

Sundara
Dawn of a New Age

CITIES OF SUNDARA IRONFIRE



AZUKAIL
GAMES

CITIES OF SUNDARA: IRONFIRE

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TEACHING A LESSON

The square was lively that night. Crowds of people moved over the pavers in small knots, gossiping and laughing. Peddlers with wine casks on their backs, or racks of grilled meats on sticks, moved among them, doing a brisk business as the city's lights were lit. No one stepped over the line of the circle in the center of the square, though. Blood still glistened on those stones; a slick, dark testament to the differences that had already been settled that night.

Two figures stepped into the circle from the northern end. They were a study in contrasts. One was broad-shouldered and tall, his thick nose scarred from being broken many times, and his long hair unkempt and knotted. The other was shorter, and slender, with an amused sneer on his face. The brute was pale, the other was dusky. The warrior wore steel and boiled leather, his companion painted silk and lambskin. The crowd began to whisper, eyes turning toward the pair of them. Oleg the Grinder had never lost a challenge laid down in the square, and given how easily his master Varian Kadrack took offense it was rare that a week passed that the musclebound enforcer didn't settle at least one affair in the dueling ring.

It was a moment later when another figure stepped into the ring. He was tall and slender, dressed in a sweat stained tunic and worn down boots. His skin was burned nut brown by the sun, and though he wasn't large, he seemed strong enough. He carried a staff nearly as tall as he was, but other than that he bore no weapon or armor. He leaned on the staff with both hands, regarding the other two across the circle.

"I call a challenge," Varian said, his pouty lips curling into a cruel smile.

"Are you sure this is what you want?" the young man in the handmade woolens asked. "I apologized for what happened."

"Your apology is worth less than nothing," Varian snarled, turning and spitting on the ground. "I call a challenge. Do you accept, or yield?"

The young man looked around at the crowd for a moment. Dozens of eyes were turned his way. Some were curious. Others pitying. Several had the sharp, hungry look of those sure they were about to see real bloodshed. One man sat on a bench, his gnarled fingers wrapped around the head of his walking stick. He smiled, his white teeth a sharp contrast to his dark skin, and winked at the young man holding the staff.

"I accept," he said, turning back to face Varian. Oleg smiled as well. It was just as unpleasant as his master's smile, though for completely separate reasons.

"Teach him a lesson, Oleg," Varian said, slapping his champion on the shoulder. Oleg drew the sword from his hip, turning it in his grip so the unsharpened edge was on the striking side. Those who'd seen the Grinder fight knew that the blunt edge was no less dangerous for lack of a whetstone. The young man sighed, rolled out his shoulders, and stepped forward.



WHAT IS "CITIES OF SUNDARA"?

In fantasy tabletop roleplaying games there is a tendency for settings to constantly be looking backward to a lost golden age, or a time of legend where great feats of magic and the techniques for creating potent items of power have been lost. Whether this downfall comes as a result of an apocalyptic event, societal collapse, destruction of knowledge or some combination thereof, players often find themselves struggling through a world that, for all its wonders, is not what it once was.

Sundara: Dawn of a New Age takes the opposite approach.

The world of Sundara has all of the monsters, magic, dangers and hardships you would expect in a fantasy RPG. However, the people of Sundara tend to look for the other side of the coin, harnessing the raw forces of their world in order to overcome trials and tribulations in strange, unexpected ways. Through discovery, industry, understanding and sheer grit, the people of Sundara are boldly stepping forward to master the world around them.

"Cities of Sundara" offers game masters and players alike a peek into this world. By visiting unique locations across the setting, it gives you a taste of what life is like in this setting. Not only that, but you can choose to use the cities in their original setting, or incorporate them into your own. Each supplement will also include resources such as new materials for weapons and armor, new creature types, as well as new weapons, magic items and more to enhance your game!

As the setting grows, even more elements will be included. So come, step out into the dawn of a new age with us, and revel in all the fresh possibilities that Sundara has to offer!



IRONFIRE: THE CITY OF STEEL

Glimpsed through the mist that lingers in the Dragonsbreath Mountains at the edge of the Bay of Swords, it's easy to mistake the rearing bulk of the city for a colossal wyrm sipping at the steaming waters. With its bleak, black walls and the smoldering skull of the Dragon Forge, glimpsed from the outside the city of Ironfire looks a dour, foreboding sight.

Those who make it past the Ironfire's gates, however, find a city of industry, invention, curiosity, art and trade. Harnessing the churning, volcanic heart of the region, the alchemists of Ironfire have produced wonders known far and wide; perhaps none of them as famous as their dragon steel. Characterized by a whorled pattern almost like a wood grain left by the unique forging process, it was the discovery of how to reliably produce this resilient, lightweight alloy that has been key to the city's growth and expansion since its founding over a century ago.

HISTORY

Though a relatively young city, built in a region that was considered too volatile for most to even try building in, innovation and curiosity were the foundation for what Ironfire eventually became.

THE RIDDLE OF DRAGON STEEL

Dragon steel was first discovered hundreds of years before Ironfire was ever built. Found only in regions where the earth steamed and the rock boiled, these jagged spits of unique steel had been formed in the natural crucible of the earth during volcanic events. Referred to as dragon's teeth in myths and stories, even small deposits of dragon steel were worth several times their weight in gold. Prized for its strength and rarity, a dragon steel weapon was a mark of great honor and prestige for one deemed worthy (or wealthy) enough to carry it.

While there had been many attempts to recreate dragon steel, no metallurgist

managed to truly succeed before the alchemist Aragor Irons.

A student of the natural world, Irons built upon the work of those who had come before him. What he realized, though, was that too many scholars had attempted to examine natural dragon steel as a relic of a process. They studied the grain and the weft, tested the metal and compared it to other forging processes performed in smithies and forges, but all of them had attempted to recreate the ideal conditions in their own lairs and laboratories.

What Irons did instead was to look for the crucible nature had already made, and to turn it to his advantage.

THE FIRE CREST COMPACT

The Dragonsbreath Mountains were (and still are) a particularly hostile place. Wild beasts run untamed there, and while there were isolated communities living in small pockets across the mountains, the only real power in the region were the lizardfolk clans that had claimed the most heavily active volcanic mountains for their own. The alchemist knew that he would need their aid if he were to have any hope of succeeding in his endeavor, which was why he reached out to the largest of the five major clans; the Fire Crests.

It took months of negotiating through an interpreter and guide for Irons to reach a negotiation with Mother Hydara, the matriarch of the clan. In return for allowing him passage through their lands to the unclaimed territory near what is now the Bay of Swords, he would allow representatives of the tribe to stay with him to observe, except during the winter months when they traditionally went into a kind of communal hibernation. Hunting and cultivation would be allowed, provided they kept their activities to the lowlands. Any dragon steel that was found during his excavation would be theirs by right, and Irons would

refine it into weapons for them. Additionally, if the alchemist found what he sought, and he was able to produce dragon steel on request, then an additional tithe would be paid to the Fire Crest clan every year. Irons agreed, but with the condition that if he was successful, then the tribe would provide the materials he needed in exchange for forging it into quality steel.

With the bargain struck, Irons brought a small team of apprentices, as well as a crew of experienced miners and engineers, to the shores of the smoking bay in hopes of finally accomplishing what so many had said was impossible.

THE FOUNDING OF IRONFIRE

It took the better part of a year for Irons and his team to find and excavate a volcanic vent that was perfect for their needs, but they knew when they uncovered three, thick fangs of natural dragon steel that were each the length of a man's arm that they had found what they needed.

Though the Fire Crests were pleased with Irons' initial find, they grew less patient as the months went on and it seemed the alchemist was paying far more attention to quarrying stone and exploring the underground chambers than he was in fulfilling his part of the compact. It was in the heat of high summer that Mother Hydara herself came down from the peak, along with her honor guard, to demand that Irons forge the weapons he had promised them. To the matriarch's surprise, Irons greeted them cordially, and presented Hydara with an impressive spear that had been forged from one of the three fangs that were uncovered. Worked in an intricate pattern that complemented the natural waves in the steel, it was as beautiful as it was deadly. The second fang had been used to forge razor-edged scimitars, which were presented to each of her personal retinue. The third was untouched, as of yet, as he had wanted to her to choose whether it

would be a single weapon, or many.

Hydara instructed Irons to forge the final fang into a large staff, the twin to the spear she had been given, but without a blade on the end. Irons agreed, and told the matriarch he would be pleased to send it to her with an escort of her guards, but she told him she would remain until the work was complete. It took three days in the forge Irons had built from the dark, heavy stone that had been cut from the ground, before the staff was quenched, detailed and polished to a shine. On sunset of the third day, the alchemist presented it to the matriarch.

