestones to be completed in order to win the mission, which will also drive the story forward. Unless noted otherwise simply start by reading through the first milestone (which almost always includes a narrative section) and perform all steps listed in the milestone before reading the next milestone. Subsequent milestones always tell you what needs to be done to "activate" them and almost always are resolved in order.

Players are encouraged to not read through the whole mission initially but go through milestones piece by piece. This would result in a more surprising narrative, sometimes with a few twists.

Example:

When the first Clue is found

Milestone: Resolve when condition is met

The heroes stumble across a group of bandits. Some of them are heavily mutated. One of the bandits is a hulking monstrosity with shards of Dark Stone poking out of its scaled skin.

Narrative: Read before continuing

The heroes must fight a group of 2/4/6 Out Scafford Gang members and 1/1/1 Darkstone Brute.

Instructions: Perform before continuing

After winning the fight—

Next Milestone: Resolve when previous Milestone is completed and condition is met

These bandits were tough to fight. They sometimes a high strength or agile reflexes and es one was no pushover.

Narrative: Read before continuing

The heroes recover D6 Health each.

Instructions: Perform before continuing

When the second Clue is found

You come across another group of bandits.

Next Milestone: Resolve when previous Milestone is completed and condition is met

Important: Every time a Milestone is activated as a result of an exploration token, do not resolve Encounters or Attacks from the Exploration token as this might mess with the event in the Mission Milestone.

Epilogue

Each mission features an Epilogue with with a narrative sections, rewards and Unlocks. If the enemies lost the mission read the Failure Section only. If the heroes won, first read the narrative section, then deal out rewards, then check new unlocks in the Unlock section.

Enemy Variants

Sometimes variants of normal enemies are introduced that can appear again later in the campaign. They use enemy sheets of "vanilla" enemies with additional modifications. In order to keep track of these, all enemy variants are referenced in the Annex Section.

Campaign Modifiers

Sometimes during the campaign, persistent modifiers are activated that give permanent enhancements to certain enemies. In order to keep an overview of all modifications, a special Tracker is provided in the Annex section.

New Rules

Unlocking content

The game starts out on a "relatively" small scale, with a "limited" set of options for the heroes. Therefore the end of every mission a list of new content that is unlocked is provided. This can include but is not limited to:

New enemies for the threat deck

A starter Threat Deck is provided in the Prologue Section of Chapter 1. When new enemies are unlocked, simply shuffle them into their respective Threat Deck

New missions to be Unlocked

To continue the story of this or another quest line. Sometimes other Prerequisites have to be fulfilled in addition before the new mission can be played.

Fulfilled Prerequisites for other Missions

To continue the story of this or another quest line. Although the next one might have to be Unlocked first before they can be played.

Repeatable Missions

Those are missions from the classic adventure books that can be played repeatedly but within the context of this campaign.

New Other Worlds

To be shuffled into the deck of Other World cards. Will mostly impact Repeatable Missions as most campaign missions are scripted to prevent random other worlds.

Campaign Modifiers

Sometimes the events in a mission can persistently modify aspects of the campaign. Make a note in the Tracker that a new modifier is unlocked (and sometimes removed).

New hero classes

Sometimes (albeit rarely) new hero classes are unlocked. Hero classes that can be played from the start are listed in the Prologue section of Chapter 1.

Repeatable Missions

Those missions are taken from the "classic" adventure books and provide the players a chance to play "classic" Brimstone but embedded within the context of this campaign. They are unlocked as part of the campaign and always are placed in the context to the story. Sometimes small changes are made (e.g. Rewards and Failures) to adapt them to the campaign. Campaign Modifiers apply to these missions.

If playing with Hexcrawl choose a random mine where that mission takes place (e.g by rolling a D30) or simply choose. The mine in the Brimstone Ruins can NEVER be selected.

NPC characters

Sometimes an NPC character accompanies the players on their mission. Their equipment and abilities are always listed in the Special Rules section of the respective mission.

These NPC characters are controlled by the players and are played just as if they are a hero character. In most missions they need to be protected as the heroes will lose their mission if the NPC falls unconscious or goes insane.

To represent them it is best to use an unused hero miniature.

HexCrawl Integration

The campaign was written in a way to be used in combination with HexCrawl. However, not everyone may want to implement another extensive Ruleset into their campaign. Therefore different options are summarized here.

No HexCrawl integration

During Prologue just read the story section and ignore all further instructions (e.g. travelling to a certain town, etc.). Simply start the mission proper as you would in classic Brimstone. Likewise, the Persistent Towns rule is ignored as well.

