

# Dark Obelisk:

The Mondarian  
Elective



## Players' Guide



A Fantasy Roleplaying Adventure  
by J. Evans Payne

FlexTale



# Colophon

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To my friends from middle school, who embraced this silly nerdy hobby as a welcome escape from the pressures everyone endures in that environment.

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To my friends from college, who stuck with all manner of nerdy obsessions of mine through the years, despite

dwindling free time in which to pursue such things, and increasing responsibilities in other realms.

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Thank you for believing in me, when all I had to prove myself was an idea, a blurb, a handful of maps, and a dream.

The product you hold in your hands—or store on your hard drive—is a direct result of your faith, and support. I can't thank you enough.

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## Dedication

This book is hereby dedicated to my amazing Kickstarter backers, without whom I would have merely ideas, and little across the finish line.

## Foreward

Good lord.

I've said often that my ambition is an excess outstripped only by the devotion of my backers and colleagues. Never has that been more the case than with this project.

**Dark Obelisk 2** was intended as a simple follow-up to the original. An extension of the story, an expansion of the mythology and the realm, and a continuation of the fun I had putting the first project together.

Now, more than a year after the Kickstarter for DO2 wrapped up, and after a half-dozen intervening books and publications, we're finally getting to the meat of the matter.

And meat there is: what you hold, in whatever format, is at the very physical limit of how much I can pack into a single volume.

The trek into Mondaria City and its nine-level (okay, eight and change, really) mining complex is a challenging one, and not for the faint of heart. But the rewards are considerable.

"Adventure" hardly seems an appropriate moniker for this behemoth of a tome of content. But this adventure is not just continuation of an adventure path and story.

It is the fulfillment of a dream. The completion of a promise. The satisfaction, I would hope, of a very long time waiting, and of confidence given, and an emotional investment that has hopefully reaped rewards.

It is also the stepping-off point for the next phase of my

ambition, and of an entire world and universe of possible content that will hopefully follow.

I can only once again thank my backers, my followers, my colleagues, my advocates, and all those who have stuck in there waiting for this to come to fruition.

Hopefully, you consider it worth the wait.

J. Evans Payne  
Malvern, Pennsylvania  
February 2018

# Table of Contents

<b>Colophon</b> .....	2	<b>Introduction to Mondaria City</b> .....	27
Infinium Game Studio is:.....	4	Summary.....	27
Legal Stuff.....	4	Entrances and Exits.....	27
Dedication.....	4	Overview.....	27
<b>Foreward</b> .....	4	Atmosphere & Theme.....	27
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	5	Areas of Interest.....	27
<b>About Infinium Game Studio</b> .....	7	Map 2: Blacksmith Ground Floor (MC-BS-GF).....	28
<i>Values and Key Differences</i> .....	7	Map 3: Central Area / Market (MC-MKT).....	29
<b>Quick Start: So Your Game Begins in 10 Minutes</b> .....	8	Map 4: Checkpoint Control Ground Floor (MC-CC-GF).....	30
Jumping Right In.....	8	Map 5: Fishery Ground Floor (MC-FH-GF).....	31
<i>Where Are We?</i> .....	8	Map 6: Garrison Ground Floor (MC-GR-GF).....	32
<i>Why Are We Here?</i> .....	8	Map 7: Hunter's Glen (MC-HG).....	33
<i>What Do We Know?</i> .....	8	Map 8: Inn & Stables Ground Floor (MC-IS-GF).....	34
<i>Who is Here?</i> .....	8	Map 9: Mess Hall Ground Floor (MC-MH-GF).....	35
<i>What's Going On?</i> .....	8	Map 10: Mill Ground Floor (MC-ML-GF).....	36
<b>FlexTale</b> .....	9	Map 11: Residential Zone (MC-RZ).....	37
What is FlexTale?.....	9	Map 12: Residence NE Ground Floor (MC-RNE-GF).....	38
<i>FlexTables</i> .....	9	Map 13: Residence NW Ground Floor (MC-RNW-GF).....	39
<i>Contexts</i> .....	9	Map 14: Residence SE Ground Floor (MC-RSE-GF).....	40
<b>Prologue: A Stranger Appears</b> .....	11	Map 15: Residence SW Ground Floor (MC-RSW-GF).....	41
Quick-Play Summary.....	11	Map 16: Storage Ground Floor (MC-ST-GF).....	42
Adventure Overview.....	11	Map 17: Trading Post Ground Floor (MC-TP-GF).....	43
<i>Location Overviews</i> .....	11	Map 18: Chaos Overview (MC-C).....	44
<b>Introduction</b> .....	12	Map 19: Chaos Foreman (MC-CF).....	45
What Is This Book?.....	12	Map 20: Chaos Supplies (MC-CS).....	46
Plot Summary.....	12	Map 21: Law Entrance (MC-LE).....	47
Adventure Path Summary.....	12	Map 22: Law Foreman (MC-LWF).....	48
Notes & Conventions.....	12	Map 23: Love Overview (MC-L).....	49
<i>Player Descriptive Text</i> .....	12	Map 24: Love Foreman (MC-LF).....	50
<i>GM-Only Notes</i> .....	12	Map 25: Outside the Gates (MC-OG).....	51
<i>Designer's Soapbox</i> .....	12	Map 26: Past the Gates (MC-PG).....	52
<i>Quests</i> .....	12	Map 27: Law General (MC-LO).....	53
<i>Obstacles</i> .....	13	<b>Dramatis Personae</b> .....	54
<i>Skill Checks</i> .....	13	Belerras (Foreman).....	55
<i>Skill Challenges</i> .....	13	Bethela Mudward (Trademaster).....	55
<i>Rewards</i> .....	13	Brimdog Firecleave (Engineer).....	55
<i>Traps</i> .....	13	Dagbrag (Gangboss).....	56
<i>Items</i> .....	14	Danalin Foeslash (Dwarven Union Leader).....	56
<i>NPCs and Monsters</i> .....	14	Didkeln Clawhammer (Chief Engineer).....	57
<i>PC Replacement Opportunities</i> .....	14	Estarel Finequill (Cartographer).....	57
<i>Shops &amp; Services</i> .....	14	Elawelle (Tribute Magister).....	57
The Dark Obelisk.....	15	Dralbrodin Strongquill (Lead Designer).....	57
<i>Obelisk Taint</i> .....	15	Faenadorn (Mayor).....	58
Variable Challenge.....	15	Friskbik (Stablehand).....	58
<i>Experience Points and Reward Nuggets</i> .....	16	Frobwin Glamfork (Feastmaster).....	59
<i>"Quadded" Stat Blocks</i> .....	17	Gabharn (Beastmaster).....	59
<i>Quadded Challenge Blocks</i> .....	18	Glimdarffe Sudsglub (Brewmaster).....	59
Incorporation.....	18	Gordsturll (Mercenary Dwarf).....	60
<i>As a New Start or Standalone Adventure</i> .....	18	Hamfast Burrbottom (Blacksmith).....	60
<i>Using With an Existing Campaign</i> .....	18	Imeltrude Legande (Warden).....	60
<i>Where In the World...?</i> .....	18	Incebb Gullip (Chemist).....	61
<i>As a Start to a New Campaign</i> .....	18	Innelothe (Herbalist).....	61
<i>Hooks and Links</i> .....	19	Killarth (Mercenary Tiefling).....	62
<b>The Campaign World</b> .....	20	Lugatoo (Coinmaster).....	62
Overview.....	20	Maresmir (Elven Administration Leader).....	62
What You Need to Know.....	20	Natobbe (Sage).....	63
High Ability, Low Tech.....	20	Raekeldorr (Illusionist Entertainer).....	64
Religion.....	20	Semtammi (Stablemaster).....	64
<i>Tribute</i> .....	20	Skandbard (Tinkermaster).....	64
Factions.....	21	Skandern Lithutz (Keeper of Records).....	65
<i>About Faction Profiles</i> .....	21	Thrennian Lo'quee (Minemaster).....	65
<i>Factions in Mondaria</i> .....	21	Vanarelia Riccars (Keepmaster).....	66
Other Factions.....	22	Wyrida (The Stranger).....	66
Railcar Rules.....	22	<b>Common NPCs</b> .....	67
Elevator Rules.....	22	Bleak Mute.....	68
Crate Climbing.....	23	Firedancer Celebrant.....	68
Debris & Difficult Terrain.....	23	Crazed Harbinger.....	69
Looting & Alignment.....	23		
Rumors and Tales.....			
<i>Default Rumors and Lore</i> .....			
<i>Plot Discovery Rumors and Lore</i> .....			
<b>Mondaria City</b> .....	25		
Map 1: Mondaria City Overview (MC-O).....	26		

Firedancer.....	69	Munitions Wench.....	71
Firedancer Campmaiden.....	69	Tainted Miner.....	71
Firedancer Hearthstud.....	70	Tainted Taskmaster.....	72
Miner.....	70	Mystic Seer.....	72
Mining Taskmaster.....	70	Open Gaming License (OGL).....	73

## About Infinium Game Studio

Founded in 2015, **Infinium Game Studio (IGS)** came about as the result of a simple mission: Make shared storytelling games easier and more fun for both players and referees alike.

Our vision is that **Infinium Game Studio** empowers referees, players, and the industry entire with innovative gaming tools; high-quality, deeply-designed products; and creative takes on established paradigms.

### Values and Key Differences

#### Plays Well With Everyone

**IGS** products are engineered to be usable by both novice and veteran gaming groups. As a result, they must contain everything a novice GM might need to react quickly to his/her play group.

#### Comprehensive and Immersive

Each **IGS** product should “feel real” and come with everything the referee might require to make the setting, context, environment, or other content come alive.

#### Everything You Need

The ideal adventure should contain practically everything you need to run the game, except the core rulebook. Even the most skilled GM wastes time looking things up in multiple books. It’s so exceedingly rare that an adventure contain all of the crunch and fluff necessary to run it.

#### Maps: Where Are We, Again?

A picture is worth a thousand words... and also, a thousand seconds of prep time. Visually appealing, easy-to-use, and extensive Maps are an essential part of any shared-storytelling experience.

#### Pervasive Maps

Don’t put a building on a map if I can’t go inside it.

#### Prepared for Anything

In a gaming session, a good referee must be prepared for the PCs to explore any aspect of the content. All too often, an otherwise outstanding adventure will fail to provide for a major percentage of its content. If there are twenty buildings in a town, but maps for only two of them--well, it’s fairly apparent where the Big Bad is going to be holed up! Not every map will be riddled with secret passages, custom random encounters, and combat, but there should be something of interest in every building. Otherwise, it shouldn’t be there!

#### Thoroughness: But What If...?

It’s possible to have a 16-page adventure that’s wonderful and exciting. It’s also possible to have a 255-page sourcebook be boring and repetitive. Striking the right balance between over-padding and under-describing is challenging, but an important part of what we do at **IGS**.

#### Flexible

Each product should be usable on its own, completely out of context; as a start to a completely new campaign; as part of the “intended” Adventure Path or associated suite of **IGS** products; or to insert into an existing ongoing campaign.

#### Reusable

No **IGS** product is “one and done” by design.

FlexTale and Comprehensive Design enable this flexibility and reusability.

#### Production Quality

Our goal is to produce world-class products with high production values.


# Quick Start: So Your Game Begins in 10 Minutes

## Jumping Right In

There's lots of detail in this book. But sometimes, you just want the executive summary, due to time or attention-span limitations.

## Where Are We?

A half-elven Stranger approaches your party, seeking your help in investigating a mystery. She then leads you to the mining city of **Mondaria**, where the entirety of the adventure takes place.

**Mondaria** is a profitable mining town that has been around for a century. It is under the purview of the  **Druid Enclave**, a mysterious and reclusive city that lies to the northeast.

**Mondaria** lies at the southern base of a mountain; within and underneath that mountain is a vast network of caves and caverns.

About six months ago, something catastrophic happened, and the **Druid Enclave** lost contact with **Mondaria**. As the PCs will quickly discover, half the population of the town was slain or went insane, and the mines and the city itself were thrown into chaos and bloodshed.

## Why Are We Here?

That's up to you as a player, your character as a PC, your party as an adventuring group, and perhaps most significantly, to your GM as a guiding force.

There are lots of reasons for an adventurer of any race, class, and background to seek **Mondaria** out; several options are described herein.

## What Do We Know?


Precious little, in truth, other than what The Stranger

presents to your party in the way of seeking help.

A large portion of the adventure revolves around discovering clues and information as to what may have taken place, and led up to the disaster.



## Who is Here?

There are dozens of NPCs to be found, each with their own backstory, personality... and, in many cases, owing to the insanity spread by the disaster, challenge in overcoming their antagonism.

Some of the most prominent members of society are described in the  **Dramatis Personae** section (p <>).

## What's Going On?

Here are some good starting points to get the action going quickly:

- Virtually every building in town has something of interest within it, either in the form of looting, characters... or vital information.
- To the southwest of the city proper is a  **Residential District** of a handful of large buildings that may be of significant interest.
- If all else fails, the  **Main Gate** of the mines forms the formal entrance to the mountain... in through the front door!

# FlexTale

## What is FlexTale?

**FlexTale™** is an attempt to make roleplaying game adventure content dynamic and interesting. A module created using **FlexTale** is different each time it is run. Treasure, monsters, plot activities, NPC backstories and character arcs, and various actions and plot elements can all occur differently.

Differences can occur using the roll of dice, or the GM can simply choose the content that s/he prefers or feels would be most engaging to the play group.



There are two ways that **FlexTale** can help make an adventure dynamic: **Dynamic Content** and **Dynamic Plots**.

### Dynamic Content

“**Dynamic content**” is a **FlexTable** term that refers to anything in an adventure that can be modified. Whether one NPC is in love with another, or who murdered the vagrant in the alley behind the town pub—**FlexTale** dynamic content makes it possible to have several explanations or paths through a story.

**Dynamic Content** is made possible by something called a **FlexTable™**.

### FlexTables

Most roleplaying game resources have tables—lots and lots of tables, in many cases! Typically, these tables are two-column, or perhaps three-column: you have one column that lists the dice roll result, and you reference that row as the outcome of the randomization. This is all well and good, but it limits the scenario to that one set of probabilities and outcomes, without accounting for things that happen in the game that you might want to impact those outcomes.

### A Traditional RPG Lookup Table

“: **Traditional Lookup Table**” is a typical “what’s in the treasure chest” table that requires rolling a **d100**. You roll a **d100**, and then you look up which row your roll falls into, and then you get your single result. Interesting, to be sure, and it definitely provides for some variability... but the extent of that variability is constant.

**Table 1: Traditional Lookup Table**

D%	Result	Description
01-30	Nothing	The treasure chest is empty.
31-40	Minor Reward	1d20 gp and a silver locket worth 5 pp.
41-80	Average Reward	3d12 gp, a gold-hilted dagger worth 10 pp, and two potions of cure light wounds.
81-100	Major Reward	2d20 pp, a potion of cure moderate wounds, and a scroll of fireball (CL 12).

### The FlexTable Difference

A **FlexTable** is used to do the same thing a normal RPG lookup table does. What makes **FlexTables** different is that they have multiple columns to represent dice rolls. Each of the columns represents a different situation or set of conditions under which that column is used to reference the result.

This seemingly simple change is used to make all of the following possible:

- Differences in **probabilities** for the individual outcomes.
- “**Scalable**” **monsters** and rewards that more appropriately match the level and power of the PCs.
- **Proportional rewards**, measured against the strength of a relationship or other conditions.
- **Circumstantial content**, restricted to certain conditions or prerequisites.

“: **Sample Treasure Chest Contents**” is the same table we saw earlier, modified to be a **FlexTable**.

### Contexts

In the above example, there are now four columns used to indicate the range of the dice roll result. These columns are referred to as **Contexts**.

Before you roll on a **FlexTable** like this one, you will have to figure out which **Context** you should refer to. In the above table, the leftmost column is **Context “A” (D%A)**, the next one is “**B**”, and so on. Each **Context** also indicates the dice to be rolled—in this example, you roll the same dice (d%) in each **Context**, but in some **FlexTables**, different dice may be used.

This straightforward example demonstrates the following differences in converting a standard table into a **FlexTable**:

**Different Probabilities:** **Context C** is the most favorable, since it provides a much bigger range of rolls under which you would receive the “Major Reward”. **Context B** is the next best, since it, too, expands the range that **Context A** has.

**Circumstantial Results:** In **Context D**, not only are the favorable outcomes less likely, but there is a fifth result row that is only possible under this **Context**: “**Cursed Reward**”.

**Determining Context:** When you are called upon to roll on this **FlexTable**, the adventure will use some description to make it clear which **Context** to use. In the above example, perhaps the **Context** is determined by how favorable the party’s relationship is with a local wizard... but if the party has fought or slain that wizard, then **Context D** is used to represent the soured atmosphere.

Typically, just prior to a **FlexTable**, adventure content will summarize which **Context** should be used. The GM is encouraged to use his/her common sense and judgement in overriding this guidance as she/he sees fit based on the party and how the game is going. For example, a GM could choose to reference a specific **Context** even though the prerequisites aren’t met. She could also choose to simply ignore the table







**FlexTable 1: Sample Treasure Chest Contents**

D%A	D%B	D%C	D%D	Result	Description
01-30	01-20	01-10	01-30	Nothing	The treasure chest is empty.
31-40	21-50	21-30	31-40	Minor Reward	1d20 gp and a silver locket worth 5 pp.
41-80	51-60	31-50	41-45	Average Reward	3d12 gp, a gold-hilted dagger worth 10 pp, and two <i>potions of cure light wounds</i> .
81-100	61-100	51-100	46-50	Major Reward	2d20 pp, a potion of cure moderate wounds, and a <i>scroll of fireball</i> (CL 12).
n/a	n/a	n/a	51-100	Cursed Reward	6d6 cp, a rusted dagger (useless in combat), and whomever opens it is struck with a <i>bestow curse</i> spell (CL 8).

entirely, and force a specific result without even rolling. Experienced GMs should use this power wisely to improve gameplay if necessary; unless you have a specific reason for overruling the recommended use of a **FlexTable**, you should try to use it as it was intended to be used.