Rather than taking the staff, though, Mother Hydara closed the alchemist's fingers around its haft, and spoke to him haltingly in his own language. He was to keep the staff, as a symbol of their pact, and as his own symbol of authority in this place of iron and fire.

Thus was the place that would become Ironfire consecrated, and given its name.

THE DRAGON FORGE EARNS ITS NAME

It took another two years of work for Irons to find the natural crucible that he'd sought, and to construct the necessary chambers to perform and refine his underground experiments. Rather than waste the stone that was cut during this endeavor, the engineers used it to construct a castle keep, which contained workshops on the lower floor and sleeping chambers for the workers above. Fed by the rising heat from below, and using differences in temperature to store rising steam in a rooftop cistern, the castle was a surprisingly comfortable place for those who had dedicated themselves to Irons' cause.

As the work dragged on, the castle became something of a landmark for those traveling through the misty lowlands of the

Dragonsbreath Mountains. It offered safe haven, and became a rudimentary trading post to those braving the wild country. This was particularly true for merchant ships, who spied the castle as they passed, and who began to regularly stop for fresh water and resupply at the castle. Additional outbuildings were constructed, but most of the focus was still on the work being done beneath the castle.

Until Irons finally managed to unlock the secret.

It took nearly five additional years of work and experimentation, as well as studying the scraps that had been left behind from the weapons he'd forged for the Fire Crests, but Irons managed to uncover the secrets of the process. Representatives from the Fire Crest were contacted, and sent a sample of the forge's product as proof of what the alchemist had achieved, and it was not long after that word began to leak into the trade routes that the mad metallurgist in the Dragonsbreath Mountains had finally accomplished his goal.

The Siege of Skallarn

With the process of creating dragon steel all but perfected, Ironfire began to grow in earnest. Orders for the forge's steel came from noble houses and private armories, from knightly orders and private collectors. At first they were few, but demand grew as more people saw first-hand what the Forge could produce. Within a year the forge ran day and night in order to keep up with demand. Not only that, but people began to flock to Ironfire as well. Many were adepts and apprentices hoping to find a place in the forge, but there were masons and miners, carpenters and drovers, bar keeps and merchants among their number as well. It wasn't long before plans were made to expand Ironfire as a settlement, and to provide the necessities for citizens of a proper city.

The heads of the Dragon Forge were not the only ones laying plans, though. The self-styled Lord Skallarn, little more than a bandit king who had evaded punishment from the surrounding governments by hiding in the rough country along the edge of the Dragonsbreath Mountains, managed to acquire a dragon steel blade from the forge. By the third time he'd swung it, he was already planning how he could take Ironfire and its resources for his own.

Though the gang he commanded was large, Skallarn knew he would need a much larger force if he hoped to take even a relatively small settlement like the one that had sprung up around the Dragon Forge. Dipping into his ill-gotten treasury, he solicited the services of mercenary bands and free companies. In addition to silver and gold, Skallarn also made promises of dragon steel blades and armor for those loyal enough to help him take the forge as his own. He waited until winter was nearly upon them, since Skallarn knew of the allegiance between Ironfire and the Fire Crests, and he wanted the lizardfolk deep in hibernation when he finally made his move. It helped that winter tended to be a lean time for those in the mercenary trade, so there were plenty of sellswords seeking a fresh patron.

History would have unfolded differently if the bandit lord hadn't made the mistake of approaching Celadine Corvishan. Captain of the elite Scarlet Company, she did more than just refuse Skallarn's offer of employment. She, along with a complement of warriors under her command, made their way to Ironfire under a cover of secrecy. Once within the city, she informed Irons and those who made up his advisory council that Skallarn would be moving against the city to take control not just of it, but of the dragon steel it produced.

Celadine volunteered herself and her men to fight for the city, with the condition that they would receive first right of refusal on

all future contracts, along with having their arms and armor produced by the Dragon Forge. Though there was a great deal of negotiation back and forth, Irons eventually agreed to their terms, under the condition that the mercenary army they swore was hot on their heels manifested, and the Scarlet Company had to earn their keep.

The first Forge Master got all that he bargained for, and more. Skallarn had hired perhaps half a dozen free companies, and enticed several dozen more renegades, rebels and rogues of all stripes to help him take the city. Several ships under the command of pirates in Skallarn's pay commanded the bay, and warded off any help that might have come by sea. Ironfire was cut off within a day, with those who hadn't run packed in behind the skirting walls of the castle, watching as the occupiers rampaged through the town. They smashed against the walls when they came, though, and between the furious fighting of the Scarlet Company, and the burning slag poured down among those who tried to take the walls, the assault quickly turned into a siege.

It was the depths of winter, with Skallarn's forces growing indolent and those inside the Dragon Forge growing desperate, that help arrived. The Fire Crests, awoken from their hibernation by an outrider who had seen what had befallen Ironfire, had gathered allies from the other mountains. A combined force of warriors from the Black Fangs, Razor Skulls, Flame Speakers and Ash Claws emerged from the mist and fell upon Skallarn's ragtag army. Within the hour the bandit lord's head had been claimed, and the loyalty and cohesion of the freelances severed.

BIRTH OF THE IRON TRADE

With their paymaster dead, a majority of the remaining mercenaries scattered into the mountains. There were several companies, however, who retreated from the

city and re-established their camps. They formed defensive perimeters, but made no moves to advance or attack. After several days, a lone rider approached the city under a banner of truce.

Skallarn was dead, but too many knew what he had tried to do. If someone smarter, stronger or with a larger fortune attempted to do the same, and this time planned for the interference of the lizard-folk warriors, then Ironfire would need far more to defend them than even the fabled Scarlet Company. These soldiers of fortune still had the dead man's silver in their purses... but they wanted the dragon steel weapons Skallarn had promised. Now that he was dead, they were more than willing to hire on to protect the city if it meant they'd earn that price.

Irons, Celadine and the heads of the mountain clans sat in conference with the captains of the three other companies; The Dogs of War, The Jackdaws, and the Bloody Fools. It took several days of discussion, but eventually an agreement was reached. The three free companies would serve for a five-year contract, and the city would provide them food and quarters during their time. At the end of that time, every freelance who had honorably served would receive a single weapon from the forge itself.

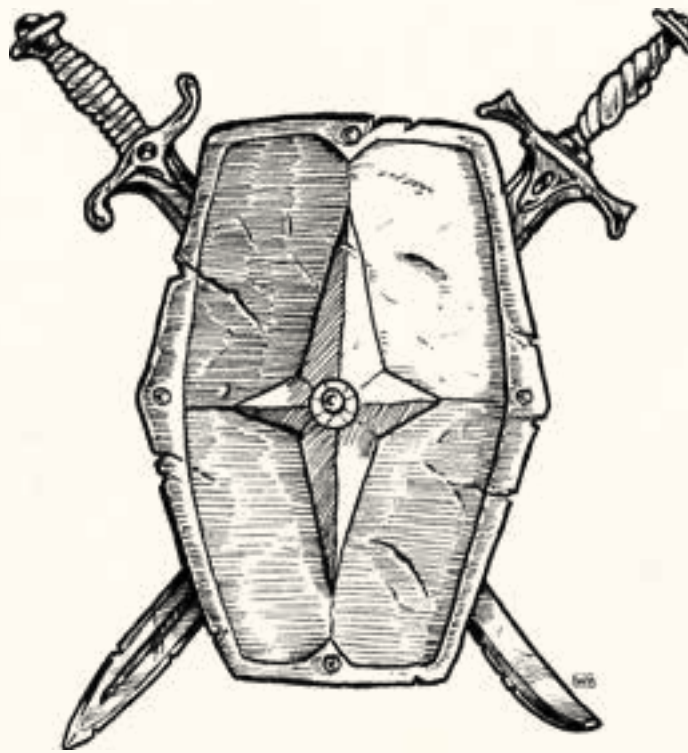
Once the agreement was struck, a plan was formed. The Jackdaws and the Dogs of War left the city to patrol the roads and man lookout stations, watching for signs of any approaching forces where they could

act as stop gaps. The Fools were seconded to the Scarlet Company, and acted as a peacekeeping force in the city itself as people put their upset lives back to order. The warriors of the mountain clans remained in the city, warming themselves on the vents until the spring came. Once the days were warm again, they departed to their holds, each touching the dragon steel stave Irons had been given as a sign of authority, and trust.

The captains had been right in their predictions, and mixed among the fresh trade and craftsmen coming to Ironfire were scouts from various free companies and invested interests who wanted to see just how bloodied the city had been by Skallarn's ill-fated attempt to seize power. What they found was a city that was rapidly expanding, with buildings made of native stone that would be proof against fire, and a protective wall growing a little larger every day. Those things would have given anyone pause, but the number of sellswords walking the walls, and riding the roads, made Ironfire

about as tempting a target as dragon with a sore tooth.

