



OTHER MINDS

The Unofficial Role - Playing Magazine for

JRR Tolkien's Middle-earth and beyond

Publisher

Other Minds Volunteers

Co-Editors

Thomas Morwinsky
Hawke Robinson

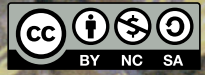
Artwork/Maps

- Sergio Artigas
- Onur Bakar
- Steve Bellshaw
- Matej Cadil
- Ralph Damiani
- Jenny Dolfen
- Anke Eissmann
- Mark Fisher
- Wouter Florusse
- Daniel Govar
- Gin Hardiarso
- John Howe
- Pierre Joubert
- Pawel Kardis
- Liiga Klavina
- JLazarusEB
- Turner Mohan
- Nolanos
- Abe Papakhian
- Jereme Peabody
- Vincent Pompetti
- Jan Pospisil
- Peter Xavier Price
- John Emanuel Shannon
- Ari Suonpää
- Angels T.I.

Production Staff

Thomas Morwinsky
Christian Limbach

Unless otherwise noted, every contribution in this magazine is published under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike license (CC BY NC SA). The exact license of a given contribution can be found at the beginning of each contribution.



Submissions

You can submit your contributions by sending them via email to

othermindsmagazine@gmx.net

Please send as plain text for all text contributions. For artwork and maps, please send the files as .PNG or .JPEG/JPG (**please no TIFF or GIF**) at a minimum resolution of 300 dpi and no greater than 600 dpi. If your file is too large to send by email (more than a couple of MB), then you can create an account on the Other Minds website

<http://othermindsmagazine.com>

and upload your contribution there. Then send us an email notifying us of your submission on the website.

Licensing

We chose to use a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike license as our default licensing template. If the author does not specify otherwise, every contribution is licensed under said Creative Commons license.

It can be accessed here: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/us/>

Disclaimers

Neither the Editors nor Other Minds Magazine hold themselves responsible for the opinions expressed by the writers of articles or letters in this magazine. The opinions expressed in the articles, columns, advertisements, forums, essays and opinions sections are those of the writers/advertisers and not those of Other Minds Magazine or its staff. The contents of this magazine are the personal opinions of the authors and do not reflect the opinions of the publisher or editors. To the extent permitted by law, we do not accept any responsibility for any statement in the material contained in this publication. While every effort has been made to correct errors in essay articles before they appear, this magazine may include certain inaccuracies, errors, or omissions. Other Minds Magazine makes no representations as to the suitability, reliability, availability, timeliness, and accuracy of the information in this magazine for any purpose.

Other Minds Magazine is an unofficial fan-based publication (both online and sometimes in print) created for those who love to role play in J.R.R. Tolkien's world of Middle-earth (and beyond) using any game system they wish. This magazine provides original scholarly articles of interest to Tolkien enthusiasts whether they are role playing gamers or not. There is no affiliation between the creators of this publication and any current or previous owners of the Tolkien copyrights, including but not limited to Sophisticated Games, Cubicle 7, Decipher, Mithril Miniatures, The Saul Zaentz Company d/b/a Tolkien Enterprises, the Tolkien Estate, New Line Cinema, or any other Tolkien license holders. This publication is 100% free and Other Minds Magazine does not accept any kind of financial reimbursement in any way. Online issues are available in PDF format at <http://www.othermindsmagazine.com>

Advertisements

Any company or producer of products related to role-playing in Middle-earth are invited to submit advertisements free of any charges within the pages of this magazine.

Please contact othermindsmagazine@gmx.net if you have any questions or advertisements you'd like to submit.

Fair Use

The copyrighted images on pages 15, 20, 21 and 134 are copyrighted by their respective owners. It is believed that the use of this image, in the not-for-profit scholarly online fanzine *Other Minds*, qualifies as fair use under copyright law in the United States of America. (<http://www.copyright.gov/fls/fl102.html>).

CONTENT

Editorial 5
by Thomas Morwinsky

The Road Goes Ever On 7
by Thomas Morwinsky

Inside Information 15
by Thomas Morwinsky

 **Middle-earth in Miniature IV: The Elves** 17
by José Enrique Vacas de la Rosa

 **Bree - Expanded Campaign Notes**..... 39
by Olaf “Falenthal” Anguera

 **Review: Erebor** 49
by Thomas Morwinsky

 **A King with no Folk** 52
by Olaf “Falenthal” Anguera

 **Divided Arnor** 73
by Thomas Morwinsky

 **The Black Arrow** 92
by David Cole

 **Buckleberry Tales** 119
by Peter Bergman

EDITORIAL: SURE AS SHIRETALK...

... and surely not news from Bree is the idea that this Issue is almost on schedule – a rather unusual event if you have followed the past several ones. The chances are good that we will be able to put another Issue (#20) by the end of the year or early next year. So keep an eye on our announcements.

Regarding gaming systems, this Issue is similar to #18 with TOR being again our focus. With *Adventures in Middle-earth (AME)* being out for some time, we plan to give this some room and have already one possible contribution in the pipeline which will then likely be published in *Other Minds, Issue 20!*

Much has happened since the publication of Issue #18. The most surprising ones came from Cucicle 7 itself. See *Inside Information* for more details. Connected to this we have also discovered a forum dedicated to all the game worlds used by and for (A)D&D games – and Middle-earth being one of them. Please also check out *Inside Information* for more details on all these news – and the advert on page 72!

This brings us also to the most important question – what to expect in this Issue of *Other Minds*?

Let's begin with the postponed instalment of our miniature series. *Middle-earth in miniature IV: The Elves* by long-time contributor José Enrique Vacas de la Rosa provides us with another excellent treatment of miniatures fit for Middle-earth gaming or just for enjoyment.

Next comes *Bree – Expanded Campaign Notes* by Olaf “Falenthal” Anguera. Here he builds his ideas on the published information, greatly enhancing it and providing greater depth to the area and people.

Following on its heels comes the the review of *Erebor – The Lonely Mountain* (by myself). This campaign supplement for TOR returns to the roots of the game in Rhovanion with infor-

mation on the Lonely Mountain (and much more beyond that).

We continue with material for TOR: Olaf did it not only once but twice this time. Here you can find his *A King with no People* – an adventure in Rohan, building on the published *Horse-lord of Rohan* supplement by C7. Enjoy adventures in an area with not so clearly drawn lines of good and evil.

The following contribution leaves the area of TOR and deals with a setting and background topic in Eriador in an era long before *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings: Divided Arnor* by myself provides information on the rulers and events in Eriador between the 9th and 20th century of the Third Age. It is partly inspired by information from MERP supplements, but is in no way bound by or to its canon.

With this we return to TOR-related stuff. *The Black Arrow* picks up on a theme briefly brushed in *The Hobbit* and masterfully makes a whole adventure out of it. Have you ever wondered what happened to the arrow which so masterfully brought down mighty Smaug? If so, don't miss this great opportunity to explore this version!

Last but not least we return to the Shire – or almost. *Buckleberry Tales* gives you a comprehensive overview of Buckland – the outpost of the Shire along the eastern shore of the Brandywine. It is written for use with TOR and also provides a number of adventure seeds in the area. It is a perfect addition to C7's *Bree* and will enable you to game in the eastern march of the Shire.

So far – so good. These were the important news and the line-up for this Issue. Have a good read – and see you all later in Issue 20!

For the Other Minds team
Thomas Morwinsky
September 2018



"Then Ilúvatar said to them: 'Of the theme that I have declared to you, I will now that ye make in harmony together a Great Music. And since I have kindled you with the flame Imperishable, ye shall show forth your powers in adorning this theme, each with his own thoughts and devices, if he will. But I will sit and hearken, and be glad that through you great beauty has been awakened into song.'"

- Amundalë (The Music of the Ainur)
The Silmarillion
by J.R.R. Tolkien

Listen to music by the many musicians around the world
inspired by the works of J.R.R. Tolkien.

Middle-earth Radio make available four different Internet radio streams dedicated to the audio and music inspired by the works of J.R.R. Tolkien.

You can tune in 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from anywhere in the world where you have an Internet connection, with your favorite streaming media player.

And when you hear a piece of music you like, be sure to support the musicians by purchasing their music (if applicable).

See the lengthy list of inspired music at the Tolkien Music website: www.tolkien-music.com

Tune in today and listen at:
www.middle-earthradio.com

THE ROAD GOES EVER ON

Certainly it reminds me [Frodo] very much of Bilbo in the last years, before he went away. He used often to say there was only one Road; that it was like a great river: its springs were at every doorstep, and every path was its tributary. "It's a dangerous business, Frodo, going out of your door," he used to say. "You step into the Road, and if you don't keep your feet, there is no knowing where you might be swept off to..."

—*The Lord of the Rings. Book I (A Shortcut to Mushrooms)*

There are many paths on the internet waiting to take you somewhere for Tolkien gaming. The vast reaches of the worldwide community harbour numerous roads and paths—some dangerous and some not—but it also has many havens of lore and respite where the weary traveller or loremaster seeking knowledge may find what he is looking for. In order to aid people on their journeys, this column of *Other Minds* (not exactly new, but with a new name) which will be a regular feature from now on offers a quick overview and pointer to potentially interesting Tolkien roleplaying-related websites.

For each site we give you a short description of its primary purpose and content to give you an overview for better judging how it might meet your needs.

The following list does not claim to be exhaustive or representative. In fact, I believe it is only a beginning. All the content of these pages is the responsibility of their owners. They are organised according to their primary gaming focus (e.g. TOR, MERP or whatever else) and, within each category, in alphabetical order.

This listing is intended to be “living”, i.e. constantly evolving and updating. So, **if you know any other sites that present information of value for Tolkien gamers, do contact us at othermindsmagazine@gmx.net so we can include it here for others to enjoy as well.**

The following abbreviations are used:

TOR—*The One Ring* by Cubicle 7 and Sophisticated Gams. The current licensed game from 2011 onwards.

AME—*Adventures in Middle-earth* by Cubicle 7 and Sophisticated Gams. The content of TOR restated and adapted for D&D 5e

LotRRPG—*The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* by Decipher. Ran from 2002 to 2007.

MERP—*Middle-earth Roleplaying* by Iron Crown Enterprises. The licensee from 1982 to 1999.

TOR AND AME

Adventures in Middle-earth (AME): Cubicle 7 publishes this new game based on the D&D 5th ed. Rules. It translates some core TOR features into this game that serves those who prefer classic D&D for their games. The content of the book so far is the same as in TOR, but with mechanics adjusted to the D&D system.

<http://cubicle7.co.uk/our-games/adventures-in-middle-earth/>

NEW

Adventures in Middle-earth (AME) RPGGeek forum: After the demise of the Cubicle 7 forums this is the place where a some AME-related take place:

<https://rpggeek.com/forums/family/40055/adventures-middle-earth>

Common skills and cultural baseline: some light analysis on the distribution of skills within cultures from the first TOR core book (for link see next page):

Other friends and hands
<http://thechamberofmazarbuldnd.blogspot.com/2012/02/common-skills-cultural-baseline.html>

El Anillo Unico: A spanish fan-site dedicated to *The One Ring* by Cubicle 7 (see below for their presence).

<http://elanillounico.tumblr.com/>

UPDATED **Facebook TOR group:** This has grown further and has now (August 2018) 681 members.
<http://www.facebook.com/groups/222560297824158/>

UPDATED **Facebook AME group:** This is an unofficial group for *Adventures in Middle-earth (AME)*, the D&D 5th ed. Version of the TOR supplements. Currently there are 664 members (August 2018). <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1855668421386951/>

Glorelendil's online resources: Designed for maximum usability with the PDF's of the TOR supplements as well as an excellent online calculating tools.

<http://nameless-castle-5228.herokuapp.com/>

<http://thawing-shore-2005.herokuapp.com/>

<http://lit-oasis-7482.herokuapp.com/>

UPDATED **Hall of Fire:** This is a re-branded variant of the webzine, that was formerly publishing stuff for *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game*. A new Issue (#3) has been published shortly after the publication of the initial version of OM19.

https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B_YG4IU49eRjU0FXOXBycDNmLVU

The One Ring – Adventures over the Edge of the Wild (TOR): Cubicle 7 publishes this latest instalment of roleplaying games set in Middle-earth. They had great and very active forum as well, but this has been switched off in May (see 'Inside Information' for more details on this).

NEW **The One Ring – RPGGeek forums:** A number of "refugees" from the Cubicle 7 site (see *Inside Information* for more details) have established a small community here:

<https://rpggeek.com/forums/family/4395/one-ring>

NEW **Truant Spiele:** The german publisher who does the german translation of AME:

<https://truant.com/>

LotRRPG

Darkshire: Some useful resources. <http://www.darkshire.net/jhkim/rpg/lordoftherings/>

UPDATED **Facebook LotRRPG sites:** First an interest page. Not much to see, but you can "like" it. The second one is a closed group about actual gaming, but now membership has decreased to 2 people. Both look pretty dead.

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Lord-of-the-Rings-Roleplaying-Game/135039343195996>

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/jmezlotrrpgg/>

MERP

I.C.E. product listing: Contains a listing of MERP products for reference.

<http://www.icwebring.com/ice-products>

UPDATED **Facebook MERP groups:** There are several groups/sites dedicated to MERP here.

Middle-earth Roleplaying by Iron Crown Enterprises, has currently 366 members.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1614785935491947/>

The second one, *Middle-earth Roleplaying*, has at least a bit of more info (though still quite little).

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Middle-earth-Role-Playing/108714242486460>

MERP UK is a closed group dealing with “untold stories” in Tolkien’s world. You can find it here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/231370666959142/>

It seems I overlooked this one. Nothing new here for years though. Only 12 members left.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/5519656692/>

Lindëfirion: A campaign log and resources for a mid-Third Age campaign set in the Northwest. Made with great love for detail. The artwork, especially the maps, is awesome.

<http://www.lindefirion.net>

Sub-page “Project Pelargir”: <http://wiki.lindefirion.net/ProjectPelargir>

Loren Rosson’s Blog “The Busybody”: A blog with reviews (“retrospectives”) of a selection of old and long out-of-print MERP modules. The relevant section is named “Middle-earth Retrospectives” and can be found on the left side of the links section (you have to scroll down a bit). <http://lorenrosson.blogspot.com>

MERP printing edition reference: A great reference for all the editorial changes and different printings of MERP 1st edition. If you are interested in the various editions of MERP up to 1992 (i.e. 1st ed.), this one is for you! Online again at a new site.

http://www.icewebring.com/MERP_Print_Ref/PrintingEditionReference.html

MERP Wikia: A Wiki-based collection of articles detailing the MERP canon and expanding it. There is some info on other sources like the LotRRPG (depending on subject), but the focus is the published MERP canon and its expansion by fans. Highly valuable for everyone focussing on the MERP canon. http://merp.wikia.com/wiki/Middle-earth_Role_Playing_Wiki

SYSTEM-NEUTRAL OR MIXED

Fan-sourcebooks: This Yahoo group (formerly fan-modules) was founded in 2001 after the demise of *Other Hands*. Here you can find a great variety of fan-made material for a lot of topics. Game system and canon focus is MERP, though not exclusively.

<http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/fan-modules>

UPDATED

Facebook *Other Minds* group: We are happy to greet new fans, so don’t hesitate to swing by and become a member. Since last Issue, our membership has increased by 111! (total of 506 by 12 September 2018)! <http://www.facebook.com/groups/othermindsmagazine>


Gondica: Blog of former MERP author Anders Blixt with some of his Middle-earth stuff on it. <https://gondica.wordpress.com/>

Iron Crown Enterprises: Publishers of HARP. Visit their website. The logo is downloaded through Wikipedia under Fair Use: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:High_Adventure_Role_Playing_\(logo\).png#/media/File:High_Adventure_Role_Playing_\(logo\).png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:High_Adventure_Role_Playing_(logo).png#/media/File:High_Adventure_Role_Playing_(logo).png)
<http://ironcrown.com/>


MERP.com: The site devoted to roleplaying in Middle-earth (though **not** exclusively or even primarily ICE’s MERP as the title may suggest). It contains a vast vault of useful information and gaming material. <http://www.merp.com>

Tower Hills, The: A webpage centered upon (Hârn and) Middle-earth.

http://www.towerhills.me/middle_earth/

 **Facebook group on Middle-earth tabletop games (in german):** A Facebook interest group for tabletop roleplaying games set in Middle-earth, independent of a specific system. .

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/209367129217255/>


 **Mittelerde-Rollenspiel:** A site devoted to tabletop roleplaying games set in Tolkien's Middle-earth for all german speakers exclusively.

<http://www.mittelerde-rollenspiel.de/>

UPDATED

TOLKIEN STUFF IN GENERAL

Ardalambion: One of the best sites dealing with Tolkien's languages. You may need to get used to the colour scheme, though. <http://folk.uib.no/hnohf/>

 **Compañía, La:** A spanish site with a forum and dedicated to Tolkien in general (including books, movies and RPG's). Looks quite good, though due to my lack in Spanish I can't say much about it. <http://www.lacompania.net>


 **Deutsche Tolkiengesellschaft (German Tolkien Society):** Similar to the Tolkien Society (see below), this site is about the furtherance of Tolkien scholarship and analysis in general.

<http://www.tolkiengesellschaft.de/>

The Elvish Linguistic Fellowship: A Special Interest Group of the Mythopoetic Society, this (and its journals) is the place for you if you're looking for information and lore about Tolkien's invented languages. <http://www.elvish.org/>


The Encyclopedia of Arda: A good encyclopedic website about Tolkien's world.

<http://www.glyphweb.com/arda>

 **Gernot Katzer's History of Middle-earth site (German):** A good site describing the essentials of the *History of Middle-earth* series. <http://gernot-katzers-spice-pages.com/tolkien/home.html>

Grey Havens, The: One of the oldest reference sites on the web that is still in business.

<http://tolkien.cro.net/>

 **Tolkienforum (German):** A good forum covering all aspects of Tolkien lore and fandom.

<http://www.tolkienforum.de>

Tolkien Forum, The (English): A good English forum on many aspects of Tolkien

<http://www.thetolkienforum.com/>

Tolkien Gateway: A good wiki site with an encyclopedia on many topics Tolkien and Middle earth http://tolkiengateway.net/wiki/Main_Page

Tolkien Society: The site for everyone interested in the more scholarly and academic treatment of all things Tolkien. <http://www.tolkiensociety.org/>

Wikipedia Portal "Middle-earth": Even Wikipedia has a whole section dedicated to Tolkien and his myth. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal:Middle-earth>

ARTWORK

Antti Autio: See his fascinating artwork at <http://aautio.deviantart.com>.

IN THIS ISSUE **Sergio Artigas (Artigas):** You can browse through his inspiring art in deviantart: <http://artigas.deviantart.com/>

IN THIS ISSUE **Onur Bakar:** Find more of his art on <http://bakarov.deviantart.com/>

IN THIS ISSUE **Steve Bellshaw (Seraph777):** Explore his great characters here: <https://www.deviantart.com/seraph777>

IN THIS ISSUE **Matej Cadil:** Found on deviantart at <https://www.deviantart.com/matejcadil>

Nacho Fernandez Castro: Visit his site on <http://www.nachocastro.es/>

Thomas Cole: Famous american romantic painter. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Cole

IN THIS ISSUE **Ralph Damiani (ralphdamiani):** You can find him and his magnificent art here <https://www.ralphdamiani.com/>

Dead01: If you're into exploring the darker side of Middle-earth, this one is for you! See it at <http://dead01.deviantart.com/>

IN THIS ISSUE **Jenny Dolfen (Goldseven):** A great german artist who focuses on the Eldar of the First Age. Her watercolour images are fantastic. You can also buy prints in several versions and sizes as well as originals. <https://goldseven.wordpress.com/> or <https://www.patreon.com/jennydolfen>

Nacho Fernandez Castro (NachoCastro): See his page at <http://nachocastro.deviantart.com/>

Katherine Carina Chmiel-Gugulska (Kasiopeia): Found on <https://www.facebook.com/katarzyna.chmielgugulska>

IN THIS ISSUE **Anke Eißmann:** She is one the greatest Tolkien illustrators. Check her art out at <http://www.anke.edoras-art.de>

Olanda Fang-Surdenas (Wynahiros): See her art on <http://wynahiros.deviantart.com>

IN THIS ISSUE **Wouter Florusse (woutart):** Check out his page on <http://woutart.deviantart.com/>

Caspar David Friedrich: Famous romantic painter. See the Wikipedia page for examples of his work: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caspar_David_Friedrich

Raymond E. Gaustadness (shockbolt): You can find his fine work on <http://www.digitalartwork.no/>

Olga G (steamey): Her beautiful art can be foun at <http://steamey.deviantart.com/>

IN THIS ISSUE **Daniel Govar:** A great artist whose website can be found at <http://danielgovar.com>.

