Night Market DND Ref

- **The Lantern Widow — quiet, maternal, melancholy.** Speaks softly and never rushes anyone. Treats death as ordinary rather than horrifying. She remembers every story customers tell her about someone they've lost and becomes noticeably warmer toward people who speak sincerely. She doesn't tolerate jokes made *at the expense of the dead*, but enjoys fond or funny stories about them. Very much: *“Tell me their name. Someone should remember it.”*
- **Grinn, Collector of Teeth — cheerful, gross, and incredibly sociable.** He's the guy who laughs too loudly at every good fight story while polishing somebody's molar. Loves scars and immediately asks where you got yours. He isn't especially bloodthirsty; he just thinks surviving violence makes for fantastic storytelling. Will absolutely offer somebody money for an interesting tooth. Probably has horrifyingly good dental hygiene himself.
- **Sister Pallid — genuinely compassionate, but unsettlingly clinical.** Has the manner of an excellent hospice nurse who happens to be a vampire. Calls adventurers “dear” and calmly examines wounds while talking. She's fascinated by people who *could* have killed someone and chose not to. Doesn't preach pacifism—she understands sometimes people need killing—but believes mercy has tremendous value precisely because it costs something.
- **The Velvet Puppeteer — enormous fucking theater kid.** Everything is dramatic. Everything. Buying a potion can somehow become a three-act performance. Loves lies when they're **good lies**, and may knowingly play along with obvious deception if the player commits to the bit. His marionettes heckle customers, whisper commentary, applaud good performances, and occasionally contradict him. He might give discounts for entertaining him.
- **Old Vey, the Drowned Astrologer — cryptic because he genuinely cannot stop seeing possibilities.** He'll answer “How much is this?” with *“Less than you shall someday pay for ignorance.”* Then, after an awkward silence: *“...twelve gold.”* He's actually fairly friendly underneath all the prophecy bullshit. Absolutely delighted by questions he's never been asked before. Sometimes says something ominous that turns out to mean absolutely nothing important.
- **The Ash Merchant — calm, professional, almost brutally straightforward.** He looks like the most dangerous merchant there and is probably one of the easiest to deal with. No theatrics. No judgment. He respects people who admit what they want: power, revenge, wealth, fame, whatever. What annoys him is pretending your ambition is nobler than it actually is. *“You want the sword because you want to be stronger. Good. We understand one another.”*
- **Mother Mire — affectionate, mischievous, and deeply nostalgic.** Treats memories like other merchants treat coins. She'll ask seemingly random things like what your childhood bedroom smelled like or the first meal you remember loving. She's not necessarily stealing those memories—sometimes she simply **likes hearing them**. Has grandma energy until you remember flowers are growing out through her rib cage. Probably gives people bizarre little gifts because “you'll need that eventually.”

- **Xalith the Starved — impeccably polite aristocrat with an addiction problem he's handling remarkably responsibly.** Never enters someone's mind without permission because he considers it appallingly rude. Talks about emotions the way a wine snob discusses vintages. *“Oh. Genuine humiliation followed immediately by righteous anger. Remarkable.”* He may ask permission to taste particularly powerful emotions. Strong emotions make him briefly lose his polished composure, which embarrasses him tremendously.
- **The Knight of No Banner — stoic, formal, but not humorless.** Communicates partly through gestures because of the whole **no head** complication; perhaps his voice emanates faintly from the armor when necessary. Respects direct questions and direct answers. Doesn't care whether you're good or evil nearly as much as whether you keep your word. He'll happily sell a murderous rogue a sword but may refuse service to someone he watched casually break a promise five minutes earlier.
- **The Empty Stall / its unnamed keeper — unnervingly ordinary.** I'd make this one the complete opposite of what players expect. When the vendor finally appears, they're friendly, conversational, and seemingly normal. No theatrical creepiness whatsoever. **That's what makes them terrifying.** They somehow know everyone's names. They remember conversations that haven't happened. Occasionally they'll respond to something a character *almost* said. If asked who they are, maybe: *“I'm the shopkeeper.”* Asked their name: *“I don't believe I've needed one yet.”*

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- **The Lantern Widow:** Warm but melancholy. Loves hearing stories about people who are gone because remembrance matters to her. She might ask, *“Were they loved?”* without prying further. She doesn't treat living people as outsiders—just temporary visitors.
- **Grinn:** Genuinely jovial. The tooth thing isn't meant as intimidation; **he's a jeweler and teeth happen to be his preferred material.** He'll excitedly identify species, age, damage, etc. He probably thinks living adventurers are fantastic because they always have battle stories. *“That scar! Oh, that's a good one. Sit, sit. Tell Grinn.”*
- **Sister Pallid:** Basically the Night Market's physician/apothecary. Gentle, professional, compassionate. She has spent centuries around death, so saving someone's life still matters precisely because she understands that death eventually wins anyway. **There's no reason to hurry it.**
- **Velvet Puppeteer:** Flamboyant entertainer and salesman. He probably actually performs for the city's invisible population. When living people arrive, he's thrilled because **new audience!** He appreciates bullshit when it's *artful bullshit*. A bard could become his favorite customer within five minutes.
- **Old Vey:** An eccentric old scholar who happens to be drowned and floating. His prophecies aren't threats; that's just how his brain works now. He might interrupt himself: *“Three moons hence, beneath a red sky, you shall—ah. Forgive me. You asked about the compass. Twenty gold.”*
- **Ash Merchant:** Extremely businesslike and relaxed. Being permanently on fire isn't noteworthy to him. He sells weapons because weapons are useful things. He respects ambition because he'll happily admit his own. Probably one of the easiest vendors to negotiate with because he hates euphemisms.

- **Mother Mire:** Very grandmotherly hag energy. Trades stories, memories, odd ingredients and comforts. She might feed the PCs while negotiating because **they look thin**, even if they're absolutely not. The disturbing part is how casually she treats things like memories as commodities: *“Oh, don't sell me your mother's face, dear. You'll regret that one. Give me your third birthday instead; nobody needs all of them.”*
- **Xalith:** I'd make him almost absurdly ethical about consuming emotions. He **buys them**. He's a merchant. If he wants to experience your terror, rage, embarrassment, love, whatever, he tells you exactly what he's purchasing and what taking it means. He may be horrified by ordinary mind flayers: *“They simply take people's thoughts? Without negotiating? How barbaric.”*
- **Knight of No Banner:** The quintessential regular. Formal, quiet and extremely trustworthy. His merchandise is immaculate. A bargain with him means exactly what was said—nothing more and nothing less. He's probably one of those merchants where experienced Market visitors tell newcomers, *“If the Knight tells you something is worth the price, it is.”*
- **The Empty Stall:** This is where I'd change my earlier idea most. I wouldn't necessarily make its keeper sinister. **Make them incomprehensible.** They aren't trying to scare anyone. Cause and effect just seem slightly wrong around them. They might hand you your change before you've decided to purchase something. Then you eventually decide to purchase it. Nobody else reacts because apparently this is just that fucking vendor.

Revision #2
Created 2026-10-04 19:31:28 UTC by PBNinja
Updated 2026-10-04 19:32:17 UTC by PBNinja