Here's an example for the above table, assuming the example of the contents of the treasure chest scaling to the nature of the relationship the party has with the local wizard:

-  **Use Context A:**  
If the party's relationship to the wizard is **Unfriendly** or **Indifferent**.

-  **Use Context B:**  
If the party's relationship to the wizard is **Friendly**.
-  **Use Context C:**  
If the party's relationship to the wizard is **Helpful**.
-  **Use Context D:**  
If the party's relationship to the wizard is **Hostile**, or if the party has ever attacked the wizard (or slain her).



This is an impressive-sounding title, but the goal is quite simple to describe: Let the story be different.



# Prologue: A Stranger Appears

## Quick-Play Summary

A stranger approaches the party, seeking their help in investigating something horrible and unknown.

The PCs must be coerced into accepting the task, and follow  **The Stranger** to the mining city of  **Mondaria**, to the northwest of  **Berinn corte**.

Once they arrive, the adventure truly begins, as the PCs attempt to discover what happened here... and what might be done to resolve it.

## Adventure Overview

The PCs are called upon to investigate what has happened to a mining city.

No word has been heard from the city for weeks, and all messengers and travelers sent there have not been seen again.

Though there are many reasons for traveling to **Mondaria City** and seeking the truth of what occurred there, the PCs discover a mining complex vast in its scope and ambition, and danger to match.

## Location Overviews

**Dark Obelisk 2: The Mondarian Elective** is broken into the following components:

## Prologue: The Stranger

**Summary:** The PCs are approached by a mysterious figure who offers a hook to get them to travel to **Mondaria City** and begin the adventure in earnest.

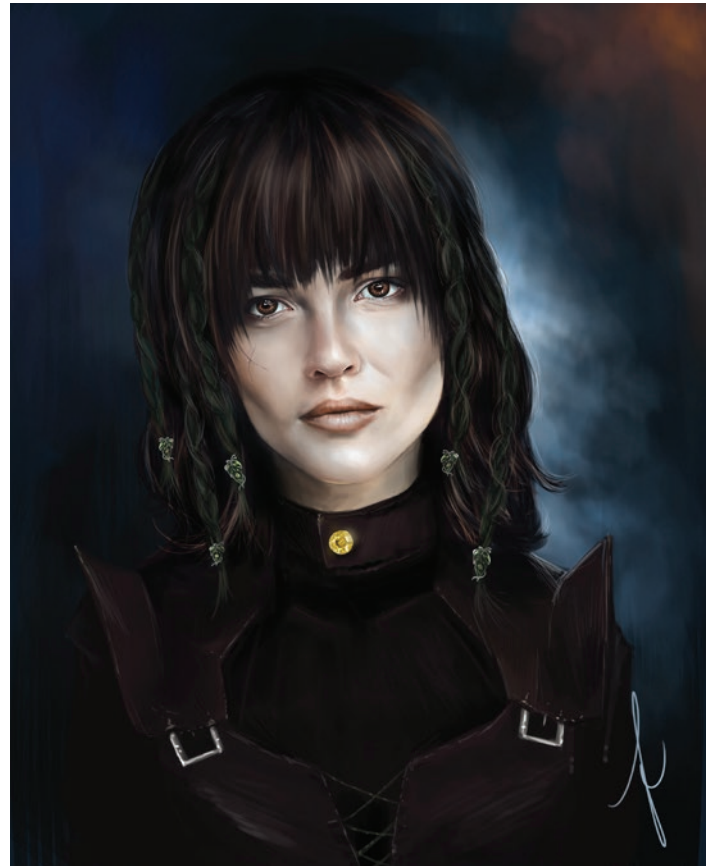
## Mondaria City

The PCs arrive at the titular mining town, and begin their investigation. Many corpses, and even more questions, are discovered, as is the entrance to the **Mine** itself.

This is the largest single environment in the adventure, and consists in actuality of four levels: **Ground Floor**, **Second Floor**, **Third Floor**, and **Basement**.

## The Mines

Nine levels, most sprawling and some even larger than the surface city above them. The descent through these levels is made possible via elevators, and hindered by monsters and characters of increasing difficulty.



# Introduction

## What Is This Book?

This book is intended to be any or all of the following. These are listed in no particular order.

- A **companion** to the enormous *Dark Obelisk 1: Berinncorte* adventure.
- A **sequel** to that adventure, taking place just after the events of that adventure.
- An adventure setting describing a vast city and **underground mining complex**, usable as a **supplement** in any campaign world, setting, or environment.
- A **standalone campaign setting**, usable as a “sandbox” style adventure without a main plot or objective, but still offering plenty of interesting quests, challenge, and intrigue.
- A **sourcebook** of NPCs, monsters, and common character reference of fully-fleshed-out and interesting characters, ready to insert into any adventure or campaign, at any level of difficulty or challenge.
- A source of “**tidbits**” of characters, beasts, descriptions, and other game elements—you can “steal” content from this as a sourcebook and insert as desired into your own adventures or campaign
- **Inspiration** for construction of your own adventures and content.

In short, how you use this book is really dependent upon you and your needs as a GM.

## Plot Summary

In the context of *Dark Obelisk 2: The Mondarian Elective*, upon arriving at the titular town, the PCs begin to discover what catastrophe befell the rich mining city and enormous underground mining complex.

They research, delve, loot, and fight their way through a complex city and nine levels of mines.

The adventure concludes with the **Obelisk** discovered, and either temporarily defeated, or the PCs escape with their lives intact for now.

## Adventure Path Summary

This setting book was created to enhance a series of connected modules which together take the players through a single unified story. This does not mean it cannot be used on its own, however.

If you do intend to use this adventure in sequence with its companion products, here is the logical order in which to play them:

- **1: Dark Obelisk: Berinncorte**
- **Berinncorte Basecamp** (*optional*)
- **2: Dark Obelisk: The Mondarian Elective** (*this book*)
- **3: Dark Obelisk: Forge and Fluid** (*working title*)

- **4: Dark Obelisk: The Siege of Berinncorte** (*working title*)


In addition, the  **Adventure Path** described above is intended to be the beginning of a much broader story arc and campaign setting.

Regardless of which pieces of the envisioned world and story are published when, the intent is for a GM to be able to pick up any piece of the overall campaign setting and be able to play it without having any background of the other components that may come before or after it.


## Notes & Conventions

As is typical in a roleplaying game adventure or module, some text herein is meant to be read or shown to players verbatim... but the majority of the content is meant to be for the Game Master’s (GM) eyes only. Below please find some visual conventions that make this differentiation clear.

### Player Descriptive Text


-  These sections are meant to be read aloud to players as-is. You are of course free to introduce your own changes as you see fit as a Game Master. Player Descriptive Text blocks are meant to serve as informative tidbits that have been preconstructed to reflect the exact nature of the situation being encountered by the party.

### GM-Only Notes

-  Granted, nearly everything not highlighted in Player Descriptive Text is not meant to be read aloud to the players. However, some content is much more “sensitive” than others.

GM-Only Notes such as this typically give away plot points, major background, or other information that the players may not normally have access to—either right now, or in some cases, ever. Make sure to conceal these sections from players unless there is a specific reason to tell them!

### Designer’s Soapbox

-  In some cases, the game designer will want to express a specific opinion about some aspect of the adventure. Typically, this takes the form of a discussion on interpreting rules, or a recommendation as to how best to play or run a particular piece of the adventure. In all cases, veteran GMs should feel comfortable ignoring these “soapbox” diatribes... but veteran and new GMs alike may find something of interest in the coalesced experience of three decades of roleplaying experience!


### Quests


A quest can be large, tiny, or in between. Some can be very quickly accomplished; others span days, weeks, or even

years, across multiple cities and even planes of existence!

In this book, all quests, big or small, have a similar presentation and key elements, as shown by the green block below.

### Quest: Rats in the Cellar (example)

 **Summary:** Kill rats in a fantasy tavern. Fun and creative.


 **Rewards:** Rat corpses. Plus 10 gp from the bartender.

 **Locations:** Bar.

 **Key NPCs:** Bartender.

 **Kickoff:** When any PC speaks with the bartender.

 **Description:**


The bartender asks the party to slay  **2d6** Giant Rats that have invested his basement.


In so doing, they will benefit from his goodwill, and a reward of **10 gp**.


### Obstacles


Doors, locks, and other obstacles that don't necessarily incorporate a trap. You'll find these prefaced by little brown symbols like this one:

#### Locked Secret Door (example)

 5" thick; **Hardness 5; hp 30;**  
**Perception DC 16; Break DC 15; Disable Device DC 18**


 5" thick; **Hardness 5; hp 30;**  
**Perception DC 18; Break DC 17; Disable Device DC 20**

 5" thick; **Hardness 5; hp 30;**  
**Perception DC 20; Break DC 19; Disable Device DC 22**

 5" thick; **Hardness 5; hp 30;**  
**Perception DC 22; Break DC 21; Disable Device DC 24**

### Skill Checks

Whether it's a single, simple check, or a series of checks in escalating difficulty, skill checks may be an opportunity to either avoid disaster or discover what might otherwise remain hidden and ignored. Such chances are indicated via yellow symbols as follows:

Some PCs may have insight into the Blacksmith's wealth; make a  DC 12 **Knowledge (Profession)** check.



### Skill Challenges



**Skill checks** are typically a single roll, often made in secret by the GM. A **skill challenge** is usually a bit more involved than a simple check—or there's simply more at stake. Either way, a challenge is a more formal, and explicit, exercise, intentionally engaged in by the players.

You'll find a skill challenge in a yellow box such as this:

### Falling Timbers (example)


**First Check:** DC 18 **Perception** (16 if aflame) to notice the falling building; success cancels subsequent checks.

**Second Check:** DC 15 **Acrobatics** to avoid the debris; failure inflicts  **2d6** points of crushing damage plus a possible  **1d8** points of fire damage; success cancels subsequent checks.

**Third Check:** DC 12 **Strength** to dislodge one's self from the debris; failure inflicts  **1d4** points of crushing damage plus a possible  **1d8** points of fire damage; success quits the challenge.


### Rewards

Treasure, swords, gems, keys, filthy lucre—this is the stuff your players are really gunning for, right? Well, that, plus a good time with friends. And maybe, if you're lucky, a good, engaging session of shared storytelling that you'll all remember for a long time.

At any rate, rewards are shown with blue boxes like this one. Some containers have common treasure, which applies equally to all difficulty bands; these are shown with the badges for all four bands like this: .

Other treasure is "scaled"; that is, the PCs receive different treasure depending on what difficulty band they are playing at. Select the band that's appropriate for the level of the PCs; that is the treasure they receive. They do **not** receive all of the treasure listed across all four bands!


### Secret Closet Chest

 **Brushgather genealogy book** (a small book; value 6 gp)

 **19 gp; opal pendant on gold chain** (value 31 gp)

 **8 pp; 42 gp; opal pendant on gold chain** (value 72 gp)

 **19 pp; 37 gp; opal pendant on gold chain** (value 180 gp)

 **52 pp; 84 gp; opal pendant on gold chain** (value 428 gp)


### Traps

Hey, blame the rogue—who in all likelihood is suffering the brunt of the trap s/he either failed to detect, and/or to disarm. Whether it becomes a bragging right, a bargaining chip, or an epitaph, traps of all manner are shown in a purple box like this one.

Note that the statistics for the impact of most traps scale to the four difficulty bands; select the one that is appropriate for the PCs in your game.

#### Acid Arrow Chest Trap

**Type Magic; Trigger Touch; Reset none**

 **Perception DC 18; Disable Device DC 20**

**Effect** spell effect (*acid arrow*; Atk +1 ranged touch (**1d4** acid damage for 2 rounds))


- ✘ **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 22  
**Effect** spell effect (*acid arrow*; Atk +3 ranged touch (2d4 acid damage for 2 rounds))
- ✘ **Perception** DC 22; **Disable Device** DC 24  
**Effect** spell effect (*acid arrow*; Atk +5 ranged touch (2d4 acid damage for 3 rounds))
- ✘ **Perception** DC 24; **Disable Device** DC 22  
**Effect** spell effect (*acid arrow*; Atk +7 ranged touch (2d4 acid damage for 4 rounds))

## Items

Be they simple items, magical items, rods, staves, potions, books, or something wondrous, items share a common block of information like the following... note that this format is used for all manner of non-weapon, non-armor equipment and usable items, both magical and mundane:

### Adventurer's Chronicle (example)

**Value** 50 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.; **Materials** paper; **Nature** non-magical; **Aura** none; **Slot** usable; **CL** n/a

This book is chock full of useful information. When used as a reference (an action that typically takes  1d4 full rounds of searching the text), an *adventurer's chronicle* grants a +2 competency bonus on a specific **Knowledge** check for which the book is designed.

**Construction Requirements** means to assemble a physical book; the author must have at least **10** ranks in the skill for which you are designing the book; **Cost** 30 gp

## NPCs and Monsters

Crunch time!

Due to the scale of this adventure, this Adventure Book contains statistics only for NPCs (both Common and Dramatis Personae) and new monsters.

Common monsters, such as Umber Hulks and Giant Spiders, do not have statistics within this tome. Most of the common monsters referenced in this book have freely-available stats, either for free online, or as part of the core books of the game system you are playing.

The upcoming *Aquila: Bestiary of the Realm* by **Infinium Game Studios** will contain full, Quadded Statblocks for every common monster referenced in this book. While that book is not required to use this one, the *Bestiary* will allow for greater flexibility in how this adventure is used, and what level of party for which it's appropriate.

## PC Replacement Opportunities

No way around it: **Dark Obelisk 2: The Mondarian Elective** is a gruesome, brutal, and challenging adventure, particularly for low-level parties. Unless the PCs are exceptionally fortunate with their dice, or they see the writing on the wall and decide to escape alive and leave the city, it's unlikely that they will all survive.

Each gaming group has its own perspective on what to do

about PC demise. Many GMs enforce death as a consequence of decision-making, and if your beloved PC dies, so be it; roll up another character and start over again. Other groups are more in the storytelling aspect of things; lenient GMs will take every measure necessary to make sure that every single PC makes it through, no matter how bone-headed their decision-making or horrible their luck.

If one or more PCs die in the course of this adventure, the GM has some options. You may of course enforce the death, and either have the player roll up a brand-new first-level character, or create a character of a level matching the lowest current level of surviving party members.

As every named NPC is dynamically located—that is, they pop up as the result of **Random Encounters** or specific probabilities in **Areas of Interest**—they are not tied to a certain location.

The GM is encouraged to try to match races and/or classes where possible, to suggest possible replacements for players whose PCs have perished.

These opportunities are chances for the specified NPC to be “taken over” by the player who lost a PC. This way, the player doesn't have to slow down play creating a new character, and the party can keep going.

This should be viewed as an opportunity for roleplaying: the GM may consider showing the player the detailed information for the NPC they are assuming control over, and the player should be encouraged to act as though their new PC had that background, secrets, and so on.

The gaming group is encouraged to roleplay the “taken over” NPC as though s/he still had their place in society and the greater scope of the adventure, and **Adventure Path**. For example, if a player takes over an NPC who hates a rival NPC, then subsequent interactions between the “taken over” PC and that rival should reflect that animosity in the player's roleplaying.

## Shops & Services

Many of the tents and kiosks in the **Mines**, for example, the **Firedancer Camp** (p 521), vend wares or services.

In most cases, the shop will be described as simply referring to a section of the appropriate rulebook, or to describe things in general terms. When selecting an item to purchase, it's important to remember the context of the transaction: the bowels of an enormous, largely abandoned, and chaotic mining complex that has been overtaken by monsters and whose inhabitants run amok.


Thus, each item for sale may have a bit of difference as to its typical prices, as this is far from a typical scenario and rules of supply and demand are quite abnormal.

It's also worth remembering that what can be bought, can also be sold: while the PCs may have no use for buying, say, a bolt of silk, generally speaking whatever a vendor has for sale, they will also purchase. Use normal rules, but use the table below to help determine each item's price basis.

**Table 2: In-the-Mines Vendor Price Adjustments**

D%	Price Adjustment	Description
1-2	+30%	“Hand-crafted or assembled from the best in the trade.”
3-5	+10%	“Ah, that’s a useful item. And much in demand, of late.”
6	None	Use normal / typical prices as per sourcebook.
7	-5%	“Few folks seem to want that item.”
8	-10%	“I’ll be glad to see it gone.”

### Kiosk Negotiations

At the GM’s discretion, enterprising PCs can attempt to negotiate. Once a PC receives a result from the **Price Adjustments** table above, they may make a  **Diplomacy, Bluff, Intimidate, or Appraise** check, at DC 16, plus 1 for each full **500 gp** of retail value (so negotiating for an item normally worth **1,225 gp** would be DC 18).

Success by **1-5** points means the PC may force a re-roll on the **Price Adjustments** table, with a **+1** circumstance modifier to the roll. The new roll stands, even if it is less favorable to the PC than the original roll pre-negotiations. If the GM allows it, a stubborn PC can attempt to negotiate further; each successive attempt increases the DC by **+1**, and these modifiers stack. Succeeding at multiple negotiations generates circumstance modifiers that DO stack!

Here’s an example: a PC wants to purchase a masterwork dagger, which is normally worth **302 gp**. The GM rolls on the **Price Adjustments** table, and rolls a 4—which means the kiosk sells the dagger for **10%** more than normal, and therefore the transaction will require **332 gp**. This PC is skilled in **Diplomacy**, however, and so asks to negotiate. The check is DC 16; the PC’s check value is 18, so they succeed. The GM rerolls on the **Price Adjustments** table, and rolls a 1—but this time the roll benefits from a **+1** modifier, and so it’s treated as a 2 outcome. This is worse, however, than the original price! The PC asks to negotiate further, and the GM indulges them, but this time, the DC for the check is 17. The check outcome is 18, so the PC succeeds; the GM rerolls the **Price Adjustments** check, and this time adds **+2**, because it is the second successful negotiation. The roll is a 4, plus 2, with a 6 total outcome—and the masterwork dagger is now on sale for **302 gp**. The PC accepts the price, and completes the transaction.