IN THIS ISSUE **Gin Hardiarso:** He focusses on a theme popular in Fantasy - Warrior Women. He does it, however, unusually well since his subjects are not bikini-armoured amazons, but realistic heroines. Check his work out under <https://gambargin.deviantart.com/>

John Hodgson: The primary artist and artistic director for *The One Ring*. It's no wonder that the game is so well received (beside the good rules) if you look at his art: <http://jonhodgson.deviantart.com/gallery/>

IN THIS ISSUE **John Howe:** The second of the great Tolkien artists that allowed the use of his artwork within our pages. Check out his great index. <http://www.john-howe.com/>

Other friends and hands
Thomas Jedrusek: One of the illustrators of *The One Ring*. see his page at <http://www.morano.pl/>

IN THIS ISSUE Milek Jakubiec (**EthicallyChallenged**): Thanks for giving permission to use your work! See more at <http://ethicallychallenged.deviantart.com/>

IN THIS ISSUE Pierre Joubert: A well-known illustrator of youths' books. See his official page (in french) at <http://www.pierre-joubert.org/>

IN THIS ISSUE Pawel Kardis (**KardisArt**): Meet his stunning work under: <https://www.deviantart.com/kardisart>

IN THIS ISSUE Liiga Klavina (**LiigaKlavina**): Check out her awesome art at <https://www.deviantart.com/liigaklavina>

Joona Kujanen (**Tulikoura**): Find his amazing art at <http://tulikoura.deviantart.com/>

Elena Kukanova: Check it out on <http://ekukanova.deviantart.com/>

Olga Kukhtenkova: You can find her work on the Tolkien Gateway <http://fan.theonering.net/~rolozo/cgi-bin/rolozo.cgi/collection/kukhtenkova>

IN THIS ISSUE J. Lazarus (**JlazaruseB**): Find him and his numerous diverse historic warriors under <https://jlazaruseb.deviantart.com/>

Alan Lee: The third of the famous Tolkien artists. <https://www.facebook.com/alan.lee.5496>

Carl-Friedrich Lessing: A famous romantic painter. See his Wikipedia article at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Friedrich_Lessing

IN THIS ISSUE Angus McBride: The famous illustrator of numerous historical books as well as MERP. The Facebook page of his estate can be found under <https://www.facebook.com/mcbrideangus/>

IN THIS ISSUE Turner Mohan: Find out more of his excellent work at <http://www.mohan-art.com>.

Ted Nasmith: The official site of renowned Tolkien artist Ted Nasmith, who was so kind in allowing us to use so much of his artwork within *Other Minds*. For more information, see <http://www.tednasmith.com/>

IN THIS ISSUE Nolanos: find here fine artwork on Deviantart: <https://www.deviantart.com/nolanos>

Gabriel Oliveira: Found at <http://think0.deviantart.com/>

IN THIS ISSUE Abe Papakhian: Check out his artwork at <http://abepapakhian.deviantart.com>.

IN THIS ISSUE Jereme Peabody (**jjpeabody**): Find more of this this skilled artist at <http://jjpeabody.deviantart.com>

Pegasusandco: Very well worth a look. <http://pegasusandco.deviantart.com/>

Daniel Pilla: Great stuff. See it at <http://danpilla.deviantart.com/>

IN THIS ISSUE Vincent Pompetti: See his celtic-focussed artwork on Deviantart: <https://www.deviantart.com/vincentpompetti>

IN THIS ISSUE Jan Pospisil (**merlkir**): One of our "old" artists, whose images we have used already in past issues. Check him out at <http://merlkir.deviantart.com>

IN THIS ISSUE Bunny Powell: The artist who drew the map for The Black Arrow adventure in this Issue.

IN THIS ISSUE Peter Xavier Price (**peet**): See him at www.facebook.com/peterxavierprice

Rolozo: Among the oldest artwork-related sites around
<http://fan.theonering.net/~rolozo/cgi-bin/rolozo.cgi/news>

Carlos Gordo Sacristán: A spanish artist, unfortunately by now I have no homepage for him.

Tara Rueping: Find her great work on <http://www.trueping.com>.

Sampsä Rydman: He has published fantastic maps and a great campaign, especially maps. See him at <http://www.lindefirion.net/>

IN THIS ISSUE

John Emanuel Shannon (jeshannon): Find his great artwork on deviantart and his page: <https://www.deviantart.com/jeshannon/> and <http://www.jeshannon.com>

IN THIS ISSUE

Ari Suonpää: Please visit his beautiful art at <https://www.facebook.com/artofarisuonpaa>

Danik Tomyn: Another great artist that can be found at deviantart. His section is at <http://danikyaroslavtomyn.deviantart.com>.

IN THIS ISSUE

Angels T.I. (Shyangell): A visit to her very enjoyable page is always worth it. See more at <http://shyangell.deviantart.com/>

Tuuliky: As a regular OM reader, you will know her great work already. It may be found at <http://tuuliky.deviantart.com>.

Maciej Zagorski: An artists specialising in maps. Find more at <https://www.patreon.com/user?u=2863325>

OTHER STUFF THAT MIGHT BE INTERESTING FOR ROLEPLAYING IN MIDDLE-EARTH

Facebook “Fans of Mithril Miniatures” group: Lots of photos of painted minis plus some awesome dioramas. <http://www.facebook.com/groups/107518272188/>



Elroi’s Mithril: The blog of a highly talented and skilled painter of miniatures. Please make sure you don’t miss out his marvellous versions of Mithril Miniatures’ figurines. Please be aware that this is in Spanish, but the images speak for themselves. <http://paintingmithrils.blogspot.com/>

Frothers Unite miniature forum: It is related to miniatures for sure! See also the article of *Middle-earth in miniature* in this Issue. <http://deartonyblair.blogspot.com.es/> (it is about miniatures, I swear).

Games Workshop: If you are interested in miniatures made according to the movie design, then the Games Workshop miniature line (for skirmish-level tabletop wargaming) is for you. <http://www.games-workshop.com>

Many Mithril Pages: A site run by fans of Mithril Miniatures (see next entry). Here you can find extensive information and fan support for both current and out-of-stock minis. <http://mmp.faerylands.eu/index.php>

Mithril Miniatures: They have been producing Middle-earth figurines since 1988; thus being one of the oldest still in business. They now have a general line (though diminished in volume compared to earlier times; in fact practically non-existing anymore) and an exclusive fellowship one which anyone can buy too, but the Fellowship members may vote on the next figures to be made. They also have a board which is mostly miniatures-centered but some general Middle-earth related information can be found as well. Recently they have been refurbishing their website and the selection of minis seems to have narrowed down even further. They also have started to

switch to 3D-printing for modelling, but as they show CGI of these models rather than the final metal figures, the quality and outlook of these cannot be judged from the website.

<http://www.mithril.ie>

Forum: <http://mithrilfigures.proboards19.com/index.cgi>

Wargames Terrain: Looking for the latest tabletop miniature wargaming and roleplaying news? Make sure to check out the Wargame News and Terrain Blog which is daily covering new miniatures, tabletop scenery and wargame rules from companies worldwide. Venture into the magnificent world of tabletop miniature wargaming and engage in fantasy, science fiction and historical warfare on your miniature tabletop battlefield. Check them out at <http://wargameterrain.blogspot.com> and Twitter [@wnt_news](https://twitter.com/wnt_news)

Check the full review of the soon to be released Northstar Miniatures plastic Dwarf Infantry and prepare to field epic Tolkienesque and folkloric inspired dwarf armies and roleplaying dwarf adventurers soon.

http://wargameterrain.blogspot.com/2017/04/northstar-miniatures-plastic-fantasy_30.html

Facebook “Wargaming in Middle-earth” group: Lots of photos of painted minis with no default manufacturer or style. In a way, it mirrors *Other Minds*’ approach; only in the field of miniatures.

https://www.facebook.com/groups/151243738922969/?hc_location=group



INSIDE INFORMATION

OTHER MINDS EMAIL RENEWED

Earlier this year in between the publication of OM18 and now, we discovered an issue with our email address. This was fixed with establishing a new one – you can now reach us under othermindsmagazine@gmx.net for all questions and communications on OM. The information in the Fineprint section has been updated accordingly.

CUBICLE 7 FORUMS DEAD

It is not the most recent news, but important nonetheless: Taking effect by 25 May 2018, the Cubicle 7 forums (including of course the TOR and AME sections) were switched off. This happened with an advance warning of only about a week. According to the C7 team, this rather radical measure was in context with the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which took effect on midnight, 25 May 2018 and C7 supposedly felt not able to comply with. This is rather surprising, since the regulation became law in May 2016 and granted a transitional period of 2 years for everyone to adapt the necessary procedures. Whatever the reasons for the sudden shutdown, it leaves the community with no central way to get news and info across to the respective game communities as was possible with C7's own forums.

Apart from the sudden info about the closure, this has also led to a noticeable community fragmentation of C7's Middle-earth games. Many of the most active members have found other places to discuss TOR and AME, but both the number of members as well as the frequency of postings and threads there (for links see below) has markedly decreased compared to the C7 forums. The core of the most active members of the TOR forum can now be found on RPGGeek (<https://rpggeek.com/forums/family/4395/one-ring>). Similar to the C7 forums, threads revolve primarily around the game itself

(mechanics, game canon and gaming material). RPGGeek also has an AME section (<https://rpggeek.com/forums/family/40055/adventures-middle-earth>), but the activity there is even scantier than in the TOR section. Some activity can also be found on *The Piazza* (<http://www.thepiazza.org.uk/bb/viewforum.php?f=98>) – a site that is dedicated to all worlds that ever used (A)D&D as a game system. Naturally, the mechanics' part here is more orientated towards D&D and its derivatives (and also a surprising amount of other game systems), but overall the content in the Middle-earth section is less about mechanics or game canons, and more about the game world.

Depending on your personal preferences, one of these sites may serve your needs. Just swing by and have a look!

MORIA BOX BY CUBICLE 7

According to info provided on the C7 forum (and confirmed later on) before it went dead, C7 plans to publish a big box for *Moria*. This shall contain data for both TOR and AME (rather than separate publications for the systems). The most interesting topic is its planned funding via a Kickstarter campaign. Originally it was announced for some date in 2018, but it seems more likely to be published some time in 2019, so keep an eye open for further announcements.

In general it seems that TOR (and AME) has seen a bit less attention by C7 in the past months, while they focus on their new edition of *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* (WHFRP).

JON HODGSON LEAVING CUBICLE 7

There is more news from C7: Jon Hodgson, their art director who shaped the superb artistic design of TOR, will be leaving the company by September 2018. After the sudden closure of the forums, this will be another setback for TOR and AME, and though he has set quite a

set up his Patreon page and business, which you can find at <https://www.patreon.com/jonhodgsonmaps>. His Facebook site is at <https://www.facebook.com/JonHodgsonIllustration>. Becoming a patreon gives you access to his artwork to support your games – or just for enjoyment on the marvellous pieces to be found there. Highly recommended!

THRESHOLD MAGAZINE FEATURED

If you have visited *The Piazza* (see above for more on this), you might have noticed a magazine named *Threshold* – after the eponymous settlement featured in the original D&D boxes. For this original D&D world (Mystara) it serves a similar purpose as *Other Minds* does for Middle-earth. Given the steady establishment of AME – and thus access to the largest community of tabletop gamers – we are happy to invite D&D gamers to share their experiences, adventures, house rules etc. for Middle-earth also here in *Other Minds*. On the reverse, every one of you who also may have an interest in D&D’s Mystara as a setting, *Threshold* surely is a magnificent resource for all things concerning the original D&D world! You can find a great visualisation of what it is on page 72 of this OM Issue. Its makers have the same devotion to Mystara as we have for Middle-earth – so you can expect a high level of passion, expertise and dedication for this game setting.

NEW GERMAN TRANSLATION!

This may not be really new for our german-speaking gamers, but it is interesting nonetheless in the context of international versions of C7’s Middle-earth games. After the demise of the german version of TOR in February 2017 (due to the line not being economically sustainable), there is now again a german Middle-earth Tabletop RPG available. The publisher *Truant* has picked up on AME and publishes it under the name of *Abentuer in Mittelerde* (a literal translation of AME). The Player Book is available, while the LM Guide is being printed and slated for release in late September. The next in line is the Rhovanion Region Guide (no date yet).

NEW ARTISTS

This Issue of *Other Minds* also features a number of artists for the first time. In good tradition, they are introduced here specifically. The links to their respective websites can be found in the “artwork” section; marked with a red flag (**IN THIS ISSUE**). We are greatly indebted to be allowed to use their stunning artwork here in the pages of *Other Minds*. In detail they are:

Steve Bellshaw focuses on RPG character artwork. You can commission your personal character from him on [his site](#) at deviantart (see also the Artwork section).

Ralph Damiani’s focus are landscape paintings. [His portrayals of Middle-earth](#)’s lands provide us with a great and imaginative perspective about its scenery.

Natalia (Nolanos) is an artist I found on deviantart and thankfully she gave us permission to use [her great art](#) (she focuses primarily on people and creatures) for illustrating our magazine.

A strong focus of **Jereme Peabody**’s art are fantastic environments and provide a rich and inspiring backgrounds for the text they accompany here in our pages. Be sure not to miss them! [It can be found here](#) (also provided in the ‘artwork’ section).

Bunny Powell is a gifted artist who drew the map in david Cole’s stunning *The Black Arrow*. Unfortunately we cannot give a website yet, but will do so once we have one.



MIDDLE-EARTH IN MINIATURE IV - THE ELVES

By José Enrique Vacas de la Rosa
(arthadan@gmail.com)

© 2018

review

ELVES AT LAST!

As promised in our last Issue, we have another instalment of our Middle-earth in miniature series – this time covering the Firstborn. I am sure you will find lots of enjoyment and inspiration from José Enrique’s insightful treatment of the subject.

Now, for new miniature content: The next theme is already set, so there won’t be a vote in the Facebook group this time! Then you’ll see the fiercest enemies of the Elves – Orcs. Being at least partially related to the Quendi (depending on which evolutionary step in the Professor’s development of Middle-earth you give the greatest canonicity), it is natural for the Yrch to be covered next time.

NEWS FROM OVER THE MOUNTAINS

We continue our journey through Middle-earth to find out how its inhabitants might look like and pick the best miniatures to represent them in our games. In Other Minds, Issue #15 we started in The Shire among the peaceful Hobbits, then visited the Dwarves in their halls of stone in Issue #16. Following this, our journey took us back in time to face the Terrors of the Old Days in Other Minds #17 (and that was under request of my dear readers, so don’t blame me for your nightmares... or increasing number of dragons in your collection!).

Before I start with the Fair Folk, let me tell you that I’ll include from now on a link to the manufacturer’s site in the miniature’s name to make it easier to locate them. In addition, a short note about a shorter folk already featured in this humble collection of articles is in order: The quest for the Stoor Hobbits is over!

Our height band for Hobbits, as used in *Middle-earth in miniature I* was:

- 3 feet (0.91 metres) $\hat{=}$ 15 mm
- 4 feet (1.22 metres) $\hat{=}$ 20 mm

And then, speaking about Dwarves in *Middle-earth in miniature II* we discovered Red Box Games, a company making finely detailed *Naugrim* but with human proportions, and too short to fill proper Dwarven boots (but perfect height for Hobbits, mind you):

Lass: 15 mm (0.91 metres / 2 feet 8 inches).

Lad: 18 mm (1.09 metres / 3 feet 7 inches).



© by José Enrique Vacas de la Rosa

Varda Elentári has made the stars align for us and many more Dwarves of this company have been released, some of them with short beards and an outfit fitting for Stoors from the Anduin Vales. A bit stocky and certainly well-armed, but what will you expect of hardened adventurers coming from the wrong side of the Misty Mountains? Take a look and judge for yourself:



© Red Box Games, used under Fair Use

And some wild looking lasses as well (no, the Stoors females do not have beards!)



© Red Box Games, used under Fair Use

In other order of things, there are three links I'd like to share with you lot. The first one is an inspirational blog with painted Mithril miniatures by a true pro artist called Elroi. This guy doesn't follow Tolkien's descriptions too closely (some green Orcs in there!) but his skill allows him to take much artistic license. The blog is in Spanish, but the pictures speak for themselves

(<http://paintingmithrils.blogspot.com/>). He granted us permission to use images from there, so expect to see more from him in this series!



Celebrimbor by Mithril Miniatures, painted by Elroi



The next link leads us to a Facebook group called 'Wargaming in Middle-earth'. The great thing about this group is that they do not limit themselves to the movie miniatures and there are many interesting conversions based on historical Dark Ages miniatures, and some really nice paintjobs and scenery.



Warriors of Far Harad by © Peter Bowman, used with permission



Dwarves by © Jack Sarge, used with permission (North Star, Oathmark range)



The sons of Fëanor by © Graham Green, used with permission (North Star, Oathmark range)

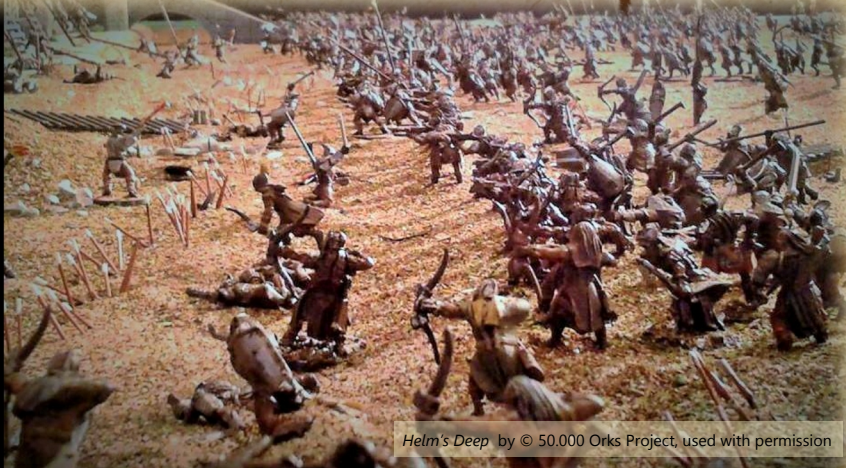
The painting is by Graham Green from [Greygreen Customs](#) with conversions from North Star's Oathmark range. Left to right, back row: Caranthir, Celegorm, Curufin, Amrod, Amras. Front row: Maedhros, Fëanor, Maglor.

And last but not least we have another Facebook group called '50.000 Orks Project'. This project is about a group of friends making some quite impressive dioramas (they do have 15

Middle-earth themed dioramas, some with up to 56,000 miniatures!). The sheer number of miniatures is impressive and the great attention to detail makes them come to life.



Helm's Deep by © 50.000 Orks Project, used with permission ©Akildare 2019



Helm's Deep by © 50.000 Orks Project, used with permission



The Black Serpent... and the Horseslords by © 50.000 Orks Project, used with permission



Helm's Deep by © 50.000 Orks Project, used with permission

The Elves

At long last our quest to unveil the perfect miniatures for your tolkienesque roleplaying games has led us below trees of mysterious forests and into hidden valleys, where the First-born still dwell in the twilight of the Third Age. They can be classified through many different criteria. Within the scope of this article and its predecessors, Northwestern Middle-earth in the late Third Age, I will simply divide them according to the place they dwelt in, so we will speak about the Elves of the Woodland Realm, the Galadhrim of Lothlórien, the Elves from Imladris, the elusive Teleri of Mithlond and perhaps I will indulge myself revealing the aspect of the Eöldrim as well. Knowledgeable reader, have you raised your eyebrows reading the last name? Please let me guide you to the only written account of this lost people in *Other Minds, Issue 6*.

Height

Let's start finding out how tall they are. A look at the writings of our dear Professor Tolkien reveals the following:

In those days [the Elder Days] Elves and Men were of like stature and strength of body, but the Elves had greater wisdom, and skill, and beauty; and those who had dwelt in Valinor and looked upon the Powers as much surpassed the Dark Elves in these things as they in turn surpassed the people of mortal race.

—The Silmarillion. Of Men

It is worth noting that the idea of Elves diminishing in height along with the passing of time is an early conception and later abandoned. Anyway we still do not know how tall they were because the race of Men varies greatly in height, from the Hobbits (who belong to the race of Men) or the Woses to the tall Dúnedain.

Galadriel, "the tallest of all the women of the Eldar of whom tales tell," was said to be manhigh, but it is noted "according to the measure of the Dúnedain and the men of old," indicating a height of about six feet four inches.

The Rohirrim were generally shorter [than the Dúnedain], for in their far-off ancestry they had been mingled with men of broader and heavier build. Éomer was said to have been tall, of like height with Aragorn; but he with other descendants of King Thengel were taller than the norm of Rohan, deriving this characteristic (together in some cases with darker hair) from Morwen, Thengel's wife, a lady of Gondor of high Númenórean descent.

—Unfinished Tales. Númenórean Linear Measures

Appearance

A common trait of the elven race is beauty and similar strength in both sexes:

In the beginning the Elder Children of Ilúvatar were stronger and greater than they have since become; but not more fair, for though the beauty of the Quendi in the days of their youth was beyond all other beauty that Ilúvatar has caused to be, it has not perished, but lives in the West, and sorrow and wisdom have enriched it.

—The Silmarillion. The Coming of the Elves

Indeed in dire straits or desperate defense, the nissi [elven-women] fought valiantly, and there was less difference in strength and speed between elven-men and elven-women that had not borne child¹ than is seen among mortals.

¹ Also the Eldar say that in the begetting, and still more in the bearing of children, greater share and strength of their being, in mind and in body, goes forth than in the making of mortal children. [...]