Many of the scouts left, spreading the word about what they'd seen. Others heard of a bustling, growing trade city, and decided to see if they could strike it rich in the city as well. While some few individuals managed to join the four companies under contract to the city, most had to find paymasters elsewhere. With ships and caravans coming and going, and persons of import looking for a little extra protection once they'd left the city's sheltering arms, that wasn't as



difficult as it sounded.

In fact, as Ironfire grew, it became known for its massing soldiers of fortune almost as much as for its public works, innovations, and the quality of its crucible steel. The center of the iron trade in all senses of that term, it's said all these years later that whether you need a dragon steel blade, or a warrior skilled enough to wield it, you will find both in Ironfire.

THE IRON LAW

Though it is a relatively young city, Ironfire has become a melting pot of ideas, languages, goods and trades. On the whole, however, the city prides itself on innovation, expression and on solving the issues and problems it faces on a daily basis. At the same time Ironfire has a fierce independent streak to it, with its citizens often taking matters into their own hands.

To maintain some kind of order, the city relies on the Iron Law.

Though there are relatively few crimes under the Iron Law (murder, theft, assault, etc.), the very simple basis of the Iron Law is that consent is the cornerstone of interactions with the city. Not only that, but the consent must be offered freely, and in good faith, to be considered just. As a result, Ironfire has a rather... diverse economy, freely bartering for services and items that would only be available in the most shadow of black markets in other cities.

If someone is suspected of committing a crime, they will stand before an iron judge and plead their case. These judges hold simple, steel staves that are an imitation of the staff wielded by the Forge Master as symbols of their authority. Trials are always conducted in public, and there must be witnesses for a trial to be considered legitimate. While someone can demand an appeal, this requires convening the district judge. The only level higher than that is

the Ironfire Council, and it is rare in the extreme for the city's top representatives to hear a case that was settled by a lower court.

Justice under the Iron Law tends to be focused on repairing the damage done, rather than simply punishing the individual. The imbalance caused by a crime must be restored in some way. In extreme situations an individual will be declared outlawed. Ironfire has no death penalty, but when an individual is declared outside the protections of the Iron Law itself, comeuppance for their actions tends to be rather swift.

DUELING CULTURE

An unusual aspect of Ironfire is something that was first used by the Bloody Fools in the early days after the Siege of Skallarn, but which was rapidly adopted by many of the other freelances and sellswords who came to the city; dueling culture.

For those who aren't willing to wait for a case to be taken before a judge, it's perfectly legal to challenge someone to a duel to settle your difference. Over the years, though, dueling in Ironfire has developed a formalized process that must be recognized in order for the duel to be considered legitimate. Both participants must declare the duel in public, they must set the terms for it to be settled (first blood, submission and in some circumstances to the death) and weapons must be declared. There must be a neutral third party to declare the duel begun, and the duel must happen in full view of an audience.

It is also perfectly acceptable for someone to stand as a champion in a duel. Several noted mercenaries started their careers by stepping into highly public duels to show off their skills to potential employers, and it's far from uncommon for someone with more money than sense to hire a champion from one of the major free companies in

the city to get into the challenge circle on their behalf.

Lastly, the Iron Law does allow for duels for those who demand a trial by combat. However, such situations tend to be very rare, as most people who would win a case before a judge would not jeopardize that victory with a duel. However, in the case that the city of Ironfire is the aggrieved party (such as in the case of a murder, where the victim cannot stand for themselves) the city will provide a champion should the accused desire a duel to settle the matter... and in many cases that means one of the renowned members of the Scarlet Company will be fighting on behalf of the city.

GOVERNMENT

As Ironfire has grown, the city has developed a need for a more responsive government. The Iron Council makes decisions, approves appointments and handles matters of public affair and policy. The Forge Master holds the position as head of the Council, acting as the first among equals, but is traditionally the member who is least involved in the day-to-day affairs of the city (as running the Dragon Forge tends to take a majority of their time and attention). In many instances the Forge Master may send a representative to attend to public meetings and business in their stead, only putting in an appearance when decorum requires. The rest of the seats on the Iron Council are filled by representatives from each district of the city. Elections are held once every three years, and all citizens of Ironfire are eligible to make their voice heard by voting and petitioning their representatives.

While the Council must convene in its entirety for matters of importance (such as large-scale public works projects, taxes and dues, changes made to the city's laws, or agreeing to take up a legal case which has been appealed), individual members are generally allowed to make and enforce

policy within their own districts, as long as those decisions do not affect the rest of the city in a meaningful way.

From choosing which businesses to contract with (particularly important for districts who hire mercenary companies to keep the peace on their streets), to which individuals are elevated to positions within the local government structure, Council members tend to be more answerable to those who live in their districts rather than to the Council itself. And while every member of the Council technically has equal standing with one another, districts who have a higher population, or which generate more revenue, tend to be given deference. It's why, as Ironfire shifts and grows, districts which were once considered less important have swelled, and those once considered leading voices have receded.

The seat at the far end of the Iron Council chamber is traditionally left empty. Reserved for a representative of the Fire Crest clan should they wish to make their voices heard during Council meetings, it is a rarity that one of the cinderscales attends. This is most common when a new leader of the clan is selected, and they wish to come and meet with the city to renew and reaffirm the agreement made so long ago.

GAZETTEER

The current districts of Ironfire are as follows. Each description contains several locations of note, along with NPCs one is likely to run into while spending time in the district, and rumors that might be heard for those who listen to whispers on the street.

STONE POLE

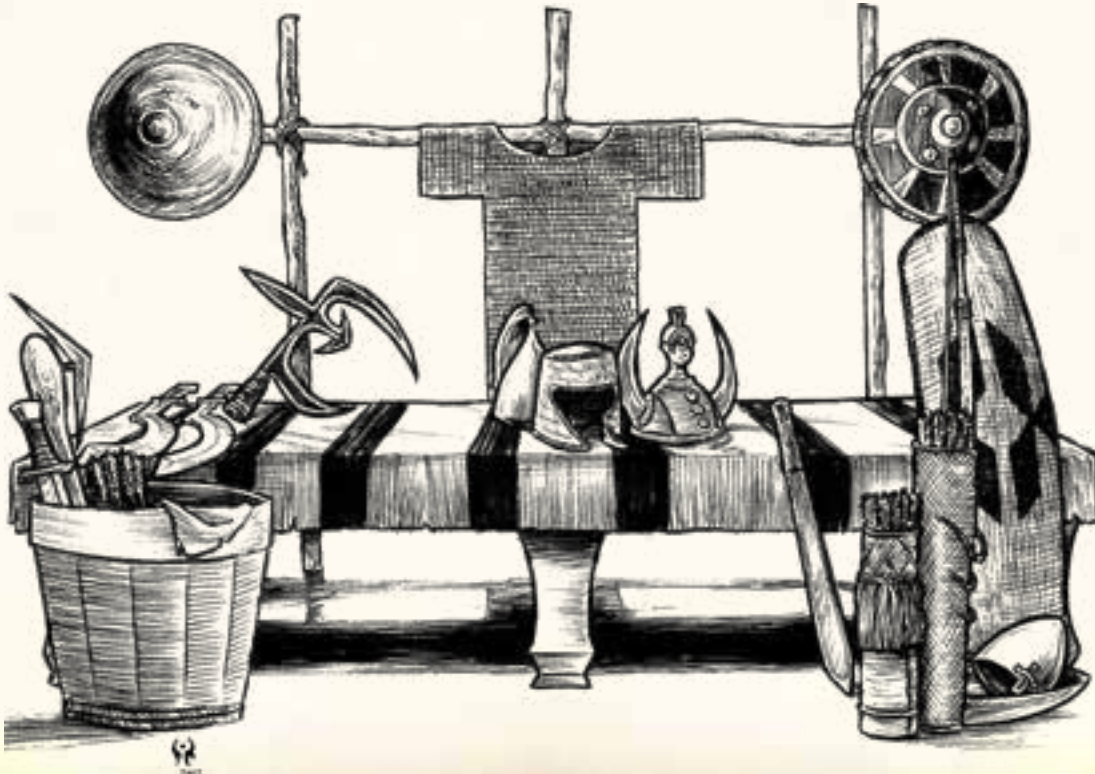
Half a hundred different races, colors and creeds come through Ironfire every day, and if you stand on a street corner in

Stone Pole you'll see every single one of them pass you by. With inns and taverns, playhouses and art galleries, at a glance Stone Pole may look like just another entertainment district. Sharp-eyed watchers are likely to notice the amount of steel on display, though, and anyone who's done time in the iron trade would recognize the banners flying from mercenary company chapter houses. Not a day goes by without blades being drawn in Stone Pole, and a square that doesn't play host to at least a handful of duels a day is considered a dull place, indeed.

