

to advance to the next episode. The players should get used to how big a part downtime and franchise activities play in an Acquisitions Incorporated campaign.

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

Before the next phase of the adventure, make sure the characters have their franchise and business affairs in order. They should know who their franchise employees are, giving those staff members detailed instructions about what to do while the characters are away. This sort of planning is a common theme in any Acquisitions Incorporated campaign, so establish this precedent early.

Speculating that Talanatha Three-Coins might have fled to the Silent Sound lighthouse headquarters of another Acquisitions Incorporated franchise, the characters might attempt to make contact with that franchise, either on their own or through Head Office. However, any such attempts yield no response. At some point, Omin Dran contacts the characters if they don't contact him first. He's worried about what the lack of contact with the Order of the Stout Half-Pint might mean, and he wants the characters to investigate.

The presence of Dran Enterprises operatives in Phandalin is troubling for Omin—especially if the Dran Enterprises hobgoblins were killed without the characters questioning them, leading to the assumption that the organization was behind the initial attack. If the characters aren't suitably intrigued by the orrery and its newly discovered component, that can be another thing that Omin charges them with investigating. Armed with a solid guess that Talanatha fled to the lighthouse, the characters prepare to head north!

EPISODE 3: DARKNESS AT THE LIGHTHOUSE

In this episode, the characters (newly enfranchised and now 3rd level) travel to the Silent Sound lighthouse to search for Talanatha, the tiefling paladin occultant of the Fellowship of the Golden Mongoose. On the way, Omin Dran contacts them with a request. He wants them to stop in Neverwinter to check on a cache of Acquisitions Incorporated treasure being stored there. However, the doppelganger who hid the cache has been arrested and is about to be executed. Even if the characters save her, retrieving the treasure where it's been hidden in the House of Knowledge—Oghma's temple in Neverwinter—will take more time and effort than Omin predicted.

Leaving Neverwinter, the characters head north in the direction of Silent Sound. But even as the lighthouse comes into view, they spot a small boat under attack by creatures from the deep. If they rescue the crew, the characters might find a business opportunity that involves partaking in a little mutiny against a ruthless captain.

At the lighthouse, the characters confirm that the Acquisitions Incorporated franchise headquartered there—the Order of the Stout Half-Pint—was attacked, and that most of its members have been killed. Moving

up through the different levels of the lighthouse tower, the franchisees find more and more evidence that the same spellcaster whose creations they've previously faced has wrought havoc there. That spellcaster, Hoobur Gran'Shoop, is found working in a grisly laboratory beneath the tower, to which the adventurers gain entrance through the lighthouse's magic lens. That laboratory is only part of the lighthouse's secret basement, though, and the characters engage in some dangerous and lucrative dungeoneering after dealing with—or doing a deal with—Hoobur.

With the threats in the lighthouse dispensed with, the characters learn that its franchise members had also recently collected one of the clockwork components of the *Orrery of the Wanderer*. They also have evidence in hand pointing to the involvement of Dran Enterprises in the attack on the lighthouse, building on the sighting of Dran Enterprises operatives in Phandalin. But what does Dran Enterprises want with the orrery? And which band of plucky franchisees will be tasked with finding out?

TO THE LIGHTHOUSE

With the franchise headquarters in Phandalin secured and the rebuilding of Tresendar Manor underway, the adventurers have a clear path ahead of them to the Silent Sound lighthouse. However, you get to decide how complicated the journey turns out to be.

One big question is whether the characters should travel overland up the Sword Coast, or whether you want to let them teleport directly to Silent Sound using the *timepiece of travel*. Either option is fine. With an Acquisitions Incorporated campaign often involving access to crazy magic, don't be afraid to let the characters make use of it. But there are options for holding back on the magic of the orrery and its components if you want to (see the "Level Inappropriate" sidebar in episode 2), and an overland journey has its own rewards, in the form of additional encounters and side treks that can help build a fun story.

This episode provides one side trek that sees the characters stop in Neverwinter on their way to the lighthouse, which can be made use of no matter what the party's method of travel. Additionally, if the characters are traveling overland, you can introduce random encounters along the road using the same method and table from episode 2. If you roll a result that makes no sense, roll again or create an encounter of your own.

A DETOUR TO NEVERWINTER

Before the characters leave for the lighthouse, or while they are on the High Road traveling toward Neverwinter, Omin Dran makes contact with a "small favor." Neverwinter is located on the High Road on the way to the Silent Sound lighthouse, so is an easy stop for the party to make.

Head Office assignments of this sort can become common in an Acquisitions Incorporated campaign, especially as the characters' reputation as troubleshooters grows. You can use such side treks as useful support for a franchise's main mission, or as an inconvenient interruption.