—HoMe10 (Morgoth's Ring). Laws and Customs among the Eldar

Clothes and equipment

Elves of the Woodland Realm

*The elves were the first to charge. Their hatred for the goblins is cold and bitter. **Their spears and swords** shone in the gloom with a gleam of chill flame, so deadly was the wrath of the hands that held them. As soon as the host of their enemies was dense in the valley, **they sent against it a shower of arrows**, and each flickered as it fled as if with stinging fire. Behind the arrows a thousand of their spearmen leapt down and charged. The yells were deafening. The rocks were stained black with goblin blood.*

—*The Hobbit. The Clouds Burst*

*That is how it came about that some two hours after his escape from the Gate, Bilbo was sitting beside a warm fire in front of a large tent, and there sat too, gazing curiously at him, both the Elvenking and Bard. A hobbit **in elvish armour**, partly wrapped in an old blanket, was something new to them.*

—*The Hobbit.
A Thief in the Night*

The Elves from the Woodland Realm have spears, swords and bows. It is not far-fetched to assume helmets and shields would be used as well. It is worth noting Bilbo's chainmail is called "elvish armour". This is open to interpretation, but could it not mean that chainmail is the common elvish armour? From a role-playing perspective, let's consider that at very least the heavier troops of the Elf-king wear chainmail in battle.

EÖDRIM OF GATHROD IM-ERYNATH

These Elves do not come from the Professor writings, but I include them for compatibility's sake. If you want to know more about them, please check Other Minds issue 6. For our purpose of visualizing them, the quote in the next column will suffice:

Their aspect has changed only little over the millennia because of their conservative and sometimes isolationist lifestyle: they are paler than the rest of the Quendi, and their dark eyes seem to be bigger. They wear dark clothes and chosen elite warriors wield morglân-made weapons while high rank or noble ones may wear morglân armour also.

—*Other Minds #6. The Eöldrim*

GATHRIM OF LÓRIEN

Unfortunately we do not have a description of the Elves of Lórien going to war. It is known however, that border sentinels wear grey hooded cloaks and bows.

*When Frodo came at last up on to the flet he found Legolas seated with three other Elves. **They were clad in shadowy-grey**, and could not be seen among the tree-stems, unless they moved suddenly. They stood up, and one of them uncovered a small lamp that gave out a slender silver beam.*

—*The Lord of the Rings.
Lothlórien*

*Late in the night he awoke. The other hobbits were asleep. The Elves were gone. The sickle Moon was gleaming dimly among the leaves. The wind was still. A little way off he heard a harsh laugh and the tread of many feet on the ground below. There was a ring of metal. The sounds died slowly away, and seemed to go southward, on into the wood. A head appeared suddenly through the hole in the flet. Frodo sat up in alarm and saw that **it was a grey-hooded Elf**. He looked towards the hobbits.*

—*The Lord of the Rings.
Lothlórien*

Immediately afterwards Haldir came climbing swiftly up through the branches. 'There was something in this tree that I have never seen before,' he said. 'It was not an orc. It fled as soon as I touched the tree-stem. It seemed to be wary, and to have some skill in trees, or I might have thought that it was one of you hobbits.'

'I did not shoot, for I dared not arouse any cries: we cannot risk battle. A strong company of Orcs has passed. They crossed the Nimrodel-curse their foul feet in its clean water!-and went on down the old road beside the river. They seemed to pick up some scent, and they searched the ground for a while near the place where you halted. The three of us could not challenge a hundred, so we went ahead and spoke with feigned voices, leading them on into the wood.'

—The Lord of the Rings.
Lothlórien

Elves of Rivendell

The Elves of the Hidden Valley sometimes patrol their borders along with the Dúnedain, and chiefs among those protectors are the twin sons of Elrond, Elladan and Elrohir. Let's see how they looked like when they joined the Grey Company and ride to assist Aragorn:

'But even as Aragorn they [the Northern Dúnedain] are courteous, if they break their silence.' said Legolas. *'And have you marked the brethren Elladan and Elrohir? Less sombre is their gear than the others', and they are fair and gallant as Elven-lords; and that is not to be wondered at in the sons of Elrond of Rivendell.'*

—The Lord of the Rings.
The Passing of the Grey Company

This is not much to work with, but I'd go for shiny chainmail and elegant clothes, probably enriched with embroidery.

Elves of Middle-earth

We literally know nothing of how they look in the late Third Age, nor are they a popular choice for characters in a Middle-earth setting. So, common sense and compatibility with what we know about other Elf folks and personal preference will be used to pick miniatures for them.

The Wandering Companies

Sadly we do not have a description of Gildor Inglórien and his companions. We can only assume Elves traveling by the relatively safe lands of Eriador would carry no heavy equipment, so no armour and few weapons are most likely (besides some traveling gear, of course).

Conclusion

We can conclude that there is no precise information regarding Elven war gear in late Third Age. At this point of Middle-earth's history the days of Noldorin hosts clad in bright mail are gone. Now Elves prefer to hide in their secret refuges, and those patrolling the borders are skilled scouts with perfect camouflage. Hooded cloaks in natural colors and bows perfect for ambushes seem to be norm.

The Miniatures

It's time to feast your eyes on the the artistic depictions I have carefully chosen for your Elven heroes! I will comment briefly which precedence suits the miniature better according to the equipment, and at the end of the article you will find a scale comparison with a sample miniature from each company. I have deliberately ruled out Games Workshop's LotR range because many have quite inaccurate outfits (thanks PJ!) and in general they are too small for our scale of choice (more so the plastic ones). In case you are new to this series of articles, allow me to quote myself regarding scale:

"I will go for the current de facto standard which is 28-30 millimetres for a standing adult human male, from the bottom of his feet to eye level. For us, that will be the height for our average middle man of Middle-earth."

—Other Minds #15.Middle-earth in Miniature

I have included the official image from the manufacturer so you can see the miniature at its best, with a beautiful paintjob (except Mithril, they should hire a professional painter) and then, whenever possible, a scale comparison picture with our “scale reference model”, a Rohir 30mm tall (1.80 meters / 5 feet 10 inches).

I also added a short reference roster with each mini.

Reference: Company and official name

Description: What it shows.

Best fit: To which character or type does this mini fit best (regardless of the name the publisher puts on the blister).



Andrea Miniatures

This company has a quite small range of 30mm miniatures, but there is one worth mentioning.

Reference: Battle Series / [Ithrandir Blade of Eternity](#)

Description: This is one of my personal favourites, the dynamic pose and the sense of motion along with the slim built and the very Elvish face makes a perfectly deadly and elegant elven warrior. He is heavily protected with his scale mail reinforced with vambraces, shin-guards and shoulder pads, and he is armed with two twin blades. This miniature comes in many parts and its assembly is a bit challenging and not the best option for beginners.

Best fit: In my opinion he would make a great Noldo from Imladris (remember the last smiths of Eregion found refuge there), or an Eöldrim. In any case he is clearly an important Elven-lord.



DARK SWORD MINIATURES

This company makes miniatures with realistic proportions, meaning they are thinner than most. While this is a bad thing if you have miniatures coming from many different manufacturers, it can be an advantage for your Elves (if you like them slim).

Reference: *Visions in Fantasy* / Male Elf Ranger with Bow, Female Elven Ranger with Bow, Male Wood Elf Archer.

Description: Generic Elven archers.

Best fit: Any Elven archer, take your pick.



© Dark Sword Miniatures, used under Fair Use



Reference: *Visions in Fantasy* / Male Elven Ranger with Bow

Description: This is a heavy armored version of our generic archer. The scale male introduces a nice variation and I particularly like the shape of the helmet.

Best fit: This is an Elf going to war, not a scout or a stealthy watcher. Perhaps a captain from the Woodland Realm or Lórien.



© Dark Sword Miniatures, used under Fair Use

Reference: *Visions in Fantasy* / Male Elven Ranger with Bow.

Description: This miniature stands out because of his interesting pose and covered face. Standard archer equipment (hooded cloak, sword, bow and quiver).

Best fit: The covered face and aggressive stance make him look dangerous. In my opinion he would make a perfect Mirkwood scout.



© José Enrique Vacas de la Rosa



© Dark Sword Miniatures, used under Fair Use

Heartbreaker (now distributed by Ral Partha Europe)

Reference: Chaz Elliot / 5015 Elf Noble

Description: A mysterious hooded Elf with a big sword. Despite the chunky sword I've always loved this miniature. The hood covering his face and his pose of static menace works quite well. He is the cheapest miniature here.

Best fit: Cool Elven lord non-player character able to save single-handed your players' group in dire straits. I picture him as one of the Exiles, a Noldor of Rivendell, perhaps a member of the Wandering Companies escorting very important Elves to Mithlond in the dangerous days of the Late Third Age.



Mithril Miniatures

They have some serviceable miniatures, and some terrible ones. They all look quite human in proportions and build, which is not a bad thing *per se* but I have grown to prefer my Elves a bit thinner than humans to highlight them as a different race. As always, beware of miniatures in full articulated plate armour, mainly used for Noldor by this company.

Reference: 32mm Limited LR (Bree to Rivendell) / Elrohir

Description: An Elf in leather armor with a sword.

Best fit: I like this miniature for its unusual equipment. It makes me think of a Teleri Elf because his short leather armor and sword seem fitting for fighting aboard a ship. And the absence of a cloak (which would hinder swimming) and longbow reinforce that aspect. However, I don't think an Elven lord such Elrohir would wear such "simple" equipment.



Reference: The Lord of the Rings Classics / MC21 Lord of the Rings 'Lorien Bowman'.

Description: This is one of my favorites from this company. The pose is really nice, a dramatic shooting stance and the equipment is what you would expect from an Elven archer: the mandatory hooded cloak, light leather armour, sword, bow and quiver. In addition this "Classic" line has an attractive price tag.

Best fit: I concur with the reference, a Lórien bowman is a great fit but of course it would work equally well for any Elven archer.



Reference: Battle of Mirkwood Part 1 / Lorien spearman throwing (weblink no longer available due to restructuring of website)

Description: This is one of the terrible ones. Little detail especially on the legs, static pose even if he is supposed to be throwing a spear... in my opinion these Lórien Elves are among the worst this company has ever produced.

Best fit: Out of your collection.



Note: For a scale reference picture see Thranduil in the Character of Note section.

NORTH STAR

This company is about to release its own miniature game with a "Dark Ages" feel to it. I'm not fond of the metal Elves they offer, but the plastic multicomponent ones are not bad. Heads, though hands and feet are a bit big.

Reference: Oathmark / OAKP301 - Elf Infantry

Description: Elven warrior with chain-mail. They can be assembled with swords and shields, spears or bows and with or without helmet. You may buy transfers for them as well, the one with the swan ship being more appropriate (Mithlond Elves).

Best fit: One of the rare occasions the Elves march to war in Late T.A. like the Battle of the Five Armies or the fall of Dol Guldur.



REAPER MINIATURES

Reaper has an extensive catalogue with some Elves serving our purpose. I have discarded those with plate armor (more so if articulated), unfitting weapons such as crossbows, etc. Here you have the ones I would pick.

Reference: Warlord – 14553/ Arthrand Nightblade, Wood Elf Sergeant

Description: Another Elven archer, not very original but well made.

Best fit: I would use him for a Lórien or Woodland Realm Elf.



Reference: Dark Heaven Legends / 02473: Aramil

Description: This miniature looks like he is reciting an enchantment.

Best fit: A scholar type, or an Elf using the Art (a kind of “magic” if you will).



Reference: Dark Heaven Legends / 02934: Wood Elf King

Description: An Elf king with a spear, leaf crown, leather armor and a hawk on his fist. Head is a bit oversized.

Best fit: I’m going to let you guess this one...



Reference: Warlord – 14587 / Oakhearth Sentinel

Description: Leather armoured, hooded cloak, longsword, shield and dagger. Shield and sword are a bit too much “fantasy” in design, meaning they don’t look very practical. Combat pose would work better if he were using his shield to protect himself (perhaps he has just realized his cool shield is of little use!). I especially like the overlapping leaves pattern of the leather armour.

Best fit: The impractical sword and shield might be justified if they are mostly for ceremonial purposes. He might be a noble Elf going adventuring, for example one of Thranduil’s personal guard .



Reference: Dark Heaven Legends / 02909:
Nienna, Elf Ranger

Description: This female Elf is equipped with a hooded cloak, sword, bow, quiver long knife and padded armor. Pose is interesting, not overly dynamic but tense, as if she has just heard something and is ready telling the party to stay still while she keeps the sword ready. Probably the sword could use some sanding on the edges to make a bit thinner and the generous neckline doesn't look very "Elvish" to me (it can be painted as tight cloth under the padded armor).

Best fit: She works very well for a Silvan Elf of Mirkwood or any lightly-armoured scout.



Reference: Dark Heaven Legends / 03803:
Laril Silverhand, Female Elven Blacksmith

Description: A female Elven smith forging a blade. I like the decoration on the hammer, anvil and apron, which makes sense since long-lived Elves take time to embellish even mundane items.

Best fit: I think she would make a great non-player character for Rivendell. Who said Narsil was reforged into Andúril by an Elf dude?



Reference: Dungeon Dwellers / 07006
Lanaerel Grayleaf

Description: The newest in this list, an Elf with cloak short sword and bow and quiver. Nice proportions and sense of movement on the cloak and hair.

Best fit: The absence of armour makes me think of the guardians of Lórien, watching over the border from a *talan*.



Thunderbolt Mountain

We've finally arrived at my personal favourite company. You simply cannot go wrong with these Elves. They belong to the realistic/slim category with outstanding detail. As I write these lines, this company has just gone out of business but I guess you still have a chance to grab some of their minitures at retailers. As far as I know the molds have not been sold to another company.

Reference: #8210 High Elf Archer Owl, #8211 High Elf Archer Comet, #8212 High Elf Archer Dragonfly. (No weblink, publisher out of business)

Description: These High Elves are centuries old and they wear the finest equipment with elaborate decoration.

Best fit: Elf-lords, Noldor or Sindar.



© Thunderbolt Mountain, used under Fair Use

Zenit Miniatures

This company has a generic Fantasy line with a gem hidden in it.

Reference: Zenit Reload / Shakir Kyrian

Description: This very dynamic Elven warrior comes with a chainmail shirt under his tunic, single edge sword (Peter Jackson's influence everywhere!) and shield (no emblem, you can paint your own). Regarding fidelity with the canon, he's perfectly fine.

Best fit: Tall and muscular (for an Elf), I picture him as a Sinda warrior from Lórien or even a Noldo from Rivendell, certainly not the Silvan type.



© Zenit Miniatures, used under Fair Use



© José Enrique Vacas de la Rosa



CHARACTERS OF NOTE

ARWEN

So it was that Frodo saw her whom few mortals had yet seen; Arwen, daughter of Elrond, in whom it was said that the likeness of Lúthien had come on earth again; and she was called Undómiel, for she was the Evenstar of her people. Long she had been in the land of her mother's kin, in Lórien beyond the mountains, and was but lately returned to Rivendell to her father's house. But her brothers, Elladan and Elrohir, were out upon errantry: for they rode often far afield with the Rangers of the North, forgetting never their mother's torment in the dens of the orcs.

Such loveliness in living thing Frodo had never seen before nor imagined in his mind; and he was both surprised and abashed to find that he had a seat at Elrond's table among all these folk so high and fair [...]

—The Lord of the Rings.
Many Meetings



© José Enrique Vacas de la Rosa

The description of Arwen is focused on her beauty, but little we know what she wears or how tall is she. My pick is this rather lovely miniature by Hasslefree Miniatures, although she's a bit too small.

Reference: Hasslefree Miniatures / HFA030 Miranda



© Hasslefree Miniatures, used under Fair Use

HFA030 MIRANDA

There is another miniature worth considering, a version by Mithril Miniatures, but she's holding the royal standard of Gondor, which makes her less useful for roleplaying purposes. She seems to be a bit short too (see second image below).

Reference: Mithril Miniatures / LR40 Arwen (perhaps discontinued, Mithril on restructuring)



© Mithril Miniatures, used under Fair Use



© José Enrique Vacas de la Rosa

Celeborn & Galadriel

[...] On two chairs beneath the bole of the tree and canopied by a living bough there sat, side by side, Celeborn and Galadriel. They stood up to greet their guests, after the manner of Elves, even those who were accounted mighty kings. Very tall they were, and the Lady no less tall than the Lord; and they were grave and beautiful. They were clad wholly in white; and the hair of the Lady was of deep gold, and the hair of the Lord Celeborn was of silver long and bright; but no sign of age was upon them, unless it were in the depths of their eyes; for these were keen as lances in the starlight, and yet profound, the wells of deep memory.

—The Lord of the Rings.
The Mirror of Galadriel

My first option for Celeborn is this miniature originally made by Black Tree for their rather short-lived Middle-earth wargame, and now renamed and available from Scotia Grendel. The scepter is an artistic license, but other than that he looks really lordly. Head and feet seem a bit big though. I don't own this miniature (yet!) so I cannot say if the height is accurate with the description (continued on next page).

Reference: Scotia Grendel – Generic Fantasy (Personality) / GFR0081 - Vitoldus The King of Elves.



FR0081 - Vitoldus The King of Elves

© Scotia Grendel, used under Fair Use

My second choice would be a discontinued miniature by Mithril, although his hair is not very tall and rather “average” in height. See Mithril’s Thranduil below, he’s in the same scale.

Reference: Mithril Miniatures / MS423A Galadriel (unreleased, so no link available)



© José Enrique Vacas de la Rosa

My second pick is also discontinued. It’s a movie version in 35 mm by Knight Models. Apparently some issue with Games Workshop made this series extremely short-lived. It is slim and elegant, but a bit short to be a true Galadriel.

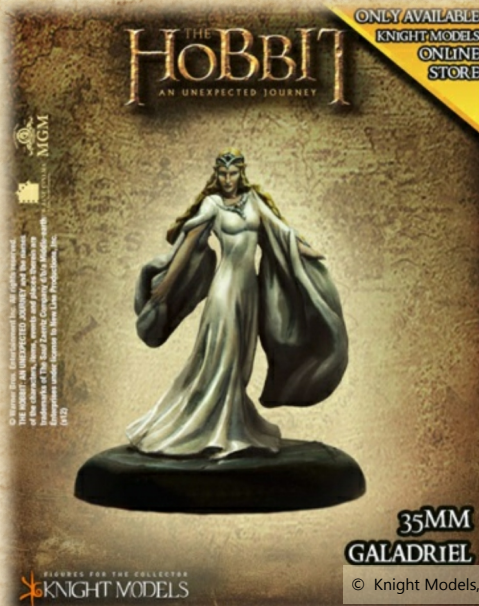
Referene: Knight Models / Galadriel (discontinued, no link).



© Elroi, used with permission

Referene: Mithril Miniatures / M137 Celeborn (perhaps discontinued, Mithril on restructuring)

Moving on to Galadriel I have the perfect miniature. In my mind there can be no other, but it’s both a discontinued and unreleased one (although some copies were sold) so I will provide other options.



35MM GALADRIEL

© Knight Models, used under Fair Use



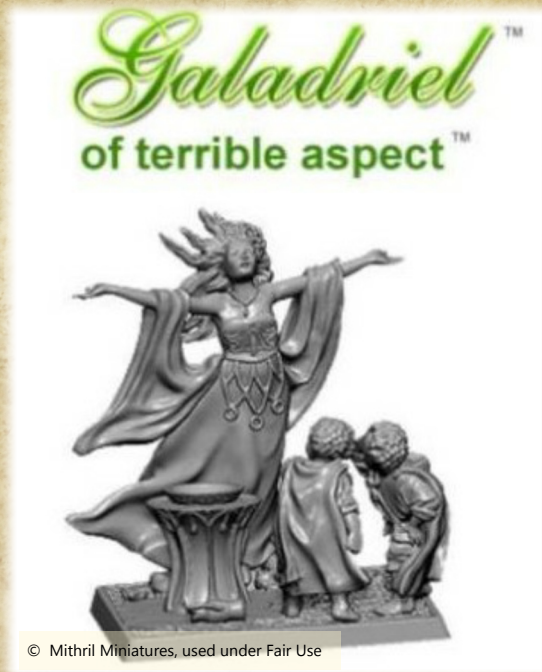
The one current one on sale by Mithril Miniatures is not to my liking, probably due to the silly pose. Be warned that she is shorter than the unreleased version (see Mithril's Thranduil below, she's in that same scale). By the way, Mithril has another one on horseback and plate armour which I'm not going to show for obvious reasons.

Reference: Mithril Miniatures / LR09
LOTR Galadriel, the bearer of Nenia.



© Mithril Miniatures, used under Fair Use

Reference: Mithril Miniatures / MZ648
Galadriel of terrible aspect



© Mithril Miniatures, used under Fair Use

Games Workshop's take on the "terrible Queen" is worth mentioning as well because she's taller than the normal version, but still too short for Galadriel and I'm not fond of her breastplate.

Galadriel tempted by the One Ring has inspired miniature designers as well. Here she stands near her Mirror with Frodo and Sam.

For the Mirror itself, I chose Games Workshop's movie version because I find Mithril's take a bit boring. You can find it easily on eBay even though it's discontinued.



© José Enrique Vacas de la Rosa

Elladan & Elrohir

East rode the knights of Dol Amroth driving the enemy before them: troll-men and Variags and orcs that hated the sunlight. South strode Éomer and men fled before his face, and they were caught between the hammer and the anvil. For now men leaped from the ships to the quays of the Harlond and swept north like a storm. There came Legolas, and Gimli wielding his axe, and Halbarad with the standard, and **Elladan and Elrohir with stars on their brow**, and the dour-handed Dúnedain, Rangers of the North, leading a great valour of the folk of Lebennin and Lamedon and the fiefs of the South.

—The Lord of the Rings.
The Battle of the Pelennor Fields

Little do we know about the twin sons of Elrond, other than that they look lordly and wear gleaming white gems on their brows. With so little information I feel inclined to use this Andrea miniature we have already seen above when discussing generic elven miniatures above. It lacks the gem, but otherwise it fits the above description quite well.

