

town council) Halia Thornton left Phandalin "to seek other opportunities." All the locals know that continual problems at nearby mines made Halia's job difficult, with little to no wealth coming into the exchange for months at a time. Unfortunately for Halia, the downturn in the mining industry was the least of her worries. The Manshoon sect of the Zhentarim saw an opportunity in Phandalin and had Halia killed. Sharna (LE female dwarf **bandit captain**) is the sect's agent. She aims to revive mining in the area, with the goal of making Phandalin a haven for the rogue faction of the Zhentarim.

**Development.** Sharna is thoroughly evil, but she's a fine actor. She has the economic interests of Phandalin at heart, but only because she hopes to have a prosperous town at her mercy when the needs of the Zhentarim become her focus. She ingratiates herself to the characters, hiring them to clear out monsters in the local area that threaten mining interests. She offers to partner up on business deals, sharing the profits of the mines if the characters invest their time or money in such operations. If the characters end up on the wrong side of Harbin Wester, she sides with them against the banker, concealing her goal of usurping his wealth and power. She encourages the characters to actively oppose Wester—or even to kill him if she thinks they might be amenable to the idea.

Sharna is a formidable combatant compared to most folk in Phandalin. She also keeps four bodyguards (**thugs**) on hand to guard the exchange, travel to the mines, rough up "uncooperative" people, or do the dark deeds she needs done to meet her objectives.

#### SILDAR HALLWINTER

Sildar (NG male human **knight**) is a retired adventurer and Griffon Rider of Waterdeep. Some years ago, he worked in the employ of the Rockseeker family, who had hoped to reopen mines in the hills and mountains surrounding Phandalin. After nearly being killed in a goblin ambush while traveling to Phandalin for the first time, Sildar's faith in himself was shaken. The Rockseeker family moved on after their troubled dealings in the town, but Sildar stuck around.

Although he is getting on in years, Sildar still trains with his weapons and keeps himself in shape. He was one of the town's three councilors prior to (as he puts it), "Halia Thornton leaving without even saying goodbye." By running for mayor against Harbin Wester, Sildar hopes to help Phandalin increase its prosperity—and to put that prosperity into everyone's pockets, not just Wester's. What he lacks in charisma, he makes up for in sincerity.

**Development.** Sildar is a member of the Lords' Alliance, a group of allied leaders concerned with the security and prosperity of the North. As such, his goals are to bring stability and wealth to the region. He is brave and honest, but nearly losing his life years before caused him to doubt not only his martial skills but also his decision making. He could prove to be a valuable ally to the characters, especially if he's elected mayor. However, he might also frustrate them with his passivity and indecisiveness—or allow them to take advantage of those same qualities to wield great influence over him.

#### POLITICS AND ADVENTURING

An Acquisitions Incorporated campaign works best when it's running on many levels at once. One of those levels is the business aspects of the characters' lives, with satire another obvious side of the campaign. But politics can be another driving force in an Acq Inc story, as can the satirical treatment of people in power.

The political maneuverings taking place in Phandalin will inevitably have an impact on the characters and their franchise. Still, if the players aren't interested in the political aspect of the campaign story, don't worry about it. Wester is elected mayor, the players can play nice with him to get what they want, and the story moves forward. But if the characters care about who becomes mayor, they have plenty of opportunity to influence the outcome.

Sildar Hallwinter cares about the good of the town but is wishy-washy. His lack of charisma hurts his chances for election. But a clever group of adventurers working behind the scenes might be just what Hallwinter needs to energize his campaign. On the other hand, Harbin Wester controls much of the wealth in Phandalin, including Tresendar Manor. As such, helping Wester get elected—or at least not being too obvious about opposing him—can put the characters on his good side. Even if Wester loses the election, his power and wealth mean that the characters will be interacting with him—and dealing with his ability to make their lives easier or harder—whether they want to or not.

Another possibility is that one of the characters could run for office as a last-minute wild-card candidate. A stranger wandering into Phandalin is unlikely to gain the trust of enough citizens to win the race, and the need to stick around town and run things will eventually get in the way of the characters venturing all over the North being heroic. But don't discount the narrative possibilities involved in the characters embracing the political side of the story even more wholeheartedly than you expect them to.

#### SISTER GARAELE

Sister Garaele (CG female elf **priest**) was a zealous and enthusiastic servant in Phandalin's Shrine of Luck before Ditch Fundi, "the competition," arrived in town a month ago. Now, she is downright frenetic. She proselytizes for Tymora in the streets, in taverns, and in people's homes. Garaele is well known for haranguing the folk of Phandalin, claiming that the misfortune of previous years has been due to a lack of devotion to Tymora. Despite this, most locals like the priest, and are likely to help her if she's in trouble.

**Development.** Garaele was once an agent of the Harpers, though she has recently broken ties with that group of agents opposing the abuse of power. Since then, she has taken significant donations from Dran Enterprises, whose agents asked her to keep an eye on the members of the Fellowship of the Golden Mongoose and any other Acquisitions Incorporated operatives in Phandalin. Garaele is happy to pass this information along in exchange for Dran Enterprises' payments to the temple, and she asks no questions about that organization's long-term goals for the town. She is a good person, however, so she won't knowingly allow harm to befall others. She is helpful to anyone willing to offer wealth, goods, or services to her shrine.