

## Slakking Off: Design Document

**Design overview:** During the summer I briefly ran a 'science fantasy' campaign in 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Science fantasy equated to making up science sounding reasons for being able to cast fireball. The first mission stood out among the rest as better constructed and more fun. A brief summary:

*Players need to investigate why a moon mine isn't outputting as much precious metal. After encountering several disturbed miners they determine the issue is a mad-woman using her own infected blood to create monsters.*

The goal for this module design was rework and re-flavor that first mission into classic fantasy. I had the opportunity to flesh out something already proven to work mediocly. I could include things like proper monsters, a map of the mine, better intro, etc.

**Why 5<sup>th</sup> ED:** I have the most experience in 5<sup>th</sup> edition, I have DMed in 5<sup>th</sup>, and participated in a longstanding 5<sup>th</sup> ED campaign. Other systems I've worked with have been frustrating for being too heavy on the DM or too numbers heavy for players. This version of DnD is a happy medium between the simplicity of DM heavy systems (Fate, Star Wars: EotE) and numbers (Pathfinder) games I am familiar with. It's easy to work with, teach, and modify. There are many resources to base content on, and it is very flexible, custom content can be easily implemented without missing a beat.

It appeals to *Gamists* because it's possible to build a strong character who excels in combat, and rewards for completion and competition are plentiful.

It appeals to *Narrativists* because the system provides prompts during character creation for backstory, players are rewarded for playing in character with 'inspiration', and the world is diverse and flexible.

It appeals to *Simulationists* because the system does its very best to capture realism with D20s (Character stats, ability modifiers, proficiency, etc.), small details are presented throughout (recommended monetary value for items, trinkets on monsters), and the world out of the box has a considerable amount of history to create a "lore accurate character".

**Encounter 1:** The main objectives of the first encounter is to get the party together if they are independent, introduce the quest giving character, and provide incentive to complete the quest.

*Gamist:* This encounter is effective for the Gamist because they have time to purchase new items at the Grand Market, any store they can imagine is here. They also have the chance to buy potions from Johannes if they take initiative. Gamists should feel like they can prove themselves to be better than the mercenaries who failed Johannes's task. Lastly, Gamists should be excited to receive gold and general loot from an adventure.

*Narrativist:* The Narrativist should feel included because they are taking part in an annual festival. The Grand Market is thematic and they get to meet characters should they choose to. They should be particularly excited about interacting with Johannes Metzger, an eccentric alchemist.

*Simulationist:* The Simulationist should be happy with the large amount of reasonable stores and their marked down products. The world is alive and realistic. Vulcite is going through an industrial revolution. The simulationist should be more than happy to craft a genuine reaction to Johannes's automatic carriage.

*Dm Tools:* The DM has several tools to use for pointing players in the proper direction. The Grand Market houses a large number of NPCs that can be used to generate interest in Johannes. The Alchemist himself can yell particularly colorful expressions until the players decide to investigate. Once players are inside the shop, the grumbling ex mercenaries could be used to make the job seem dangerous, challenging the gamist, compelling the narrativist, and providing accurate reactions for the simulationist. Johannes has several pre-written hooks to dangle in front of the players such as knowledge of a player's gambling debt. The automatic carriage Johannes uses to transport the party was implemented to wow players with amazing tech, prompting conversation with the NPC. Johannes also has several pre written answers to questions players may have.

**Encounter 2:** The objectives of this encounter were to make the mine feel uncharacteristically desolate with the introduction of Cynthia, a warm and thoughtful NPC isolated in a bad situation. Next, the players discover the problem (but not solve it), and to make it feel much larger than originally thought.

*Gamist:* The Gamist gets to roll checks for intimidation or diplomacy against the miners, then gets to fight the maddened ones. Their character also has a very effective and fun way to kill enemies: pushing them off a cliff. The Gamist should want to learn what happened to the mine so they can 'win' and get their gold.

*Narrativist:* The Narrativist should enjoy getting to meet new characters, especially Cynthia since they will be seeing her a lot. They should care a great deal about learning what happened to the mine, and speaking with the remaining workers.

*Simulationist:* The Simulationist will appreciate the genuine reactions of the naïve new guy, concerned regular, and grizzled veteran. They will enjoy the difficulty of keeping up with a fit miner. And will love the accurate disrepair of the abandoned mine.

*Dm Tools:* Cynthia and her sending stones are the ultimate DM tool. The ability to grill players about not getting work done in character is flavorful and should motivate them to continue working. The sending stone can also serve as an alert when the players are in trouble. The fact the previous mercenaries were fired by Cynthia should also be an effective tool, she can hang potential failure over their heads whenever they stray too far off. The cliff inside the combat encounter allows for more crazed miners to attack the players if the party is not threatened by their presence. The cliff is also a very easy way to get rid of enemies that are giving the players trouble while also being thematic. Players can choose to run if they are overwhelmed, which triggers different events. There are several variations of dialogue from Cynthia to keep the players moving no matter what. Finally, the melting corpses are employed to ensure players don't dillydally after winning their combat encounter.

**Encounter 3:** The primary objectives of this encounter were to make the payers feel prepared when tackling the problem, feel slightly overwhelmed when fighting the boss, and to ultimately have the players triumph in the face of adversity. The final encounter also serves as a hook for following adventures in the same setting.

*Gamist:* The Gamist should be enthralled to defeat a boss and restore the mine to its previous functionality. They receive the gold they were promised from the start of the campaign and have effectively won.

*Narrativist:* The Narrativist should be pleased the story has drawn to a close. They got to learn what the source of the problem was and personally administer the cure to dozens of diseased miners. The narrativist would also love saving the boss crazed miner from her infection, though this is an optional event.

*Simulationist:* The Simulationist should enjoy fighting the final boss in an accurately rotted office. The Simulationist will be pleased with their realistic objective of finding more bodies with more blood. Lastly, they will surely enjoy the well-earned payment and gratitude of their bosses.

*Dm Tools:* There are several contingency plans based on how players may approach most situations. The DM has dialogue for if they take too long to head to the abandoned mine, for instance. Players are met with a locked door and have three different ways to enter the necessary room. The door can either be opened with strength, with weapons, or with a lockpick. Depending on how the players open the door, the boss fight begins differently. When fighting the boss, the DM can use scattered bodies as enemies or props, preventing the players from utterly destroying the boss. After defeating the crazed miner, depending on whether or not she is defeated with nonlethal damage, she can be cured with the rest of the miners and players will receive a small reward. The DM rolls 3d6 to determine the amount of gold to give to the players for their actions, or the DM can lie and give the players however much gold feels deserved. The adventure also possess several future hooks in the form of job offers from Johannes and Cynthia offering jobs.