Reference: see p. 24



© Andrea Miniatures, used under Fair Use

Elrond

The face of Elrond was ageless, neither old nor young, though in it was written the memory of many things both glad and sorrowful. His hair was dark as the shadows of twilight, and upon it was set a circlet of silver; his eyes were grey as a clear evening, and in them was a light like the light of stars. Venerable he seemed as a king crowned with many winters, and yet hale as a tried warrior in the fulness of his strength. He was the Lord of Rivendell and mighty among both Elves and Men.

—The Lord of the Rings.
Many Meetings

Reference: Mithril Miniatures / LR37 Elrond (I can't find a link due to Mithril's website ongoing remodelling).



© Mithril Miniatures, used under Fair Use



© José Enrique Vacas de la Rosa

My personal pick is a discontinued version of Elrond also by Mithril (pictured to the right). The concept is quite close, but the pose is much more interesting in my opinion, as if in deep thought after reading a passage of the book he's holding. Ebay is the best option if you are searching for it.

Reference: Mithril Miniatures / M338 Elrond the Loremaster (discontinued). Again, eBay is the best option to find him.



Glorfindel

Suddenly into view below came a white horse, gleaming in the shadows, running swiftly. In the dusk its headstall flickered and flashed, as if it were studded with gems like living stars. The rider's cloak streamed behind him, and his hood was thrown back; his golden hair flowed shimmering in the wind of his speed. To Frodo it appeared that a white light was shining through the form and raiment of the rider, as if through a thin veil.

—*The Lord of the Rings. Flight to the Ford*

Question: Why (in the first edition, I. 221) is Glorfindel's horse described as having a 'bridle and bit' when Elves ride without bit, bridle or saddle?

Answer: I could, I suppose, answer: 'a trick-cyclist can ride a bicycle with handle-bars!' But actually bridle was casually and carelessly used for what I suppose should have been called a headstall. Or rather, since bit was added long ago (Chapter 112 was written very early) it had not considered the natural ways of elves with animals. **Glorfindel's horse would have an ornamental headstall, carrying a plume, and with the straps studded with jewels and small bells; but Glorfindel would certainly not use a bit. I will change bridle and bit to headstall.**

Taking into account the information provided in the Letters, I cannot find a suitable match. I'm afraid we'll have to settle for the closest (but not perfect) option.

Reference: Mithril Miniatures / LR36 Glorfindel (I can't find a link due to Mithril's website ongoing remodelling).



Legolas

There was also a strange Elf clad in green and brown, Legolas, a messenger from his father, Thranduil, the King of the Elves of Northern Mirkwood.

—*The Lord of the Rings. The Council of Elrond*

Gimli the dwarf alone wore openly a short shirt of steel-rings, for dwarves make light of burdens; and in his belt was a broad-bladed axe. Legolas had a bow and a quiver, and at his belt a long white knife.

—*The Lord of the Rings. The Ring goes South*

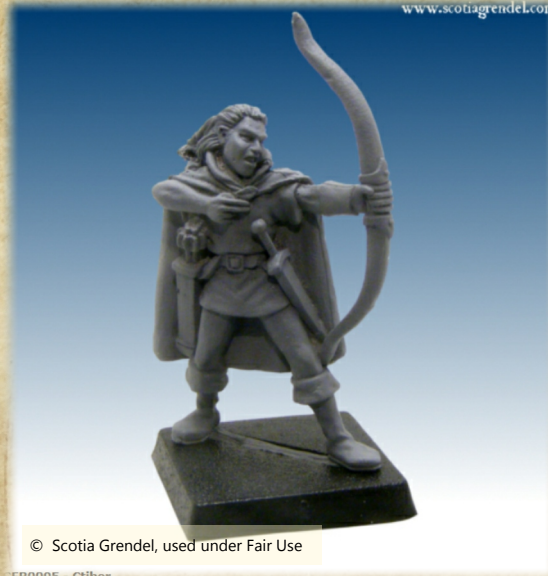
So we are looking for an Elf with bow, quiver and knife. It's safe to assume he would wear a cloak, probably hooded, as well.

My first choice would be the Legolas miniatures released by Mithril, one for the Fellowship of the Ring (still available as part of the box set) and one discontinued as part of the Chamber of Mazarbul series.

Reference: Mithril Miniatures / MB237 The Fellowship of the Ring box set, MC14 Legolas and Gimli (discontinued).

As second choice I offer this Scotia Grendel miniature. It shares the common flaws of this series which are a big head and feet.

Reference: Scotia Grendel – Generic Fantasy (Personality) / GFR0095 – Ctibor .



© Scotia Grendel, used under Fair Use

GFR0095 - Ctibor

Now, more aimed at collectors, we have a couple of references by Mithril with Legolas and Gimli quite nice and a bit expensive.

Reference: Mithril Miniatures / MZ645 Lorien boat with Legolas and Gimli

MZ645

Lorien boat with Gimli and Legolas™

Gold Status Fellowship
April 2017 Winner



© Mithril Miniatures, used under Fair Use

The Lord of the Rings™ metal miniatures www.mithril.ie



© Mithril Miniatures, used under Fair Use



© José Enrique Vacas de la Rosa

Reference: Mithril Miniatures / MS587
Legolas & Gimli riding Arod

Reference: Mithril Miniatures / MB236 The
Hobbit box set

Legolas™ & Gimli™ Riding Arod™



MS587 © Mithril Miniatures, used under Fair Use
Lord of the Rings™ metal miniatures www.mithril.ie



© José Enrique Vacas de la Rosa

As an alternative, you can use Reaper's Wood Elf king already on p. 28.

Final Thoughts

There is a huge variety of Elves miniatures out there. In the scale comparison pic below I have placed the thinner ones to the right, you have to decide yourself if you want your Elves slim or with a heavier and more human-like build. Probably the best choice is Reaper because variety, price and compatibility (not too slim not too heavy).

I have already chosen the subject for the next installment of this series (so there'll be no vote for this one). So far we have been indulging in the Free Peoples, but now it's time for to creep down the tunnels, far from the sunlight, where evil things dwell. Do you hear the hoarse song coming from below?

Clap! Snap! the black crack!
Grip, grab! Pinch, nab!
And down down to Goblin-town
You go, my lad!

Thranduil

In a great hall with pillars hewn out of the living stone sat the Elvenking on a chair of carven wood. On his head was a crown of berries and red leaves, for the autumn was come again. In the spring he wore a crown of woodland flowers. In his hand he held a carven staff of oak.

—The Hobbit.
Barrels out of Bond

We can find a nice Thranduil miniature in The Hobbit box set by Mithril. Here he is armed for war, in a majestic pose.

© José Enrique Vacas de la Rosa





EÄ

THE WORLD THAT IS

Eä:
 "Ilúvatar called to them, and said:
 'I know the desire of your minds that what ye have seen should verily be
 not only in your thought, but even as ye yourselves are, and yet other.
 Therefore I say:
Eä! Let these things Be!
 And I will send forth into the Void, the Flame Imperishable,
 and it shall be at the heart of the World, and the World shall Be;
 and those of you that will may go down into it.'
 And suddenly the Ainur saw afar off a light, as it were a cloud with a living heart of flame;
 and they knew that this was no vision only, but that Ilúvatar had made a new thing:
Eä, the World that Is."

—J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*, *Ainulindalë* (The Music of the Ainur).

Arda in the First Age from the building of Thangorodrim until the War of Wrath

The Eä RPG system is dedicated to role playing gaming in J.R.R. Tolkien's universe. Eä d20 is currently well along in it's development with the "Races & Cultures" tome nearing completion. Eä d20 is the adaptation of the Open D20 (D&D 3.5) role-playing gaming system modified to more accurately fit the "feel" of Tolkien's Middle-earth. Tomes of lore include:

- Races & Cultures (near completion)
- Magic in Middle-earth (core mechanics complete, conversion charts in progress)
- Destinies & Lore (Classes, Skills, Feats, etc. - in early stages)
- Creatures & Monsters (Ancalagon through Zigurim) (planned)
- Valar & Maiar (Includes Vala, Maia, Istari, Lords and Characters of Renown) (planned)

BREE - EXPANDED CAMPAIGN NOTES

By Olaf "Falenthal" Anguera
(olafalo@gmail.com)

© 2018

adventure



The following contribution is an expansion to the adventures provided in Cubicle 7's Bree supplement. The "p.xx-yy" notes in this text refer to specific pages of that supplement. You must have access to the TOR supplements "Bree" (or at least the pages containing the adventures) and the adventure **Harder Than Stone** from "Ruins of the North", to use this expansion. Otherwise you will quickly lose track of the adventure! Simply insert the parts from this text to the respective pages of the modules mentioned above and begin running an expanded/new adventure.

A Troll sat alone on his seat of stone,
And munched and mumbled a bare old bone;
For many a year he had gnawed it near,
For meat was hard to come by.
Done by! Gum by!
In a cave in the hills he dwelt alone,
And meat was hard to come by.

Up came Tom with his big boots on.
Said he to Troll: 'Pray, what is yon?
For it looks like the shin o' my nuncle Tim,
As should be a-lyin' in graveyard.
Caveyard! Paveyard!
This many a year has Tim been gone,
And I thought he were lyin' in graveyard.'

'My lad,' said the Troll, 'this bone I stole.
But what be bones that lie in a hole?
Thy nuncle was dead as a lump o' lead,
Afore I found his shinbone.
Tinbone! Thinbone!
He can spare a share for a poor old troll,
For he don't need his shinbone.'

Said Tom: 'I don't see why the likes o' thee
Without axin' leave should go makin' free
With the shank or the shin o' my father's kin;
So hand the old bone over!
Rover! Trover!
Though dead he may be, it belongs to he;
So hand the old bone over!'

'For a couple o' pins,' says the Troll, and grins,
'I'll eat thee too, and gnaw thy shins.
A bit o' fresh meal will go down sweet!
I'll try my teeth on thee now.
Hee now! See now!
I'm tired o' gnawing old bones and skins;
I've a mind to dine on thee now.'

But just as he thought his dinner was caught,
He found his hands had hold of naught.
Before he could mind, Tom slipped behind
And gave him the boot to larn him.
Warn him! Darn him!
A bump o' the boot on the seat, Tom thought,
Would be the way to larn him.

But harder than stone is the flesh and bone
Of a troll that sits in the hills alone.
As well set your boot to the mountain's root,
For the seat of a troll don't feel it.
Peel it! Heal it!
Old Troll laughed, when he heard Tom groan,
And he knew his toes could feel it.

Tom's leg is game, since home he came,
And his bootless foot is lasting lame;
But Troll don't care, and he's still there
With the bone he boned from its owner.
Loner! Boner!
Troll's old seat is still the same,
And the bone he boned from its owner!

—The Lord of the Rings.
Flight to the Ford.

GREAT FUSS WITH THE LATEST GOSSIP AT THE PRANCING PONY

Pages 45-46: Night has fallen, and the common room is filled with people who have closed their business, had dinner with their family and came here now to have the next-to-last pint before going back home to sleep:

- Conversation is the very same in all the tables of The Pony: “Don’t you know?! Just yesterday Tomas Heatherton was caught by his own father, Nick Heatherton, turning his uncle Timeas Heatherton’s house upside down. He was looking for Timeas’ hidden treasure, no doubt. Nick had to kick out his son by force and Tomas hasn’t been seen in town since.”
- “Has Tomas found anything in his uncle’s house?”
- “Who or what is he hiding from?”
- “Why didn’t Nick drag Tomas here so we could question him?”
- “Only one week has passed since his uncle’s demise and this felon is already trying to make profit out of it! He didn’t even show up the day before yesterday to the funeral of old Timeas! My Mathilda has always known he is a lazy bones gutty and my Mathilda is never wrong”

Now, describe some of the patrons. You may use the table on page 29 if you want to, but I recommend introducing some local personalities, which may appear again in future adventures, such as:

- Cole (p.17) the factotum of the Reeve of Bree (save the true Reeve for the next adventure to make his intervention more dramatic and use Cole to link both scenarios).
- A prominent member of the Undertree family, like Albert Undertree (p.101), to present the clan from Staddle, which will appear in the last adventure.
- Harry Talltree, the Forester of Archet (p.23), who may show interest in the heroes if they defeat the Old Troll.

A hero from Bree, or any who visits the area frequently and have the *Folk-lore* Trait, may know something about them. When describing any of these personalities tell your players about Grór as well. It is easy to notice that there is just one Dwarf in the room at this time; all dwarven traders have gone to rest already to resume their trip early before sunrise. Use the information on pages 46-47 for Grór’s description and for handling any interaction with him. This way the group will know the Dwarf before meeting him later in the adventure, but it will not be as evident for the players as if you highlight him being alone in the room.

Use of skills such as **Courtesy, Insight, Riddles, Song**, a relevant Trait or buying drinks for the patrons (only a *Rich* character can buy enough drinks to loosen some tongues, others must spend 1 Treasure point) will help uncover the following information:

- On Timeas’ death: It is told that he was murdered and that his killer could have been from outside. Timeas looked pale and stressed, talking to nobody a couple of nights before passing away. It seems clear that a ghost was visiting him at night (“I saw strange lights near his place some nights ago!” comes a shout from across the room). And the ghost must have announced his death (“Perhaps one of those Barrow-wights from the Barrow downs?” guesses one woodcutter from Combe). The people of Bree give him a hard look, stating clearly that such things are not to be mentioned. The woodcutter shrinks into his stool and focusses on his drink, keeping his mouth shut for the rest of the evening.

- A Great or Extraordinary Success reveals: the butcher of Bree confesses, even knowing that it is not right to speak badly about a dead person, that Timeas still owes him 6 coppers and that this is very inconsiderate of him. More so because the butcher saw with his own eyes how Timeas paid the undertaker for the expenses of his own funeral in advance, also giving him precise instructions for the funeral.
- Talking to the undertaker (he is in the common room now, or may be met with later during the adventure) reveals Timeas’

funeral instructions: “Roll a certain map around my lower leg, put my boots on to cover it and bury me like that.” His brother Nick is also aware of these details.

- **On Timeas’ past:** Timeas was an old but still energetic man. Toward the end of his days he was a humble man, nice to everybody. He always liked to talk with travelers stopping at The Pony and had a kind word for everyone. But it had not always been like that. The old folk remember that in his youth he had a very strange phase. He *travelled* to the east and would not return to Bree for weeks, some-time up to a month. “No respectable person should ever disappear just like that!”

– With a Great or Extraordinary Success: the heroes will learn that Timeas was not only *travelling* but actually *adventuring* (this word causes quiet a commotion throughout the room). He was in the company of strange and likely untrustworthy fellows. Sometimes he brought back a good handful of coins from his adventures, enough to keep up a comfortable living for quiet some time. And he only shared a little bit of his wealth with his family but nobody else.

Further questions (**Courtesy, Insight or Riddles**) about these adventures or the treasure will reveal:

- They stopped the day Timeas came back to Bree in the company of one of the northern Rangers. Rangers are deemed strange and untrustworthy, but usually it was not in their company when he went adventuring. In fact, it looked as if the Ranger had saved Timeas from his former associates. Timeas was not seen with his former associates ever since, nor did he go adventuring ever again.
- Despite all rumors about treasure, Timeas and the Heathertorns never stopped working nor did they live like really rich folk. But on a few occasions, when an espe-

cially bad harvest occurred, or his family was in dire straits otherwise, Timeas would disappear for a few days and come back with a bag full of coins. “Just enough to get us through”, he would say and he always added: “but these are the last ones.” He never revealed the whereabouts of this hidden treasure.

If the heroes fail any test, get an Eye result or when the Ranger who brought Timeas back to Bree is mentioned, you may drop this remark through Albert Undertree (p.101):

- My last apple harvest is useless and that is something truly worrying. I am sure one of those Rangers is to blame, they must have entered my stores to spend the night and they have infected my apples with their foul smell. All the store stinks, that’s how I know it must have been a Ranger. These people spend their time splashing through the Midgewater marshes and even unhealthier places and it’s impossible to get rid of that smell for days.

Albert Undertree has apple orchards in the farmlands surrounding Staddle. The storehouse he speaks of is the southernmost one, very close to the Great East Road and few minutes away from Bree’s burial ground. That is why the Old Troll used it to rest during the day after one of his expeditions in search of corpses.



Alarums and IncurSIONs

Page 47: Suddenly Tomas bursts into The Pony terminating all talking. Describe him as pale, with eyes wide open, stumbling forward while babbling and grabbing chairs and table corners for support as if blind or an undead...

An **Insight** test will reveal that he is just in shock and he needs a lot of calming before he starts talking sensibly. This same test can be used as the Preliminary roll for the upcoming Encounter. The action of calming him down (with **Inspire**, **Awe** or some brandy) can already be considered the Introduction phase.

After he calmed down, Tomas could be questioned about his findings in his uncle's house. He would then show an amulet resembling a black bird. It was lying on a table, but Tomas had never seen it before in his uncle's house nor had his uncle ever worn it. If examined, it is easy to notice a rune on the backside. A **Lore** roll or a Trait like *Old Lore* reveals it as the letter "G". *Arnor Lore* will also reveal this was Gorlanc's symbol, a treacherous villain who wandered the area desecrating barrows to steal their treasures. You may give away some additional information about him and his misdeeds from the scroll text on page 47. This Gorlanc was banished from these lands decades before Timeas stopped adventuring.

The amulet was a warning left by Grór on the windowsill of Timeas' house as a reminder of what he did for Gorlanc and a way to announce his past was back for a reckoning.

It is important for the campaign that this amulet is found, because if the heroes finally decide not to go to the Black Barrow and they do not discover the backpacks with the signed letter (the Upper Barrow, p.63), the link between the current adventure, Gorlanc and his followers will be lost. And then the link between the three adventures of the mini-campaign would be lost as well. It is the same amulet that appears in Tarry-Mack's backpack (p.71) and among the belongings of Hirlinon (p.78) in the next adventure.

If the heroes chose not to go to the Black Barrow and leave the CURSED TREASURE ALONE

Page 63: If the players decide to go after the Black Barrow, follow the adventure as written. But if they decide to pay attention to the many warnings advising to let the cursed treasure alone, Grór and his brutes will attack them in an alley before they can reach the town center. The Dwarf will desperately try to seize the map and will attack the company, along with some thugs from Bree and a fooled Nick, Tomas' father (See below).

After the events of Part Three, Grór learned enough to know that the group was pursuing a Troll and he was fairly sure the map was in the creature's lair. So he decided to go back to Bree and wait for the heroes' return. If they did not make it, it would mean the Troll was too dangerous to be confronted. If they managed to come back, most likely they would be tired and wounded after the fight and it would be easy as pie to beat them up. He bribed the guards at the gates so they would inform him as soon as the heroes returned and promised a share of the treasure to some thugs and brutes from Bree to get their help.

He also fooled Nick, promising him to look after his boy and teach him a respectable trade (Men think all Dwarves are good teachers of some respectable craft), so he serves as an innocent decoy to lure the group into Grór's ambush.

- The gate guard will see the heroes coming from afar and he will send word to Grór, who in turn will set his plan in motion. Nick will greet the heroes in the main street shortly after they have entered Bree and will ask about his son. If they ask him how he came to know the exact moment of their arrival, he will say the guard is a friend of his and told him that "the group that helped your boy" is coming back to



town. Whether Tomas has survived and is with them or if the group has to deliver to him the sad news of his son's death, Nick will ask all of them to go to his place and tell him in detail what has happened. He will lead them through a dark alley between two tall houses, where Grór and his thugs will surround the company. Remember to have Grór stab Nick when he reveals his true intentions, as indicated in page 64.

If the Company is wounded too badly and comes into dire straits, make Haleth appear. After running her own errand, the Ranger could not forget about the group and their difficult task. So she decided to pass through Bree and check if they had managed to come back in one piece. "Not too late", as the saying goes...

Epilogue

Page 66: If you did not need Haleth to appear in the fight with the Old Troll or at Grór's ambush in Bree, have her appear now during the Fellowship Phase. Timeas' map tells of the location of a Dúnadan treasure and the ruins of an old settlement of the Realm of Arnor (where the King's Chair is). Haleth will contact the group to discover what they have decided to do with the map or the treasure, ask them about what they did find in the marshes if they went there and will offer her help on collecting information about the precious objects the group might have found in the Lower Barrow (p.63). The important thing is to somehow keep Haleth in touch with the group, to show that she cares about them like a Patron.



Forsaken Inn © by Matej Cadil, used with permission

STRANGE MEN, STRANGE ROADS

'I don't know if the Road has ever been measured in miles beyond the Forsaken Inn, a day's journey east of Bree'.

— *The Lord of the Rings.
A Knife in the Dark*

ARRIVING at the Forsaken Inn

Page 67: Butterbur will deliver a letter from Haleth to the heroes. The letter sets the Forsaken Inn as the meeting point with a Ranger and urges them to go there on a specific date (make it the next evening). The identity of the Ranger varies according to your needs:

- Haleth: So, she will be the murdered Ranger, to increase the drama.

In this case the letter will ask for the group's assistance in an investigation.

When they ask about her in the Forsaken Inn, Jack Forsaken won't describe her in the terms of Tarry-Mack's cynical personality. Instead, the innkeeper will describe how Haleth liked staring at him when she stayed at the inn. Her inquisitive look made the innkeeper feel uncomfortable and he believes that she could read all his secrets just like that. Every time people speak about Haleth use one of the nicknames usually given to Rangers, to contrast the relation the group has with the Dúnadan. Tarry-Mack, usually used for Mallor, could also be applied for her.

