(*WIP*) Connection to Main Quest (Artifact Quest)

Sequence of Events

Start of the Run

- The city where the Artifact is located is famous, and already marked on the Map (only a very basic description during the first run)
- Only general Direction is known, exact path changes from Run to Run
- The fact that there is an Artifact there is not common knowledge, so first time players might just be unlucky and not discover the Artifact before losing their run

Approaching the City

1. Players hear rumors about a city with excellent smiths
2. As the players get closer to the city, enemies start to be better equipped and merchants have noticeably better weapons and armor
3. When they're 1-2 clearings away from the city, they might hear of rumors that there's something very dangerous near the city outskirts, closely guarded
4. Inside the city, the fact that the Artifact is close by becomes clear

NPCs and Rumors

- **Weary Blacksmith:** *"Steel from that city? Toughest you'll ever find. But there's talk that their skill isn't just from hard work—something down there keeps pushing them forward, whether they like it or not."*
- **Wandering Scholar:** *"There's a ruin near the city. No one's allowed near it. But every so often, figures flicker inside—shadows moving like men. They say it's just tricks of the light. I don't believe that."*
- **Battle-Scarred Mercenary:** *"I knew a man who tried to sneak inside. Next day, someone—something—showed up, fighting just like him. It wasn't him, though. Not anymore."*

Inside the City

□ Positive Standing with the Faction:

- Players are **welcomed** into the city, free to shop and interact with **special NPCs**.
- The guards **warn** them of the cave's dangers but do not interfere if they attempt entry.
- **Potential Perk:** They may receive **a powerful weapon or armor** as a parting gift.
- Conversation with the **Captain of the Guard** at the Gate of the cave: *"You've got steel in your eyes, outsider. I won't stop you if you wish to test your mettle. But listen well—what lurks in that cave remembers every face it sees. If you fall, you'll fight yourself the next time someone enters. Take this—it may just keep you from becoming a ghost of your own making."*

□□ Neutral Standing with the Faction:

- The city is open for trade, but access to the cave is **denied unless the guards are convinced or bribed**.
- **Combat only begins inside the cave** after the Artifact's influence takes hold.
- Conversation with a **suspicious Guard** at the Gate of the cave**:** *"You think you can just stroll into the depths? No chance. That place is sealed for a reason. Unless you've got something to offer—or a damn good reason—you're not getting past me."*

□□ Negative Standing with the Faction:

- The city gates are **closed** to the player.
- **The guards will attack on sight** if an attempt is made to enter the cave.
- **Combat begins outside the cave**, forcing players to **fight their way in**.
- Conversation with the **Commander of the City Watch** before entering the city**:** *"We don't let your kind through these gates. And if you think you'll set foot near that cave, you'll be dead before you take three steps. Turn around, or die where you stand."*

Combat

Outskirts of the Cave (Artifact is Passive)

- **Enemies wander randomly**, and only attack within range.
- **Enemies spawn slowly** and only after another unit has been defeated.
- **There is no time limit**, allowing careful exploration.
- Guards may **follow the player**—offering assistance or hostility depending on past interactions.

Deeper Within (Artifact is Active)

- **Enemies rush towards the player,** relentlessly attacking the player's units.
- **Enemies spawn rapidly (every 1-3 turns)**, up to a theoretical maximum.
- A **timer starts**, and the player's goal is to survive until the timer runs out.

- Guards, if present, **will retreat the moment the countdown begins**.
- **(Potential Mechanic: The Artifact can be attacked to lower the timer—but doing so is extremely difficult.)**

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