If the PC fails a negotiations check, the GM has some options as to how to penalize them. If the check is failed by **1-5** points, the price may simply stand as-is. Failure by **5-10** points might indicate that the price is fixed, and no further negotiations are possible with this vendor. Failure by more than **10** points might suggest that the price increase as though the next-worst result had been rolled on the Price Adjustments table.

In addition, the type of skill employed in negotiations might imply additional consequences. Failure at an Intimidate check, for example, might mean that the vendor refuses to do any further business with the PC in question; failure by more

than 5 points may even involve the vendor attacking the PC.

## The Dark Obelisk

In the Mines, there are several false and true pieces of **Dark Obelisk**. These are dark, horrid artifacts from times long past, and discovering their true nature is—as of yet!—still beyond the scope of this point in the **Adventure Path**.

True iterations of the titular crystals have the following effects.

### Obelisk Taint

Shards of the **Obelisk**, no matter how large, produce an atmosphere of evil and chaos, from the effects of which few are immune.

This takes the form of auras, which influence creatures based on their proximity to the physical presence of the **Obelisk**.

#### **Aura: Minor Obelisk Taint**

**Effect** **Lawful** creatures within 30 ft. suffer a **-1** penalty on their attack rolls, skill checks, and damage rolls if used against a creature with this aura. In addition, a creature with this aura may **Take 10** on skill checks used in opposition to groups of creatures with at least one member who has the **Lawful** descriptor.

The effects of this **aura** do not stack with those of **Greater Obelisk Taint**, though a single creature may be under the impact of both auras simultaneously.

**Origin** All creatures with the **Chaotic** descriptor, who are within 50 ft. of an **Obelisk**, gain the benefit of this aura, which lasts for **1 hour** after this proximity. In the context of this adventure, all **Chaotic** monsters have this aura.

#### **Aura: Greater Obelisk Taint**

**Effect** **Lawful** creatures within 30 ft. suffer a **-3** penalty on their attack rolls, skill checks, and damage rolls if used against a creature with this aura. In addition, a creature with this aura may **Take 10** on skill checks used in opposition to groups of creatures with at least one member who has the **Lawful** descriptor.

The effects of this **aura** do not stack with those of **Minor Obelisk Taint**, though a single creature may be under the impact of both auras simultaneously.

**Origin** All creatures with the **Chaotic** descriptor, who are within 20 ft. of an **Obelisk**, gain the benefit of this aura, which lasts for **10 minutes** after this proximity.

## Variable Challenge

**Dark Obelisk 2: The Mondarian Elective** was designed initially as an adventure for four to six PCs of between 4th and 6th level. However, one of the things that has frustrated many GMs is that adventures are almost universally designed in this manner: for a specific level of challenge, or at most, a very narrow range of PC levels (e.g., “4th to 6th level”).

There are many advantages to this approach, not least of which being the guarantee that all challenges (monsters, traps, and NPCs) are calibrated very specifically to that

narrow zone of difficulty.

The drawback, of course, is the narrowness of that range. GMs wishing to run a module designed for 10th-level PCs, for example, are either flat out of luck, or have to do some fairly intensive work to scale the content up or down to better align with the PCs she is playing with.

The degree to which a particular GM, or even gaming group, enjoys perusing and tweaking game statistics—“crunch”, in common parlance—varies, of course. Some GMs love crunch, and spend a majority of their prep time creating and refining their challenges to ensure the crunch is accurate and appropriately challenging. On the other end of the spectrum are “by the seat of their pants” GMs, who ignore crunch almost entirely, rarely referring to stat blocks lest it distract from the focus of storytelling.

This adventure, and in a broader sense, **Infinium Game Studio**, does not want to judge as to which approach is “better” or “worse”. What matters is that you have fun and enjoy yourselves!

However, we do want to make it as easy as possible to play this adventure no matter what level your PCs happen to be.

## Experience Points and Reward Nuggets

There are many ways of calculating, dispersing, and accounting for experience points (XP) in a Pathfinder gaming group. What follows is a method that I have used over the decades, and it’s been a lot of fun. Although it may not be for every gaming group—your mileage may vary—it’s an interesting spin on traditional methods, and the approach may work for you.

Whether this approach works for you or not, however, it’s worth reading through, because all of the Quests in this adventure denote XP awards using this method.

## I Want Candy

In the author’s early days as a GM, I tossed out candies as rewards to the players when their characters did a good job. Candy could be distributed for defeating a kobold, picking a lock, dodging an attack, convincing the castle guard to look the other way, or any of the ordinary actions whose consequence typically involve experience points.

However, I also gave out candy for good roleplaying, convincing dialogue, outstanding (or horrid) emulation of accents, meta-jokes about the circumstances of the game that were truly hilarious, suggesting things to me as the GM or other players that took the story in a new direction, or—and I have to be honest, here—helping me as a GM.

My general rule was, if I forgot a rule, and you pointed it out in a way that didn’t make you seem like a jerk, then you got rewarded. This could be something as innocuous as reminding me that your elf ranger’s longbow was firing +1 arrows, or as significant as reminding me that a certain piece of equipment granted a reroll to a critically-failed outcome.

Generally speaking, candy rewards were given out in my games for anything—literally, anything—that made the gaming experience more fun. Doorbell rings, and the pizza’s here, and your character is tied up in the cyclops’ cave, so you know you won’t be doing anything for a few minutes, and so you go and grab the grub, and tip the delivery guy—

that’s worth a candy. Tell a funny joke—that’s worth a candy. Save the life of your comrade, only to drug him unconscious and use him as a prop, in the manner of Weekend at Bernie’s—okay, that’s a little ghoulish, but it’s in character, and amazing, so, yeah, that’s three candies right there.

## Candy as XP

Candy is awesome, though for one of my gaming group, who was a diabetic, it was a controlled and mindful awesomeness. But even the most free-wheeling player wants their character to level up. I get it.

At the end of each gaming session, my players would “turn in” their candy wrappers. Each wrapper represented something gone right, a good deed done—and therefore it was converted to XP. Generally speaking, no matter what the PCs’ levels, no matter what the adventure, 10 candy wrappers meant you advanced to the next level. If you fell short—let’s say, you only got 6—then it meant you were closer for next gaming session (i.e., 4 needed in this example).

As years went on, it became a bit less practical and/or healthy to urge my friends to consume at least ten pieces of candy every time we got together, and so the approach was tweaked. Instead of candy wrappers, gold stars, or spare dice in a particular color, or Warhammer 40,000 figurines. The point was, you got a token, a “nugget” of reward, which was later converted into XP.

Rules lawyers hate this method, and I respect that. But even the most hardened min/maxer eventually recognizes that this approach, despite its drawbacks, keeps play flowing quite quickly, and keeps everyone focused on what I believe should be the goal of any roleplaying game session.

Namely: to have fun!


## Reward Stars: The Formalized Approach

Whether or not you appreciated the above anecdote, or the approach it describes, it’s required reading, because now we’ll get to how it applies to **Dark Obelisk: Berinncorte**.

As with everything else in this book, the GM is encouraged to completely ignore or change this approach if you feel it would make it work better for your gaming group.

The following represent opportunities to gain an experience point reward in this adventure:

- **Defeating** monsters and NPCs.
- Avoiding traps, picking locks, or otherwise **overcoming obstacles**.
- Succeeding in **skill challenges** or checks.
- Fulfilling other objects in pursuit of a **Quest**.

Monsters and NPCs in this adventure list the **XP** reward the PCs should obtain for defeating them in combat. They also list the number of “**Reward Stars**” players should receive for success. This is denoted like this:  +2.

Think of a **Reward Star** as a sugar-free and abstracted version of a piece of candy from the earlier anecdote: players receive one or more most times that they achieve something in the game.

**Locks, traps, and skill checks** are typically “quadded”; each level of **CR** lists a suggested **XP** reward, but also a number of

## Reward Stars.

**Quests** only list **Reward Stars**. This is because **Quests** should be fun, interesting, and above all, useful to the PCs, but shouldn't be game-breakingly powerful or ignorably impotent. A simple delivery quest, for example: what should that be worth? **500 XP**? For a level one character, that can be almost halfway to levelling up; for a level 19 character, that makes for a completely worthless diversion. Using **Reward Stars** solves this problem, by automatically scaling the reward to be significant regardless of character level.

If you follow the approach I've used, then at the end of each gaming session (or in between sessions, or at the start of the next session, whatever works best for your schedule), convert the **Reward Stars** to traditional **Experience Points**.

The GM is heavily encouraged to augment the rewards documented with additional rewards, for perhaps-less-tangible contributions: good jokes, helpful behavior, playing fair and nice, being a good sport, paying for or even just ordering dinner, that sort of thing.

Such "intangible rewards" should be general in nature: a good, timely joke should be rewarded with a chunk of XP that's meaningful and helpful to the PC in question, whether they're level 1 or level 19.

## Stay In Character... Or Else

In rare cases, or with certain gaming groups, the GM should reserve the right to remove or revoke the **Reward Stars** a particular player, or the group entire, has earned.

Such penalties should not be applied in a discouraging manner, or against players who are genuinely trying, but whose luck is simply poor, or for whom things just aren't working out. Indeed, successful roleplaying in the face of dire circumstances should be rewarded more!

**Reward Stars** should only be revoked if the player is detracting from play, distracting others, making inappropriate jokes not appreciated by the rest of the group, not paying their fair share... or just generally being a jerk.

## Converting Reward Stars to XP

Each **Reward Star** represents different **XP** depending on what your current level is.

If you've assigned **Reward Stars** to a particular PC, use the character's current level on the table below to convert to an **XP** reward.

On some occasions, you may instead have granted **Reward Stars** to the party as a whole. In this scenario, calculate the **Average Party Level (APL)** as you normally would, and use that on the table below to convert the reward to standard **XP**.

If a PC has more than the minimum sufficient **Reward Stars** to advance in level, they may continue to advance! In such a scenario, count Stars using the PC's current level, until they level up. Any remaining stars are converted to **XP** using the character's new level. In exceptionally rare circumstances—or with exceptionally indulgent GMs!—this may involve a PC levelling up multiple times between sessions, though such power-levelling is generally discouraged.

Finally, in addition to different methods of determining rewards, gaming groups tend to have different theories as to how rapidly characters should level up. Slow, average, and fast tracks are shown here, which scale to the corresponding

Character Advancement experience point totals in the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook*.

For purposes of **Reward Stars**, the following standard has been used:


- **Slow** advancement requires 15 **Reward Stars** to advance.
- Advancement with the **Average** progression demands 10 **Reward Stars** per level.
- Only 5 **Reward Stars** are needed to advance following the **Fast** track.


**Table 3: Converting Reward Stars to XP**


Level, CR, or APL	Slow	Avg	Fast
1	200	200	260
2	300	300	400
3	433	400	540
4	600	600	800
5	800	800	1,000
6	1,200	1,200	1,600
7	1,600	1,600	2,200
8	2,533	2,400	3,200
9	3,000	3,000	4,200
10	5,000	5,000	6,800
11	6,333	6,500	8,000
12	9,667	9,500	13,000
13	12,667	13,000	17,000
14	19,333	19,000	26,000
15	26,333	25,500	35,000
16	36,667	41,000	50,000
17	53,333	50,000	70,000
18	76,667	75,000	100,000
19	100,000	105,000	140,000
20	n/a	n/a	n/a


## "Quadded" Stat Blocks

Toward the goal of having an adventure that can be run with PCs of various levels, all NPCs and monsters in this adventure have four separate sets of statistics.

 These represent iterations of the creature in four distinct scales of challenge. These scales are referred to, in ascending difficulty, as **Low**, **Moderate**, **Advanced**, and **Elite**.

 **Low**-level statistics are the default, and are intended for parties of 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> level PCs. Typically, the **Low CR** for a creature will be in the range of fractional, up to 4.

 **Moderate** statistics present a bit more challenge, and are meant for 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> level PCs. **CRs** can be in the range from 4-10.

 **Advanced** creatures give even more of a fight, representing **CRs** in the range of 10-15, and are meant for adventurers of the same levels.



✘ **Elite** monsters and NPCs are the most evolved, and present formidable difficulty in the 12-20 **CR** range. These stat blocks are designed for PCs above 15<sup>th</sup> level.

To avoid confusion, elsewhere in the text outside of the creature's quadded stat block definition, the statistics referred to are the **Low**, or default, block. For example, the condensed, "vital stats" block that is shown in red where the NPC or monster is introduced in the adventure uses the **Low** values.

## Quadded Challenge Blocks

Skill challenges and checks, traps, poisons, and obstacles sometimes have quadded stat blocks as well.

Although nearly all NPCs and monsters have quadded stat blocks, not all other game elements do. This is intentional. It represents the reality that although monsters and people might be of advanced difficulty, the city of **Berinncorte** exists in a typical, average fantasy realm—DC 50 Mythic-caliber locks simply doesn't exist, let alone on every door in town!

Below is an example of a door that has a quadded challenge block. The icons represent the scale of increasing difficulty; from top to bottom, they are **Low**, **Moderate**, **Advanced**, and **Elite**.

### Locked Secret Wooden Door

✘ 5" thick; **Hardness** 5; **hp** 60; **Perception** DC 16; **Break** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 18

✘ 5" thick; **Hardness** 5; **hp** 60; **Perception** DC 20; **Break** DC 24; **Disable Device** DC 22

✘ 5" thick; **Hardness** 5; **hp** 60; **Perception** DC 22; **Break** DC 26; **Disable Device** DC 24

✘ 5" thick; **Hardness** 5; **hp** 60; **Perception** DC 24; **Break** DC 28; **Disable Device** DC 26

## Incorporation

Some gaming groups are comfortable just sitting down around a table and starting things off by the GM informing everyone "all right, you're in the Central Tavern on Main Street of Middle Town. What do you want to do?"

However, many gaming groups desire a bit more context. Particularly for play styles that emphasize storytelling, it can help for players to have a bit of information about the game world. What sort of law and order are kept, and by whom? What good and evil forces roam the land? What is the history of the region, and what wars or struggles have occurred or whose influence lingers still? And above all, what does the surrounding territory look like, and what are our options in terms of travelling elsewhere?

To play **Dark Obelisk: The Mondarian Elective**, there are a few options to choose from to introduce your players to the larger world. Which option you select as a GM, and as a roleplaying game group, will depend mainly on how you want this adventure to tie in to the larger world and/or campaign setting.

## As a New Start or Standalone Adventure

This is the simplest option to using this adventure: simply generate your party's new characters and get going! Make sure you have a good variety of characters, races, classes, and so on represented.

Then, feel free to "drop" the party wherever it makes the most sense to do so—e.g., the party simply walks into town.

## Using With an Existing Campaign

The plot, NPCs, and other elements of this adventure do not hinge on a dependence to a particular gaming world. As such, it should be straightforward to use this adventure as a one-off module in the context of a grander, established campaign setting—either one "off the shelf", or one of the GM's own creation.

In fact, **Dark Obelisk 2: The Mondarian Elective** does not require you as a GM to have any larger gaming world established, described, or chosen. You can just play it as-is.

If you choose to continue playing the other modules in the **Adventure Path**, you can spool out additional details about the gaming world as they become relevant; for any given moment in time, your gaming group can focus simply on the plot and action happening that moment, and leave the world-building and grandiose backstory for a later time.

## Where In the World...?

**Mondaria City** was designed to be somewhat typical in nature and needs in terms of where it could be placed in a new existing or new game world. It's a mining town, of course, so naturally it must be placed in a region with mountains and rich in ore.

Realistically, it can "go anywhere", so long as that context isn't too extreme—for example, it probably doesn't make much sense to have **Mondaria** atop a mountain surrounded by a moat of lava!

**Mondaria** can be situated in any temperate climate. The intended, explicit environs surrounding the town will be elaborated upon in subsequent campaign material, but suffice it to say that all of the following elements are nearby:

- **Forest**, very close by to the south and east.
- The **river**, that flows to the west of the city and up north of the mountains.
- **Mountains** to the north.

## As a Start to a New Campaign

You may wish to use this adventure to kick off a new campaign... but don't necessarily want to follow the **Adventure Path** to which it leads. Or, you may have an established campaign in mind.

In such circumstances, feel free to ignore or amend any references to geography beyond **Mondaria** found throughout the adventure. You can "place" **Mondaria** anywhere you like within an existing map, campaign setting, or geography that makes sense. In doing so, remember that **Mondaria**, while featuring some significant qualities, is not meant to be a geographic, economic, or political hub, and is in fact

intended to be somewhat remote relative to other towns and villages.

You can also use *Dark Obelisk 2: The Mondarian Elective* as a “transitional adventure” to change the setting, context, or theme of an existing adventure campaign. This is a bit trickier, since this module is meant for 4th- to 6th-level characters.

However, experienced GMs can modify the difficulty of challenges found herein to adapt the content to be a suitable match for more powerful PCs. Used in this manner, you can use the obelisks’ eruptions to disrupt existing cities in your campaign world—if you’re up to a bit of tweaking and advance preparation, you could even adapt the adventure so that it takes place in an existing city of your choice!

## Hooks and Links

If you’re looking for reasons that the party seeks out **Mondaria** or begins their tale of adventuring there, here are some ideas. Of course, as a GM, you are by no means bound to selecting from among these... but it’s always useful to have some inspiration or something to get started quickly.

## Class-Based Hooks

These connections and motivations are based on the presence of one or more characters in the party who have at least one level in a particular class. As GM, you may judge that only one of these is a sufficient motivator; alternately, you can combine multiple class hooks to provide the entire party a believable reason to travel to **Mondaria**.