- Mallor: If you prefer to keep Haleth as a Patron to avoid making the campaign too grim, the letter will tell about a companion of hers (the Ranger Mallor) who has requested her help. But she has an urgent errand from her captain and cannot attend. Haleth asks the companions to go on her behalf and help Mallor if possible.

The walk from Bree to the Forsaken Inn takes one day, but no Fatigue rolls are needed, so there is no need to calculate the travel distance. Simply make sure the heroes do not arrive before the evening, so they will not meet Haleth/Mallor before her/his death.

Caravan members

Page 73-81: If you need to reduce the number of caravan members because you do not have enough players, or you don't want to keep record of so many Loremaster characters, you may want to do the following:

- Narvig is a dispensable character. His brother Narvi can play both roles.
- It may also help to make Vig and Vogar inseparable, so watching one of them will reveal information about both. This cuts down the number of successes the group needs to get information about the dwarf's debts.
- Eoin, the boy from Bree, can also be excluded from the caravan. If you do not want to lose the false lead about the "crime of passion", Edoric himself can play that role. He can be heard speaking to himself while readying the wagons at dawn, before the rest of the travelers wake up. Instead of Eoin's "teenager love", Edoric would say about Berelas that she is a woman he would die for, and that he would give up traveling the roads for her. He would like to muster the courage to tell her about his love once they arrive at Bree and the current contract is over.

Strangers in the Woods. The purpose of the Elven Company

Page 84: The Elves introduce themselves as a Wandering Company on their way to the Grey Havens where they will set sail into the west. But this is only a façade for strangers. In truth they are a patrol sent from Rivendell (you may want to introduce Elladan and Elrohir, or Gildor Inglorion as the leaders to have a cameo of a character from the books). Elrond has detected the presence of dark magic (Gorlanc) in the area and is looking for its source (the fortress that will be attacked in the epilogue of the adventure, p.93). Part or all of this information can be revealed to the group if they get a result of 7+ in the Social Encounter with them.

Options for Berelas and the heroes

Page 91: If the final outcome is that Berelas will be judged by the Rangers, you can offer two alternatives:

- If Haleth sent the letter requesting the group to meet Mallor, it makes sense that she shows up in Bree to learn what has happened with her companion Mallor and his investigation.
- If Haleth is the dead Ranger at the start of the adventure, simply make the Reeve Tywc Greenleaf tell the company that Rangers come to Bree often. It is just a matter of waiting in the common room of the Pracing Pony until the next one shows up. You can use this moment to introduce Hiraval, the Ranger with the leading role in the adventure *What Lies Beneath* (Ruins of the North, p.93). This way you may use him later on linking that adventure smoothly to your current one.

No matter which Ranger contacts the heroes, they will have to give him the bad news of Mallor/Haleth's death and explain the part Berelas played in it. They may also ask for advice on what to do with the ring. The Ranger will say that any decision on such an item is beyond his knowledge and abilities. He will offer to escort Berelas to Rivendell, to ask for guidance from the great and wise dwelling in the Hidden Valley. But ultimately the heroes have to decide what to do. This is a chance to introduce Elrond to the heroes, so it may make sense for him to invite them to Rivendell – maybe for some of the adventures in *Ruins of the North*.



Strider © by Peter Xavier Price, used with permission

Epilogue

Page 93: Do not make the assault on Gorlanc's fortress part of the narration of the next Fellowship Phase. Taking into account that the characters will likely not take an active role in the attack (unless they are all Rangers of the North and/or Elves from Rivendell), you can run the following adventure presented in *Unfinished Business*.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

"And now they're gone for robbers and live outside, hiding in the woods beyond Archet and out in the wilds north-away. It's like a bit of the bad old times tales of, I say."

— *The Lord of the Rings: Homeward Bound*

This adventure is an adaptation of the first part of the adventure *Harder than Stone*, from *Ruins of the North* (p.36).

The main adaptations/changes are the following:

- Harry Talltree, the Forester of Archet, has heard about the group's deed of defeating a Troll. Harry himself has been obsessed with killing the two-headed Troll he did not "finish". After years of searching he finally found its tracks and is eager to hunt it down.
- The Problem is that along its footprints are many man-made tracks as well: it seems to have associated with a group of bandits and Harry knows that he cannot face them all alone. He discovered the tracks while investigating the scene of an attack on a caravan, in the Chetwood. So he hurried to Bree looking for the heroes because of their experience, both in investigations and fighting Trolls.

- On their way, Harry will explain that the "caravan" was actually a couple of carts pulled by some folk from Archet to a safe place in the woods. As explained in page 14 of *Bree*, there are still people storing supplies in refuge cabins there, should they need to flee from Orcs, wolves or Evil Men. You can use the description of the Wood-Castle in page 23 of *Bree* for this refuge.
- Use an adaptation of the scene on pages 37-38 of *Ruins of the North* to describe the place where the attack occurred and how to track the footprints to the bandit's camp. The camp is to the northeast inside the Chetwood, where there is enough shadow during daylight hours for the Troll. The bandits and the Troll work for Gorlanc, who is stealing supplies to stock his fortress. This should be made clear at some point: if they get close to spy they will hear that "Gorlanc will be satisfied when we arrive with the carts we got this time". Or the heroes might discover black amulets with a black bird and a G rune on the backside on the bodies found at the battle site. Remember to describe the Troll missing one head and take your time to explain Harry's feeling of anxiety when the creature, he has been searching for so long, is finally within his reach.
- Once the battle has started allow some of the bandits to escape. Perhaps the captain stays in a rearward position only barking

Troll sat alone on his seat of stone © by Matej Cadil, used with permission



orders (using *Voice of Command*) and flees when he realizes they are losing the fight. For the two-headed Troll (now turned into a one-headed Troll) you may use the stats of a regular Stone Troll.

- For this scene it could be interesting to detail Harry Talltree's combat stats and let him fight alongside the group. Of course, during combat he will focus on the Troll alone and the heroes will need to protect him from the bandits (and the Troll). You may want to give the Troll the Special Ability *Hate (Harry Talltree)*, for evident reasons. Also, take your time to consider how Harry might react if it is one of the heroes who lands the killing blow on the Troll instead of himself. Will he be grateful or angry at the hero?
- Once the Troll is dead and the people from Archet are rescued (adapt the Dwarves from the original adventure accordingly), Harry will want to go back to Archet to make sure everybody is safe. Meanwhile, the heroes should go after the escaped bandits. Keep in mind that Harry knows nothing about Gorlanc, unless the heroes tell him. So, after having rescued his neighbors, disbanding the bandits and finishing the pending "job" with the Troll, for him the quest is over.
- Skip Part Two of the adventure about Rivendell and Elrond, and go straight to Part Four.
- You can run tracking and chasing as you prefer. The important bit here is that the bandits are headed north, running parallel to the abandoned Greenway that leads to the dreaded Deadmen's Dike (Fornost).
- After two days of pursuit they will see a ruined fortress and notice movement there. This is the fortress described in page 47 of *Harder than Stone* (from the supplement *Ruins of the North*).

- Let the heroes scout the area, make plans about how to enter and when they are ready to act, describe a pristine trumpet blast breaking the silence. Then, scores of Rangers and Elves will come forth from different directions - until now invisible to the heroes - to storm the fortress. The company will have no time to react or think on doing anything, being impressed by the shining armour and fury of the Elves and the relentless assault of the Rangers.
- Ask for **Awareness** rolls, because after a couple of minutes Gorlanc flees through a secret exit out of a cave just below the top of the hill. The heroes should notice Gorlanc and his men escaping from afar and they should raise an alarm. But they will have no chance to block their retreat themselves. Gorlanc can rise a dense mist emanating from the nearby stream, if the group decides to go after him. Choose an important character with a good relation with the group, such as (Haleth/Hiraval/Cenedriiel/Elladan and Elrohir/Gildor Inglorion), who will come to them after their warning, or find them in the mist if they get lost in it. He will encourage the heroes to follow him in his pursuit of the escapees. I would advise to use a Ranger and not an Elf though, that is related to the setting and the mood of this mini-campaign, which deals with the affairs of the Bree-landers and the discovery of the true nature of the Rangers. Let the Elves remain somewhat distant and mythical - something to be explored later if the players want to.
- Now start the adventure *Holed Up in Staddle* from the section titled *The Chase* (Bree, p.95). Offer the information of the previous section *A Weary Traveler*, as you see fit. There will be no Fellowship Phase between this adventure and the previous one, but there will be one in the middle of *Holed Up in Staddle*.

HOLED UP IN STADDLE

Passing through, they kept on along the Road for some miles. It bent to the left, curving back into its eastward line as it rounded the feet of Bree-hill and then it began to run swiftly downward into wooded country. To their left they could see some of the houses and hobbit-holes of Staddle on the gentler south-eastern slopes of the hill.

— *The Lord of the Rings*.
A Knife in the Dark

Following this adventure - as suggested in the *Bree* supplement - it can be a good time for an important personality to reach out to the heroes and hand them an invitation from Elrond. The Lord of the Last Homely House will have heard of their deeds from Rangers, Elves or Gandalf himself and he will be keen to hear their personal account of what took place. Choose a character based on the relationship established between Elrond's group/the Rangers and the Loremaster characters from previous adventures, such as Haleth or Cenedriel. Any of them is a better choice than Gandalf, who has met them only once during these adventures. Once again, a Ranger would be more fitting to escort them and unveil the Hidden Valley, where the Dúnedain become something very different from what common Bree-landers are used to see.

The adventure *What Lies Beneath* from *Ruins of the North* would be a fine continuation, especially if you have introduced Hiraval at some point. Now that the north of Bree has been freed from Gorlanc's influence, it seems convenient to reclaim a Ranger-outpost in the area, such as the manor. You can even let the youngsters from "Ruins" settle there, resolved to go on adventures inspired by the tales about the heroes themselves!

And since they are going to journey in the vicinity of Fornost, you may add Bilbo's request from *Concerning Archers* during their stay at Rivendell. This can open a new campaign line centered on discovering and thwarting Gishak

Gashnaga's plans (*Ruins of the North*, p.71).

While the Orc Chieftain is now operating in the North Downs, his stronghold can still be located in Mount Gram. After fighting him in *Concerning Archers*, the players might wish to inquire about the Hill-men that accompany the Orcs. This investigation will lead to the tribe of Hill-men that is described in *Nightmares of Angmar*. There they will learn that this is a settlement on the eastern side of the North Downs that was seduced by Gorlanc (after the same fashion of the Dunlendings and Saruman). Once Gorlanc was killed they were without a leader and some of them wanted to live under the Shadow, while others wished to establish a relationship with the people of the south (Bree and its surroundings).

If the heroes don't care to ask about the Hill-men, another option is for one of the company's patrons to learn about that internal struggle, possibly through some Ranger scouts, and send the heroes to negotiate an alliance with the Hill-men. The kidnapping of the children by Goblins from Mount Gram sets the adventure in motion. Replace Carn Dûm by Mount Gram and Heddwyn by Gishak himself. Or perhaps Heddwyn has become Gishak's lieutenant, seduced by promises of future empowerment of



Romanesque ruins © by Wouter Florusse, used with permission 2012.

his people in exchange for assisting the Orcs in taking over Eriador.

If you want to open still another path of adventure, the Vault of Heddwyn (*Ruins of the North*, p.30-31, entry 14) could work out similarly to the Vault where Feredrûn was held captive in *Harder Than Stone* (*Ruins of the North*, p.47 and p.50 entry 7). Consider that Feredrûn was discovered and enslaved by Heddwyn. Once the Witch-servant of Angmar is dead, the Hunter of the East is set free with her shackles still on. The Elves of Rivendell will know how to break them. But the tools to do so might be buried somewhere in Eregion or even in Moria. But exploring the Black Chasm would require a supplement of its own.

Finally, because of the encounters with undead in the North Downs' mansion in *What Lies Beneath* and in the ruins of Fornost in *Concerning Archers*, you can adapt the adventure *Shadows Over Tyrn Gorthad* to that northern area instead of to the Barrow Downs. Elrond and Gandalf are worried about the rise of undead

activity in the area and they suspect that old Sorcery of Angmar may be at work there.

Regarding the side quests from that adventure, Mirabella Thorndike could become a hobbit adventurer that travelled too far, just like Ruby Boffin (*Bree*, p.10). Her rescuer can be Talandil the Ranger of the North Downs (*Rivendell*, p.59). The Hill of the Elf Prince should be substituted for the Tower of Twilight (*Rivendell*, p.60). Asking for counsel from Tom Bombadil is still appropriate, due to his knowledge about the Barrow-wights. And remember that the North Downs were where the last battle against the Witch-king of Angmar was fought, so there could be plenty of barrows of fallen elves and dúnedain.

Or - why not - you may simply allow the heroes to take a rest in Rivendell, marveling the Elves and learning about the true nature of the Rangers. And then they might go back to a peaceful life without any further shocks in their beloved Bree. They truly earned it!




REVIEW - EREBOR

THE LONELY MOUNTAIN

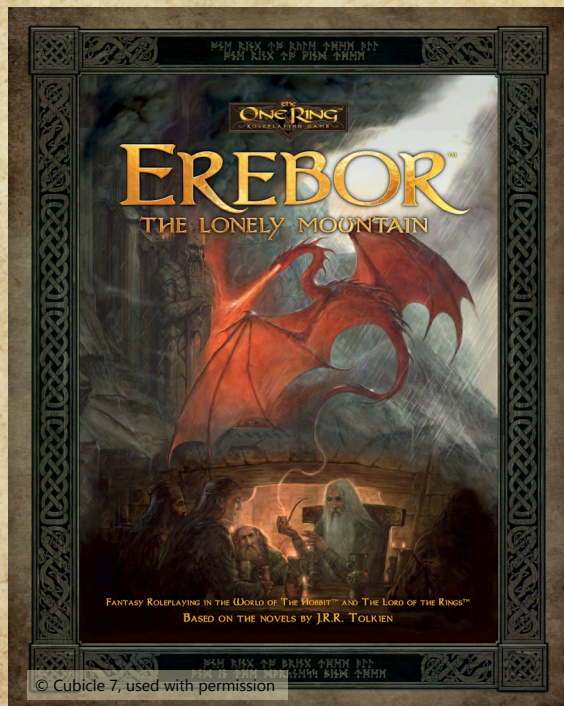
Reviewer: Thomas Morwinsky

(tolwen@gmx.de)

© 2018

per the terms of the CC license: 

review



Product in Short	
Title	Erebor - The Lonely Mountain
Author	Gabriel Garcia, Andrew Kenrick, Mark A. Latham, T.S. Luikart, Francesco Nepitello, James M. Spahn and Kenneth Spencer
Artwork	Jon Hodgson, John Howe, Sam Manley, Jan Pospíšil
Publisher	Cubicle 7
Year published	2016
Pages	112
Price	\$ 29.99
Gaming usability	★★★★★
Presentation & atmosphere	★★★★★
Middle-earth lore	★★★★★
Overall score	★★★★★
Available from	
http://cubicle7.co.uk/buy-now/ http://cubicle7.co.uk/find-a-shop/	

GENERAL

Erebor brings *The One Ring* (TOR) back to its roots – Wilderland. Despite the name, the pages covering the great dwarven citadel constitute only a minority in this module (more on this topic later on). Besides the eponymous content, you also get information on Dale and its surrounding lands, rules for creating and using dragons in TOR, a history of the War of the Dwarves with the Orcs and two new playable dwarven cultures.

Almost 27% of the book (30 pages) deal with Erebor itself, ca. 32% (36 pages) are devoted to Dale and its lands, 17% (17 pages) present the dragons, while 7% (8 pages) are given to the great war of TA 2793-99. Finally, almost 13% (14 pages) are reserved for the two new cultures (Dwarves from the Grey Mountains and Iron Hills). The remaining pages go to introductory topics and the index. In terms of background info and fluff versus mechanical info, ca. 62% (69 pages) go to the former while 32% (36 pages) to the latter, which leaves 6% to introductory topics, table of content, etc.

EREBOR

This first section provides you with an overview of the Lonely Mountain and its core features. Iconic places such as Thrór's and Thráin's Chambers are described, plus some more (e.g. the Chamber of Mazarbul). We also see a more general description of the overall working and living areas as well as a rough general historical outline. There is a one-page overview map of the whole Erebor (2D topview) with markings for the described places. The sheer scale of the map provides the LM with plenty of opportunities to place other locations. As usual in TOR, no scale is given and you are thus on your own to estimate the size and complexity of the Lonely Mountain's features.



Overall I deem this part OK, as it gives the LM practical guidelines on how to use the Lonely Mountain in his game. The main problem of such a site is mentioned in the text itself: Since the Dwarves are loth to grant widespread access to Erebor for outsiders, it is very unlikely for most adventure groups to see more than the outer "official" halls, which are necessary for dealings with outsiders. These features are described in *Erebor*, but not much more. Therefore the part on Erebor itself should be understood as an immediate and practical gaming aid rather than a comprehensive and in-depth description of the place and its inhabitants, history, culture etc. Personally, I expected

a more detailed description of Erebor (given the title) and thus was quite disappointed by the rather superficial treatment of the Lonely Mountain.

DALE AND ITS LANDS

Dale and its lands are the second regional focus of the book. In fact they are given even more space than the eponymous dwarven city. The descriptive style is similar to that for Erebor, but more comprehensive and detailed. The latter is not surprising, since Dale as a whole is much more accessible to visitors and thus offers more opportunities for gaming groups to explore. Both text and layout are of the well-known high quality TOR style and evocative of Tolkien's books. You feel immediately at home here. Several businesses, administrative and residential locations, together with their inhabitants and descriptions of important figures from Dale are described in detail.

What I deem less appropriate is the layout of Dale itself (the city). This rather large city looks (and reads from the descriptive text) like a bustling metropolis of the north, built mainly from stone houses and looks rather "finished" or "full" (i.e. without empty or ruined spaces). Though to my opinion this is not "wrong" as such, it seems inappropriate in the supposed timeframe (i.e. the early years of Bard's kingship), when the city lay ruined for 171 years and has to be rebuilt completely. Given the overall situation, the city should – to my opinion – look much more "in the process of being rebuilt" with some areas still ruined (some already cleared, others not), most already rebuilt from wood (being quicker and more "northmannish") and only a few important ones from stone. In contrast, the layout as provided in Erebor – again to my opinion – fits much better into the time of the War of the Ring, when seven decades of peace and prosperity provided enough time and resources for this place to evolve into what is described in this supplement. So, in a nutshell, to me the city looks anachronistic. Ironically, such anachronisms were also a staple feature in MERP and I had hoped this thing of the past wouldn't come back in newer Middle-earth gaming supplements.

DRAGONS

For fans of dragons, *Erebor* provides detailed rules on how to create and stat these monsters. It is a nice touch, given the impact Smaug had on the site. Still it takes up 17 pages of the whole supplement, which could have been given to more fluff or directly useable gaming material (supposing that dragons are a rather rare encounter for most gaming groups).

THE WAR OF THE DWARVES AND THE ORCS

Eight pages are devoted to a detailed account of the War of the Dwarves and the Orcs (TA 2793-99). While not directly connected to *Erebor*, it belongs to the greater history of the Dwarves, as the wanderings (and slaying!) of the exiled dwarven king Thrór caused this war. The great historical detail beyond the info provided by Tolkien is somewhat unusual for TOR, and this was a very pleasant surprise for me. Hopefully this will integrate with later supplements (especially the announced *Moria* box).



DWARVES OF THE GREY MOUNTAINS AND THE IRON HILLS

Erebor also provides additional cultures to play – namely the Dwarves from the Grey Mountains and Iron Hills. This part is solid, as can be expected from the past TOR additions to playable cultures.

ARTWORK

Artwork is traditionally one of the strongest points of TOR (see image above), and this is no exception. Now it is even topped with an absolutely gorgeous cover art (see p. 49) by John Howe himself!

OVERALL

Erebor gives you a lot of material for a campaign in northern Rhovanion. You get immediately useable material for a wide range of activities. So you can use the product directly as provided for a game session without the need for much adaptation. Therefore its greatest strength is the diversity of topics covered within a relatively small page count. On the other hand this is – in my opinion – also its main weakness, as it is far too superficial on the eponymous core topic (*Erebor*) and even peripheral ones like Dale. It also may look like the authors tried to please everyone with its content. In addition

pages are lost to parts that are interesting in themselves (e.g., the War of the Dwarves and Orcs or the rules section on Dragons or the two additional dwarven cultures) but of only peripheral concern to ***Erebor***. In the light of this, a more fitting name would have been something like *Dale, Erebor and the North*. It is a bit of everything, but none of it in greater depth. On the other hand, you get solid and well-useable material for immediate use in a game, and this is not to be underestimated, as we speak

about a gaming product here. In addition, I noticed no obvious lore issues this time, making *Erebor* stronger in this respect than many other TOR products. The artwork is great, especially the highly evocative cover art by John Howe.

All in all, I am somewhat torn regarding an overall rating. Judging by the immediate usability for gaming (and no need for deeper background info), I'd give 4 or 4.5 points, whereas I'd give only 3 points if I think of the expectations raised by the title and the very diverse (and thus rather short on individual topics - especially the Lonely Mountain!) content I got in the end. So in the end, I settled for an overall rating of 3.5.

