

Rice Mineralogical Survey of 1948

[\[The Day After Ragnarok\]](#)

The Rice Mineralogical Survey of 1948 has every resource that Vancouver can throw at it, which admittedly isn't much; but what's left of the Canadian government takes the Survey very seriously. It's easy enough to issue a decree to get the Albertan oil fields running again; but to do that, the drillers will need (among many other things) metals of all sorts. Steel, copper, titanium, nickel, chromium -- and stockpiles are low, after a decade of war and Armageddon. Worse, global trade isn't remotely what it used to be. Fortunately, Canada has a wealth of mineral resources; unfortunately, at a minimum known Canadian titanium and nickel deposits are too far away from civilization to exploit properly.

So the government at Vancouver has decided to do a mineral survey of the barbaric wastes of Alberta and western Manitoba for mineral deposits that **can** be exploited properly by civilization. They've picked for its head Professor Kate Rice, herself formerly of Manitoba: the prospector and adventurer soloed a dogsled run for a thousand miles from the Winnipeg Glacier to Vancouver (while in her sixties, no less), which should give some

indication as to her ability to function in the post-Serpentfall Canadian wilderness. If there's anybody better out there at finding mineral deposits, they'd almost certainly would rather want to work for Prof. Rice anyway.

And there is definitely work available. Rice is going to need everything from surveyors to armed guards for her teams, and is absolutely ready to hire an eclectic team of freelancers and let them keep working together; if she was thirty years younger, Kate Rice would be a full-fledged freelance adventurer herself. The pay's decent enough, but the real benefits are in ancillary salvage opportunities and generating goodwill with the Canadian government. Neither Rice nor her superiors will fuss overmuch if teams pick up a little something on the side, just as long as the minerals get found and tagged for exploitation. Vancouver will also pay for information with military value, too. Not extravagantly, but enough to encourage future tips and reports.

So what are the complications? Well, there are the usual monsters: mostly wendigo, this far north (although furry giant spiders have been reported in some abandoned mines). Bandits, too, or at least the less ambitious bandits. The *more* ambitious bandits -- including the ones who wish to go legitimate, or at least become respectable

-- are actually more likely to let the teams go unmolested through 'their' territory. After all, if a new mineral deposit is discovered, then **somebody** will have to actually run the mines. Since Vancouver is so far away, surely it makes more sense for local entrepreneurs to do the hard work?

Vancouver does have an opinion on that, in fact; but Kate Rice has a different one, and it's much more results-based. The Albertan oil fields will need the metals; as long as actual slavery isn't involved she'll care more about whether the bandit chief can make quota reliably than anything else. This can lead to all sorts of conflicts later, of course; but then, if there are two potential mining barons in contention for the same deposit Prof. Rice won't mind if the nicer baron wins the mineral rights. As long as the metal gets mined.

Last note: Professor Kate Rice was a noted beauty when she was in her prime: six feet tall, blond hair, and typically referred to by her contemporaries as 'statuesque.' Currently she's sixty five years old and had been retired for years; her current appearance is up to the GM (the pulps could justify anything from 'still retaining traces of her youthful beauty' to 'tough as nails and as wrinkled as a walnut' to 'could pass for a woman half her age'). Whatever her appearance, players should discover very

quickly that Rice knows every adventurer's excuse, gambit, weasel, and fast-talk in the book. She should, after all: she was one herself, for most of her life. And, really, isn't she still one **now**?

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