### Paladins

There is a calamity that may have befallen the mining town, causing suffering and death for innocents. Paladins should have no choice but to seek out the city and investigate.

### Rogues

An abandoned city? Above a massive, rich mine? With little law or order to speak of? Rogues would sign up by the dozen for such an opportunity.

### Fighters and Martial Characters

Mercenaries can always be tempted with a bit of coin... either given outright, by **The Stranger** (p 64), or in the form of promised loot.

### Arcane & Divine Classes

Though it is a mining town, it is an exceptionally successful one, and the **Keeper of Records**, **Loremaster**, and others have a substantial font of recorded knowledge. There just might be something in their archives to attract the interest of these types of characters.

### Monks and Druids

Druids are simple: **The Druid Enclave**, a powerful nexus of the class to the northeast of **Mondaria**, can simply mandate the involvement of practically any Druid.

Monks are a bit more challenging, but there is so much to investigate, see, and slay, that it can match with the ulterior motives of nearly any character.

## General Hooks

These hooks are not linked directly to any particular race, class, or other party element, and can be deployed as the GM sees fit as best matches the play style and existing motivations of the party.

### Political / Racial Strife

Dwarves and Elves are in conflict over the power struggle within the mining city: the Elven Administration rules things from an official standpoint, and the worker-class Dwarven Union is convinced there’s more opportunity for improved conditions and shared profit.

### Commissioned to Investigate

The Stranger is a well-paid, well-placed, and powerful ally; she’s hardly the only person the Druid Enclave Council sent into the wilderness to seek out helpers to investigate what occurred.

### Former Attachment

For dwarves or elves, having a former attachment to or involvement with the mining city of Mondaria is hardly unthinkable. The GM and players are encouraged to craft a convincing backstory that involves them, if nothing else seems reasonable.


# The Campaign World

## Overview

**Aquilae**, the campaign setting in which **Berinn corte** is located, will be elaborated and described in detail in other books by **Infinium Game Studio**. This is partly due to limitations of length: a focused narrative on the campaign world would itself take longer than the adventure itself! Scope is a factor, as well—too much about the broader game world may distract from the immediacy of the “day-to-day” plot of this particular adventure.



However, the biggest reason for an abbreviated depiction of the game world is that there is much, much more to this realm than meets the eye... and the events of this adventure, while seemingly isolated and bizarre, play a large role in the revelation of these attributes.

In truth, the events of this adventure are so self-contained, and limited to the mining town and the mines underneath it, that for the purposes of playing it out, the larger context hardly matters.

While this is primarily limited to things that directly affect the narrative and activities in the adventure, there are some aspects of **Aquilae** that you may want to bear in mind as you guide the PCs through events—so you don’t have to “backtrack” in subsequent components of this  **Adventure Path**.

## What You Need to Know

Here’s an executive summary of important aspects of the realm that may affect how you portray the game world in the context of this adventure:

- **Gods** are real, and many. (See **Religion**, below.)
- Nearly every sentient being pays  **tribute** to one or more gods. (See **Tribute**, below). Typically this is through tithing to the appropriate **church**, or **government**.
-  **Tribute** can be done in the form of monetary wealth, artwork or valuables, or a devotion of magical power. No matter what the form, nearly all tribute actually does end up being transported to the gods themselves!
- About six months ago, the **Dark Obelisk** was discovered on **Level 9** of the **Mines**, and it caused evil and chaos to burst forth, upending everything in the **Mines** and the City of **Mondaria**, and causing a massive amount of death and suffering.

## High Ability, Low Tech

Leafing through the **Dramatis Personae** section, you may notice that the **Ability Scores** of most key NPCs are not what might be considered “average”. This is by design.

There are many schools of thought as to the differences, if any, between a player-character and a non-player-character, or a commoner. Are the PCs superhero-caliber individuals, each imbued with something special that drives their capabilities above and beyond that of normal people? Or instead, are the PCs just people, pretty much the same as

everyone around them—they just happened down a different path than others, but one that others weren’t prevented from taking by some innate quality or limitation.

It’s possible to have a great deal of fun with either philosophy, or anywhere in between. This adventure, the city of **Mondaria**, and the realm of **Aquilae** all operate under the theory that people are people, and most

In addition to which, **Mondaria** sports a goodly number of fairly talented individuals. Hence the stats.

If your gaming group rebels against this sort of approach, you as a GM are of course welcome to “handicap” any or all NPCs so that they are more in line with your players’ expectations of what is considered “normal”.

## Religion

Gods play a major role in **Aquilae**. The pantheon is varied and vast—dozens, perhaps hundreds, of supremely powerful beings. It is exceptionally uncommon to find someone who is not a devotee of at least one higher power—and there are many who are advocates of multiple gods. The general mindset of most sentient beings in **Aquilae** is an open acknowledgment, an agreement that all gods exist. Devotion to one or more gods in particular merely means that you favor their perspective on things... and, with any luck and enough tribute (see below), those gods return the favor by aiding you from time to time when it is needed most.

One might think of Roman and Greek mythology as a good comparison here: there are many gods, and while they are all immortal and wield immense power, they all share certain “human” weaknesses, such as a proclivity for playing tricks and engaging with mortal affairs. Some gods are more powerful than others, and the “society” of gods is a rich and storied plot unto itself which most mere mortals rarely glimpse.

## Tribute

If you pray, you pay! Everyone, in every religion, gives money and resources to their god. In almost all cases, this is done through the church, though in remote situations, tithing in this manner can be quite difficult. Even isolated hermits typically worship at least one god.

Many devotees do not live near a temple of worship for their deity. The pantheon is flexible, however: any worshipper, of any god, can visit any church, and donate their tribute there. Part of each church’s responsibility is to make sure all tribute eventually gets sent to its appropriate god.

To be clear: in **Aquilae**, churches are kind of a form of tax center. And all tribute does in fact end up being shipped off to the gods themselves.

The mechanics of tribute, of how it gets processed and where it goes, how it actually gets to the objects of worship, and the nature of the gods themselves will all be discussed in greater detail in subsequent campaign books.

## Factions

Dozens of factions, religious and secular, struggle for control and influence in the greater world of **Aquillae**. **Berinncorte** is a smaller village, somewhat remotely located, and although it is proximate to natural resources, it is not a crucial part of the greater territory.

### About Faction Profiles

The factions discussed here are the ones with the greatest influence in the city, and those with whom the residents are aligned.

Each faction has quite a bit of information associated with it, as follows:

**Badge / Icon:** Iconography can be important in factions. The symbol of a faction might be used to inform members as to the whereabouts of meeting locations, signal membership to others, or simply as a form of medieval “advertising” to spread knowledge of the faction’s presence.

**Type:** The general nature of the faction and its goals.

**Alignments:** Some factions enforce only certain alignments in their membership; others tend to attract those of a particular alignment. Many factions don’t care so much about alignment, and welcome members from all backgrounds and demeanors.

**Motivations:** The driving force of the faction itself, or the common goal, behavior, or desires of its membership.

**Day-to-Day Goals:** What the group hopes to accomplish on a day-to-day ongoing basis. Typically, this is a more humble hope than Long-Term Goals.

**Long-Term Goals:** In addition to short-term goals, most factions have an over-arching agenda they realize may take a long time to bring to fruition.

**Notable Philosophies:** A phrase or mantra that best summarizes the beliefs of members.

**Influence:** How much power the group and its members wield, if pressed to do so. This can be political power, military strength, magical prowess, etc.

**Reputation:** The general sentiment those outside the group have of the group itself.

**Leadership:** The nature of the faction’s leader(s), how they come to power, and under what circumstances leadership can change.

**Inner Circle:** In addition to Leadership, some factions also have an “inner circle” or group of Elders within their ranks. Such elite members are often privy to secrets about the faction and its motivation.

**Size:** Most factions have a fluctuating membership; the Size noted here is typically a range.

**Stability:** Thousand-year guilds or start-up social clubs, this indicates how likely the group is to still be around in a few years.

**Enemies:** If the group has enmity with any other factions, they are listed here. Sometimes, this is a general statement as to what sorts of people or organizations would be unwelcome in the midst of this faction.

**Allies:** Any formal alliances, or informal relationships, between factions are noted here.

**Resources:** This section describes how many resources the organization as a whole has at its immediate disposal—this can be arcane knowledge, money, or other assets.

**Description:** A summarization of the nature of the faction and its behavior. Anything noteworthy about the group that doesn’t belong in another heading goes here.

**Membership:** Most groups won’t let just anyone into their ranks—at least without getting to know them. Many groups demand something else, too: money, in many cases, but in certain factions, it may be necessary to embark upon a quest, create an item, discover new knowledge, save the life of an existing member, and so on.

**Members:** Description of the membership of the faction, whether any races, classes, etc. are forbidden.

**Common Traits:** If members have anything in common—either formally as part of their membership, or if many of them just happen to frequently have something notable about them—it is mentioned here.

**Demeanor:** The attitude of members, both in general (are they paranoid? Devout? Irrational?), and in the context of the faction itself (do they deny the group even exists? Are they proud of their membership?).

**Tribute & Dues:** Factions are not religious, but the gods and governments of **Aquillae** demand that even those who choose a secular lifestyle contribute as they are able. Nearly all factions collect at least a 1% tribute from each member annually. In all but the most extreme cases, members are not prevented from giving additional tribute to other religions or groups as they wish.

## Factions in Mondaria

### Elven Administration

**Icon / Badge:** A mountain, superimposed by a leaf.

**Type:** Operations and administration.

**Alignments:** Lawful, almost exclusively.

**Motivations:** Keeping a mining operation profitable.

**Day-to-Day Goals:** Maintain order and ensure worker productivity.

**Long-Term Goals:** Help the city and its inhabitants to thrive by establishing relationships, trade, and investing back in infrastructure. Profiting the Druid Enclave.

**Notable Philosophies:** Law and order are the most effective means of running a city.

**Influence:** Extreme, within the city of Mondaria.

**Reputation:** Fair.

**Age:** Mature (~125 years).

**Leadership:** Autocracy (**Mayor Faenadorn**, p 56).

**Size:** Small (~30 members).

**Stability:** Highly Stable.

**Enemies:** None officially.

**Allies:** The Druid Enclave.

**Resources:** High.

**Description:** In one entity, the Elven Administration combines the office of Mayor of the City of Mondaria, and the oversight of operations of the entire mining complex. They report only to the Druid Enclave Council, which largely cares only for continued profitability.

**Membership:** All members are either hired or appointed by the Druid Enclave.

**Members:** Typically Lawful or Lawful Neutral citizens with a knack for administration, or a special skill.

**Common Traits:** In addition to alignment, members of the Administration are often better dressed, fed, and generally taken care of than workers in the mines.

**Demeanor:** Effectiveness and efficiency, law and order are the goals of most government employees.

**Tribute & Dues:** Employees are expected to **Tribute 1%** of their wealth annually to the city. Citizens are also expected to tribute, either directly to the city, or to one of its factions or religions. As always, employees or citizens are welcome to tribute additional wealth to **Mondaria**, though in practice this hardly ever happens unless the citizen in question needs something specific from the government. In theory, this is not quite as quid-pro-quo as it might seem; typically the extra tribute is paid to the city by way of thanks for extra effort.

## Dwarven Union

**Icon / Badge:** A chunk of ore, superimposed by a pickaxe.

**Type:** Worker's union

**Alignments:** Chaotic and Neutral; typically not Lawful.

**Motivations:** Ensuring for the health of their workers, and fostering a more profitable and safer environment for all.

**Day-to-Day Goals:** Ensure worker safety.

**Long-Term Goals:** Take over ownership of the Mines from the Elven Administration. They realize this is a very far-fetched goal.

**Notable Philosophies:** Workers are the fuel that generates the warmth of profit.

**Influence:** Medium, within Mondaria; zero, outside it, which largely accounts for their failure to produce much true change.

**Reputation:** Good.

**Age:** Mature (~125 years).

**Leadership:** Democracy (**Danalin Foeslash**, p 54).

**Size:** Large (~400 members).

**Stability:** Stable.

**Enemies:** None officially.

**Allies:** None.

**Resources:** Low.

**Description:** The Dwarven Union was formed unofficially several decades ago to combat unfair treatment and abuse by the Elven Administration. Outright murder by the

Administration has ceased, but beatings, rapes, and injuries in general have gone up, since the Union formed.

**Membership:** Every single worker in the Mines is automatically a member.

**Members:** Every miner, nearly all dwarves no matter their line of work, and some sympathizers outside those endeavors.

**Common Traits:** Blue-collar, working-class folks, or those with a family history of same.

**Demeanor:** They are careful to prevent their protests and political views from impacting their productivity overmuch, lest they be accused of being shiftless.

**Tribute & Dues:** Employees are expected to **Tribute 1%** of their wealth annually to the city. As always, employees or citizens are welcome to tribute additional wealth to **Mondaria**, though in practice this hardly ever happens unless the citizen in question needs something specific from the government. In theory, this is not quite as quid-pro-quo as it might seem; typically the extra tribute is paid to the city by way of thanks for extra effort.

## Other Factions

There are numerous other factions in **Aquilae**—traders, guilds, bandits, thieves, assassins, governments, clergy, and so forth. However, none of them holds formal sway within the city limits of **Mondaria**.

This is hardly an anomaly: most settlements in the realm are ruled from within by a small handful of factions, who among them wield total power. Outsiders as individuals may be welcome, but external influences are typically not.

## Railcar Rules

In the Mines, nearly every level has some form of railway system. Before the catastrophe, these were used to move ore about, and even sometimes to move workers about.

In your use of this adventure, decide beforehand what, if any, role the railways will serve in your gaming group. Here are some suggestions:

- An atmospheric **novelty**: with this approach, the PCs cannot use the railway, and it doesn't matter therefore where the railcars are.
- A means of facilitating **safe travel** between points along the railway. If this approach is taken, then moving between any two points on a map connected via a railway will suspend **Random Encounters** rolls for the duration of the trip. Place railcars at entry/exit points, for example the **elevators**.
- A **questionably-safe** mechanism for transport. Randomize a calamity every so often, or introduce a **Random Encounter** to throw the sense of safety for a spin.

## Elevator Rules

Every level of the **Mines**, and the surface level of **Mondaria City**, has elevators. These function to transport creatures from one level to the other.



For simplicity's sake, assume all elevators are in working order. Some are covered in spiderwebs or other impediments; rules for what is involved to restore them to normal use are described in each case.

Assume that the **controls** to operate every elevator are freely accessible.

It's also possible to **summon** an elevator from another floor.

No matter the circumstances, moving from one level to another takes approximately **four minutes**.

## Crate Climbing

Throughout the Mines, there are many, many cases where crates or other containers are stacked atop one another.

Large crates are typically 5' to 10' cubes; small crates are usually 1' to 5' cubes.

Climbing them should use typical climbing rules. However, if you're looking to streamline things a bit, here is an alternate approach:

### ▲ Climbing Crates

**DC 15 Climb** (12 for small crates) to scramble up to the top. Failure means falling to the ground (and **1d4** points of bludgeoning damage if a large crate).

## Debris & Difficult Terrain

The Mondarian Mines were a rich, vast operation, brought low by creatures of chaos and evil, and the insanity of

its own population. Buildings, and in one case, an entire underground city, have been destroyed.

Simply put, rubble abounds. There are entire mine levels where the regions without debris are far outnumbered by those with.

Count all squares on all maps that have any debris or rubble on them as being **difficult terrain**.

It is suggested that for prolonged slogs through major areas of rubble, the following rule be used:

### ▲ Debris Treks

If a creature's turn begins in rubble, and the creature's planned movement for the entire round indicates they will remain in rubble, make a **DC 14 Athletics** check. Failure means falling to the ground immediately and **1d4** points of bludgeoning and piercing damage.

## Looting & Alignment

It is possible to spend the entire adventure not looting from the destroyed city and Mines. However, that would make things incredibly difficult, and a bit boring, besides.

It should be made clear that the entire region has fallen into chaos and evil, and that possessions and buildings in the typical sense of those words no longer really hold much weight.

In some rare cases, it's clear that a certain, single building is still under the ownership and control of a certain NPC; in those cases, you can consider thievery from a moral

# Mondaria City





# Introduction to Mondaria City

## Summary

The mining town of **Mondaria** formally falls under the jurisdiction of the **Druid Enclave**, a secretive and largely Elven compound to the northeast of the town itself.

In practice, however, Mondaria is run by the elven administrators who are few in number, but nearly absolute in their power over the largely Dwarvish and Gnomish worker population.


In its current state, the city is a ghost town. This may be literal depending on how **Random Encounter** tables are rolled!

What is typically dozens, if not hundreds, of workers and shoppers and visitors and tradespeople is now a small handful of sentients and many more unsavories.

Monsters have largely taken over the region, though the mentally afflicted and warped populace tends to disregard the threat in preference for living in a constant state of strained denial that anything has befallen the once thriving mining town.

## Entrances and Exits

### Entry

 The PCs will always enter this area via the **road to the southeast**, which leads to the city of **Berinn corte** from the **Dark Obelisk 1** adventure.

## Overview

The PCs are likely to run into the Blacksmith, plying his trade and willing to sell all manner of expected offerings.

They are equally likely, however, to run into a demon, or other monster, even in shops or other buildings.

Monsters come from two sources: some have emerged from the depths of the mines that lay underneath the town, finding their way to the surface out of a sense of grim malevolence and inevitability.

Others come from the surrounding forests and plains, drawn by the growing sense of chaos and evil.

## Atmosphere & Theme

No matter the source, the monsters are legitimately dangerous. Particularly as the PCs have been led to believe only that contact has been lost, and that this may turn out to be more of an investigation than a battle, there should be an element of alarm, of surprise, and of growing unease with the situation throughout the party's exploration of this level.