A KING WITH NO FOLK

By Olaf “Falenthal” Anguera
(olafalo@gmail.com)

© 2018

adventure

Olaf was not satisfied with providing one dedicated contribution for this Issue (the Bree campaign earlier), but went for nothing less than an additional, fully-fledged adventure!

This time he brings us (and your Companions) to Rohan and its issues with the aftermath of the ill-regarded reign of Fengel and the newly crowned Thengel and its problems with the mess his father left in the realm.

*Similar to the TOR’s official products for the region (**Horse-lords of Rohan** and **Oaths of the Riddermark**), the focus is more on domestic politics of a mannish realm and the failings of men rather than fighting the obvious goons of the Enemy (werewolves, Orcs etc.).*

Accordingly, possession of the two aforementioned TOR supplements will be of great help for the LM in running this adventure and placing it in the greater context outlined by the two.

When Fengel died the Rohirrim recalled [Thengel], and he returned unwillingly. But he proved a good and wise King.

— *The Lord of the Rings*
Appendix A

- **When:** Not too long after Thengel’s crowning; TA 2953 or the beginning of 2954 at most.
- **Where:** From Meduseld in Edoras to Stanshelf into Dunlending territory.
- **What:** Ambassadors, diplomats and petitioners have gathered at the gates of Rohan’s new King, both to present their respect and to learn his allegiances.
- **Why:** Thengel is supported by few within his own kingdom, despite his lineage. He doesn’t know whom to trust, and strangers might hold fewer prejudices towards him than his own people.
- **Who:** Edelyn of Stanshelf throws an unexpected petition at Thengel’s feet during an audition. The King has to send some trusted, or at least neutral representatives to assess the situation.

ADVENTURING PHASE

The adventure is divided into nine parts: from Edoras and the audience with King Thengel, to the West-march, the land of the Dunlendings beyond the borders of Rohan.

Part One – An audition unheard of

Part Two – The Queen in the Shadows

Part Three – Ride into the West

Part Four – Herders in Disguise

Part Five – Helm’s Deep

Part Six – Grimslade

Part Seven – Into Foreign Lands

**Part Eight – To be part of Something:
Stanshelf**

Part Nine – Conclusions and Reports

PART ONE: AN AUDITION UNHEARD OF

For several days, King Thengel has been holding an open audition in his Golden Hall of Edoras. He was recently crowned, and wants to know of the troubles that stir his land. Lending his royal ears to everyone, regardless of class or status, offers Thengel many opportunities: after years of living outside of Rohan he becomes known among his people and by admitting everyone to his palace he earns him some of their gratitude; and he may hear first-hand about his folk's real problems without interference and manipulation of his father's counselors.



© by Pierre Joubert, Edition Hachette

Not only petitioners, but also envoys from different parts of the realm and beyond arrive day after day at Edoras. They pay their respect to the new King of Rohan, make themselves known to him and may also assess where his interests and loyalties lie.

The characters may be in the Golden Hall for any of these reasons, staying for a few days in Edoras under Thengel's protection before returning to their hometowns. Another option is for one or several of the heroes to be part of the King's court: wardens, entertainers or such, who normally reside in Rohan's capital.

If the players like to roleplay their characters, they can play their own audience with the King and Queen, presenting gifts, introducing their leaders or communities, asking for royal intervention in some local trouble, and so on.

It is late in the afternoon and it seems that the flow of people asking for an audience is dwindling down. But suddenly a commotion is heard from the outside until the doorwarden sternly announces a new guest:

"Lady Edelyn of Stanshelf, of the Dunlending tribes, asks permission to talk!"

It is clearly with disgust that the doorwarden has pronounced the phrase "Dunlending tribes".

At a sign from Thengel, a lady garished in warrior's clothes is led into the hall. While at first sight she seems like a shieldmaiden of Rohan, a closer look shows that her hair is not so blonde, her chainmail is of lesser quality and the sign of the white horse is only roughly painted on her shield. Her stride though is as proud and firm as that of any Marshal of the

Riddermark. Once close enough to the throne (and just when some of the wardens are moving their hands towards the pommels of their swords), to everyone's surprise she kneels before the King of Rohan. Lowering her head and offering her sword, she makes a demand:

"Hail, Thengel King! I am Edelyn, the lady of Stanshelf. I have come here from beyond the Gap of Rohan to ask for your recognition as a vassal to Edoras. My people are related to yours, and we want to ride by your side. Eorl's blood runs through our veins as well — This comment raises nervous rumours among the present Rohirrim — and as kin, we only demand recognition and respect. My sword, as are those of all of Stanshelf's warriors, are at your disposal, oh Thengel, King of the Riddermark!"

A cry breaks the silence that floats in the hall for unending seconds after her speech. It comes from somewhere among the shadows, beyond the area illuminated by the central fire. *"They are all barbarians! They can't be allowed in our halls and cities!"* Tension seems to grow, while Thengel is sharply looking at Lady Edelyn, motionless and apparently absent-minded.

The companions should be asked what they do now. They can intervene and support either the rejection or acceptance of the plea. Or they can try to find the person who shouted against Edelyn, or remain still and watch how the events unfold.

In case they go looking for the Rohir challenging Edelyn, a *Search* or *Stealth* test can reveal Goldred the Merchant (HoR p.20). He prefers a

kingdom in conflict (with need for merchants that provide weapons and other supplies) to a peaceful one. If the heroes talk to him about his motives, he will openly express his hate for the Dunlendings, who have no riches to add to Rohan. If the companions disagree with him, he'll quickly dismiss talking to them and will leave the hall.

Or, if you wish to introduce a more devious character, use Gálmód (HoR p.34) for this role. In this case, he'd probably not shout something as blunt as the statement above. Be sure to change it to something more cunning, and think twice about what his motivations might be.

Whatever the case, no one of the present Rohirrim steps forward in support of Edelyn.

This scene is intended to show the characters the Rohirrim's attitude toward Dunlendings. Even if some people might be sympathetic to Edelyn, they don't dare to speak freely. Encourage the heroes to take some action, or at least ask them to express how they feel about the situation. Queen Morwen will note their reactions and will refer to them when she explains why she has chosen the characters in the next scene, either because they acted honourably, or because she thinks they have a lesson to learn the hard way.

At last Thengel will raise his hand, silencing all discussions within the hall. Looking around, he will finally declare:

"This plea is not something to be taken lightly. I will need time, Lady Edelyn of Stanshelf, to give you my answer. Meanwhile, you will be considered my personal guest here, for as long as you want to stay in Edoras and you will be treated as one of our own."

Then he rises from the throne and dismisses the audience until the next day.

PART TWO The Queen in the SHADOWS

The companions might have several accommodations in Edoras or even in the surroundings, depending on their origin. One option could be Cépa's House (HoR p.22), but also one of the outbuildings of the Golden Hall or its alcoves if they are the King's family guests or servants (HoR p.22, point 6: *Side Aisles*).

Goldred [or Gálmód if you chose to use him] can be found in Cépa's House, and Edelyn in the outbuildings of Meduseld. Edelyn has travelled with some warriors of her folk, but she was careful enough to quarter them outside of the city's walls. Although proud and confident, she isn't stupid: Edelyn knows that she and her folk will be considered as Dunlendings among the Rohirrim for the time being. Entering Edoras with several of her warriors would be considered a provocation. Characters can look for and interact with Edelyn and Goldred, and learn more of their motives.



Eowyn © by Peter Xavier Price, used with permission

During the night, each character will be found by an errand-boy asking him to dress up and accompany him to Meduseld, where Queen Morwen is awaiting them.

The Doorwarden, old Héafod (HoR p.19) opens the heavy bars and the door without asking questions and lets the companions in. The Queen is seated in the smaller seat reserved for her on the dais of the Great Hall. She is dressed in black, with comfortable but elegant clothes. She offers wine and some food while waiting for everyone to settle down.

Once everybody has arrived she thanks them for coming talking with a perfect and melodical Westron, which contrasts with the Rohirrim's usual rough accent.

Adapt the following message to the characters' reaction to Lady Edelyn's plea in the hall:

"I have called upon you because of what Lady Edelyn has asked for today. I saw you all in the Golden Hall last afternoon, so we all know what is the issue here. You can imagine that it is a matter of far-reaching consequences, so a decision must be made carefully. My King and I can understand how it feels to be considered a stranger in your own land - each for his own reasons - and must say that we are sympathetic to grant Lady Edelyn her request. But such a decision is not just a personal one. You also noticed the emotions throughout the hall: if Thengel, who has still to win the confidence of his own vassals, would allow a group of so-called Dunlendings to join our ranks, it would cause conflict, unrest and distrust toward the King. And so far the King has, only few loyal folk to rely on: those that thrived under his father are not to be trusted; those that despised the ways of Fengel are wary that his son might be cut from the same cloth.

I have seen and heard you talk this afternoon. Therefore, I assume that you too might have an open mind towards this matter, and can provide us with a neutral point of view on the conflict. In addition, my take is that you have much to learn first-hand what the people of Stanshelf are really like, and what help or danger they may represent to Rohan.

That is why I want you to escort Lady Edelyn back to Stanshelf, and stay there as her guests for a while: to learn and watch and give us your opinion for the decision we should take. Since some of you are strangers, and others trusted

people of Rohan, your words and thoughts will be considered an independent proof to support the final choice in this question.

Lady Edelyn already has agreed to the plan, and will ride tomorrow noon with those of you who wish to join her."

The Queen is open to questions, comments and proposals to the plan. She will consider them all carefully, will answer sincerely and to the best of her knowledge. Whenever she speaks of matters that would normally be for the King's ears only, she uses the form "us", and never mentions a need to consult with Thengel before answering.

This conversation can be run as an Encounter. Tolerance is based on the highest Wisdom of the group. Elves and Men of Minas Tirith add 1 each to the Tolerance. Also, add to Tolerance the highest Standing among the characters of Rohan and Gondor. Unless they are already a company as part of their background, it is expected that each one introduces himself individually, and proposes his decision to accept or refuse the mission. The companions can decline the offer [and you might want to run the adventure *Blood on the Snow* next, from the supplement *Oaths of the Riddermark*, now that they are all gathered in Edoras] and the Queen won't insist or try to convince them otherwise. Also, she understands if the characters are wary and want to ask questions before their decision. In the Interaction phase Morwen is empathic to the character's doubts, and is glad that they express their opinions openly, so that all TNs can be set to 12; Unless they try to lie, speak with prejudice or behave aggressively, in which case the TN raises to 18.

Morwen will openly share any information about her or Thengel's past, as can be found on pages 15 to 18 of the *Horse-lords of Rohan* supplement. Also, she can provide some knowledge about the situation in the Gap of Rohan, Stanshelf or the Wulfings and their origins. She is no loremaster of old history, but she is well informed of the political struggles in the region.

She will provide the group with horses and rations if needed. The quality of those depends on the outcome level of the Encounter. At basic levels (1-3 successes), she can borrow a horse

per character based on their Standing within Rohan (or if they hold the Esquire of Rohan title), or Valour for foreigners. Remember that heroes from the Rohan culture will start with a travel horse of their own. A starting character not hailing from Rohan, and with a Valour of 2, can also get a (borrowed) travel horse. Those with a Valour of 1 will get a simple pack-horse (see HoR p.133). All borrowed horses are expected to be treated well and to be returned to Edoras safe and sound.

With higher levels of success (4-6 successes) the borrowed horses can have one of the Horse Qualities listed in Horse-lords of Rohan pages 134-5. Based on the LM discretion it would make sense to limit the choice to Surefooted or Tireless only. If a Rohir character wants to exchange his own horse with a borrowed one with a Quality, he can do so. His own horse will be taken care of in Edoras, waiting for his return.

With a level of success higher than 6 Queen Morwen will be so impressed that she will also provide signed royal document declaring all companions servants to the King, that are to be treated with the utmost respect by all people of the Riddermark. The document will only be useful for this Adventure phase, and for matters related to this mission.

PART THREE RIDE INTO THE WEST

Before the group gets to Stanshelf, the journey will feature several encounters along the way.

First of all, Lady Edelyn will reunite with her men, which are quartered in a longhouse a few miles from Edoras.



A track of "Blood on the Snow" (Optional plot)

Optionally the longhouse where the three companions of Edelyn should be waiting can be found destroyed and abandoned. This then ties in with the adventure Blood on the Snow, from the supplement Oaths of the Riddermark. With some changes, you could adapt the hunt for the Horse-eater from page 11 (The Second Steading) onwards. The dying survivor at the longhouse should be a Man of the Mark (the owner of the steading). He will tell the heroes that the Dunlendings fled the place once the beast killed Silvermane and Hardhoof. The Man of the Mark will curse them, calling them cowards. The three Dunlendings will be found later hunting the Horse-eater, similar to the Encounter with Imhar Far-reach. Of course, if Edelyn is with them, the Encounter to gain their trust will be unnecessary. They will explain that it was futile to face the surprising terror that attacked the longhouse. Therefore they opted to hide and track the creature to its lair. They will consider the Rohir's resistance foolish in the face of such a superior enemy. Ulfūr, the scorning Rohir that appears at the Grimgelad, could have been sent by Goldred to watch for anything suspicious that could be used against the group at the King's Court, thus adding a subplot of espionage and mistrust to the adventure.

Once the company meets Edelyn's companions, they will see that the group is composed of three people:

Two warriors (a man and a woman), bodyguards of Edelyn that turn out to be twins. They are called Marcus and Mara. Just like their lady, they are dressed as Rohir warriors, but with lower quality equipment. The point of their spears is not so bright, the scabbard of their swords are all made of unadorned leather and the symbols of the white horse are painted in low quality. Both have short hair, seemingly cut with a knife by themselves and their visible body parts (wrists, neck ...) reveal some paintings.

They greet the companions warmly and thank them for their support after Edelyn tells them that they are going to be their guests at Stanshelf for some time.

- During their voyage, Marcus and Mara will inquire about the companions' war gear: Where did they get it? What material it is made of? How come it is so bright? They are true warriors and therefore interested in quality weapons and armour. So naturally, magical or high quality weapons (Rewards) will quickly catch their attention. The twins are not shy at all and will take an object to examine it without asking permission. If a companion takes off his chainmail when going to sleep for example, they will likely grab it for closer examination. After having praised it loudly however, they will return any object to his owner. This may be seen as rude and even interpreted as "stealing", until proven that they don't intend to keep those objects. Asking to return such items while Marcus and Mara are examining them will be answered with a simple "We are not done looking at it, just a moment".

The other man looks like a wise counsellor. A well-kept sword at his side though shows that he may be a useful fighter too. He is introduced by Edelyn as Fenerwise. Very tall and very fat, his mount is a broad pack-horse barely to carry the big man. He remains silent mostly. Once in a while he takes out a lead tablet from a pouch and starts scratching letters on it, probably to write some kind of travel record.

- During the travels, the companions might inquire Fenerwise about his records. Dunedings (and most Rohirrim, for that matter) are illiterate, and as a culture they don't have a language elaborate enough for written tradition and history. He will be happy to show them his tablets made of lead if asked and explain what he is doing. The letters are actually icons, invented by himself. If the companions question him further, they will learn that Fenerwise is in fact a genius born into an illiterate culture: he created his own letters for keeping written records (similar to the Egyptian

hieroglyphs), which due to their complexity can only be read by himself. If any of the heroes wants to learn some of the script, a Lore test after spending some time with Fenerwise reveals that the records also include curses and blessings for people met along the road. If asked whether these are magic or plain personal comments Fenerwise won't understand the difference.

Although the three of them look fierce (everyone in its own way), they don't give the impression that everyone in Stanshelf is a "savage blood-thirsty barbarian", as most Rohirrim like to believe. Still the three companions and even Lady Edelyn herself, should be portrayed as members of a culture that is only related not equal to the Rohirrim. The impression that each hero will get of them during the journey will and should vary: from considering the people of Stanshelf as "true-hearted warriors, close enough to the rohirric ways to disregard any other differences" to thinking of them as "savages at heart that try to disguise as honourable riders". At the end of the adventure each character must come to his own conclusion about Stanshelf and its folk. And this should become part of his personal report to King Thengel and Queen Morwen. The small details for Marcus, Mara and Fenerwise mentioned above should be a starting point for the Lore-master to create scenes of interaction with them. The emphasis should lie on the differences in customs and manners that will create confusion and even conflict at first. It depends on the open mindedness and tolerance of the characters whether they can be put aside to promote a closer relationship or not, increasing the rift between both people.



Eponine © by Vincent Pompetti, used with permission

She who watches
the watchers

Similarly, Edelyn will also watch the companions closely, which have been chosen by Rohan's King as emissaries and representatives. During their interactions, keep a record of how respectfully (or not) the heroes address her and her companions. Do so by assigning a positive or negative valour to a starting disposition of zero. For example, if Marcus takes a sword from a hero while resting and the character accuses him straight away of being a thief subtract -2 points from the disposition. If, on the other hand the character politely tells him to give it back or asks what Marcus wants with his sword, Edelyn's disposition will increase by 1 or 2 points. Some examples for such situations are given in the adventure. But the Loremaster should watch out for significant interactions originating from the heroes themselves and he should provoke these situations during his narrative.

At the end of the adventure the disposition's number will grant the fellowship certain privileges or disadvantages upon starting the Fellowship phase in Stanshelf, similar to the outcome of Encounters.

The first leg of the Journey takes the companions to Westfold Vale, near Helm's Deep.

This leg will take 1 day by horse with a single Fatigue test at TN12. Remember to reduce the Fatigue gain for failed tests by 1 for being mounted.

While on the road, a patrol of mounted Rohirrim will halt the company and seeing strangers among them will inquire about their business. The patrol is led by Elfthain (HoR p.42). He will hear what they have to say and will ask all kind of questions until he is sure that the company is not lying or hiding something. He will be especially interested in knowing who gave them leave to cross the lands of the Riddermark. "Clearly, some or all of the company come from foreign lands, and even of enemies" he will state pointedly while aiming his gloved finger at Edelyn and any other Dunlending in the group. Naming Thengel will raise his curiosity and he will insist on knowing the motivations of the

King for sponsoring such a strange company. He is sincerely interested as he wants to know what kind of king Thengel is.

PORTRAYING Elfthain -
Rohan's dilemma

Elfthain is Lord of Fowlmere, a village in the Westfold Vale. He represents the loyalty conflict that presently plagues Rohan. He loves the kingdom and would like to proudly follow his lords the Second Marshal and the King of Rohan. But the former King of Rohan, Fengel, was a shame in the eyes of Elfthain's family. They obeyed and served him faithfully because he was King of Rohan, but their hearts held no respect for Fengel himself. Thengel now is the new King, but has ascended the throne too recently to judge what kind of ruler he will be. And the doubts about him are understandable: he is the son of the despised Fengel after all. And he has not been raised in Rohan, thus being ignorant of the pitfalls of the Court's politics. This could lead him to becoming either a good leader free of past evils, or a puppet overwhelmed and manipulated by the plots of the belated Fengel's favourites - many of whom still hold positions of power and influence.

In this scenario, a person like Elfthain, who'd give his life for Rohan and his people, is in the situation of not knowing whom to trust and support to turn Rohan into a kingdom to be proud of.

This kind of loyalty and personal conflict should be taken in consideration by the Loremaster regarding all important characters in Rohan, namely Elfthain, Éogar and Grimborn, but also others as needed. These inner doubts are what the heroes can exploit to turn their hearts from suspicion and mistrust to confidence and faith in the new King of Rohan.

If there is one thing among these three (Elfthain, Éogar and Grimborn) that can bring them together, it is the fact that Thengel really is the kind of King they all wish for. If the players reinforce this through their acts in the name of Thengel, this will end the friction between those three and bring them to work together in earnest for the Riddermark.

If the companions tell him the truth about their mission and present the royal letter, Elfthain knows that the company should be escorted to Helm's Deep and be guests to Éogar as a gesture of respect. He also knows the Second Marshall's hate of Dunlendings will surely hinder the company's mission and thwart the King's will. If they don't have the letter, he will explain in fair but clear words that they have to present themselves before Éogar.

Depending on how good-hearted and trustworthy the companions address Elfthain he may react in one of two ways: if they are sincere he will try to help them by warning the group about Éogar's hate for the Dunnish folk. He will tell them that it is their duty to introduce themselves to Éogar, but he will also offer to guide them through secret paths, away from the eyes of Éogar's patrols, up to the Gap of Rohan. "This way," he advises, "your mission won't be compromised by Éogar's hate for your folk".

- If the companions seriously consider hiding with Elfthain's help, Edelyn will proudly object. She declares that they might not be Rohirrim *still*, but neither are they bandits or ruffians. She is the leader of a warrior folk and not some smuggler hiding in the dark. The companions should be successful once at a test to calm her down (Courtesy, Inspire) and twice (Persuasion) if they want to convince her to accept the hiding plan. If, on the other hand, they just want to force her to adhere to the plan, they will need an Awe test with at least one Tengwar.
- If the companions try to force or persuade Edelyn to the plan, but fail she will get a -2 reaction.
- If the companions successfully force her into the plan Edelyn will get a -1 reaction.
- If calmed down, and persuaded to follow the plan, she will get no reaction modifier.
- If she is calmed down and the plan is discarded out of respect for her opinion, Edelyn will get a +2 reaction.

On the other hand, if the company tries to hide as much information from Elfthain as possible or try to lie to him, the lord's worst side will surface. Depending on how they do it, the Loremaster might see fit to ask for a Corruption test or even distribute Shadow points for lying. Elfthain will see a chance for them to win Thengel favour, while undermining Éogar's position. He will force them to come along to see Éogar and will provoke the Marshall into



unleashing his anger because King Thengel has allowed a group of Dunlendings access to his Fold without first informing him.

