

In his journey from Jyom Pass to Tuula, Shen was met by one of his disciples carrying a message from an unknown settlement within Shon-Xan. The letter was a plea for help, detailing a spirit menace slowly causing its people to become wildly insane and then later wander off at night in the direction of a nearby mountain to never be seen again. Together with his student, Shen promptly changed his course and headed towards Shon-Xan territory.

From a hilltop, Shen could already see the heavy spiritual presence residing over a secluded area hidden from view, deep within the valley. As he got closer, the foliage thinned, and forgone, emaciated animals could be seen along the path, hopelessly looking on towards those who entered the accursed territory. Upon entering the encampment, its people could be seen pleading their gods feverishly for forgiveness and assistance in ridding themselves of the curse. The village leader was amongst them, conducting the prayers and tending to those who fell ill.

It was beyond anything Shen had imagined when reading the letter, and left him feeling guilty for not acting upon the substantial and prevalent imbalance between the physical and spiritual worlds.

Upon seeing the envoy he sent and his accompanying master, the village leader scrambled towards them and exclaimed, “At last! We have been awaiting your arrival dearly! Your disciple here has told us of your expertise in spiritual affairs, so we do hope you’ll be of assistance. Please, follow me into my quarters.”

Shen grimly noted, “I am sorry I did not come sooner... My negligence has allowed something of this size and severity to encroach and consume your village, and for that I truly am sorry.”

The village leader understandingly said, “Oh no, please, you are not to blame! These things... they... they are difficult to understand fully, and I believe it is due to my own incompetence in leading my people that this happened.”

“You see, we are not native to this place, nor its spirits. We are refugees who fled to Shon-Xan in wake of the Noxian invasion who were turned away at its gates. I hoped to provide for those who were denied access, so I established this village you see to provide a safe haven for us here where the Noxians would not think or bother to look... I believe our presence has not been accepted by the wildlife and spirits who reside here, and I have been inattentive in tending to the problem. I am unworthy of the people here who have called on me in times of suffering and relied on me to solve their problems, but I do hope you will mend my wrongs with the spirits... not for me, but for everyone else here.”

Shen reassured the village leader, “Your people saw something in you when they chose you as their leader, so I hope that at the end of this, you will lead as you always have, for their trust is truly a physical connection between you all... I will begin working to restore the balance in this village for everyone here, including yourself.”

“Thank you. I hope I can live up to their expectations” said the village leader with a brooding smile.

Upon further investigation, Shen found a stream of spiritual energy leading into the village from a nearby mountain. Following the stream, he was led to a rock outcrop with spiritual energy flowing out of the cracks in the ground. Shen secured the perimeter of the area and then proceeded to rupture the rock from which the spirits were escaping. From the hole erupted a pillar of continuous spirit energy that punctured the clouds and then rained down on the

mountain and the surrounding area. Shen leapt down the rift he created and followed the tunnels to an open area with a glistening and corrupted tree on an island in the middle of a pool of water from which the spirit energy was flowing. He drew both his physical and spiritual swords, and with quick, consecutive strikes, the tree and the accompanying corrupted spirit energy was destroyed. The remnants of the tree crumbled into ashes and were absorbed into the island, and from the ground phased the glowing, spiritual figure of an old hermit Vasthayshai'rei.

In a raspy, withered voice, the figure spoke, "Ahh... Thank you, for releasing me... It has been many years since I have seen the physical world... For too long have I been plagued by this accursed tree set upon my grave by the Noxians."

"I am blessed by your great spiritual presence," remarked Shen as he bowed to his spiritual ancestor.

"Please, stand up... I see I am the cause of much of the corruption within this region... I hope you and those affected will find it in your hearts to forgive me... I will see to it that this presence is eradicated, and for your troubles I will empower your swords... Again, thank you, and goodbye."

The Vasthayshai'rei closed his eyes and sank into the ground once more, and as he descended, glowing, vibrant spiritual energy seemed to emanate from the area and into the surrounding rock. Shen could sense the corrupted energy dissipating away, and upon climbing out of the hole, he could see the wildlife returning, and the village visually becoming more jubilant. From the village came its leader, scrambling towards Shen.

"You did it! Our sick are as healthy as could be and life is finally returning to the village!" exclaimed the leader.

Looking at his now sanctified swords, Shen contentedly noted, “I had no part in this, but rest assured... there is always someone is looking out for us.”