Making up the bulk of the center of Iron-fire, Stone Pole is named for the obelisk of black, volcanic rock that punches up a dozen feet from the center of the city's main plaza. Used as a sundial, this square is also where a great deal of public duels take place, as there's always witnesses nearby to observe the proceedings. With visitors coming north from the Harbour, south from the North Ward and even from the Oak Gate, Stone Pole is where sailors come to spend their wages, where sellswords seek patrons, and where anyone looking for a bit of entertainment can usually find it.

NOTEWORTHY LOCATIONS

- **The Scarlet Chevron:** Located east of the central square, the Scarlet Chevron is a square-cut building of local, black stone that looks like a barracks... or a small fortress. Flying the red and gold colors of the Scarlet Company, the Chevron has served as the free company's base of operations for decades now. The street outside is often thronged with hopefuls, clamoring for the chance to take service with Scarlet Company, who are the only mercenary company to have an exclusive contract with the Dragon Forge itself. Trials are held at the convenience of the captain-in-residence, and while the ring of steel often comes from the courtyard, it's just as common for hopeful recruits to be given a test mission to prove themselves as it is for them to step into the ring with one of the Crimson Sergeants of the company.
- **The Ashes:** Just north of the obelisk for which the district is named, the Ashes is one of the most popular clearing houses for the latest gossip and rumors of interest to the city's various soldiers of fortune. The tavern is larg-



er than it seems, with the bulk of it in a basement below street level, and a mezzanine above the lower floor. The walls are covered in trophies of various battles, each with a plaque noting what the item is, where it came from, and who offered the trophy to the Ashes to display. The clientele consists of everything from caravan guards seeking fresh work, to freelancers flush with coin from their latest deployment, and the atmosphere is often boisterous to say the least. The tavern is also known for its spiced salamander steaks (either served raw, or acid-scorched), as well as its throat-searing apple whiskey that can knock even the toughest drinkers off their stools.

- **Duraga Arms:** Sword smiths and armor peddlers are thick on the ground in Ironfire, but Duraga Arms is a purveyor of war gear that has stood the test of time. Found in the western part of the district, the storefront looks no different than any of its neighbors aside from the chimney sticking up from the smithy in the rear. The weapons and armor on display are carefully labeled, and there's a wide, scuffed testing arena in the center of the shop filled with scarred practice targets. While much of the steel on display is fresh-forged, Duraga Arms is more than happy to buy serviceable arms and armor from those who are retiring from the trade, or who simply have no use for their older kit once they've purchased something better.

PERSONS OF INTEREST

- **Bastion "The Watcher":** An old man with skin the same, deep hue as his mahogany walking stick, Bastion's head is always freshly shaved, and his thick, gray beard neatly trimmed. Often found sitting on one of the many benches around the center plaza, it's said he's witnessed every duel that's taken place in the center of Stone Pole for at least the last decade. Those who take the

time to speak with him find that Bastion is friendly and knowledgeable, able to offer commentary on dozens of different combat philosophies, weapons and fighting styles that have gone in and out of fashion over the years. Those who listen carefully may even hear a tale or two from Bastion's youth, when he often stepped into the ring and cracked heads with the hardwood cane he still carries.

- **Keiru:** A "squire for hire" as she bills herself, this slender halfling wears her hair cut short, except for a small rat tail that dangles down between her shoulder blades. Keiru can polish armor, care for a mount, sharpen a blade and handle nearly any other duty a squire would for someone on campaign... for a fee. Though several mercenaries give her the side eye, suspicious she's little more than a thief with an elaborate con, Keiru has served several notable individuals throughout the city. Though the long knife at her belt isn't for show, Keiru prefers a position a little more removed from the action. She always has her ear to the ground for who's rising in the city... and just as importantly, who's falling.
- **Karaka:** The head cook at the Ashes, Karaka is a long, lean half-orc woman who tends to have a plug of sweet cinder between her teeth more often than not. With the air of a ship's bosun while she's running the kitchen, she ensures that everything goes as smoothly as possible on her watch. While a serving boy who clumsily drops a plate might catch the rough side of her tongue, she is the only one allowed to speak out about her workers. Fierce as a mother fire lizard when angered, Karaka has flung her share of hard cases and big talkers out into the street when they tried to lay a hand on a member of her staff.

WHISPERS AND RUMORS

- Even though Stone Pole is somewhat fa-

mous for the number of free companies who maintain halls there, the number of independent sellswords seems to have grown strangely thin on the ground of late. The established companies haven't been taking on fresh soldiers, but those who ask around hear about suspiciously well-paid jobs that have been sending streams of mercenaries out of the city. It's emptying Ironfire somewhat, and some are beginning to speculate the jobs were just a red herring to deplete the city's easy supply of fighters... but to what purpose?

- A figure in black has offered themselves as a champion to several individuals who were on the wrong end of a disagreement. With their face swathed behind a black cloth, and a long, straight blade at their hip, this black champion has not lost a single duel yet. There have been a dozen in the past month, all of them at dusk or nightfall. Speculation is running rampant about who (or in some cases what) might be lurking beneath that shadowy hood.
- A tall woman with a long, blonde braid has been speaking to dozens of old hands throughout Stone Pole. Her questions are always about particular dueling champions, famous soldiers of fortune and the more esoteric fighting styles that have come through the city. When asked why she's so interested she claims she's doing research for a volume on the history of free companies and their martial prowess in and around Ironfire, but the answer always comes a little too easily. It feels like she's looking for something, but most are too charmed by her to consider what until after she's closed her journal and left.

THE HARBOUR

Filled with the creaking of hawsers, the shouts of longshoremen, and the bustle of goods, the Harbour flows in time with the tides in the Bay of Swords. The scents of exotic spices mix with fish, salted pork,

alchemical reagents and a thousand other commodities that come off the various merchant vessels every single day. The shining teeth of the city's break wall cut the power of the waves, and the sleek vessels of the Harbour's defense ships crouch like hounds waiting for the call to run.

One of the major sources of commerce in Ironfire, the Harbour district brings in everything from food and supplies, to travelers and diplomats. An unruly district, it's said that if you can find something in the city at all, there's someone in the Harbour willing to either buy or sell it. Rumors buzz through the district like flies on a midden heap, and there are those who maintain fortunes are won and lost every day by those who happened to be in just the right (or just the wrong) place.

NOTEWORTHY LOCATIONS

- **The Clearinghouse:** Sitting in the middle of a collection of warehouses at the east end of the docks, the Clearinghouse is where goods are inspected, docking and import fees are paid, and records are stamped regarding what has come into (and gone out of) the city. The Clearinghouse tends to be a hive of orderly chaos, and there are always small crowds lingering around the fringes; laborers hoping for work, travelers seeking passage, and mixed in among them the occasional thieves trying to get a line on rich cargoes that are sitting at the dock.
- **Lanasha's Duty Free:** Though there are several so-called duty-free shops throughout the Harbour district, Lanasha's is considered both the fairest and the most reputable. Founded decades ago, it is the oldest continuously-operating private business on the city's waterfront. Lanasha herself, a broad-shouldered, wide-hipped dwarven woman, tends to greet her customers with the warmth of a distant aunt you only see during yearly celebrations. Most say

that Lanasha knows the name of every ship big and small that's been through the Harbour more than twice, and then name of most sailors who come to her shop at least once. While she keeps her business to herself, many of her neighbors keep an eye on Lanasha as a kind of weather vane for what rises and dips are coming through the district's markets.

- **The Quartermaster:** A public house and hostel run by "Captain" Dorn Ja-zeerit, the old man certainly plays the part of a grizzled old sea dog. A widower, he took over the Quartermaster from his late wife who'd opened it after she lost her first husband to the sea. While anyone can find a stiff drink and a hot meal at the Quartermaster, it's something of a home away from home for those who have nowhere else to go. And while donations of coin are always welcome, those who can't afford to pay out of their pockets are allowed to haul, cook, clean, make repairs or do nearly anything else in exchange for their time on the "crew," however long or short it is.

PERSONS OF INTEREST

- **Brona Spires:** A slender woman with flyaway blonde hair, Brona is usually seen near the docks either standing at her easel, or with a leather-bound sketchbook in her hand. An artist of

some local fame, she prefers the Harbour district for its constantly changing scenery. Every day there's something new to see, and to commit to whatever medium she has to-hand.