If the companions prefer to continue their journey without deviating towards Helm's Deep or hiding under Elfthain's cover, he will let them pass without further questioning to resume their journey to Stanshelf.

If they follow Elfthain through secret paths, go to **Part Four Herder's in Disguise**.

If they are taken to Éogar or if they decide to follow the protocols and visit him on their own, go to **Part Five Helm's Deep**.

If they resume their journey normally it will take them one day to reach Grimborn's house by horse and one Fatigue test at TN12. If a Hazard is triggered, the company will find the

patrolling Éored of Myldrid Shielding (HoR p.42). She will order his Éored to point their spears at the company and will ask them about their business there. Whatever the answer she will take them to Éogar, by force if needed and you should also go to **Part Five Helm's Deep**. If the company doesn't encounter her, go to **Part Six Grimslade**.

PART FOUR HERDERS IN DISGUISE

If the company decides to cross the Westfold avoiding the nuisance of going through Éogar's interrogations, Elfthain will lead them to Éofara the Horse-Herder (HoR p.43). A few hours ride north off the main road they will find him with his men (mostly family) camped in tents in the open field. Éofara and his workers usually follow their herds back and forth along the plains of Westemnet and visit the settlements of the Westfold periodically. So it won't be a problem to hide the heroes and Dunlendings among them, dressed in thick cloaks and hoods, while leading the horses towards Grimslade on the border of Rohan.

While Elfthain and Éofara seem to know and trust each other, the herder wants to talk to the company by the campfire and judge for himself whether they are honourable folk. They will sit down and Éofara's family will offer the company drink and food. The Loremaster should ask all the players for some social test to introduce themselves and gain the trust of Éofara. Since he is a cautious man the TNs will be set at 16. Invoking appropriate Traits can allow for an autosuccess. Great or Extraordinary Successes allows the succeeding character to vow for a companion who failed his own test. Showing Queen Morwen's letter will grant an autosuccess for the whole company.

At least one extra success will have to be used to vow for Edelyn and her dunnish companions: Éofara won't trust the Hillmen's promises or words.

If the company manages to win Éofara's help, they will have to ride with the herd for cover. It is not enough to simply ride along pleasantly they will also be charged with duties

in taking care of the horses just as everyone else in the group.

In addition to the normal Fatigue test at TN12 for the day of travel, each hero has to roll one Athletics test at TN16 every half day: if there are more failures than successes, some of the horses escape from the herd and that half day is lost recovering them. The heroes will have to roll one additional Athletic test at TN14 for the time that should have been spent advancing and resting will be used to gather the escaped horses. Repeat the process until the company achieves more successes than failures in a row. Each great or extraordinary success counts as 2 and 3 successes respectively.

Traits like *Beast-lore* or *Horsemanship* can lower the TN of the Athletics test for herding by one degree to TN14.

If, at any time a Failure with an Eye is rolled, Myldrid Shielding's Éored will be encountered patrolling the area. The heroes have to find ways to avoid being identified as strangers, such as Athletics to lead their horse far from Myldrid's prying eyes, Stealth to hide among the usual riders or Riddle to disguise himself with someone's helm.

As indicated before, Myldrid will use whatever means necessary to take the company to Éogar if the group is discovered travelling in Westfold.

Once the company reaches Grimslade, Éofara will gladly invite those companions who performed well in the horse-herding to visit him in the future. This will open up the Fellowship Undertaking *Go Riding with the Horse-herds* (HoR, page 30). He won't mock anyone who performed poorly but rather play it over with a joking remark. He knows that herding is a tough job and understands that not everyone is made for such a trade.

Upon reaching Grimslade, go to Part Six.

PART FIVE Helm's Deep

When reaching Helm's Deep, use the description of the fortress and its surroundings found in *Horse-lords of Rohan* (page 45-47) as the heroes approach the Hornburg.

Their horses are taken and tended to once they enter the inner court. Make sure to underline how all the Rohirrim soldiers openly look at the Dunlendings with suspicion and undisguised hatred. Insults are mumbled in rohirric, although no offensive actions are taken.

At the door to Éogar's hall the doorwarden will ask the company to leave their weapons behind. Also, only one Dunlending, as representative, will be permitted inside. If there are Dunlending heroes, remember that it is either them or Edelyn who will be allowed to enter. Lady Edelyn will insist on entering to present her cause, but good argumentation from the heroes could change her mind.

Those that stay outside with the rest of the Dunlendings will have to wait for hours in a hall without chairs and only a few narrow and high openings for light and fresh air. The guards will stay outside and will leave the guests alone.



Helm's Deep II © by John Howe, used with permission
© 2006, www.john-howe.com

- After a while, Marcus and Mara will start to lose their temper. First they will mumble, what anyone will guess are insults at the Rohirrim. They will move nervously around the hall, breathing heavily and glancing hatefully at the door.

- The companions can try to interact with them, singing a Song to entertain the twins, inspiring them to resist the provocation, or even explaining to them with Courtesy that it is a well-known tactic to make strangers wait for a long time to stress them before talks begin.
- Not interacting with the twins, or doing so but failing with an Eye, results in the two pounding on the door, threatening to bring it down while screaming at the guards on the other side. A group of Rohirrim guards will storm into the room and force them to stay still, making perfectly clear that they'll use armed force if necessary.
 - If the companions don't intervene, or fail with an Eye, Edelyn's reaction will be reduced by -2.
 - If the companions intervene, but fail, Edelyn's reaction will not be moved.
 - If the companions successfully calm down the twins, her reaction will increase by +2.

Inside the throne room, Éogar will have his wife Esfled and his son Erkenbrand by his side when receiving the company. It is a very strange group that has come to his doors and he wants to hear Esfled's opinion in private afterwards, while his heir supposed to listen and learn.

Depending on how they arrive before the Second Marshal, the Tolerance will be adjusted as follows:

- Use the highest Valour as the base Tolerance for the Encounter
- Add the highest Standing among Rohirrim
- Subtract -1 for every Dunlending present (at least Edelyn)
- Subtract -1 if they were brought to Helm's Deep because Myldrid discovered them in their way
- Add +1 to the Tolerance if they came here to pay their respects and inform Éogar of their passage through the Westfold on their own.
- If the company is in the possession of the royal document provided by Queen Morwen and present it to Éogar add +1 to the Tolerance

The company will have to introduce themselves, preferably with a spokesman: Éogar wants to keep this talk simple and straight. He is the master of Westfold and doesn't tolerate arguments against his decisions well. Courtesy is the best option here. If it is a Dunlending character who speaks, raise the TN for all tests by one level.

During the Interaction the characters will have to explain what they are doing in the Westfold (Persuasion, Riddle), what their route is (Travel, Lore) and swear an oath under the penalty of death, not to leave the road until they pass Grimslade, the last settlement of Rohan (Courtesy, Song, Awe).

If Tolerance is exceeded before any success is achieved, Éogar will send the whole group to prison until he makes up his mind what to do with them. During a private talk with his wife she will convince him to let them go to the Gap of Rohan, thus avoiding annoying King Thengel. Myldrid and her Æored will escort them beyond Grimslade.

If any success is achieved, Éored will simply allow them to cross his lands after swearing an oath to leave Rohan as fast as possible. They will be watched from a distance by Myldrid's Æored, to ensure that they keep to the road.

The quantity of successes gained in the Encounter will not change Éogar's mind, but might gain Esfled's respect. If five or more successes are achieved, she will approach the group before they leave the Hornburg and will ask them to return to Helm's Deep at some point in the future. She will ask for their help in making the keep a vibrant and prosperous place, thus opening the options found on page 47-48 of *Horse-lords of Rohan* for making Helm's Deep a Sanctuary.

If you want to, Erkenbrand could also be moved by the characters performance. Although he is just 10 years old and is unlikely to interrupt or speak against his father.

Éogar won't be eager to help the company. Quite the contrary He is barely restraining himself from imprisoning Lady Edelyn and her companions, only because the group is under the King's protection. Simply considering the

idea of becoming allied with a Dunlending tribe is abhorrent to him. Whatever the outcome of the Encounter, he won't give them fresh horses, a night's sleep, travel rations, a free-pass document, or any other favour the heroes might ask of him.

Friendly faces, hidden intentions

Once the group resumes its journey, either after a night in prison, or rushing off after a tense meeting with the Second Marshal, adjust the time of the day so that they need to rest and recover a few hours after leaving Helm's Deep. Maybe they weren't given any breakfast and need to stop for supplies or they were asked to resume their journey shortly before dusk.

Whatever the reason, the only place to take a rest is Léofold and Merwyn's farmstead (HoR page 43). They are welcoming anyone gladly (even Dunlendings) without a second thought. However, they are Saruman's spies and want to gather as much information as possible from the



© by Pierre Joubert, Edition Hachette

company, especially about the King's intentions and the reactions from other important people, like Éogar or Élfthain. Be sure to begin playing this scene as a cosy and welcoming respite. Lady Edelyn and her court will be treated respectfully, as any Rohirrim, and not with the usual scorn and despise. But make sure that Léofold and Merwyn ask questions, wanting to hear all the details of their mission. They are rather clever at this and will not ask bluntly. They



© by Pierre Joubert, Edition Hachette

wrap an entertaining conversation around their questions, coupled with a little bit of useful information by themselves. The more secretive the characters are, the more the couple will make funny comments about it, creating an atmosphere where secrecy is unnecessary, such as with friends. They will try to lure the characters out of their silence with theories on what they might be up to, always with a joke, to see if they might be able to worm some information out from them.

You might want to roll one or two contested tests between a hero and the farmers if the role-playing of the scene allows it. Both farmers have 4 dice at any appropriate skill. If a hero fails the contest (with a Riddle skill test), he will notice that he said too much even if that wasn't his intention.

If you want to add to the suspicion, also describe how Léofold and Merwyn are seen talking and laughing with Lady Edelyn's group in low voices, always returning to their duties as soon as any of the heroes approaches.

- They will especially notice Fenerwise, who has been showing his recorded tables to the innkeepers. In his tablets, he has described Edoras, the patrols they have found, the different paths they have taken to reach Helm's Deep, how the fortress is constructed, the people that live there, ... Everything written in the form of a diary, but full of details nonetheless. No roll is needed to notice that there might be sensitive information there about the defences of Rohan's keeps. The scribe could be convinced to keep those writings to himself, with a Persuade or even a Battle test, showing him how this information can be used to discover weaknesses in Rohan's defences.

- If the companions do so by embarrassing Fenerwise, asking him to hand out the tablets with sensitive information, or telling him not to write anymore about the defences of Rohan, Edelyn's reaction will be reduced by -1 or -2, depending on how much the characters insist or how insulting they are towards Fenerwise.
- If the companions somehow cherish the level of detail of the scribe and therefore, point out how this detailed information might be dangerous in the wrong hands, Edelyn's reaction will increase by +1.

This encounter won't have any direct implications in this adventure, but you can use it in upcoming events of your campaign if Saruman's plots are to be a part of it. Otherwise, it will underline the fact that there are many conflicting interests in Rohan, some of them from sources unknown.

PART SIX GRIMSLADE

Usually, the company will only reach Grimslade if they haven't been to Helm's Deep.

For the adventure's flow it is also better not to chain two Encounters with lords of Rohan that might look too similar.

The company will probably reach Grimslade only if they are led here by Elfthain, a great friend of Grimborn. Both Grimslade and Grimborn are described in HoR, pages 42 to 44.

The chieftain of Grimslade holds even more hatred for Dunlendings than Éogar. He will only receive such a group if Elfthain vouches for them and he won't suffer any Dunlending stepping into his great hall.



Norse Hersir © by JLazarusEB, used with permission

Similar to Éogar, he will stretch his kindness barely enough to let the Dunlendings live another day. If the heroes have developed a good relationship with Elfthain, i.e. by not lying to him about their mission, they might also receive lodging in Grimslade before being asked to leave. Every Dunlending in the group including Lady Edelyn will be accommodated in a barn (not the stables! The Rohirrim don't want their horses to be near Dunlendings...), while the rest of the group can sleep in the great hall.

- If the group wasn't in Helm's Deep, then it is here that the twin warriors complain aggressively about the way they are treated by the Rohirrim (see **Part Five**).

PART SEVEN INTO FOREIGN LANDS

Shortly after leaving the Gap of Rohan, a few miles into the West-march, ask the players for an Awareness test. With just an ordinary success, the company will discover a group of armed Dunlendings. They seem to be scouting the area, maybe preparing an ambush, or looking for something? They are surprisingly easy to spot, as if the scouts didn't know how to hide very well.

A great or exceptional result will also reveal that all of the explorers are teenagers and that they all spread and gather around an older Dunlending to inform him of their findings. It seems that the older man is giving them instructions and assessing their performance. All in all, there seem to be no more than four young scouts. Lady Edelyn can inform the heroes that those Dunlendings are part of the Iron-folk, a war-like and abusive tribe of warriors. They seem to be scouting the lands for future incursions (see Oaths of the Riddermark p.35 "The River reavers", and the kidnapping of Éogar's wife), while preparing their youngsters to be warriors.

The heroes will have to decide how to approach the situation, as the dispersed scouts will surely see them at some point while heading south to Stanshelf.

Being teenagers, an attack on the Dunlendings will gain the adventurers one Corruption point. If the company tries to take them down by force, the Dunlendings will try to intimidate the company at first but will flee the second the battle is about to start.

The Iron-folk aren't on good terms with Stanshelf and the feeling is mutual. Lady Edelyn doesn't like them at all ("they have no honour and only prey on the weak") and she will tell the heroes that they are ready to assist them should the group decide to kill the scouting party. Acts of showing mercy and talking about honour and a compassionate heart, or how a true warrior only draws his sword against worthy foes (Song, Inspire or Awe) will win the lady's admiration.

Edelyn and her companions won't be of much help if a dialogue is started. If the

company approaches the Dunlendings without raising arms, they will quickly gather around the old man who will be the only one to speak. While he will ask what the group is doing in their lands, he won't push it or risk an attack. After a few words have been exchanged, he will tell the youngsters to regroup and head back home, since their work there is done. He will spit on the ground, mumble some words in his own tongue and leave.

An extended test of Stealth could be another option to pass by the inexperienced scouts. At least each companion should achieve four successes: a companion can give one of his successes to another hero who failed his Stealth test. If, at any time a companion fails one Stealth test (and no one can cover up for him) he is discovered by one of the young Dunlending scouts.

Example: The company rolls for Stealth. Two of the heroes manage to get an ordinary success, another one fails his roll, and the fourth one gets a great success. The fourth hero "gives" his companion one of his successes, so he will now be down to one. But the group won't be discovered and may continue their Stealth rolls.

PART EIGHT TO BE PART OF SOMETHING: STANSHELF

Upon approaching Stanshelf, the group sees that the outer farms (few and small) have been ravaged or even burned. They are mostly empty of people and less than a dozen cows or other farm animals are seen. If the companions search the place, it becomes clear that it has been attacked and ransacked only recently. Fresh and recent stone-mounds (stones piled over a burned corpse) can be seen next to most houses. It is the traditional burying method, as the ground is too rocky to allow digging. Even the land seems to reject the people of Stanshelf.

Once the walled town is in sight, they notice that the gates are closed and guards patrol the palisade vigilantly. Lady Edelyn grows nervous and angry as the group advances and hurries to reach her town.

The guards open the front gates the moment they recognize their leader and the whole group is welcomed with cheers but also cries of anguish.

During Edelyn's absence, Stanshelf has been raided by the Wulfings from Frecasburg.

Edelyn hastes to her great hall and listens in silence to the tale of the attack. After hearing of the losses and the pillaging she becomes angered and asks the heroes to help her launch a surprise attack on Frecasburg. This is unwise, as the Wulfings are stronger and more numerous, but it seems that Edelyn's mind is set and no one can talk her out of it. The characters can still try

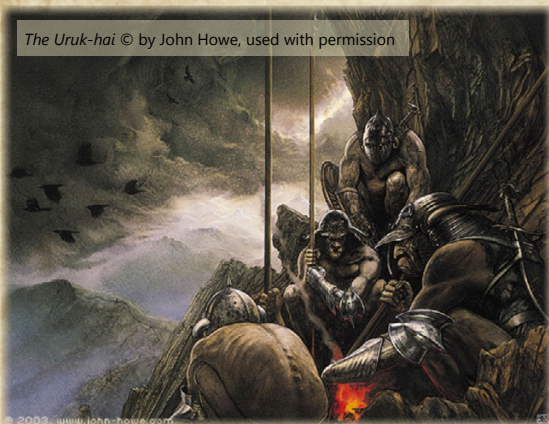


Victory © by Onur Bakar, used with permission

to talk some sense into Edelyn (which will result in an automatic failure, as if she entered a Bout of Madness), help her organize the attack, or offer their assistance in the attack itself. Depending on what they say and do the LM needs to adjust Edelyn’s reaction towards them. It is important to consider that Edelyn will reflect on the characters at the end of the Adventure phase, once she calmed down again and sees with clarity what happened here. That means that characters who try to convince her respectfully into calling off the attack, reminding her of the likely casualties for her people, will gain a positive reaction. Those that recklessly supported a suicidal attack just for revenge, might be seen as “bad counsellors” by Edelyn once her killing rage has passed.

From the conversations running up and down the hall, it should become clear to the characters that Edelyn’s people are not even liked in Dunland: they are as despised by the other Wulfings and Dunlendings as they are in Rohan. This is not the first time they have been robbed and pillaged by Dunlending tribes, but this time too many of her people have died and the attack was led by Frána the Lord of the West-march (HoR, page 57).

With or without the help of the characters, Edelyn will summon her riders and warriors disregarding any sensible contrary advice. But just when the Wulfings of Stanshelf ready themselves for the desperate attack, a raiding group of orcs led by Gazhúr Three-Deaths comes out of the mountains to assault the town!



It seems that the orcs planned to prey on the weakened town, after noticing the latest attack on Stanshelf. But neither did they consider the

fast return of Edelyn, nor did they expect to find every able man and woman ready and armed. But Gazhúr is no coward and he won’t leave without launching an attack on Stanshelf. His objective might change from overcoming the settlement to just kidnapping some humans as slaves, but he wants bounty nevertheless before returning home again.

In the forthcoming battle, even if the heroes manage to kill Gazhúr, it will be only the first of his three deaths. It will be interesting to see the companions’ reactions, when they meet Gazhúr, who should be dead by all means, again in the future...

During the battle, create scenes where the heroes can intervene at decisive moments, other than having them fight down orc after orc. Give a description of the situation at hand in relation to the overall tide of the battle. Then, offer the characters the chance to take part in a key battle scene. Those who do not participate will have to fight orcs and goblins in their turns. For example, if a dwarf is present, he might decide not to ride to the rescue of the kidnapped villagers (scene 2) and stay at the palisade beheading those orcs that manage to climb through the defence’s holes caused by his companions having to mount their horses and riding off fast.

Here are three examples of decisive scenes the Loremaster can change, or implement into his own course of action:

- **Scene 1:** The main force of the orcs assaults the outer wall of Stanshelf. They bring crude ladders and grappling hooks with them. Since there aren’t many great archers among the Wulfings, most orcs make it to the foot of the wall and begin their climb. The heroes can try to push back the ladders (Athletics) or quickly cut the ropes thrown over the wall (Craft). Instead, a hero can use his action to test Inspire or Battle: a success adds one bonus die to a companion’s testing Craft or Athletics, 2 on a great success and 3 on an extraordinary success. The assault lasts until twice as much successes have been achieved as there are companions (6 successes for 3 companions, 8 for 4 companions, etc.).

▪ **Scene 2:** The attack on the palisade was a distraction! A group of orcs has captured some villagers who were surprised roaming their ruined land and the few animals that were left. The heroes will have to ride fast through a side gate to avoid the orc's main force and catch the kidnappers before the orcs reach their main force again.

An Athletics test is required to avoid the orcs at the wall. Each companion who fails will be engaged by two goblins and won't be able to follow the others until he kills both goblins or disengages from combat. Those who manage to avoid combat will need to roll contested tests of Athletics versus the Movement rating of the orcs. Each hero that accumulates three losses is out of the race. Once a hero accumulates three wins, he will have caught up with the kidnappers and will engage in melee. The other companions need a full turn before they arrive to help their comrade. There is one orc per companion.



▪ **Scene 3:** Edelyn orders the main gate opened and rides in a suicidal frenzy along her fiercest warriors. The rage that consumed her earlier hasn't vanished yet. She leads a wedge that breaks the orc forces in two and reaches Gazhúr. The heroes need to drag her from the combat by force, as Gazhúr is too terrible a foe even for her. The companions can engage Gazhúr and try to kill him themselves, in which case the rest of the orcs will swarm over them and

take their leaders body while fleeing the battlefield.

Or they can engage Gazhúr and roll Athletics tests (three successes are needed) to drag Edelyn out of combat. If they manage to drag the Lady of Stanshelf away, Gazhúr will call his forces to retreat. Again, the swarming of goblins and orcs will make it impossible for the heroes to attack Gazhúr as he flees.

The orc attack should be repulsed in the end, leaving the warriors of Stanshelf decimated and wounded. Thus, Edelyn won't risk emptying the settlement of fighters to attack Frecasburg now that there is the goblins threat looming over it. The performance and bravery (or lack thereof) of the companions during the battle will also add or subtract from the Lady's reaction towards them.

