

RUNNING AN ACQUISITIONS INCORPORATED CAMPAIGN

The grand buffet that is an Acquisitions Incorporated campaign features plenty of the exciting locations and high adventure common to all great fantasy campaigns. But an Acq Inc game adds a unique helping of humor and corporate intrigue to the mix, creating a rich narrative familiar to anyone who's watched an Acquisitions Incorporated livestream game. To take full advantage of the potential of an Acq Inc campaign, keep the following concepts in mind.

FAMILIAR FACES

This campaign provides many NPCs for you to do with as you please. They all have roles to play in the encounters and events of the adventure, but what happens to them after that is up to you. Every NPC could be a potential ally, enemy, or foil later in the campaign. If the players take a shine to one, bring that character back—or better yet, make the NPC an integral part of the ongoing plot. All franchises need servants and hirelings to do mundane jobs, and NPCs the characters already know are a great fit for these roles. Employ these NPCs to make the world feel more familiar and real to the players and characters alike.

RIGHT AND WRONG

Even the most heroic heroes sometimes fall short. And in many cases, adventurers aren't even within longbow range of "virtuous" in their motivations. As such, what the characters fail to do, do poorly, or do wrongly can be just as important as what they accomplish. Don't let failure and setbacks derail an adventure or a campaign. Rather, look for ways that failure or partial success might lead to new ways to reach a campaign goal.

You might be absolutely confident that the characters will save those townsfolk and earn their trust, letting you use the townsfolk to reveal an important quest goal. But if the town burns down despite the heroes' best intentions—or because they had better things to do—let them be mistaken for local authorities come to lend a hand in the aftermath. Or let them be unexpectedly arrested after being mistaken for the evil forces that

ADJUSTING THE ADVENTURE

Wow. Can you believe the advice your players are getting in that sidebar on the last page? And after all the time you're going to put in getting ready to run this adventure? Outrageous! Someone needs to teach these people a lesson.

If you're running the adventure for larger or smaller groups, you can adjust the encounters using the guidelines given in chapter 3, "Creating Adventures," in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Or maybe you'll adjust them anyway to keep things interesting. And never forget that you can change up any aspects of the adventure to make them a better fit for your campaign. Swap monsters around to keep the players guessing, or make use of the adventure's many suggestions for side treks and additional encounters. That'll keep these so-called heroes in line.

burned the town down, and given the dangerous quest out of animosity. Humor plays a big part in an Acquisitions Incorporated campaign, so make use of unheroic irony whenever the players and characters provide it.

LIFE GOES ON

By its most basic nature, a roleplaying game campaign focuses on the actions of the characters. However, it's important to remember that the world goes on without them. The heroes can't be everywhere at once. If they establish a base in one town but spend a lot of time away, anything could happen to that base. Hirelings might grow disenchanted in the characters' service if abused, neglected, or left to their own devices for too long. Ramp up the drama and the humor of a campaign by occasionally focusing on what the characters neglected or left behind.

LET THE FRANCHISE SHINE

An Acquisitions Incorporated franchise is like a newborn baby that the characters all had a hand in conceiving, delivering, and raising. It needs constant care and feeding as it grows to its full potential, but there'll be a lot of risks, drama, and dirty diapers along the way. (Okay, that might be taking the analogy too far, but you get the idea.) Running a franchise can be difficult, but the potential rewards for the characters are tremendous. And for the players, making the franchise the focal point of the campaign provides a joint goal and a shared vessel of creative input.

STORY OVERVIEW

This adventure touches on a number of classic tropes in its setup and execution. Artifact of incalculable power accidentally stumbled upon? Check. Evil faction with plans to end the world? Got it. But even against potentially world-shattering events and plots, an Acquisitions Incorporated campaign is always centered around humble characters making choices—including one unfortunate NPC whose choices have set the adventure in motion.

A year ago, a group of adventurers led by a dwarf named Caerhan Coalsmith found a strange object buried in the remains of a ruined tower. The relic appeared to be a golden orrery housing, missing its geared clockwork components. It was obviously a magic item of some kind, but arcane lore wasn't the party's strong suit, so the orrery was set aside while Caerhan investigated its provenance and history.

The dwarf heard a few tales about devices that matched the relic's description. Though he never learned the full scope of its powers, rumors told of how those powers would increase if a magic orrery's missing components were collected and placed within it. Unfortunately, Caerhan also never learned about the curse the orrery carried—and his party paid the price.

As an artifact, the *Orrery of the Wanderer* comes with a random major detrimental property (see the "Artifacts" section in chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). The specifics of that property when the orrery housing was found are left up to you, but whatever it was (compulsion to evil for someone in the party, hostile life