- **Aron "Red Merry" Merriweather:** A deep-chested man with a head full of thick, black hair that's just starting to go gray, Aron is the captain of the vessel *Sunset Glory*. One of the few iron-side ships in the hands of a privateer, it cost him a fortune to have his ship outfitted by the Dragon Forge; but it's a fortune he claims he's earned back thrice over defending the Harbour. While there are rumors that Aron will be retiring from the trade any season now, those who try to tell him he should give up the life and fortune of a privateer before he's ready are apt to see him reach for the cutlass at his side.
- **Jergis Fleech:** An unusual gnome with a lazy eye and a habit of talking to himself, Jergis is a tinkerer and inventor. Often seen haggling for strange or unusual items to cart back to his workshop, no one ever knows what discovery he's going to make next. From water-repellent blade oils, to an automatic deck scrubber, his successes are relatively few, but they tend to be exceedingly useful.

WHISPERS AND RUMORS

- Members of the Dragon Forge's staff were recently seen leaving Jergis



Fleech's workshop. Since that day there have been deliveries to the gnome's lodgings day and night, as well as bizarre smoke rising from his chimney, and the occasional controlled explosion. Whatever he's currently testing must be important, because he seems to be working at all hours of the day and night.

- Dredgers have been out in the Bay of Swords, dragging chains and casting nets into the smoking waters. While this is far from unusual in and of itself, there are rumors that a ship pulled something up in its anchor chain in the deeper section of the bay, and now the hunt is on to find more. Whether it's a lost load of ingots, a cache of valuable coins or some relic from before the founding of the city, the story changes depending on who's telling it. There are new ships joining the hunt every day, however.
- The freighter *Sea's Grace* was found adrift, and has been under heavy guard by the Scarlet Company since being dragged back to the dock. Unusual in and of itself, as the Black Gulls are the current free company contracted to the Harbour district, there has been a great deal of speculation about what business the red cloaks have with that ship. Some claim there's a plague on board, and they're keeping people out. Others say there was murder done on the vessel, and they're preserving the scene. A few voices claim there's a new mecha-

nism that was being tested, allowing the ship to get under way without a crew, and the engineers are studying the results. There're dozens of different stories, but none have been willing to earn the displeasure of the guards keeping watch on the vessel to get close enough to it to find out if any of them are true.

MIDDLESHADE

Growing in the shadow of the Dragon Forge like bizarre, stone fungi, the homes and storefronts of Middleshade are built from the black rock excavated from the forge's initial creation. The streets are paved with slag blocks, which form a bizarre, coruscating pattern that can disorient those not used to it. As grim as the district may seem at first glance, the people of Middleshade are as colorful as their district is gloomy. With brightly-dyed clothing and hair, they've been compared to birds during mating season. Equally bright art installations dot the district, and along with stained glass, murals and more, Middleshade is a district of sharp contrasts.

Perhaps the oldest district in the city, aside from the Dragon Forge itself, Middleshade was built to house the workers and early residents of Ironfire, and it acted as the marketplace in the early years of the city. It has only expanded since those early days, and though it still houses many of the workers who serve the Dragon Forge, Middleshade also hosts a variety of entrepreneurs, upscale taverns, schools and public facilities. From breweries to glass blowers, and greenhouses to tea shops, there's something new to discover around every corner of this unusual, technicolor sprawl.

NOTEWORTHY LOCATIONS

- **Irons Academy:** Built around a courtyard in the northeast part of the district, the Irons Academy accepts any and all students free of charge who can pass its



entrance exams. Focusing primarily on the practical philosophies of alchemy, the academy also boasts classes on arcane instruction, divinities and ecology both natural and unnatural. The primary purpose of the academy is to cultivate the next generation of researchers for the Dragon Forge, but the school is also a testing ground for new theories, methods and inventions. It's by casting an eye toward the future, by creating or discovering a new formula, invention, process or refinement of practical use, that a student earns the iron chain of a graduate.

- **Nightshade Brewery:** Located just north of the boundary with the Harbour district, the Nightshade Brewery is a brooding structure of windowless black stone with roof tiles cut from volcanic glass. Those who step inside find a taproom that's surprisingly cheery, with hardwood floors, bright lamps with colored glass shades and several serving windows cut into the walls. The bulk of the ground floor is filled with tanks and casks of spirits, with the second and third floors primarily used for drinking and dining. Those who walk through the doors can always find something unique on offer; from the deep purple sweet ale that is the brewery's trademark, to bitter black wine and mulled mushroom cider, the variety shifts on a near weekly basis. In the basement, somewhere only employees are allowed to venture, the cellar is filled with regimented beds of mushrooms and fungi. Carefully cataloged and maintained, these plants are the key to the brewery's operation.
- **The Museum of Artistic Industry:** Housed in a number of buildings in the center of the district, the Museum of Artistic Industry is filled with examples of the machinery that literally built Ironfire, as well as functional models explaining several processes behind how aspects of the city function, and are maintained. From massive trip-hammers that used the steam-pressure from

the natural vents to form and shape bars of dragon steel, to a display showing how the steam chambers carved beneath the city warm the streets and buildings in the winter while cooling them in the summer, the museum is a popular attraction for visitors and locals alike.

PERSONS OF INTEREST

- **Aelonwe Feldspar:** A woman with long, chestnut hair that's just starting to go gray over her temples, Aelonwe seems young for someone who holds the position of head librarian; at least to those who can't see the signs of someone with a touch of elven blood in their veins. A long-time cataloger of the Irons Academy, Aelonwe is one of three people who have the key to the restricted section of the library. Knowledgeable about much of the city and its history, her area of focus is in book preservation techniques. Her own thesis focused on the unique properties of salamander skin to ensure that even a roaring blaze would barely singe the cover of a properly treated volume.
- **Aethelwulfe Kettleblack:** A slender halfling man with teakwood skin and raven hair, Aethelwulfe lives with his wife and four children on the south side of Middleshade. His unique position as a city inspector means that his small size is quite an advantage in getting into places no one else can reach, and he's far from the only halfling in his department. While he ensures that he keeps city business under wraps, for the most part, nothing makes him happier than telling stories about the various close calls and bizarre encounters he's had crawling through Ironfire's bowels.
- **Saphia Ringeld:** A former crane operator who got her start in the Harbour district, Saphia worked at the Dragon Forge for several years before an accident led her to take early retirement. Walking with cane, most wouldn't be

able to tell at a glance that her left leg is missing from just below the knee, as it was replaced with a cunningly-crafted, articulated prosthetic. An associate at the Museum of Artistic Industry, Saphia leads tours, and she can break down half a dozen displays, explaining the physics behind these seemingly miraculous operations.

typically a quick thing to fix... but teams of individuals have been going in and out of these homes for nearly a week, and very few of them look like the masons or alchemists who would normally be dispatched to solve such a problem.

WHISPERS AND RUMORS

- The Museum of Artistic Industry has announced there will be a new, fully interactive exhibit debuting soon to open a new wing to the public. No one seems to know what will be in the new wing, but the opening date keeps getting pushed back for undisclosed reasons. Security around the wing has been beefed up, as well, and there are whispers that there have been... accidents during the construction. While representatives have claimed there's nothing to worry about, the museum's attendance has noticeably decreased since the rumors began.
- Sewage workers have been doing more checks than usual throughout Middleshade, adding extra doses of what looks like a thick, gray, alkali powder to the system. Workers handle the material while wearing bulky protective gear, and they keep that gear on when they follow the powder down into the sewers. Several teams have resurfaced with injuries, and wild stories, though none seem to agree on what, precisely they faced before it scuttled away into the darkness. Clearly there's something down there, and it's not willing to be dislodged without a fight.
- Several town homes throughout Middleshade have been temporarily closed, with those living in them moved to other quarters for the time being. The official story is there may have been a leak of harmful vapors from the caverns below, and workers are attempting to find and seal any such leaks. Such a situation has happened before, and it's

GHOSTBOROUGH

Clouds of steam linger on the streets of this district, dribbling from pipes and grates. The air is thick and warm regardless of the time of year, and figures moving through the steam seem more like restless shades than living people. The surfaces of the buildings are streaked with impurities, and fungi grow wild in the mortar. Lights beckon from taverns and inns, bathhouses and brothels, but shadows lurk in the alleys of Ghostborough as well... shadows far more dangerous than any spirit.

Named for the steam vents that line its streets, Ghostborough is always hot and damp. Originally the termination point for the steam tunnels that ran from the Dragon Forge, the expanding population of Ironfire demanded more space be added. Neighborhoods in Ghostborough tend to have their own cultures, and boundaries between them are almost palpable for those who walk the streets. Shadier elements of the city are also drawn to Ghostborough, conducting business that skirts the Iron Law when it isn't outright broken. There has been a push back against these illicit operations thanks to the recently-elected district representative Rissa Davenport, but while the former duelist's rhetoric won the heart of her constituents, she's found it difficult to pull the roots of these syndicates out of her district.