Persistent Towns Only (Not Recommended)

Include the rules for permanent towns and perform all instructions to travel to that specific town in the Prologues. To do so check the size of the town heroes want to travel to and perform the required amount of Travel Hazards for that Town size. However this might lead to a lot of Travel Hazards and may become quite repetitives.

HexCrawl Travelling Rules only (Recommended)

For groups who do not want to include the full HexCrawl Experience but still want to experience the full scope of this campaign. Simply include all rules for Overworld Travel found in the HexCrawl Rulebook (and the Town Board) and ignore everything else.

(This will be the mode the author of this Rulebook will use with his group of players).

Full HexCrawl Integration

Use everything found in the HexCrawl Rulebook as preferred. It is recommended to not use the Overworld Darkness Tracker as this campaign is designed to last longer as this mechanism may allow.

New Rules

Variants

This section provides suggestions to adapt the campaign to tailor it to one's personal preferences.

Less locked content

This campaign provides a more guided experience as opposed to classic Brimstone to gradually ease new players into the system and allow more focused introductions to new enemies and factions within the story structure. This means that most content will be gradually unlocked. If a group does not want this they can have already unlocked from the start

- Enemies
- Other Worlds
- Character Classes (Looking at the FF classes)
- Side missions

This would often not make much sense from a narrative standpoint but the campaign would still be functional.

More randomness

Most campaign missions have the **No Random Gates** rules and either take place in the mines or one of the Other Worlds only. This was done to provide a better narrative. However, if players want they can **cancel this rule** and have heroes randomly cross into other worlds like in classic Brimstone.

Again it would very often not make much sense from a narrative perspective but most missions would still be functional.

Difficulty modifiers

The Mission Tracker in the Annex section provides several modifiers for every mission that can be used to in- or decrease the overall difficulty. This is to adapt missions according to Posse strength, which can vary greatly between player groups. (And to accomodate the fact that some missions may simply not be optimally designed). **Apply these modifiers as you please.** Modifiers to increase the difficulty are **red**, modifiers to decrease difficulty are **green**. However this might require reading through the whole mission and could spoil the experience for some.

GM Mode

Missions are written in a way to keep a few elements of the story hidden until they come up. As a result, if players do not read ahead within the missions or read future missions, there might be some surprises. However it might cause problems when they encounter imbalanced enemy groups. On the other hand completely reading through a mission might spoil the surprise.

One variant is that one player takes over the role as a **Game Master**, who prepares the missions ahead of time, reads everything to the players and keeps track of overall progress. This would also allow the GM to **control the difficulty** of a mission in a more agile way. For example, when the heroes are close to death because of a number of unfavorable dice rolls the GM can decide to place fewer enemies in the next combat encounter. Or, when he see that the heroes are simply too powerful during a mission increase the number of enemies in the next encounter.

Naturally this would remove the random aspect of the classic game even more but might provide a more interesting experience for the players.

Mini Stories

Instead of playing the full campaign players can decide to play the assorted quest lines as their own mini-stories in their normal campaign. To do so (at least for now), simply follow the Prerequisite Chain within the chapters and familiarize yourself with all the missions.

At some point in the future (or per request) an overview of which mission belong together will be provided.

This Variant is not fully implemented yet as all storylines will conclude only in a future chapter.

Make the campaign your own

It was already mentioned a couple of times but cannot be stressed enough: If you do not like any part of the overall campaign structure, mission design, narrative, enemy design, feel free and encouraged to change things up in any way you want.

Again, if you want to provide feedback please do so and any reasonable changes will be implemented in a future version of the campaign.

New Rules

Campaign Tracker

In the Annex section is a Campaign Tracker that helps in keeping track over which missions have been completed, which missions are unlocked, modifiers for difficulty levels as well as a short overview which expansions are required to play that mission. It is highly recommended to make use of this.

Contact information and Credits

Contact

If you have any questions or want to provide ideas and feedback you can do so via the following channels:

E-Mail

michaelthaller1986@gmail.com

Not checking this account every day but should catch your Mail.

Boardgamegeek

I am registered as the user "Battlepeon" (don't ask). I am not there every day but will answer PMs whenever I can.

Facebook

I am member of the Shadows of Brimstone Community group as the user Michael Thaller. You can PM me directly or ask a question in the group board. PMs should be answered rather quickly, however I may not always read all board entries.

The fastest way would be a direct PM via Facebook.

Credits

Shadows of Brimstone was created and is owned by Flying Frog Productions.

The template used to create this campaign was created by boardgamegeek user Klutz.

Hexcrawl, including the map that is being used in this campaign in an altered form has been designed by boardgamegeek user Padirn.