## Areas of Interest

- **MC-O-1: Blacksmith**
- **MC-O-2: Central Area / Market**
- **MC-O-3: Checkpoint Control**
- **MC-O-4: Fishery**
- **MC-O-5: Garrison**
- **MC-O-6: Hunter's Glen**
- **MC-O-7: Inn & Stables**
- **MC-O-8: Mess Hall**
- **MC-O-9: Mill**
- **MC-O-10: Residence Northeast**
- **MC-O-11: Residence Northwest**
- **MC-O-12: Residence Southeast**
- **MC-O-13: Residence Southwest**
- **MC-O-14: Stairway to Western Watchtowers**
- **MC-O-15: Storage**
- **MC-O-16: Trading Post**
- **MC-O-17: Chaos Region Overview**
- **MC-O-19: Chaos Foreman**
- **MC-O-20: Chaos Supplies**
- **MC-O-21: Law Region Entrance**
- **MC-O-22: Law Region Foreman**
- **MC-O-23: Love Region Mining Overview**
- **MC-O-24: Stairway to Eastern Watchtowers**
- **MC-O-25: Love Mining Foreman**
- **MC-O-26: Outside the Gates**
- **MC-O-27: Past the Gates**
- **MC-O-28: Law Mines General**

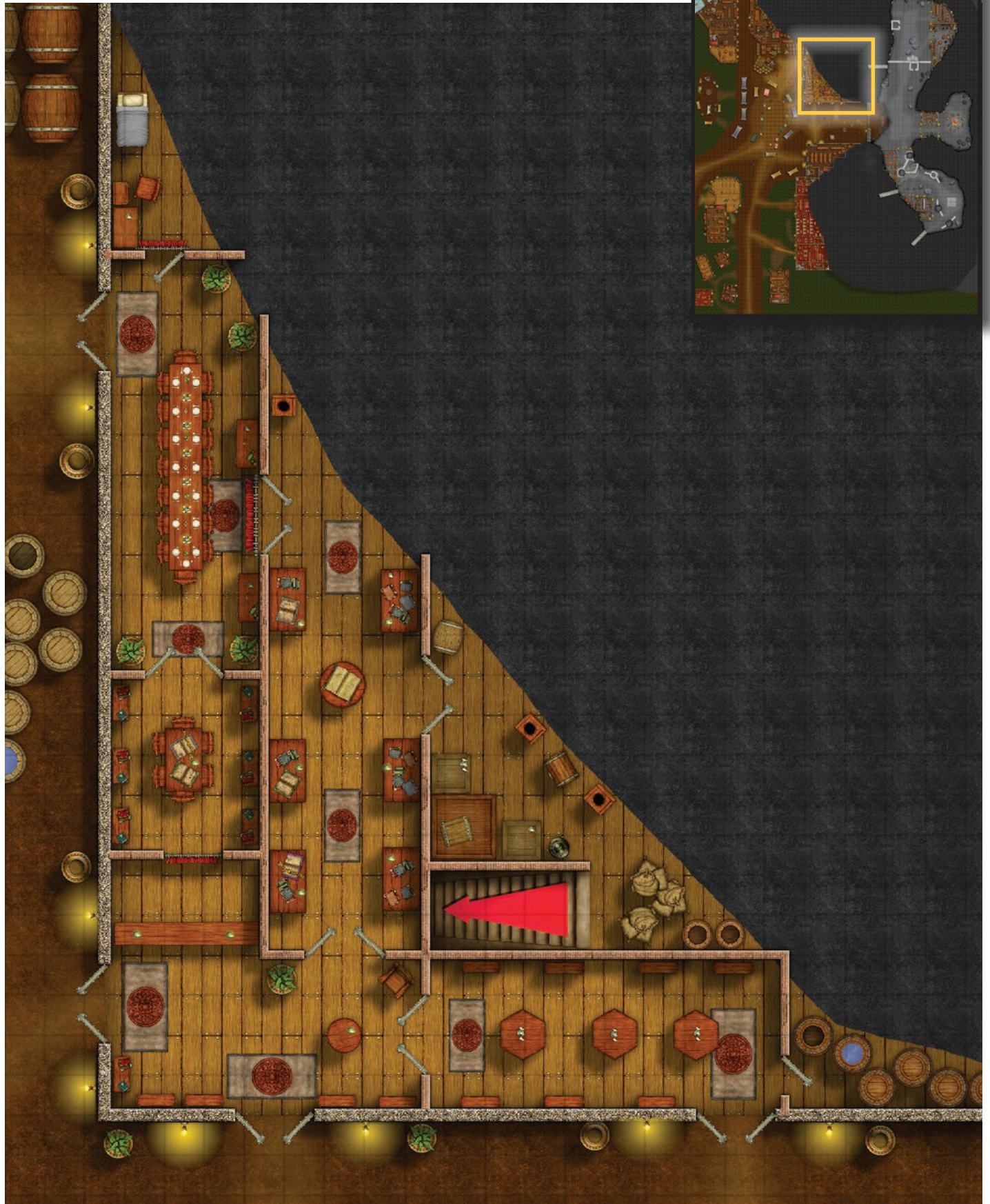




Map 4: Checkpoint Control Ground Floor (MC-CC-GF)

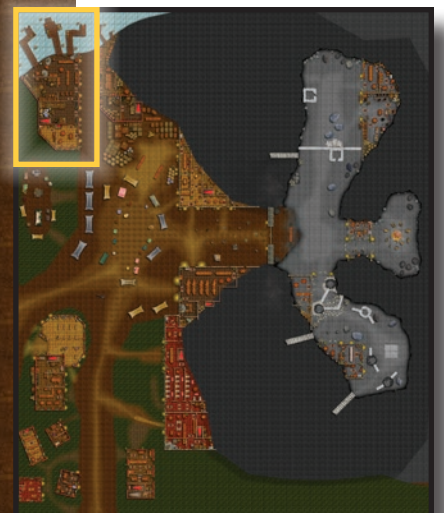
One square equals 5 ft.

Mondaria City



Map 5: Fishery Ground Floor (MC-FH-GF)

One square equals 5 ft.



Map 6: Garrison Ground Floor (MC-GR-GF)

One square equals 5 ft.



Map 7: Hunter's Glen (MC-HG)

One square equals 5 ft.



Mondaria City

Map 8: Inn & Stables Ground Floor (MC-IS-GF)

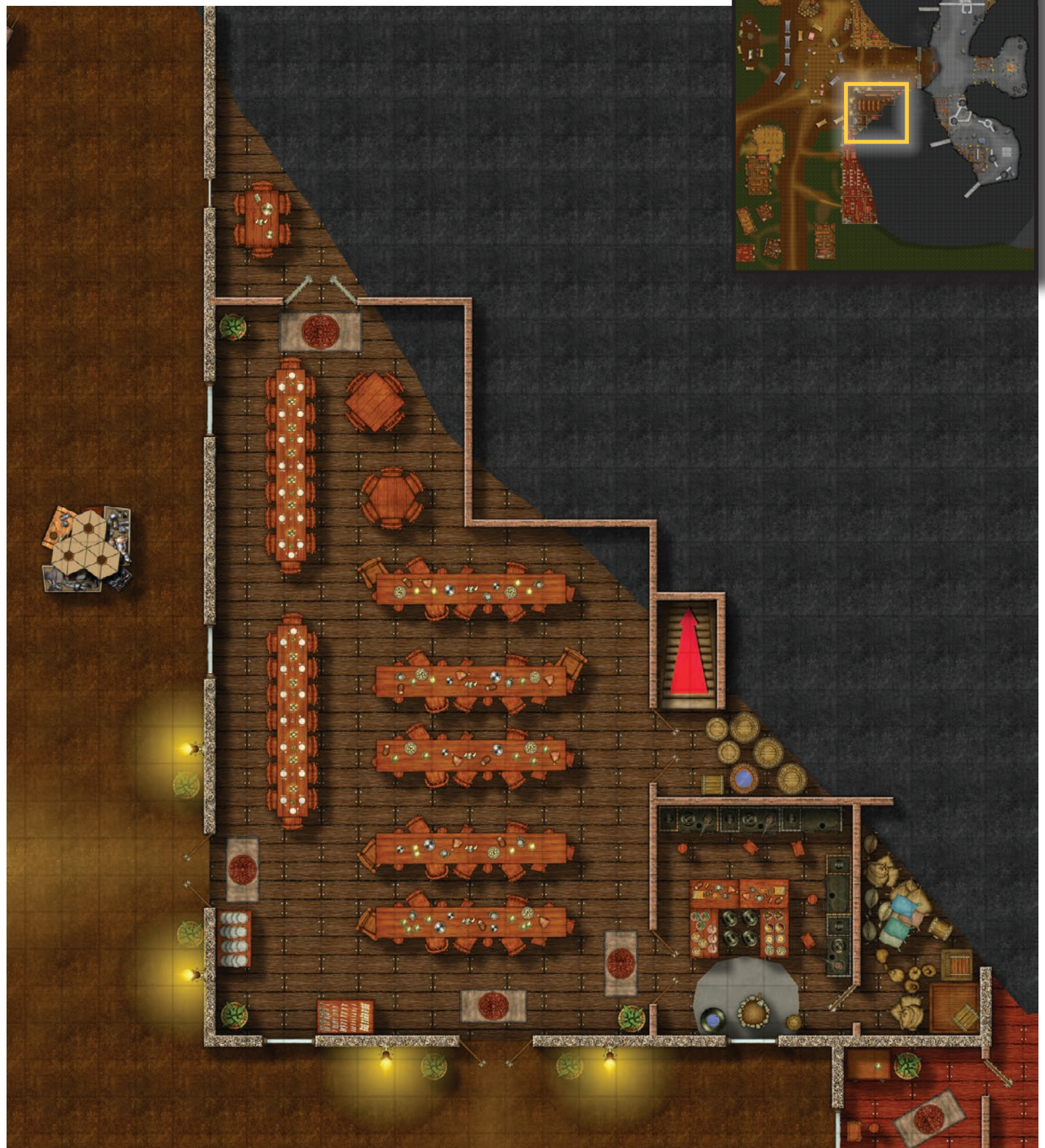
One square equals 5 ft.





Map 9: Mess Hall Ground Floor (MC-MH-GF)

One square equals 5 ft.



Mondaria City

Map 10: Mill Ground Floor (MC-ML-GF)

One square equals 5 ft.

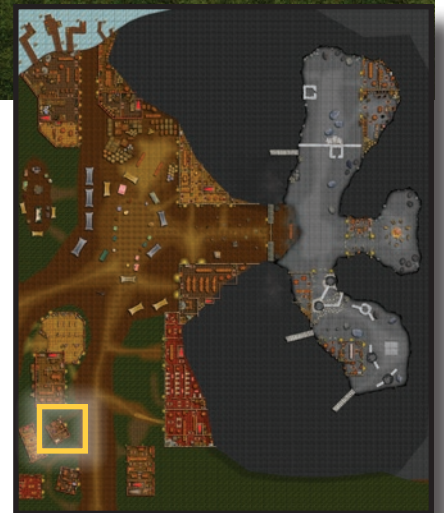






Map 13: Residence NW Ground Floor (MC-RNW-GF)

One square equals 5 ft.



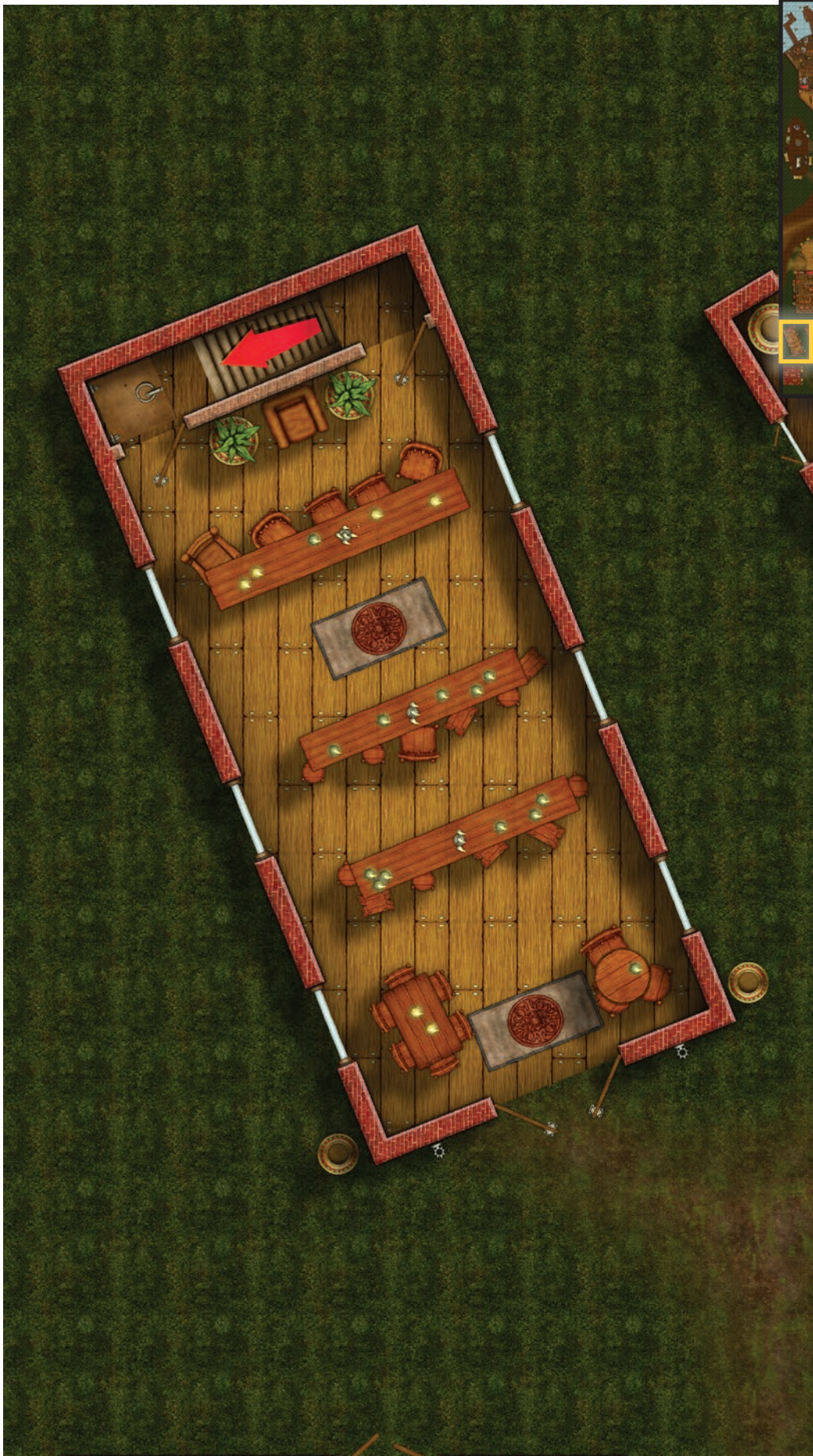
Map 14: Residence SE Ground Floor (MC-RSE-GF)

One square equals 5 ft.



Map 15: Residence SW Ground Floor (MC-RSW-GF)

One square equals 5 ft.



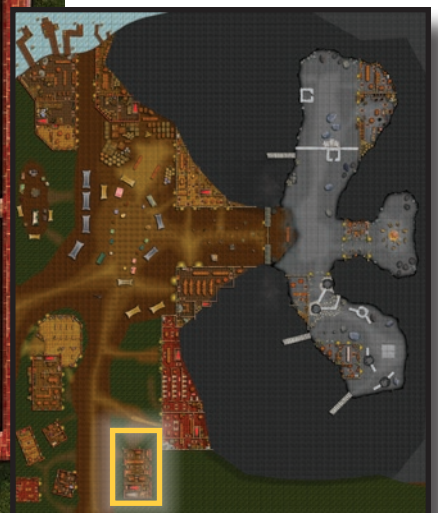
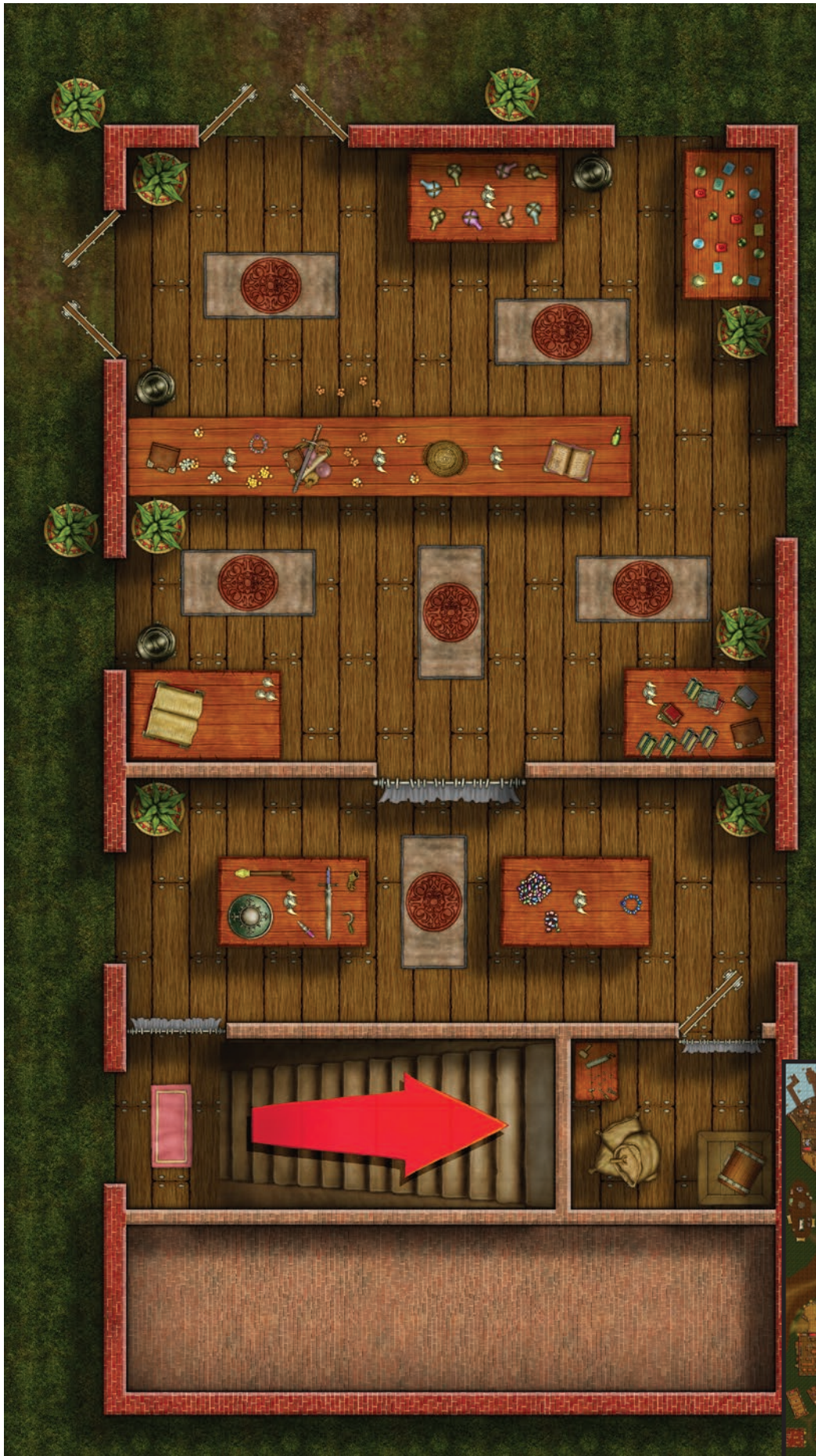
Mondaria City