NOTEWORTHY LOCATIONS

- **Oak Gate:** While the Northward Road is where the majority of travelers and visitors enter Ironfire, Oak Gate is where caravans, wagons and other shipments

of goods and imports enter the city walls. The large warehouses outside the city stores hazardous goods and dangerous materials until they can be properly retrieved, and once the gate of the Northward Road is closed for the night, the Oak Gate is where all those entering or leaving the city must go.

- **The Steam Room:** Located just off a small plaza not far from the Oak Gate, the Steam Room is a public bath house built atop the terminus of one of the city's largest steam tunnels. This far from the Dragon Forge a majority of the steam has condensed into hot water, which is collected and re-boiled for use by the patrons above. While far from the only such location in the district, much less in the city, the Steam Room is where travelers often come to wipe the dust and aches of the road from their bodies while attendants clean and press their clothes.
- **Blackscales:** Abutting the wall on the western side of the district, the building referred to as Blackscales was built several decades ago. The official point of contact with the cinderscale nation spread throughout the region, this place provides food and lodging for the lizardfolk visiting the city, as well as answering questions for those attempting to adjust to life within the walls. Individuals looking to make peaceful contact with clan representatives, or to find guides to shepherd them through the region, can also find them here. The banners of the five clans are prominently displayed outside the Blackscales, and those who step inside find the place decorated with skins and hung with fetishes. Even among the buildings of Ghostborough, the Blackscales is noticeably warm, which helps keep the temperament of its residents even.

PERSONS OF INTEREST

- **Samarda Blackscale:** The seventh among the cinderscales to accept her

current position, along with the name Blackscale, Samarda is a lithe, long-tailed example of her species. Soft spoken, typically dressed in the red shawl of the Fire Crests fringed with black to show her standing as mistress of the Blackscales, she handles the day-to-day affairs of the place. Though usually reserved and calm, those who've seen her enraged can attest that her bite is far worse than even the rough side of her tongue... particularly as she is one of the few among her clan who inherited venomous fangs that she isn't afraid to put to use.

- **Lemardan Three-Fingers:** A pale man with a crescent moon scar around one eye that complements the notch left in his ear by a knife fight, Lemardan has all three fingers on his left hand mixed up in the various pools of black business that happen in the shadows of the city. While it's rarely Lemardan's hand that holds the dagger on any particular job, it's said that whether it's smuggling at the gates to thievery in the Harbour, that a little bird has whispered in his ear about it.
- **Asher Whiteclaw:** With skin like soft leather, and eyes as hard as an anvil, Asher has the air of a predatory beast when he walks the city's streets. An outlaw hunter by trade, Asher has brought down some of the most dangerous bounties ever posted in Ironfire. Some of his bounties have required him to drag his charges out of the city in order to collect... something which has put him at odds with the iron judges on more than one occasion. Asher has weathered accusations and duels alike, and to his credit has brought most of his bounties in alive. Rarely well, and not always in one piece, but still alive.

WHISPERS AND RUMORS

- Several parties of cinderscales have been coming into the city, and congregating at the Blackscales. This isn't un-

usual in and of itself, but there appear to be clan speakers from across the mountain holds who have all made long journeys to be part of this conclave. Something important is going on behind the dark stone walls, but no one in the district has any idea what it could be.

- A dozen people have been found dead throughout Ghostborough, their muscles seized up, and blood running from their eyes and noses. Each of them seems to have been poisoned, but so far no one has been able to determine how, why or what the poison was. Some have suggested that the steam, released more heavily during the night-time hours, may have been tainted enough to do serious harm to those unlucky enough to be caught by the vapors. Others aren't convinced, trying to find some common thread connecting all those who've died.
- The board game King's Nails has recently grown in popularity all throughout the city, but nowhere is it more popular than in Ghostborough. One factor driving the popularity of the game is that roughly once a month a mysterious notice will appear somewhere in the district, announcing altered rules and fresh scenarios for players to follow. It's as if someone is watching, and creating a kind of chronicle for the ongoing war between the light and dark pieces on the board. But who could be doing it? And to what purpose?

THE DRAGON FORGE

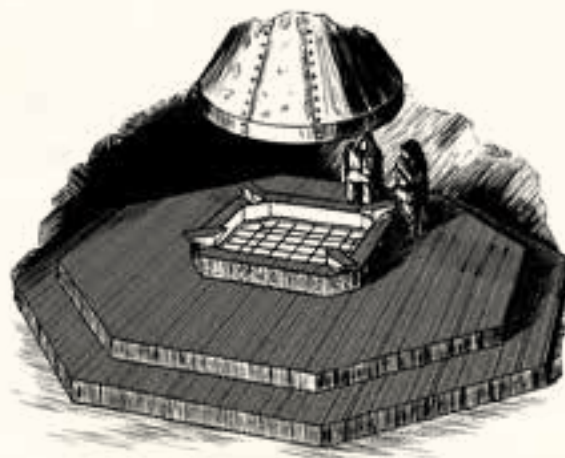
A looming presence over the entire city, the castle smolders and smokes like the head of a waking wyrm. Impressive as it is, with its scarred walls and sweeping defenses, the castle is merely the tip of the Dragon Forge itself. It runs beneath the city, pulsing like a colossal heart that pounds with

steam and molten metal. Large enough to be a district of the city in its own right, the Dragon Forge is where Ironfire began... and many say that as long as the Forge functions, the city will endure.

The oldest structure in Ironfire, the Dragon Forge is the entire reason for the city's existence. The thundering of trip hammers and the hissing quench of steam sound night and day from deep in the earth, and every day new wonders and follies are dreamed up by those who toil within the Forge's depths. The Forge is where ideas become reality, and where even failures can be melted down, and transformed into something new, unique and strange.

NOTEWORTHY LOCATIONS

- **Smokefield:** A collection of outbuildings near the Steaming Gate, Smokefield is the central control for the city's underground steam heat, as well as its sewage and water flow. And much like the main body of the Dragon Forge, Smokefield extends down into the ground, with the control mechanisms installed above. In addition to monitoring and controlling the processes to keep the city running, excess pressure is often vented from these facilities by opening exterior pipes that spume steam high into the air. The engineers who keep Smokefield running are said to be some of the most important public servants in the entire city. And other than the castle built over the main body of the forge, nowhere is more impregnable than Smokefield.
- **Slag Runs:** Outside the city wall are thick, frozen waves of impurities that have melded together and been expelled from the Forge. Rather than simply being left to cause untold damage to the surrounding area,



engineers have dug canals through the exterior, lining them with stone and installing channel locks to cut off the flow as necessary. This allows an area to be completely filled, and sectioned off, then when the slag is cooled it can be removed, broken up and used for a new purpose. In times of crisis, though, the Slag Runs also act as a deadly defense, providing a molten barrier to any who would attempt to assault the city walls.

- **Castle:** While the underground chambers of the Dragon Forge are off-limits to anyone who has not been granted access by the Forge Master or one of their appointees, a great deal of day-to-day business is conducted in the more public aspects of the Castle. Agreements for acquisition of raw materials are made, public meetings of the city's district representatives take place, votes are cast, terms of employment are agreed to and dozens of other small but necessary tasks are handled. Though there are workshops in both wings of the Castle where craftsmen put finishing and detail work on unique items produced by the Forge, the bulk of the work is done below.

PERSONS OF INTEREST

- **Forge Master Darris:** A man with a short beard and broad shoulders, Darris was at the top of his class during his time at the academy. The last Forge Master who met Aragor Irons before the city's founder passed, Darris is driven by a need to ensure his legacy as someone who honored his position and his city. Already responsible for several alterations to Ironfire's infrastructure, Darris is well-regarded by the people as a whole for the improvements he's made thus far. Though friendly and curious, Darris has a noted dislike of charlatans and frauds. "One can only accomplish the impossible through action," as he so often says. "Not through belief and wishes."

- **Vars "Breaker" Longspear:** An orc-blooded man with the shoulders of a bull and the laugh of an amused donkey, Vars is a swinger on one of the hammer crews that plies the Slag Runs. Taking care to avoid sharp edges and pockets of strange-looking materials, Vars tries not to concern himself with what's in the slag, or where it's going to go. He just fills his cart, collects his earnings and ensures he keeps his head wrap and goggles in place so he can go home without injury at the end of the day.
- **Shenara Locke:** The Castle seneschal, Shenara handles the everyday affairs within the towering structure. From scheduling meetings, to making appointments, to handling documents and queries from potential patrons, she is in many ways the face of the Dragon Forge itself. With her thick, dark hair and friendly smile, she tends to make a good first impression. Those who see past her professional mask note that her eyes are as hard as the walls of the Castle, though, and anyone who's done business with her will find that she's as immovable as the battlements once she has staked her position.

