

C.J. Wilson

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Runedar, Initial Plotline Proposition

Premise

As we've mentioned, Argon is the exiled former king of the dwarves. After he was exiled, he wandered for a time, hoping to find somewhere interesting and outside of the influence of most of the major kingdoms. He tended to avoid populated areas as best he could, and eventually stumbled upon his present location. He noticed early on that the effects of the nearest Obelisk seemed weakened, and figured he was simply "out of range." Either way, he set up shop there, cultivated the land, and gradually explored the mines down below. He's been there a couple years, now, and has grown comfortable... if a little restless.

The inciting incident for the game occurs as he's exploring those mines. He stumbles into an ancient shaft, and realizes it was likely created centuries ago. Despite that, the structures supporting it still seem pristine (if dusty), and he decides to explore. As he does, he begins to recognize the writing along the wall, and on some objects scattered throughout these larger tunnels: they look like the same sort of inscriptions on the Obelisks.

Pushing further, Argon finds a massive chamber with what appears to be an inactive Obelisk Root (I'll explain more, later). Intelligent and curious as he is, he finds a way to activate it and decides to take a risk: he turns the damn thing on.

He feels its effects immediately. The crystals and text of the Roots seem to light up (though I imagine the visual elements should be up to the design team), and rather than feeling strengthened or weakened, Argon feels *freed*.

Returning to the surface, Argon sees that an Obelisk has risen up out of the lake or river near his home (and probably messed up a good chunk of the area, which will give some repair and crafting tutorials for the player). This Obelisk looks different from the rest. Newer, in a sense. Zeel, I figure this will be your domain.

Either way, Argon quickly realizes two things: first, that this Obelisk is unique, in that it neutralizes the effects of the other Obelisks. Second, and due to feeling, for the first time in his life, like he is unaffected by an Obelisk, he realizes that there is nowhere he's traveled that is truly outside their influence. Which makes his current home the *only* place that people can live "on the same footing."

Then, Argon remembers something: his map of the mythical Veins of the World. He pulls it out and looks through it... and realizes that what the dwarves always *thought* were imaginary cave systems was actually an incomplete map of the Obelisk system.

He's quickly emotionally overwhelmed. This curious dwarf has found a new mystery that *no-one* else has discovered, and that seems to link back to an interest he's always had. And, what's more, he looks around his home and begins to test the boundaries of this Counter-Obelisk, and realizes it stretches for miles... far enough, in fact, to fit a small country.

And with that, he begins to fantasize about a land where people can live together as equals, and a land where he could have a second shot at leadership. That desire begins to clash with his curiosity, and his interest to explore this mystery. Could he really be free to investigate if he was tasked with leadership again?

Either way, he realizes that the path forward is the same: he needs to travel to each country's capital and start to investigate the Obelisks, and maybe start recruiting like-minded fellows that can help him along the way.

Obelisk Roots

This is mostly a visual thing, but it was an idea I figured I'd throw out. Blade, you wanted the Obelisks to be a lot like floating crystals. I figured that, below every Obelisk (sometimes deep below, sometimes on the surface) is an "Obelisk Root." These look like docks, as though-- if the Obelisk fell-- the crystal would rest snugly inside. But, while obviously artificial and half-crystalline, these "docks" seem to spread out into the ground below in a way that's disturbingly organic, as though they've spread and "rooted" into the ground like trees. One suspicious element of these Roots is that they *always* seem to mark the deepest underground anyone can venture. Attempts to mine underneath (rare, but they happen), usually result in mining into completely empty chambers, or striking impossibly hard (and extremely out-of-place) stone. They've *long* been an object of Argon's curiosity, as even the greatest scientists and craftsmen can't seem to place them.

Questions for Blade:

You shot down my previous idea for Karnoss's overthrow of Argon. Was there a particular motive you wanted to have for his overthrow, or a particular way you wanted it to go? Did you want it to lean towards bloody and violent, or more political and subtle?

Did you have any preferred gender norms in this world? Did you want it to be egalitarian throughout, or for some groups to have rigid gender norms or entrenched sexism in some shape or another?