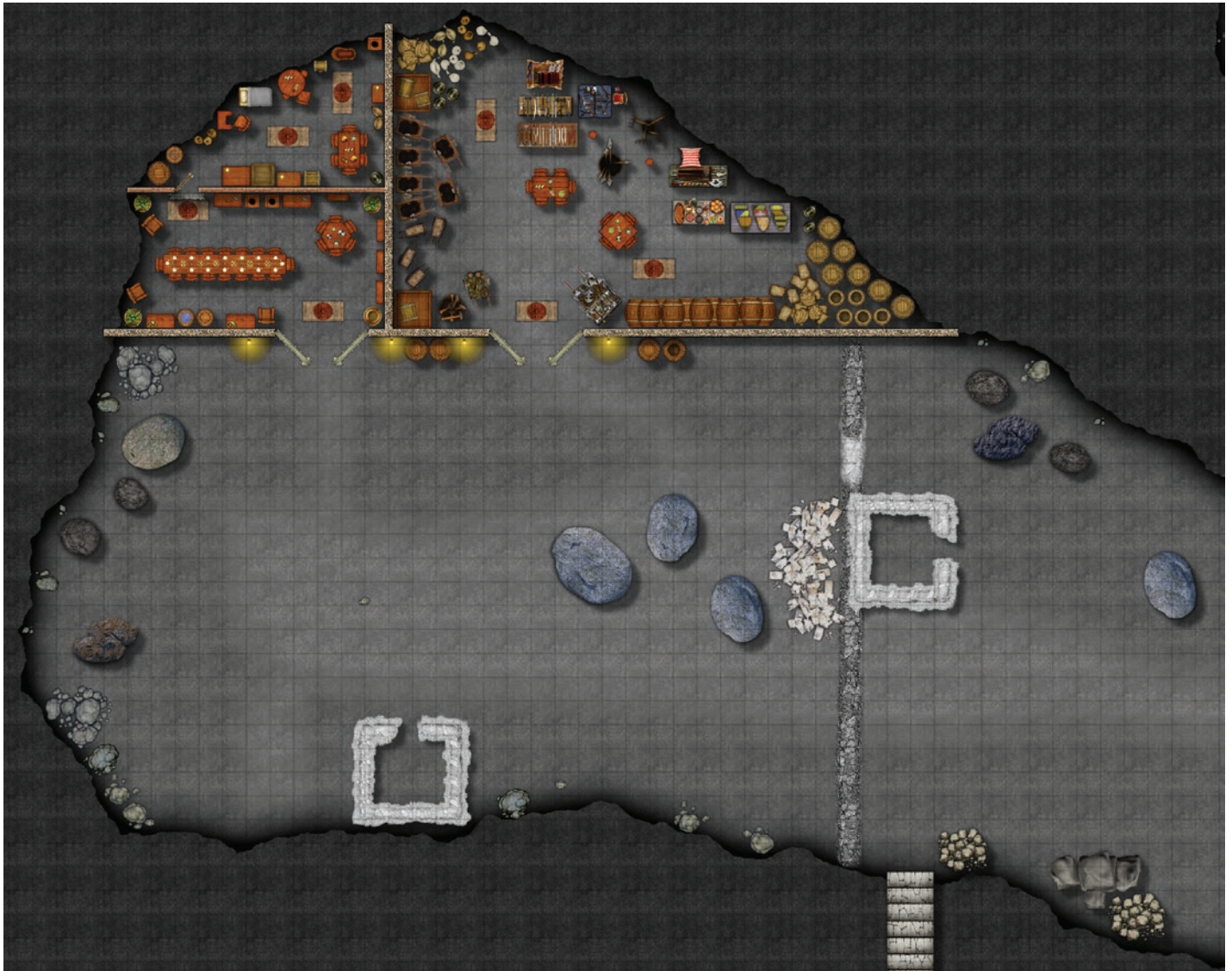




Map 17: Trading Post Ground Floor (MC-TP-GF)

One square equals 5 ft.

























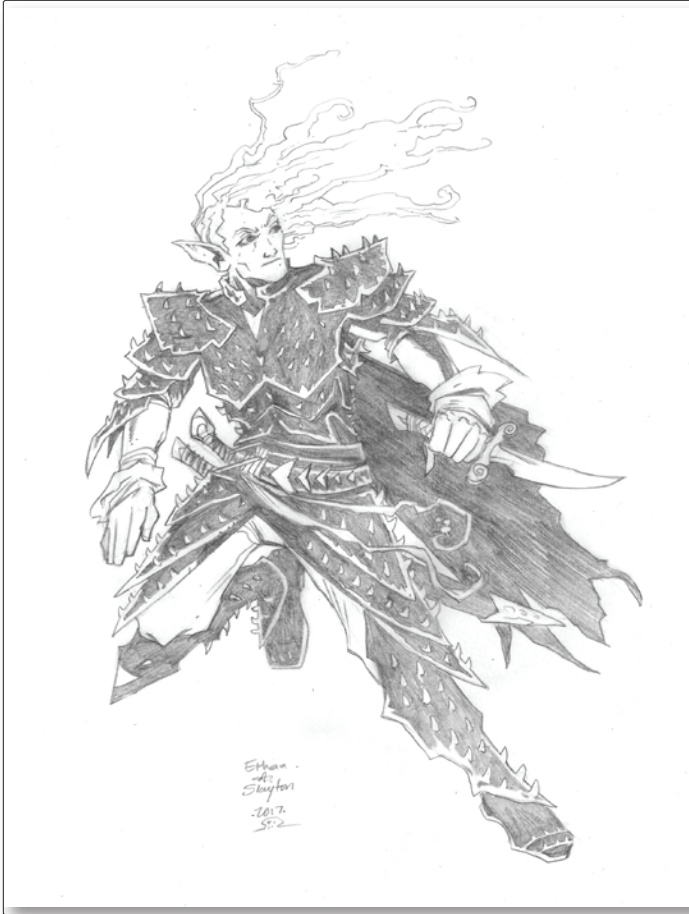
# Dramatis Personae

## Belerras (Foreman)

### Appearance

A solemn, silent Elf, this Foreman hates Dwarves with a blinding passion. Thankfully for his superiors in the mine, his lust for power and control and order far exceeds his racial hatred, so on a day-to-day basis, he typically is able to put aside his ire and focus on squeezing efficiency out of those he abhors. He wears spiked studded leather armor, and uses a shortbow, longsword, and daggers.

### NPC 1: Belerras (Foreman)



## Bethela Mudward (Trademaster)

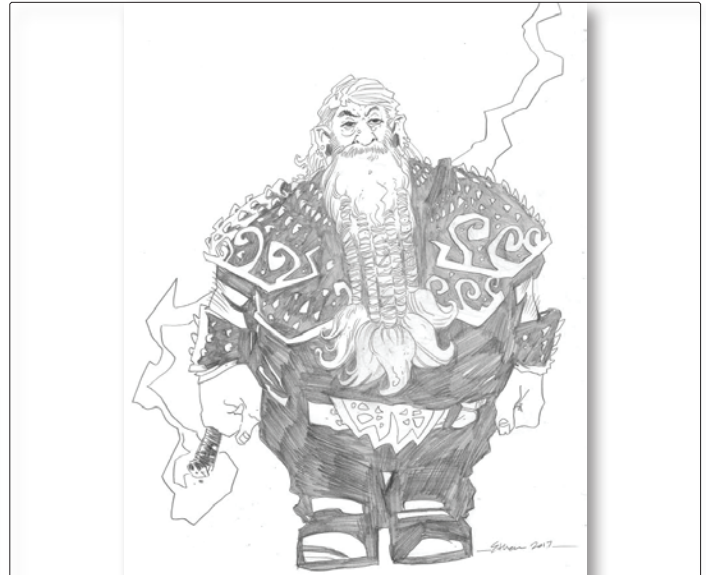
### Appearance

Beautifully adorned with rich, silk robes, this mistress of all things trade governs all external commerce, and therefore has ultimate say on every good and product that flows into or out of the mine and city complex.

Under her robes she wears studded leather armor—no fool she—and wields a cutlass, dagger, and light wooden shield.

She has an eyepatch over one eye, though it's for affect—both eyes work perfectly well, but the patched one is a different color, a cosmetic effect she's quite sensitive too from childhood insults.

### NPC 3: Brimdog Firecleave (Engineer)



## Brimdog Firecleave (Engineer)

### Appearance

Engineers try to dress as impressively as they feel; most will spend every earned copper on silk embroidery and ornately-embellished leather armor that is more beautiful than functional.

Engineers typically have ruddy complexion, a rotund physique, and a snobbish facial composition; most use piercings of the nose, ears, and eyebrow to dangle additional symbols of their wealth and success.

### NPC 2: Bethela Mudward (Trademaster)



## Dagbrag (Gangboss)

### Appearance

These half-orcs all resemble orcs more than men, and bear several facial, neck, and shoulder scars. Their faces are set in a scowl or cruel grimace, and their curly black hair is usually tied back in a bun with a crude loop of hardened and dried sinew from a recent feast.

### NPC 4: Dagbrag (Gangboss)



## Danalin Foeshlash (Dwarven Union Leader)

### Appearance

A charismatic (for a dwarf) and jovial man, he has found himself in the position of union leader almost by default—in addition to there being nobody (including him!) who really wanted the position, nobody else can match his unique combination of physical prowess and social aptitude.

Light-brown, plaited, gut-length hair encircles an almost cherubic face, from which sky-blue eyes shine sweetly. His ears are round and large, huge ovals framing either side of his face and poking elaborately out from underneath the hair. Both ears, and his nose bridge, are adorned with piercings of intricate Dwarven skrimshaw. He typically wears scale mail of silver and ash-grey.

### NPC 6: Didkeln Clawhammer (Chief Engineer)



### NPC 5: Danalin Foeshlash (Dwarven Union Leader)



## Didkeln Clawhammer (Chief Engineer)

### Appearance

This fighter gives every appearance of a brutish warrior, but beneath his heavy plate armor and massive greataxe lies the brain of a master tactician. He's actually not that great in combat, but his demeanor and slew of devoted underlings grant him a great deal of authority with those who might otherwise view his intelligence as a negative. Fear, politics, and a close-knit gang of followers are the tools of this dwarf's trade.

Stereotypical in demeanor and garb, Didkeln wears the beard and gruffness of his race with ablomb.

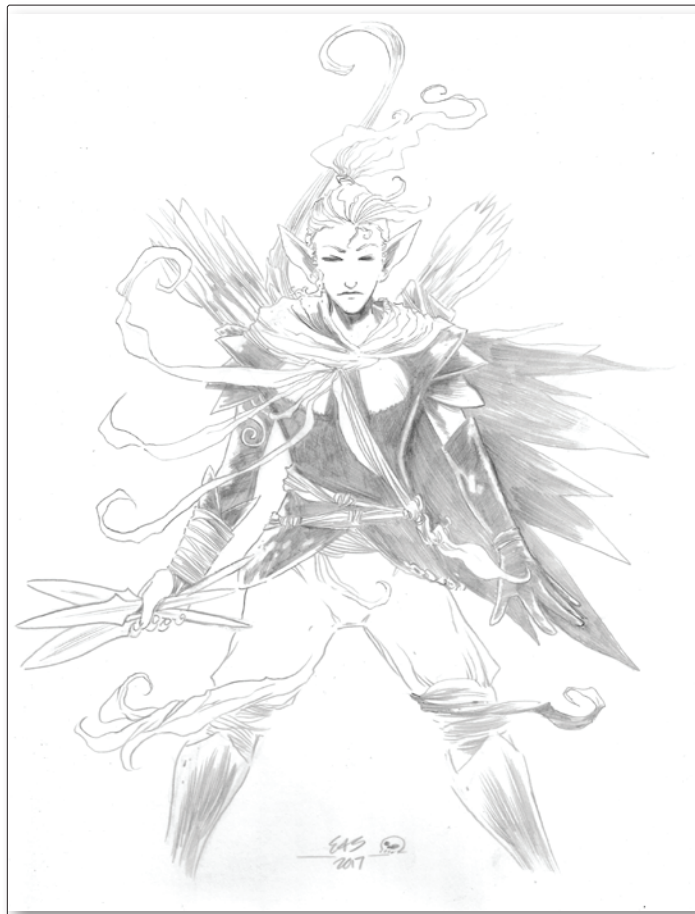
## Estarel Finequill (Cartographer)

### Appearance

Estarel would be quite happy locked in a room for most of her time, scribing things out and drawing maps endlessly. On occasion, however, about once every few weeks, she has a painful need to seek out adventure.

Long, unkempt hair in desperate need of a brush sits tied back in a braid. Simple tunics and leather pants with functional boots, all of it quite ancient and creased, complete the ensemble most days.

### NPC 7: Estarel Finequill (Cartographer)



## Elawelle (Tribute Magister)

### Appearance

Pensive yet with presence, this Magister is no mere administrator. She was assigned to Mondaria mainly given her Ranger skills and elven lineage; she was hideously disappointed to be assigned quarters under the mountain, in the mine itself. She must admit that her station is truly underground in this regard; there is no better or more certain way to guarantee Tribute flows in appropriate volume.

A beauty in youth, she yet maintains a powerful presence and cheerful effect on all genders in conversation. She's older, nearly past middle age, with white straight somewhat short hair.

### NPC 8: Elawelle (Tribute Magister)

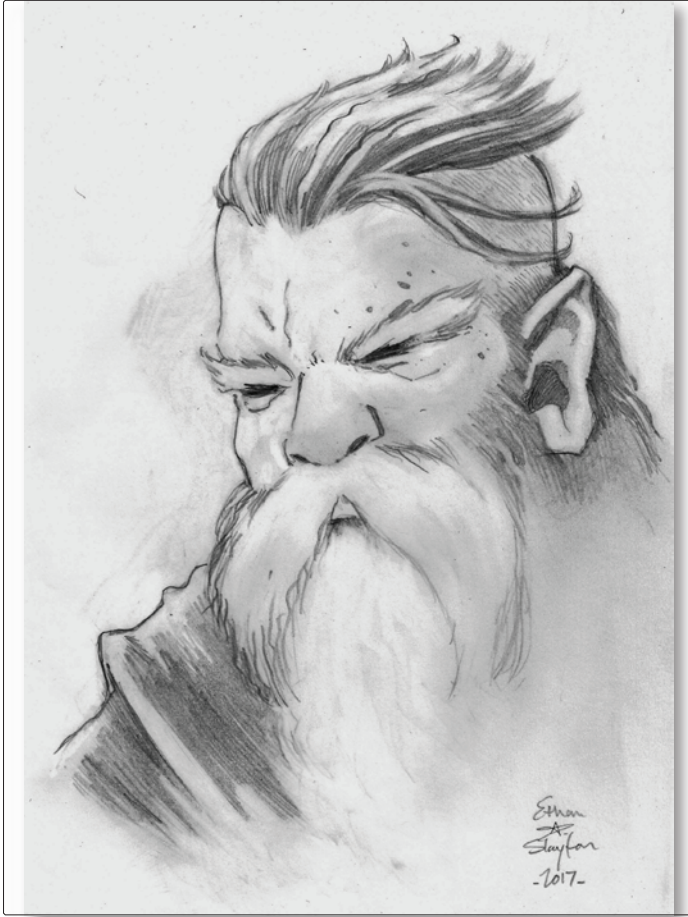


## Dralbrodin Strongquill (Lead Designer)

### Appearance

A thick, fluffy, white beard reaches to his navel; his silver hair is mostly gone on the sides, but thick on the top, and slicked back. His ears are slightly pointed, as though some elvish blood falls somewhere in his lineage; his peers chide him for that often.