WHISPERS AND RUMORS

- There have been more shifts going out into the Slag Runs than usual, and speculation is running rampant about what that might mean. A lot of people seem to think that the Forge is simply increasing production, and so it wants to have plenty of overflow space for additional slag to flow to. Some suggest that something of value floated out with the slag, and the Forge is trying to recover whatever it was before any details leak to those who might try to steal it.
- An entire wing of the Castle has been put under guard, and cut off from the public. Workers of all varieties have been seen going in and out of the area, but even in the Castle itself no one

seems to know what's going on in there. Speculation is running rampant that this might be the culmination of another of the Forge Master's pet projects, and if whatever is being built functions the way he intends that it might mark the beginning of another large-scale addition to the city.

- Shipments of rare and unusual materials, including drake's bones, cultures of various slimes, troll's blood and more have been arriving at the Forge. No one seems to know why, but the bizarre nature of the shipments has led to some fairly wild speculation about what purpose they might serve once they've been lowered down into the belly of the massive operation.

DRAGON STEEL

A rare substance for centuries, the metallurgists in Ironfire have made dragon steel a significantly more widely available material. While there are still individuals who cling to the status of "natural" dragon steel dug from the earth as being more potent, durable and true, there is functionally no difference between the two... except that the steel produced by the Dragon Forge is of a far more uniform quality.

One reason the metal is so prized is that dragon steel weapons can hold an edge far better than nearly any other non-magical blade. When sharpened with a whetstone (a process that takes roughly 15 minutes of focused work), a non-magical dragon steel weapon that deals piercing or slashing damage deals +1 damage for the next 24 hours. Additionally, dragon steel is so resilient that it can ignore the first touch of a rust monster. Additionally, scouring the weapon after an encounter with a rust monster (a process that takes a short rest) can remove all the negatives stacked on it. This cannot repair broken weapons or ammunition, however.

CINDERSCALE LIZARDFOLK

Native to many volcanic regions, the cinderscale lizardfolk have been the dominant species in the region surrounding Ironfire for several hundred years. Unlike lizardfolk who live in lakes and swampy conditions, the cinderscale have adjusted to better suit their volcanic homes. Though they still have roughly the same size and physical appearance as their watery kin, cinderscales tend toward darker scales to blend with their environment, with fiery colors on their crests and frills.

The clans in the Dragonsbreath Mountains have operated as part of a confederacy for generations. Originally established to prevent inter-clan warfare and promote cooperation, each clan is mostly left to their own devices by the others unless their presence is specifically asked for. Safe passage tends to be granted through each other's lands, and when there is a clear and present danger the clans unite to deal with it.

Those who wish to play cinderscale characters can use the following variant lizardfolk abilities for them.

SPECIES TRAITS

Ability Score Modifiers: +2 Dexterity, +2 Constitution; Cinderscales are as quick as they are tough.

Type: Humanoid (reptilian)

Size: Medium

Speed: 30 feet

Languages: Sulfurus (language of the cinderscale confederacy). Bonus languages may be gained for a higher Intelligence as normal.

Low Light Vision: Cinderscales can see twice as far as humans in conditions of low light.

Fire Hardened: Cinderscales have Fire Resistance

Rapid Scuttle: Cinderscales have a Climb speed of 15 feet



Natural Attacks: Cinderscales gain a bite attack that deals 1d4 points of piercing damage.

CINDERSCALE VARIANT ABILITIES

Many of the clans among the confederacy are known for certain, defining traits and unusual features. Though these variants may be chosen for any cinderscale character, as they've spread due to intermarrying, travel and other factors, they are most strongly associated with the particular clan attached to it.

Ash Claws: With pale, light gray scales, the Ash Claws are known for their unique ability to vanish into their surroundings; a useful trait for those who stalk the burning, coal-fire canyons of their mountain. Ash Claws can change the color of their scales to blend into mountainous, subterranean and urban environments, gaining Advantage on Stealth checks. This ability does not function if an Ash Claw is wearing armor, or clothing that covers more than ¼ of their exposed hide. This ability replaces Rapid Scuttle.

Black Fangs: Named for the color of their long fangs, these cinderscales have a deadly venom that can slay their prey. As a bonus action whenever a Black Fang deals damage with their bite attack, they can choose to inject that target with their venom. They can use this ability once per short rest. This ability replaces Rapid Scuttle and Fire Hardened. **Black Fang Venom Injury,** Constitution save, DC is equal to 8 + the Black Fang's Constitution modifier + the Black Fang's Proficiency bonus; on a failed save the creature takes 2d6 poison damage, and is poisoned for 5 rounds. On a successful save the creature takes half that damage, and is not poisoned. A poisoned creature must make a fresh Constitution save every round, or continue taking damage from the Black Fang Venom. When a creature finally saves they only take half damage from that round, and the poisoned

effect ends. The damage increases to 3d6 at 6th level, 4d6 at 11th level, and 5d6 at 16th level.

Fire Crest: Clear-headed and clear-sighted, the Fire Crests' eyes have adapted to the unique environments of their particular home. Fire Crests gain the unique ability to see 15 feet through fire, smoke, fog and ash. This ability replaces Rapid Scuttle and their bite attack.

Flame Speakers: Able to speak the language of fire, this tribe has an intuitive connection to the molten veins of the world. A Flame Speaker who casts a spell that deals fire damage treats their casting stat as 2 points higher for the purpose of making attacks, and determining the save DC against that spell. This ability replaces Rapid Scuttle and Fire Hardened, as they must give into the flame in exchange for its power.

Razor Skulls: Huge even by the standards of cinderscales, the Razor Skulls have thick necks, elongated teeth and bony crests almost like horns rising from their heads. Their powerful jaws and large teeth deal 1d6 damage instead of 1d4. This damage increases to 1d8 at 6th level, 1d10 at 11th level, and 2d6 at 16th level. This replaces Rapid Scuttle.

DRAGONSBREATH SALAMANDERS

Native to the caverns of the Dragonsbreath Mountains, these huge lizards are named for the monstrous beasts of myth. Roughly 10 feet long from nose to tail, these creatures have thick, wedge-shaped heads and rows of short, heavy horns. They tend to stay in well-heated caverns, only venturing out for food, or to mate. When happy these huge lizards radiate a pleasant warmth that can heat an entire room, but when threatened they burn even hotter, doing serious harm to anything that gets close to

them.

Ridden by the cinderscales, many of whom have tamed mounts to make traversing the mountains easier, they've also seen use in Ironfire. Particularly in the Dragon Forge, where they make excellent beasts of burden, unbothered at all by the extreme temperatures all around them.

DRAGONSBREATH SALAMANDER

Large Animal

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 23 (4d10 +3)

Speed 30 feet **Climb** 30 feet

Strength 16 (+3)

Dexterity 12 (+1)

Constitution 14 (+2)

Intelligence 2 (-4)

Wisdom 10 (+0)

Charisma 5 (-3)

Senses *darkvision* 30 feet

Languages -

Challenge 1

Special Traits

Volcanic Adaptation Dragonsbreath salamanders are immune to fire damage

Burning Bite The internal temperature of a Dragonsbreath salamander is scorching, dealing an additional 1d6 fire damage on a successful bite.

Actions *Bite* **Melee Weapon Attack** +5 to hit; reach 5 feet, one target; *Hit* 10 damage (1d8+4 piercing damage+1d6 fire damage)

Note: Items made primarily from the skin of Dragonsbreath salamanders have fire resistance, and if the item is a large piece of clothing such as a cloak, coat, jerkin, etc., then it grants its wearer fire resistance as well. Salamander hide is prized by wizards who want to protect their spellbooks from the dangers of the adventuring life, and it's often a main component of protective

clothing for those who work in the hottest parts of the Dragon Forge. Smaller items such as spellbooks, belt pouches, gloves, etc. add 25 gp to their cost to be made with salamander hide, while larger items like cloaks, coats, backpacks, etc. add 75 gp.

NEW BACKGROUND: MERCENARY VETERAN

If you're good at something you should never do it for free, and the iron trade is replete with soldiers, enforcers, duelists and warriors who have taken this wisdom to heart. Whether you were born and trained in Ironfire, or you came to the city with an illustrious career of deployments under your belt, you know the secret to turning steel into gold is an element of danger, an ounce of fear and at least a few drops of blood.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics or Acrobatics, and Persuasion or Intimidation

Tool Proficiencies: Smith's tools

Equipment: A writ of recommendation from a previous client, a well-used honing stone, a small square of scouring chain, a set of traveling clothes, a banner or patch with your personal emblem, pouch of 10 gp of various mints and cities.

FEATURE: PRECEDING REPUTATION

There are bold mercenaries, and old mercenaries, but for someone to be both is practically unheard of. You've been in the trade long enough that people know your name and reputation, even outside the circles of soldiers of fortune.

When taking this background choose either a Good Reputation or a Bad Reputation. If you have a Good Reputation (you are honorable, stalwart and trustworthy), then you find that people respond well to you. People are always paying your tab at taverns, asking to hear tales of your adventures or

even offering you a place to stay when you need it. If you have a Bad Reputation then you can often get away with acts of petty theft and intimidation in civilized areas (walking out on tabs, refusing to pay for a room at the inn, etc.), and common folk will be afraid enough of the stories they've heard not to call you to task for it.

in need to provide aid, but they're also far more likely to be sought by wealthy clients. Those with a Bad Reputation may find the city watch keeping a sharper eye on them, and though they may also find wealthy paymasters at their doors, they tend to be far more unscrupulous individuals whose money is more than a little bloody.

Those with a Good Reputation may find they're often called upon by common folk

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A LESSON LEARNED

Oleg bellowed as bones cracked. Steel clattered as it fell to the paving stones, and the huge man's roar was cut off suddenly as the butt end of the staff slammed into his jaw, and spun his head. Eyes rolling, he stayed on his feet a moment longer before dropping to the ground in a heap. For a moment the crowd all around was silent, then whistles erupted, followed by curses. Coins exchanged hands as bets were settled. The young man knelt, placing his fingers on Oleg's neck, and then in front of his mouth.

"He'll live," the man with the staff said as he stood. "But I would get him to a healer, if you want him to be able to use that arm again.

Varian's mouth was tight with anger, his eyes dark and narrow. Fear erupted in them when the man with the staff crossed the circle toward him. The crowd around them went quiet. The man had won the duel handily enough, his spinning staff more than a match for Oleg's brute muscle. But he had the look of an outlander, and outlanders didn't always understand the rules of the duel. If he broke the rules the red cloaks would find him eventually, and there would be a trial, but that was small comfort to Varian, whose protector lay insensate in a heap on the flagstones.

"See here, now," Varian said, taking an involuntary step back. His voice had risen to a shrill pitch that he tried unsuccessfully to swallow. "You won. I commend you. Now if you'll excuse me--"

The man put a hand on Varian's shoulder, and Varian's voice died. The young man leaned down, and held his gaze. He waited a beat, ensuring he had Varian's undivided attention. The crowd around them was silent as a mural, except for Oleg's grunt of pain as he attempted to swim back up into consciousness.

"All I wanted was directions," the man said. "Where is the House of Black Banners?"

Murmurs rose at that, as excited onlookers began to speculate. The man paid them no mind, his gaze steady on Varian. For his part Varian might have looked less stunned if he had been struck. He gestured vaguely behind himself.

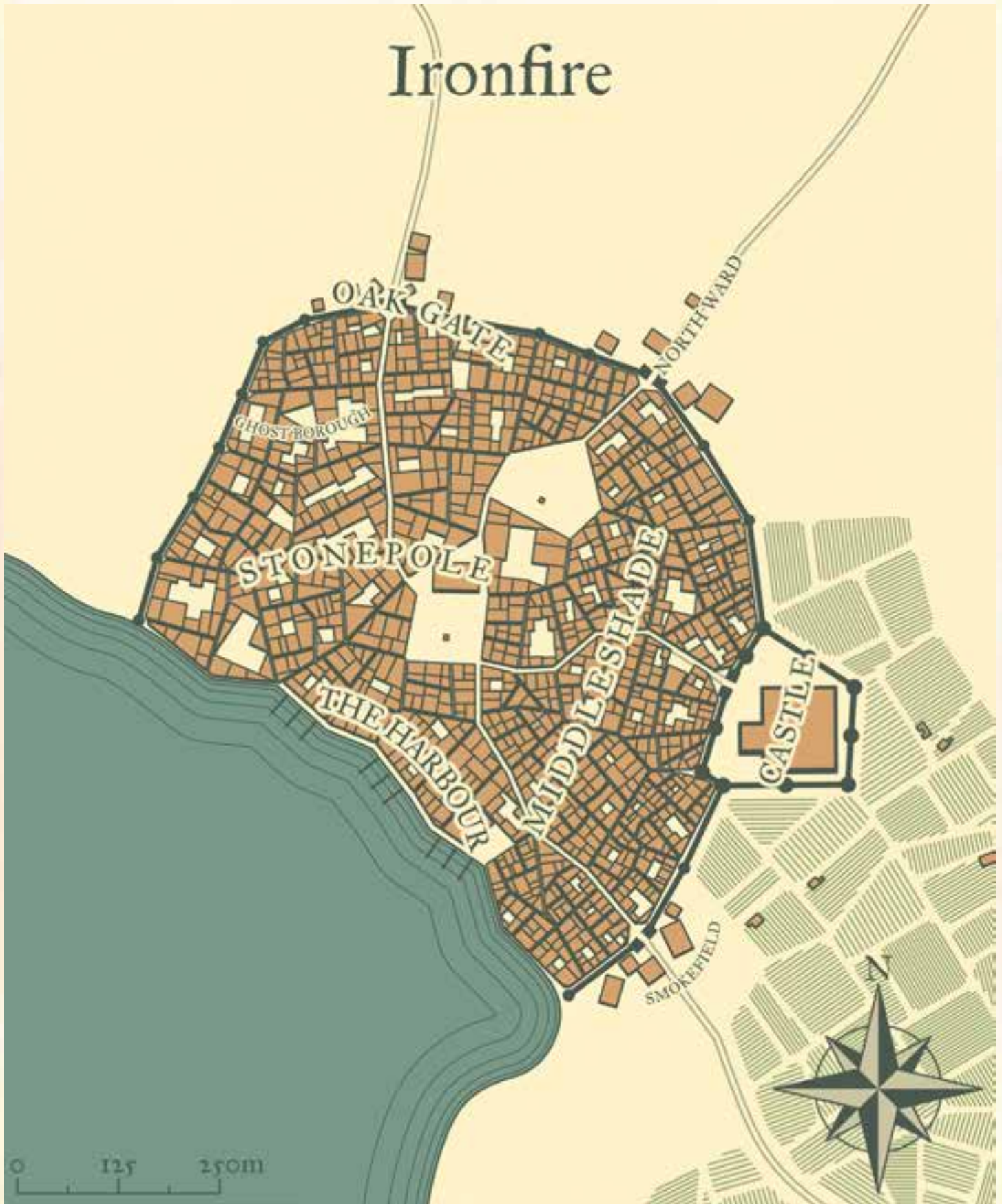
"Two blocks down, and turn toward the harbor," he said, looking at the unkempt man with the staff. "The black flags... they hang from the balcony above the door."

"Thank you," the young man said, enunciating the words to drive them home. He let go of Varian's shoulder, and smoothed the tunic he'd been gripping. "My uncle has been expecting me."

"Y-your uncle?" Varian asked as the man brushed past him, walking toward the chapter house of one of the city's more dangerous companies of freelances.

"Come by upon the morrow, if you wish," the young man called over his shoulder, his voice as friendly as could be. "If you're willing to step into the ring yourself, I'm sure he'd be happy to teach you to fight your own battles. I doubt you'll be as pretty as Oleg is by the time the lessons are done, though!"

IRONFIRE MAP



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Sundara

Dawn of a New Age

Nestled in the Dragonsbreath Mountains, the city of Ironfire sprawls like some great wyrm of legend. A legendary producer of fabled dragon steel, Ironfire is a city of industry and invention, where innovation and adventure often make for strange bedfellows. It's said that fortunes are made within those city walls every, single day.

For those who think to simply walk in and claim their good fortune, though, this city has teeth. Mercenaries ply their trade through nearly every boulevard, and honor duels are a daily spectacle in the city's many squares. Shadowy business happens in the darker corners, and everyone from merchant mariners to privateers is looking for an opening.

Do you have what it takes to forge your path in the City of Steel?

"Ironfire: The City of Steel" is the first installment in the Sundara: Dawn of a New Age setting. However, the city itself can easily be adapted to existing campaigns and settings for use in your current game!

This supplement includes:

- City map and history of Ironfire
- District-by-district break down including notable NPCs, important locations, and rumors
- Rules for using items forged from dragon steel
- Rules for playing cinderscale lizard folk, native to the volcanic Dragonsbreath Mountains
- Unique backgrounds for veteran mercenaries from the City of Steel