## NPC 9: Dralbrodin Strongquill (Lead Designer)



## Friskbik (Stablehand)

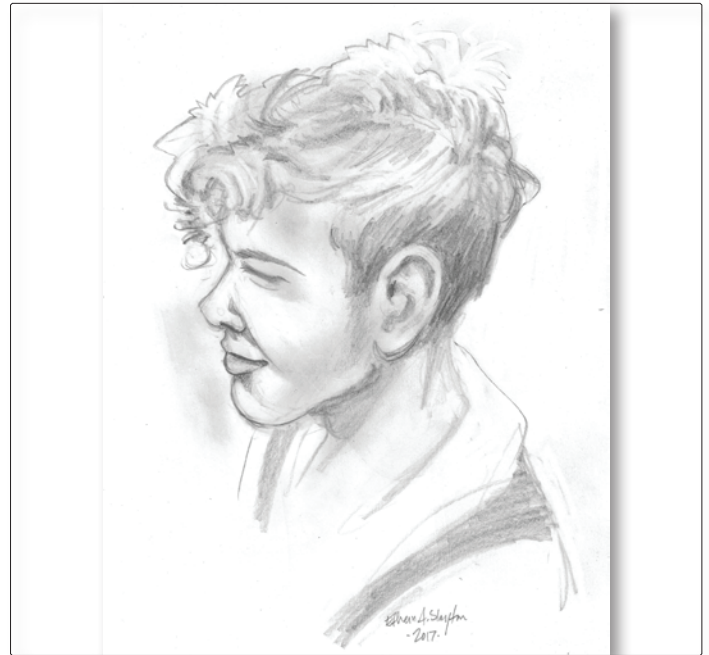
### **i** Description

Halflings are typically used to being underfoot, but this stablehand always feels trodden upon. Dejected and resigned to what he feels is the lowest caste in the city, he nevertheless loves horses, and takes pride in his work where possible.

### **f** Appearance

Grimy about the face, he wears hide armor and wields daggers when he can steal them.

## NPC 11: Friskbik (Stablehand)



## Faenadorn (Mayor)

### **i** Description

In a racially-charged, profit-motivated, industrial environment such as Mondaria, the Mayor's authority may not be what you'd expect it to be. Ostensibly the administrative leader, the rule of law and conduct of the mining operation are factors entirely out of the Mayor's sphere of influence. In day-to-day operations, the Mayor's true purpose is to rubber-stamp proposals, sign off on budgets without much actual input or control, and ultimately act as a conduit back to the Druid Enclave for communications and update purposes.

### **f** Appearance

The Mayor is a middle-aged Elf, formerly strident and purposeful and commanding, but rendered meek and resigned to excess and lethargy by his current post. His handsome face has begun to show lines about his mouth and intensely blue eyes; his chin and cheeks have grown thicker from feasting. His light-brown, almost ashen shoulder-length hair is straight and typically unadorned; he wears a thin wooden tiara about his scalp as a symbol of his office. He dresses in elaborately designed and beautifully-embroidered studded leather armor, atop of which he dons a thick, dark green cape richly embroidered in gold.

## NPC 10: Faenadorn (Mayor)





## Frobwin Glamfork (Feastmaster)

### **i** Description

This cheery, portly halfling clearly benefits from her own trade; her ruddy and cherubic cheeks and perpetually flushed face and neck are quick indicators of her skill and her lust for her craft.

### **i** Appearance

She wears simple padded armor underneath a huge flowing apron. Apart from food and wine, she indulges in boots: finely-crafted, soft and supple leather; such items are essential in that she spends as much time meeting and greeting in the mess hall as she does behind the scenes preparing food and coordinating her chefs.

She's got brown eyes and shoulder-length brown hair which she typically ties back in a bun.

## NPC 13: Gabharn (Beastmaster)



## Gabharn (Beastmaster)

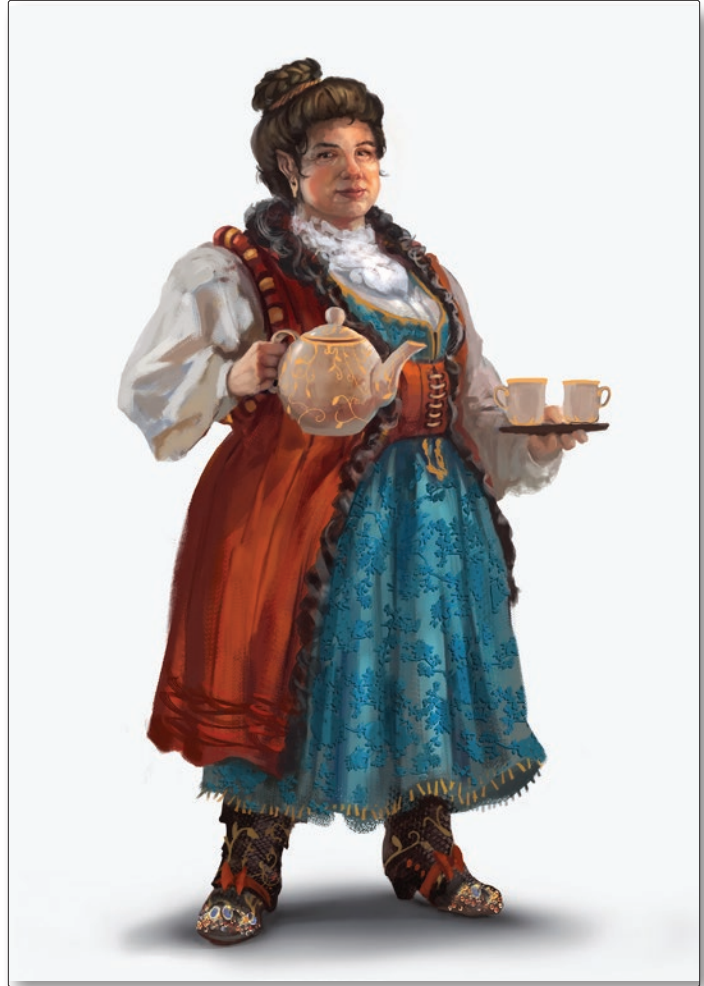
### **i** Description

A retired adventurer and mercenary, this Beastmaster has learned to prefer the company of animals to people. Betrayed in his youth by his parents, again by his uncle, and repeatedly by his adventuring partners, he seems to have a knack either for making bad choices, trusting unworthy partners, or simply having poor luck of comradeship.

### **i** Appearance

He wears leather armor and wields a longsword and shield; though trained with a shortbow, he prefers to get up close with foes if combat is on the table. His arms bear scars from fights long past; he has a long scar tracing the length of his head from front to back where the hair has never grown back.

## NPC 12: Frobwin Glamfork (Feastmaster)



## Glimdarffe Sudsglub (Brewmaster)

### **i** Description

This half-orcish brewer is good, not great, at her trade; an onlooker from outside the mine may wonder why she retains her post as Brewmaster for the enterprise. Such naivete misses the dwarf's true calling: major player in an impromptu black market, the landscape and players of which are ever-changing.

### **i** Appearance

Twin shortswords and a host of daggers, and studded leather armor, are her combat tools.

## NPC 14: Glimdarffe Sudsglub (Brewmaster)



## Gordsturr (Mercenary Dwarf)

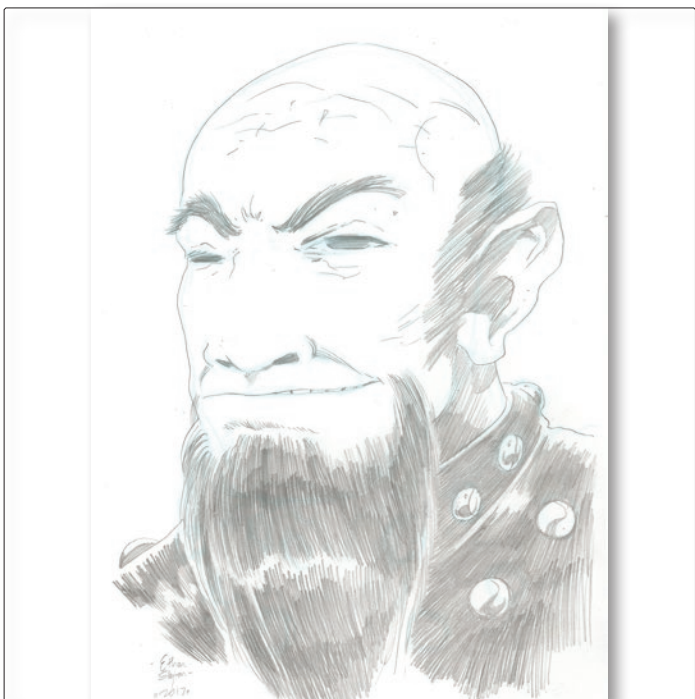
### **i** Description

A trickster with a terribly dark sense of humor, this dwarf has dark-brown, nearly black, beady eyes.

### **i** Appearance

The muscles of his face seem frozen in a perpetual arched smirk, though his tone can make that seem sarcastically comic or sinister as reflects the situation. He is thin, and tall, for a dwarf; his beard is a goatee only, but yet quite long, reaching in complex plaits and braids to his stomach. He wears ornate studded-leather armor, dark brown with whorls of silver.

## NPC 15: Gordstrull (Mercenary Dwarf)



## Hamfast Burrbottom (Blacksmith)

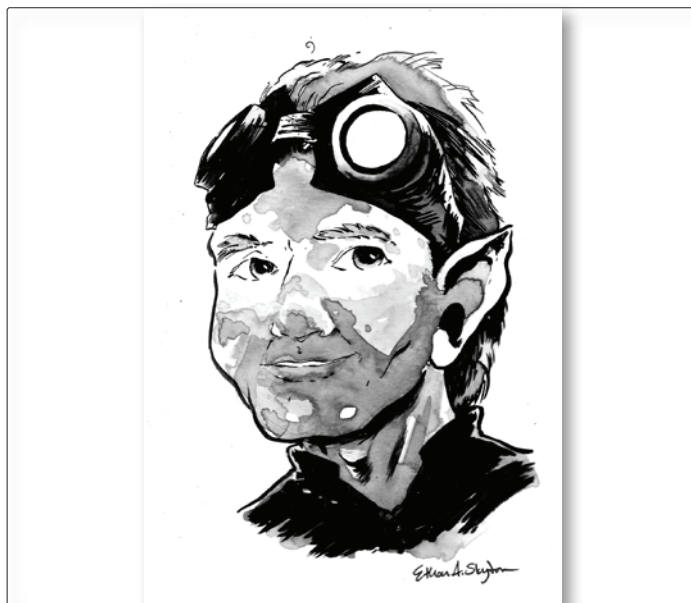
### **i** Description

In an underground mining city staffed by a huge volume of dwarves, being one of the few halflings is difficult enough—but being a halfling blacksmith in that context draws a great deal more attention and glares than he had intended. Talent is talent, however, and even the most jaded and racially-proud longbeard must admit that this smith knows his tongs and anvil, at least as well as any dwarf.

### **i** Appearance

This blacksmith wears a lead apron, heavy leather armor, thick black boots, and protective goggles. His face, arms, and hands are ever stained with soot; though he approaches his work with order and cleanliness, he usually doesn't clean himself overmuch, as he has found that the grime adds some automatic visual credibility to his trade.

## NPC 16: Hamfast Burrbottom (Blacksmith)



## Imeltrude Legande (Warden)

### **i** Description

Long serving in the role of police, protector, savior, and keeper of the peace, she has grown a hatred of her fellow man sourced from a realization of the evils that are commonplace and ignored in most society. She loathes mobs, but yearns to act as savior to worthy people; despairingly, however, as her experience grows, her definition of who qualifies as “worthy” has grown more and more restrictive. In her day-to-day role in the mines, she acts as a fearful ward against wrongdoing, policing through brutality and mercilessness rather than compassion. Fortunately for most, her deputies, commoners conscripted to the task for the most part, have a greater respect for circumstance.

### **i** Appearance

She wears plate armor, and bears a morningstar and tower shield; she typically wears a thick helm with a visor that opens the entire 200 degree span of her vision.

## NPC 17: Imeltrude Legande (Warden) 729



## Innelothe (Herbalist)

### **i** Description

This druid has a calm, ethereal grace about her, moving and talking as though she drifts and floats through the world of others, seeming an apparition or a manifestation of something that exists more truly in another realm, apart from our own. She has yellow eyes, extremely pointed ears even for an elf, and golden hair. Her most striking feature, however, is that she is albino.

### **i** Appearance

She braids her hair elaborately, and dresses in gowns and robes, typically a mixture of slate-grey and dark green. Her only jewelry is a red teardrop pendant, worn on a golden necklace chain close to her throat in an almost choker-like arrangement.

## NPC 18: Incebb Gullip (Chemist)

## Incebb Gullip (Chemist)

### **i** Description

Small in stature, this gnome is often ignored entirely, a pattern she is quite happy with, as it allows her to single-mindedly focus on tinkering and experimentation. Her “experiments” often go too far, but not out of a sense of true vileness: she simply wants to know everything, solve all problems, and gain wealth as a result; if such pursuit leads her to scavenge corpses, or indeed even tinker with living specimens who come to her for unguent for a wound, she doesn’t really differentiate. Everyone that isn’t her is disposable, usable only in terms of how they might help benefit her.

### **i** Appearance

She wears a heavy leather-and-lead vest, mainly to shield her body from the effects of her experiments. Her eyes are ever behind thick protective goggles. Her gaunt but not unpretty face is stern, focused, and typically stained with acid splashes and soot; as she cares not for how others view her, and bathes but once a week if that, these easily-remedied stains persist in the day-to-day work of her trade. She wears thick, six-inch-diameter hoop earrings; to each are clipped a handful of ampules which dangle to her shoulders; these are here to be easily and quickly grabbed if she needs solvent, for example.



### NPC 19: Innelothe (Herbalist)



mortals and the Gods, and strives to squeeze every copper piece from the faithful, that they might be driven to salvation by the dispersal of earthly goods.

Naturally, such selfless devotion and frugality does not apply to the upper castes, in his belief; he himself is a servant of the gods, so therefore, shouldn't he also benefit of wealth, that he might better serve his divine masters?

#### Appearance

He wears half-plate armor, a heavy steel shield, and a battleaxe.

### Maresmir (Elven Administration Leader)

#### Description

She's risen in the ranks of elven administration with intent and focus, wielding her pernicious insight and gorgeous features in equal measure as needed to ensure her success. Her lips are full and pale, her cheekbones high, and her pointed ears small; she wears chin-length, brown hair straight in a slight convex curve.

#### Appearance

She wears comfortable grey-and-green heavy leather armor, and commonly keeps her longsword and shortsword sheathed in a crisscrossed pair on her back—the hilts of which sticking out visibly over her shoulders add a militantly competent

### Killarth (Mercenary Tiefling)

#### Description

Killarth has long served the interests of paying adventuring parties. She longs to be a part of a military, but as she views it, most are led by either soulless conquerors, or peace-keeping wimps.

#### Appearance

This ferocious and intense tiefling has small horns whose tips point forward out of close-cut, blonde, wavy hair. Though pretty, she usually has a few cuts and bruises, scrapes and marks from venturing into the woods, and cares not for cleaning them up. She wears well-worn hide armor, dark brown with light-brown stitching, and typically smears a mixture of mud and ground leaves across it in a pattern of her own design as a camouflage. Her narrow eyes seem those of a huntress indeed, dark green like the forest with small pupils. Her shoulders are broad, almost mannish, her neck similarly wide.

### NPC 20: Killarth (Mercenary Tiefling)



### Lugatoo (Coinmaster)

#### Description

A tiefling paladin with a focus on material wealth is nobody's idea of a stereotypical financial administrator, but that's what we get here in the mines of Mondaria. He believes fervently in the concept of Tribute as a holy conduit between

NPC 21: Lugatoo (Coinmaster)



undertone and latent threat to any negotiations in which she is engaged.

NPC 23: Natobbe (Sage)



NPC 22: Maresmir (Elven Admin Leader)

## Natobbe (Sage)

### **i** Description

Although she rarely travels outside her hovel, some claim to have glimpsed her ambling about with the aid of a quarterstaff.

### **i** Appearance

Sunken eyes, darkekend visage, and a haunted aspect: this vendor of scrying services is every inch the stereotype. She's typically garbed in a hooded robe; nobody has seen her without the hood raised and her head sunk deep within, covered by shadows.



NPCs

## Raekeldorr (Illusionist Entertainer)

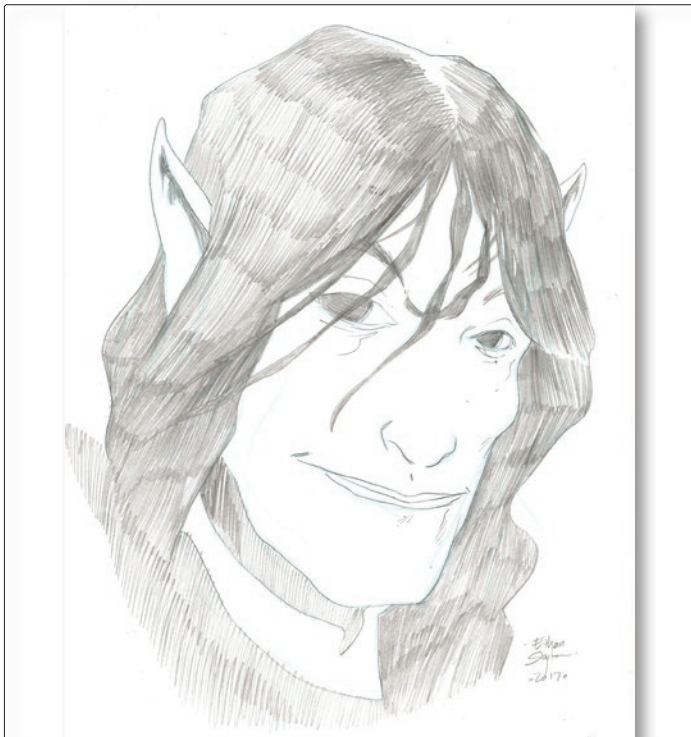
### **i** Description

This half-elven wizard looks nearly entirely human, but for pronounced pointed ears that poke through shoulder-length straight brown hair. He bears a faded white scar across his right temple: two straight up-and-down lines, as though he had raked a fork across his forehead.

### **i** Appearance

He dresses in dramatically-embroidered black cloaks and gowns, typically with a mixture of red and gold stitching. His hazel eyes always contain a hint of smile or trickery; and he himself would admit that both are stock and trade for the illusionist entertainer he is.

#### NPC 24: Raekeldorr (Illusionist Entertainer)



## Skandbard (Tinkermaster)

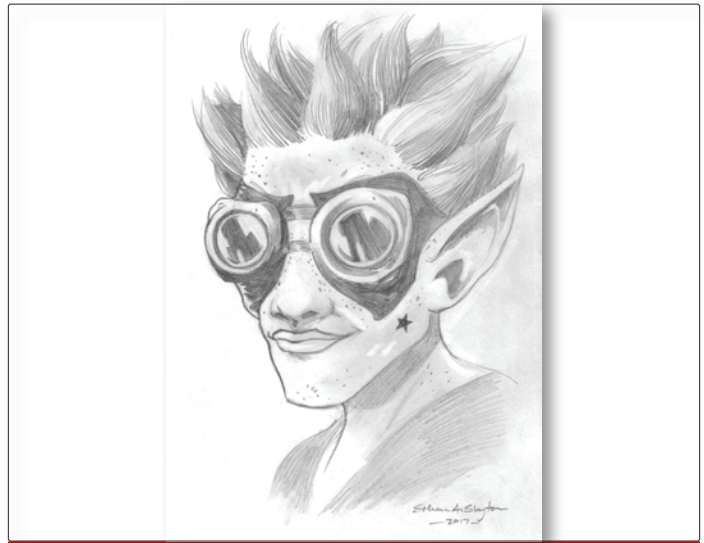
### **i** Description

Tiny eyes with huge goggles give this gnome the impression of a harmless and simple gadget-worker. This assessment ignores her deadly capabilities with ranged weaponry; though nearsighted to an improbable extreme, with the aid of her self-made goggles, she can hit far targets in a manner that seems aided by magic.

### **i** Appearance

She bears a gunpowder rifle, a shortbow, throwing daggers, and a sling, all atop studded leather armor.

#### NPC 26: Skandbard (Tinkermaster)



#### NPC 25: Sementammi (Stablemaster)



## Sentammi (Stablemaster)

### **i** Description

Although hot-tempered and belligerent with people, this half-orc, half-elf is a sweet-talker with beasts, whom she views as superior to sentients for any number of reasons, not least of which being loyalty and capability. Those who would seek her hand romantically have been universally rebuffed, leading to a cruel and vengeful (and untrue) rumor that she favors the physical companionship of the beasts she so loves.

### **i** Appearance

She wields a greatclub and twin pickaxes, and typically wears no armor save for skimpy and functional leather dresses.

## Skandern Lithutz (Keeper of Records)

### **i** Description

A clerk to the extreme, this gnome prizes himself on his ability to memorize, catalogue, and otherwise inventory every single thing in the mine. Needless to say, this is as pointless a task as it is thankless, and much of his time is spent obsessive-compulsively performing rituals of record that have nothing to do with his actual job.

### **i** Appearance

He uses a sling and daggers, and wears simple leather armor; his eyes are deeply sunken, and his hair a wild mess from neglect.

## NPC 27: Skandern Lithutz (Keeper of Records)



## NPC 28: Thrennian Lo'quee (Minemaster)



## Thrennian Lo'quee (Minemaster)

### **i** Description

There are many masters in the depths under the mountain; the Minemaster's purview is the actual collection of minerals and ore from the walls on most levels. Cruel when her temper is tested, she is most of the time a light-hearted comrade, quick with a joke or a cunning pun. Her friends are many, her confidantes few, and her enemies tend to not last long.

### **i** Appearance

She wears chainmail, and wields a heavy mace and steel shield. She wears her hair tied back in a bun, and some joke that she seems more half-orc than elf, such is her armor, gruff and straightforward demeanor, and lusty approach to life.

## Vanarella Riccars (Keepmaster)

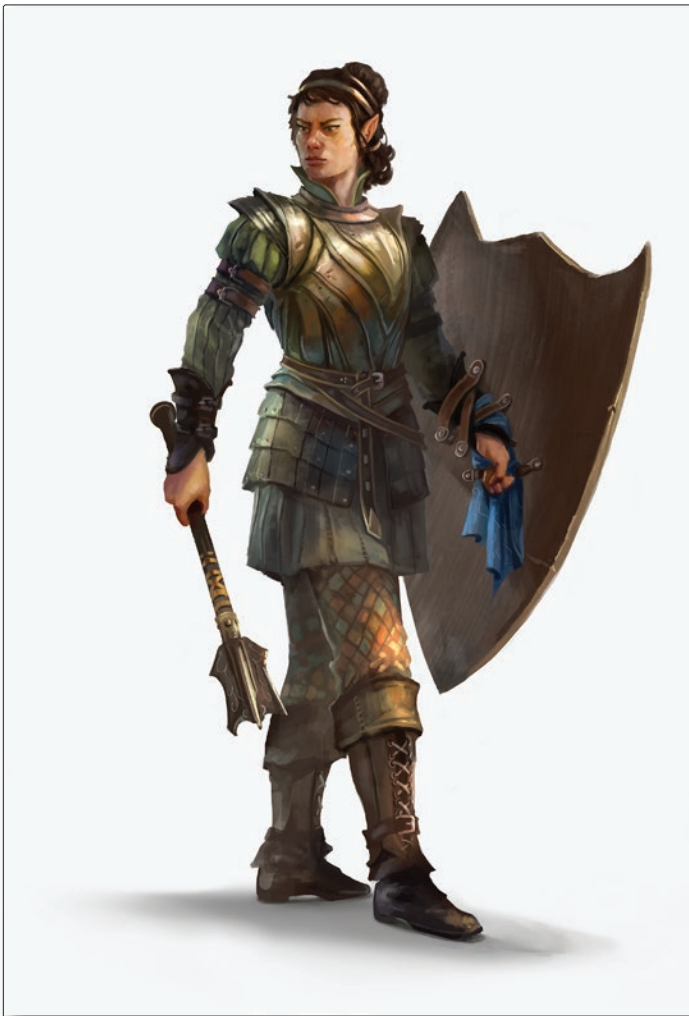
### **i** Description

Though forces of good, evil, and mercenary intrigue ultimately war together to rule Mondaria and its mines, the Keepmaster strives to help Good to the fore. She'll settle for a balance, but her heart yearns for a just, good, and orderly society where all are fairly treated. Her friends, if indeed close friends she had, might point out that a deep and chaotic mine, largely ruled by Elves and staffed by Dwarves and therefore strained by the racial divide that arrangement necessitates, may not be the most appropriate place for such a perspective on the world. She would point out that the challenge such a scenario dictates makes it precisely the best place for imbuing such a stance on things.

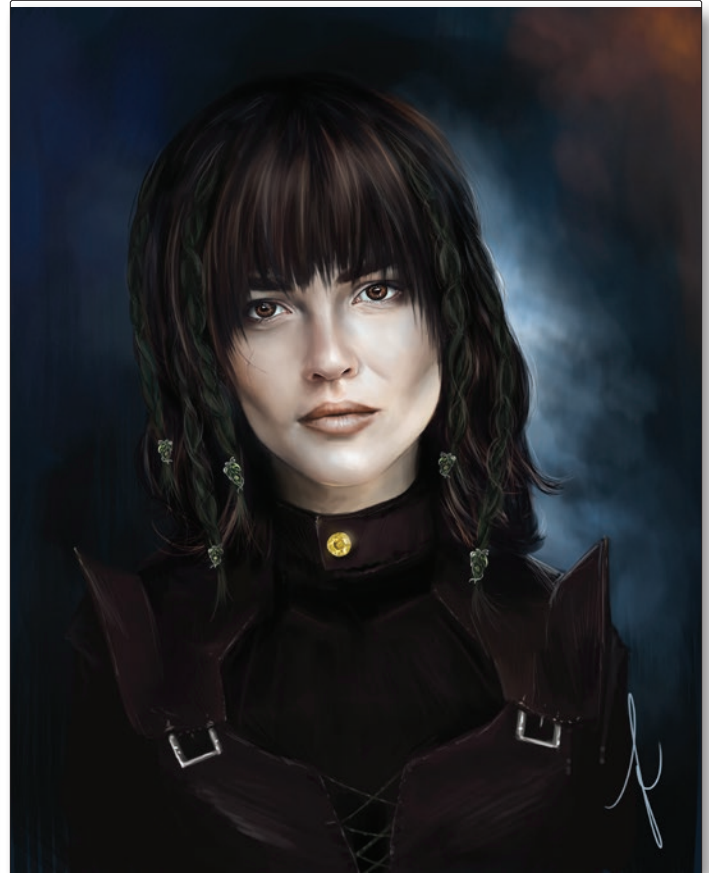
### **i** Appearance

She wears half-plate armor, no helmet, and wields a heavy flail and heavy steel shield.

### NPC 29: Vanarella Riccars (Keepmaster)



### NPC 30: Wyrida (The Stranger)



## Wyrida (The Stranger)

### **i** Description

She's a ranger, a rover, someone used to going alone, to getting the job done, and to returning. The Stranger always seems on a mission, even if that mission is as commonplace as securing an Inn for the evening: there is a manner about her, a resolve, a determination, that brooks few questions and little argument. She may be attractive, or not; it's hard to say, since her demeanor and approach to things speaks little as to her predilections for romance.

The Stranger is not taken to beliefs, premonitions, or other divinations. But the hunter, the forager, and the wild traveler within her knows a bad thing when she sees it.

### **i** Appearance

She is of middling height for a half-elf. Chin-length, straight, brown hair with a tint of green, though whether this effect is natural or cosmetically applied is unclear. Her hair frames her face and hides her ears; this is intentional, both to hide the slight pointedness of her half-elven ears to obscure her ancestry, and to conceal the scars that besmirch her forehead, cheeks, and neck. They're not deep, but definitely present: they could be from a particularly nasty childhood incident in a poisoned briar patch... or something more sinister and recent. Either way, she's certainly not telling. She seems a strong and silent type: stern and dedicated.



# Common NPCs

## Bleak Mute

### **i** Description

This unfortunate soul is mute, his tongue having been lost to some unknown tragedy years earlier.

### **i** Appearance

He has wavy, light-brown, close-cropped hair. His face has the architecture of a high-born lord, but despair, poverty, and a dark past have stolen the noble bearing from his countenance, save for his eyes, which seem great beautiful pools of sky blue. His mouth is ringed by a spattering of small linear scars; they are side effects from the torture that stole his tongue and speech.

**NPC 31: Bleak Mute**



**NPC 33: Crazy Harbinger**



**NPC 32: Firedancer Celebrant**



## Firedancer Celebrant

### **i** Description

A lithe, cavorting half-elf, the Celebrant is the foot soldier of the dancing troupe who travels and entertains. The Celebrants trapped in the caverns of Mondaria have become pale, dangerously thin versions of their former selves, never certain where their next meal is coming from or even if they will make it to such.

### **i** Appearance

Typically dressed in flamboyant, jesterlike padded armor, it's been torn and tattered and smudged from the cave dust and grime. Celebrants usually wear daggers and shortswords.

## Crazed Harbinger

### **i** Description

This young woman has never been quite right in the head, and wanders from place to place without profession or ambition.

### **i** Appearance

She's very pretty, but her waist-length black hair is a horrid mess of tangles and knots, and her eyes are black-rimmed pits of madness. Though attractive and traveling solo, she's never suffered assault, driven either by lust or money; it's almost as though her madness protects her like a shield. She has but one garment to her name: a light-brown tunic of heavy wool, sleeveless; it's too little for the winters and too heavy for the summers, so she is always sweating or shivering, both of which lending weight and presence to her insanity. She's extremely pale, has a cute mole on her left cheek.

## Firedancer

### **i** Description

Firedancers are troupes of entertainers, traveling combinations of bards, thespians, and courtesans who make their wage by accompanying or intersecting with caravans, adventuring parties, or remote outposts otherwise cut off from such luxuries.

### NPC 34: Firedancer



### NPC 35: Firedancer Campmaiden



### **i** Appearance

These attractive, nimble half-elves are acrobatic tumblers who wear bright, colorful and silken outfits. Their hair is typically tied back in one or more ponytails or pigtails, and is typically dyed in at least three abnormal hues—red, gold, and green, for example. They wear no jewelry, as it could easily interfere with their performances, but commonly wear makeup to accentuate their natural comeliness—even the most obvious mistake is easily forgiven for a pretty face!

## Firedancer Campmaiden

### **i** Description

Campmaidens are a welcome addition to any campsite, be it a vagabond troupe or a king's battlegroup. These beautiful thespians are the traveling campsite's courtesan: singer / storyteller, prostitute, and general companion.

### **i** Appearance

They typically wear their hair waist-length and loose-flowing, spending an hour or two on it each morning to make it silken and smooth. Many use dyes to attain a reddish hue; most prized in this profession is the typical red hair, green eyed elven look with high cheekbones, almond eyes, and full lips.

## Firedancer Hearthstud

### **i** Description

Sensual and charismatic, the Hearthstud serves a similar function to that of a Campmaiden in a Firedancer troupe. Hearthstuds rarely have any power in the troupe itself, however; the duty is viewed as less a task and more an indulgence.

### **f** Appearance

Hearthstuds come in many flavors and appearances; most have long and well-kept hair, with high cheekbones and a thin yet chiseled appearance.

### NPC 36: Firedancer Hearthstud



## Mining Taskmaster

### **i** Description

Severe and demanding, these dwarven masters are each different. Some seem resigned to their role, and go about their duties dispassionately; others seem to derive an almost sexual gratification from doling out the occasional punishment.

### **f** Appearance

No matter their passions, all Mining Taskmasters sport a similar appearance: shoulder-length hair (typically blonde) tied back in a severe ponytail; black eye makeup in crude rings to enhance the sinister aspect of their gaze; grimy features that make it unclear as to what they might look like were it not for their role. Simple, battered, light-brown leather armor is typically adorned with a single embellishment: the stylized symbol of a whip, typically embroidered in a silvery thread atop the left breast. Between the grime, the makeup, and their dress, it's hard to separate the dwarf from the job... which may be the whole intent of their appearance.

### NPC 37: Miner



## Miner

### **i** Description

Rugged and dirty, this is a gruff, working-class version of the stereotypical dwarf from fantasy fare: complex and long beard worn in braids and plaits, shoulder-length wavy dark-brown hair, and thickly-set features around a round and lined face.

### **f** Appearance

He wears a thick leather smock, almost like a blacksmith's apron, atop a white tunic stained brownish-gray from his labors. Deep lines age his face prematurely; he's in the prime of health, but well past half his lifespan, having toiled away his vitality in service to the mines.

## NPC 38: Mining Taskmaster



## Munitions Wench

### **i** Description

Lithe, dejected gnomes scurry about to fetch all manner of equipment for the mining staff. Typically, it's explosives and related gear; although the dwarven mining teams are skilled, gunpowder is by its nature volatile, and Munitions Wenchs occupy the clear bottom rung of the ladder in the underground society. Though many would admit they have the worst, most dangerous, and least rewarded jobs in the mine, they make the most of it, laughing and enjoying one another's company during their few hours of downtime between tasks. Though their profession is dangerous, it is rarely cruel; they are spared the taskmaster's whip so long as they do their job, and many are the hours in between dangerous or unsavory activities demanded of them. Munitions Wenchs always exhibit a thick layer of soot; though many are naturally pale, the constant exposure to dirt and filth tends to have a long-term effect similar to, but darker and blacker than, sunburn.

### **i** Appearance

They're typically quite young, adolescent, with dark-brown wavy hair tied back in various manners (a topknot or bun is most common). Their garb is sparse and never clean; a greasy and blackened tunic is typically all that is required, its original hue rendered impossible to discern from grit and grime and gunk.

## Tainted Miner

### **i** Description

These miners have been transformed by Obelisk shards, either from prolonged proximity or from direct physical contact. Some have touched Obelisk remnants on a dare, others out of curiosity, and the most hapless aren't even aware of the change they have undergone.

### **i** Appearance

Their eyes, already hollowed from work underground, are now ghastly and sunken remnants. Their hair has fallen out in clumps; what remains is typically shock-white with flecks of deepest black. Their gait is a shamble, almost zombielike, and their attention seems faraway, as though they are struggling to find themselves as they once were, far off on the horizon of the world in which they now find themselves. A faint purplish-black haze seems to surround their entire bodies, but it's subtle enough that it often seems just a trick of the light. Tainted Miners often have intact clothing, with the occasional slit or gash where a melee with their one-time colleagues or friends betrays a conflict.

## NPC 39: Munitions Wench



**NPC 40: Tainted Miner**



**Tainted Taskmaster**

**i Description**

Similar in appearance to a Mining Taskmaster and a Tainted Miner, the otherworldly aspect of Tainted Taskmasters are even more pronounced.

**i Appearance**

The purple-black glow is unmistakable, and prevents them from hiding effectively in the dark. Their eyes are pits of black, sunken so far that in normal subterranean light it's unclear if their eyes are even still present. Hands and limbs are gaunt, narrowed, and knifelike in their movements; their necks are similarly thin. On their face and neck, purplish veins can be seen just beneath the surface of their waxy, almost translucent flesh.

**Mystic Seer**

**i Description**

Prophecies and performance go hand-and-hand with this charismatic seer, who fancies himself something of a bard as well as practitioner of the mystic arts. Rumor is that he occasionally takes payment in the form of physical encounters, but those who may have engaged in such an interaction are either too disgusted or too ashamed to confirm the rumor.

**i Appearance**

He's deft with a dagger, and is keen to demonstrate his

myriad talents to any who will pay.

**NPC 42: Mystic Seer**



**NPC 41: Tainted Taskmaster**



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