The characters will have to learn from this that Stanshelf is an island threatened by aggressive orcs and unfriendly Dunlendings, all of whom are waiting for just a moment of weakness to erase the town from the map.

PART NINE CONCLUSION AND REPORT

The company is asked to stay for a Fellowship phase in Stanshelf (maybe for a Year's End, depending on the season the adventure started) to gather more information and make up their mind about the Wulfings of Stanshelf. They will see the everyday lives and ways of the people of Stanshelf and will have to draw their conclusions as to what kind of people they are.

Depending on Edelyn's overall reaction (based on the characters' actions during the journey) several options will be available:

- **1+:** Participating in special Fellowship Undertakings with the people of Stanshelf. Use the following Undertakings from various supplements, adapting them to the region and to the Dunlending culture: Compete in the Field of Heroes (HotW p.50), Hunting Grim Hawks (HotW p.44), Patrol the Wild (DoM p.58).

- **3+:** Participating in dangerous Fellowship Undertakings: Go Hunting with the Woodmen (HotW p.91), Weeding in Fangorn (HLoR p.85).

- **5+:** Opening of Stanshelf as a Sanctuary

After that time, they'll be free to return to Edoras and report to King Thengel.

Let the players decide what they will tell the King and the Queen about Stanshelf and Edelyn, based on their own experiences during the adventure. Also, ask for their opinion on what Rohan should answer to Edelyn's plea, some good ideas might come from it.

In the end take your time (as will King Thengel) to decide what will be done and how it will affect the campaign. In general terms, Thengel probably won't admit Stanshelf to Rohan; he still needs to win the confidence of his own Marshals and treating Dunlendings as brothers and sisters is detrimental to this primary objective. But he won't let Lady Edelyn rot surrounded by common enemies. A treaty of peace with Stanshelf could be signed, forbidden Éogar and his Éoreds to attack the town. Also, a trading treaty could be engaged with the town, exchanging Wulfing stonemasons for Rohirrim steel weapons and metal armour. This way, the keeps of Rohan can be improved and maintained and Stanshelf will have a better chance of surviving its aggressive neighbours.

After having done such service for the King, the company will have earned the respect and trust of Thengel and Morwen. Each one will be offered a seat at the Court: officially named as ambassador for their people for foreigners, or as counsellor if from Rohan or Gondor. The real reason behind such titles is to have a group of individuals nearby who can be diplomatic, trustful, and who have acquired good knowledge of the problems of Rohan. Edoras will be available to be opened as a Sanctuary (if it wasn't before already), and King Thengel will become a Patron. Thus, the campaign found in *Oaths of the Riddermark* can be played in direct succession to this adventure, even with characters from foreign cultures.

If you want to reward your players with something else, a horse will be provided (but not owned) to each character that hasn't got one. The horse can be the same that was lent to them at the beginning of the adventure. Withholding ownership of a horse (at least in the beginning) helps set the tone of Rohan, where horses are not considered items to be disposed as presents.

And remember how the encounter with Éogar went in Helm's Deep: Not far from now the company will find him again in Red Days Rising. They should better not have angered the Second Marshal in his own keep!



©2002, www.john-howe.com

Helm's Deep © by John Howe, used with permission

APPENDIX

This adventure can be played by an all-Rohirrim party, like the one formed by the pre-generated characters found in the TOR supplement *Oaths of the Riddermark*. In this case, it would be interesting for each character to decide what he or she thinks about Thengel. The new King can be considered a hope for change, or a danger to the established system, or even an unknown stranger the character still has no opinion of.

But also, as the adventure is started with the reception of the ambassadors, this allows the introduction of characters from other far-away cultures.

Below you can find ideas how to introduce heroes from various Cultures. Some of them offer different roles that can advise on skill increases at character creation, and a recommendation for Background and Virtue or Reward based upon the supposed role:



Pict © by JLazarusEB, used with permission

- **Veroch**, a Dunlending companion of Edelyn. He might be a warrior and protector, or a wise counsellor to the lady of Stanshelf. He has come all the way from their hometown to Edoras, and his duty is to see the lady return home safely. Whatever he thinks about Edelyn's petition, he keeps it to himself.

Recommended Background: First Among Equals

Recommended Virtue: A Secret Folk



The Maiden of Strength © by Gin Hardiarso, used with permission

- **Sigfled**, a Rider of Rohan, close to the King's household. She was chosen for her unwavering loyalty – or because her loyalty needs to be tested. She also wants to know what kind of errands her King and Queen send her to, before she decides whether they deserve her loyalty or not.

Recommended Background: Granddaughter of the Doorward

Recommended Reward: Horsetailed Helm



- **Ohtar**, a Man of Minas Tirith, strong at arms or silver tongued. He tended Thengel's horse in Mundburg and has moved to Edoras with him. He is faithful and a personal friend to the King and Queen from their time in Gondor, but is now looking for his place and a duty in the strange and wild Riddermark.

Recommended Background: Horseman in a Stony City

Recommended Virtue: Piercing Sight

- **Luindis**, an Elf of Lórien, envoy from Lady Galadriel and Lord Celeborn. A diplomat sent to pay the respects of the Golden Wood to the new King of Rohan, known to hold the wisdom of the High Men of Gondor. Also, her ears are open for rumours about Saruman's whereabouts – an issue that troubles Lady Galadriel recently.

Recommended Background: Voice of the Lord and Lady

Recommended Reward: Elven-Brooch



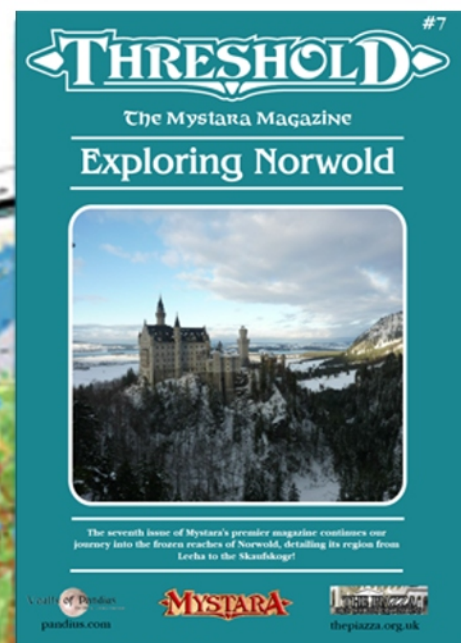
Winter Dwarf © by Sergio Artigas, used with permission

▪ **Sviar**, a Dwarf from the Blue Mountains. Always looking for new markets, the dwarves have sent an emissary to talk about trading questions with Rohan. But many in the Blue Mountains still remember that it were the Dunlendings, not the Rohirrim, who helped them when Erebor fell to Smaug. Dwarves are slow to forget both help and perceived injustice.

Recommended Background: Eriador Trader

Recommended Reward: Harp of the Halls

Get back to the beginning in the pages of the **THRESHOLD** Magazine



Threshold Magazine is the premier gaming magazine filled with expanded information on the Known Worlds, original D&D, and adventure gaming. Enjoy new material for this old D&D setting.

You can download the current or any of the back issues of Threshold Magazine at the Vaults of Pandius at www.Pandius.com, the official Mystara website.

Looking for more Mystara? Go to The Piazza, the D&D Worlds Discussion Forums.

The Mystara Magazine is a non-commercial, fan-produced magazine. There is no intention to infringe on anyone's rights, and in particular not on those of Wizards of the Coast, which holds all rights to the original material on which the magazine is based.



thepiazza.org.uk

Vaults of Pandius
The Official Mystara Homepage

pandius.com

DIVIDED ARNOR

By Thomas Morwinsky
(tolwen@gmx.de)

© 2018

MIDDLE-EARTH
SCHOLARSHIP

Those of you who have followed *Other Minds* from its early days know that I am especially interested in further detailing the background of Middle-earth, discerning specific aspects of its history, demographics or politics.

This contribution is no exception, as it delves into the details of the successor realms of Arnor. It uses the scanty information provided by Tolkien and based on this builds a detailed account of the rulers and history especially of Cardolan and Rhudaur.

It is designed to provide background information for all those interested in campaigning in other eras than the late Third Age, as the time of these realms was the mid-Third Age and it ended 1,000 years before the time of Bilbo and the default timeframe of TOR and AME (and the LotRRPG).

After Eärendur, owing to dissensions among his sons their realm was divided into three: Arthedain, Rhudaur, and Cardolan. Arthedain was in the North-west and included the land between Brandywine and Lune, and also the land north of the Great Road as far as the Weather Hills. Rhudaur was in the North-east and lay between the Ettenmoors, the Weather Hills, and the Misty Mountains, but included also the Angle between the Hoarwell and the Loudwater. Cardolan was in the South, its bounds being the Brandywine, the Greysflood, and the Great Road. In Arthedain the line of Isildur was maintained and endured, but the line soon perished in Cardolan and Rhudaur. There was often strife between the kingdoms, which hastened the waning of the Dúnedain. The chief matter of debate was the possession of the Weather Hills and the land westward towards Bree. Both Rhudaur and Cardolan desired to possess Amon Sûl (Weathertop), which stood on the borders of their realms; for the Tower of Amon Sûl held the chief Palantír of the North, and the other two were both in the keeping of Arthedain [...]. In the days of Argeleb son of Malvegil, since no descendants of Isildur remained in the other kingdoms, the kings of Arthedain again claimed the lordship of all Arnor. The claim was resisted by Rhudaur. There the Dúnedain were few, and power had been seized by an evil lord of the Hill-men, who was in secret league with Angmar. Argeleb therefore fortified the Weather Hills; but he was slain in battle with Rhudaur and Angmar.

— The Lord of the Rings.
Appendix A

The Amlaithioni of Arthedain

1 Amlaith	born 726	lived 220 years	died 946
He establishes his rule in Fornost to avoid the highly symbolic Annúminas (of united Arnor) as capital for Arthedain.			
2 Beleg	born 811	lived 218 years	died 1029
In his time the first real conflict among the Dúnedain arises when the other realms contest Arthedain's position at Amon Sûl.			
3 Mallor	born 895	lived 215 years	died 1110
In his time an evil shadow falls upon Greenwood the Great, and it became known as Mirkwood. The Necromancer of Dol Guldur (later known to be Sauron returned) begins to work his evil. The Periannath cross the Mountains and come into (former) Arnor. The first major wars among the sister-kingdoms occur during his reign.			
4 Celepharn	born 979	lived 212 years	died 1191
His time sees the apogee of the three successor realms' most blissful time. There is no serious conflict and much prosperity.			
5 Celebrindor	born 1062	lived 210 years	died 1272
His reign is initially characterised by the prosperity inherited from his father followed by The Anarchy in Cardolan after the Disaster of Cameth Brin.			
6 Malvegil	born 1144	lived 205 years	died 1349
It is at the beginning of his reign over Arthedain that evil comes to Arnor. For at that time the realm of Angmar arises in the North beyond the Ettenmoors. Its lands lie on both sides of the Mountains, and there many evil men and Orcs, and other fell creatures (the latter are not obviously part of that realm in this time) gather. In his time, Hobbits move westward and settle around Bree.			
7 Argeleb I	born 1226	Lived 130 years	† slain 1356
In his days, since no descendants of Isildur remain in the other kingdoms, the kings of Arthedain again claim the lordship of all Arnor. In token of this claim all the kings of Arthedain, and the chieftains after them, take names with the prefix aran, ar(a) signifying 'high king'. The claim was resisted by Rhudaur, but accepted by Cardolan. In Rhudaur the Dúnedain are few, and power has been seized by an evil lord of the Hill-men, who is secretly in league with Angmar. Argeleb therefore fortifies the Weather Hills; but he is slain in battle with Rhudaur and Angmar.			
8 Arveleg I	born 1309	lived 100 years	† slain 1409
With the help of Cardolan and Lindon, he drives his enemies out of the Hills; and for many years Arthedain and Cardolan hold the frontier along the Weather Hills, the Great Road, and the lower Hoarwell. A great host comes out of Angmar in 1409, and crossing the river enters Cardolan and surrounds Weathertop. The Dúnedain are defeated and Arveleg is slain. The Tower of Amon Sûl is burned and razed; but the palantír is saved and carried back in retreat to Fornost, Rhudaur is occupied by evil Men subject to Angmar, and the Dúnedain that remain there are slain or flee west. Cardolan is ravaged. Araphor son of Arveleg is not yet full-grown, but he is valiant, and with aid from Círdan and Elrond he repels the enemy from Fornost and the North Downs.			
9 Araphor	born 1391	lived 198 years	died 1589
He proves to be a skilful leader in the war of 1409. Later he also turns out to be a wise and far-seeing king that strengthens his realm for the troubles to come. His reign is the longest of all the Númenórean kings in Exile.			
10 Argeleb II	born 1473	lived 197 years	died 1670
In his days the plague comes into Eriador from the Southeast, and most of the people of Cardolan perish, especially in Minhiriath. The Hobbits and all other people suffer greatly, but the plague lessens as it spreads northwards, and therefore Arthedain's northern parts are little affected. It is at this time that the Dúnedain of Cardolan end and evil spirits out of Angmar and Rhudaur enter into the deserted mounds and dwell there. Argeleb II grants the land west of the Baranduin to the Periannath; they cross the river and enter the land in 1601.			
10 Arvegil	born 1553	lived 190 years	died 1743
11 Arveleg II	born 1633	lived 180 years	died 1813
12 Araval	born 1711	lived 180 years	died 1891
With the help of Lindon and Imladris he wins a victory over Angmar in the Third Northern War of 1851, and seeks to reoccupy Cardolan, but the evil wights on the Barrow-downs terrify all who seek to dwell in their vicinity.			
14 Araphant	born 1789	lived 175 years	died 1964
Angmar recovers and makes war on the Dúnedain. Araphant seeks to renew the ancient alliance and kinship with Gondor. In 1940 his heir Arvedui weds Firiël daughter of King Ondohor of Gondor. But Gondor is engaged in the long Wars of the Wainriders, and sends little help.			
15 Arvedui	born 1864	lived 110 years	† died 1974
He is the last king at Fornost. In the winter of 1974 the Witch-king lays waste to Arthedain, and scatters the remnants of the Dúnedain. Arvedui escapes from Fornost and flees north, taking the palantíri of Annúminas and Amon Sûl. He attempts to take a ship from Forochel to Lindon but is ship-wrecked and the Stones are lost.			

Table 2: The Amlaithioni

The Thorondurioni of Cardolan

1	Thorondur Under his rule Cardolan is established as the strongest economic power of the successor kingdoms, controlling the Great Road and the metropolis of Tharbad.	born 727	lived 218 years	died 945
2	Turamarth He allies with Orodreth of Rhudaur to oust Arthedain from Amon Sûl. Arthadan reinforcements arrive in time though and eventually a new peace treaty is signed. In his time Hobbits begin to settle in the arhírdor of Dyr Erib.	born 810	lived 215 years	died 1025
3	Cirion Under his rule Cardolan makes another attempt at wresting control over Amon Sûl from Arthedain, but like his father, his efforts come to naught. Afterwards he focusses on strengthening his realm.	born 892	lived 213 years	died 1105
4	Terennil He is Cardolan's most successful king whose reign sees the greatest prosperity. It is he who introduced large-scale sheep farming in Cardolan.	born 973	lived 210 years	died 1183
5	Mardil He dies in a shipwreck off Cape Andrast after returning from a visit to Gondor.	born 1053	lived 145 years	† died 1223
6	Celervellon He is most remembered for his ambition to bring Rhudaur under his rule, which eventually leads to total disaster when he is killed together with most of his army in the Disaster of Cameth Brin.	born 1143	lived 89 years	† slain 1232
7	Tarchil The younger son of Mardil ascends the throne unexpected and proves to be a successful ruler that rebuilds the realm after The Anarchy. He dies childless and is the last of the direct line of Isildur in Cardolan.	born 1148	lived 197 years	died 1345
8	Minaglar He is descended from Thorondur, but far removed from the direct line. The arahiri hope to elect a weak king in him, but he accepts Argeleb's claim to the overlordship of Arnor in return for support against the barons. He is killed by a spy from Rhudaur.	born 1297	lived 84 years	† slain 1381
9	Osthir He is the last Prince of Cardolan and is slain in the Second Northern War.	born 1344	lived 65 years	† slain 1409
9a	Níriel Osthir's daughter is proclaimed queen after the death of her father, but neither Arthedain nor Gondor recognise her claim. She is slain in a botched abduction attempt.	born 1395	lived 17 years	† slain 1412

Table 2: The Thorondurioni

The Galadhrioni of Rhudaur

1	Galadhrion He cedes the northern parts of his realm to the clans of Meisawis as the price for their support in gaining his throne.	born 731	lived 217 years	died 948
2	Orodreth	born 812	lived 213 years	died 1025
3	Edhelthorn In his time, evil things begin to appear again. He is slain by Trolls while travelling through northern Rhudaur.	born 889	lived 142 years	† slain 1031
4	Elrion Evil things grow in strength during his reign and the Periannath come over the mountains, settling in Dún-Glandagol.	born 969	lived 205 years	died 1174
5	Aldor He is the last King of Rhudaur from the direct Line of Isildur. In the year 1228 he is overthrown by a Hillman named Rhugga and is forced to flee into exile. His entire family is slain during the flight.	born 1046	lived 202 years	died 1248
6	Elwen The first queen of Rhudaur is also known for removing the Hillmen from Rhudaur's throne. She is, however not from the direct line of Isildur but distantly descended from King Galadhrion.	born 1121	lived 162 years	died 1283
7	Fordegil	born 1166	lived 153 years	died 1319
8	Elgost He is the last Dúnadan king of Rhudaur and is slain in a coup that brings the Hillmen again into power. His family flees to Cardolan after his death.	born 1206	lived 140 years	† slain 1346

Table 3: The Galadhrioni

The Hillmen Kings of Rhudaur

The following lists the Hillmen kings of Rhudaur. Though nominally rulers of a sovereign realm, from 1346 onward Rhudaur's kings are mere puppets of Angmar. Violence among the nobility is commonplace and thus most kings die prematurely by their contender's hands (often from their own family). This status as a client kingdom lasts until the Great Plague, after which Rhudaur is officially made a part of Angmar.

The Hillmen generally fall into two groups: The first are the "original" Hillmen who live a traditional rural life-style, primarily in the Highlands. The second group are the Hillmen from the Lowlands and the river valleys. They assimilate parts of Dúnadan civilization and later on most of the rulers arise from their lords. They are also most open to the overtures by Angmar and its promises of wealth and power. They are the witch-realm's most reliable supporters in Rhudaur.

1	Rhugga He is the first Hillman on the throne and this sparks the intervention of Cardolan which finally leads to a great victory for Rhugga. He is slain while raiding in Cardolan.	born 1199	lived 39 years	† slain 1238
2	Murag He is slain by Elwen when she reclaims the throne of Cameth Brin.	born 1209	lived 45 years	† slain 1254
3	Dúghnas	born 1315	lived 40 years	† slain 1355
4	Diguir	born 1327	lived 49 years	† slain 1376
5	Brolos	born 1331	lived 56 years	† slain 1387
6	Fearlig	born 1338	lived 54 years	† slain 1392
5	Ionall Beside King Arveleg I of Arthedain and Prince Osthir of Cardolan, Ionall of Rhudaur is the third monarch that loses his life in the Second Northern War.	born 1364	lived 45 years	† slain 1409
7	Braon He is slain by a nephew.	born 1388	lived 43 years	† slain 1431
8	Torig-Finn	born 1402	lived 68 years	died 1470
9	Ladirg	born 1440	lived 38 years	† slain 1478
10	Burcha	born 1448	lived 44 years	† slain 1492
11	Connart	born 1452	lived 47 years	† slain 1499
12	Dorchag	born 1455	lived 61 years	died 1516
13	Breum	born 1483	lived 38 years	† slain 1521
14	Uilach He is slain during a raid into Cardolan and following some power struggles is succeeded by his son.	born 1487	lived 36 years	† slain 1523
15	Murdran	born 1490	lived 60 years	died 1550
16	Fiorchar-tan He is killed in a coup from a rival clan.	born 1501	lived 58 years	† slain 1559
17	Breas	born 1520	lived 53 years	† slain 1573
18	Gethiggh	born 1538	lived 60 years	† slain 1588
19	Rulloch	born 1544	lived 57 years	† slain 1601
20	Umarg	born 1578	lived 47 years	† slain 1625
21	Broggha Like many of his people, he dies in the Great Plague. He is the last king of a (nominally) independent Rhudaur.	born 1594	lived 33 years	† died 1637
22	Eilagh With the death of Broggha in the Plague, Angmar reduces Rhudaur to a province and strips Broggha's son of his royal title. This disgruntles many Hillmen and over the years, resistance forms.	born 1620	lived 34 years	† slain 1654
23	Toluggha	born 1628	lived 54 years	† slain 1682
24	Torag-Aeding He is descended from a Dúnadan lady that was captured in a raid by Broggha in TA 1635 and later given to one of his Highland Clan chiefs as a prize. He combines the fierce spirit of independence of his father with the nobility and wisdom of his mother – making him a great leader of men. The unrest that has been smouldering in Rhudaur erupts into open rebellion two years after his accession (and careful preparation) as governor-lord in Cameth Brin. The well-prepared Hillmen are able to resist Angmar's forces for many years until Torag-Aeding is finally captured and later executed in Carn Dúm. With him the line of "independent" Hillmen rulers in Rhudaur comes to an end.	born 1647	lived 54 years	† slain 1701

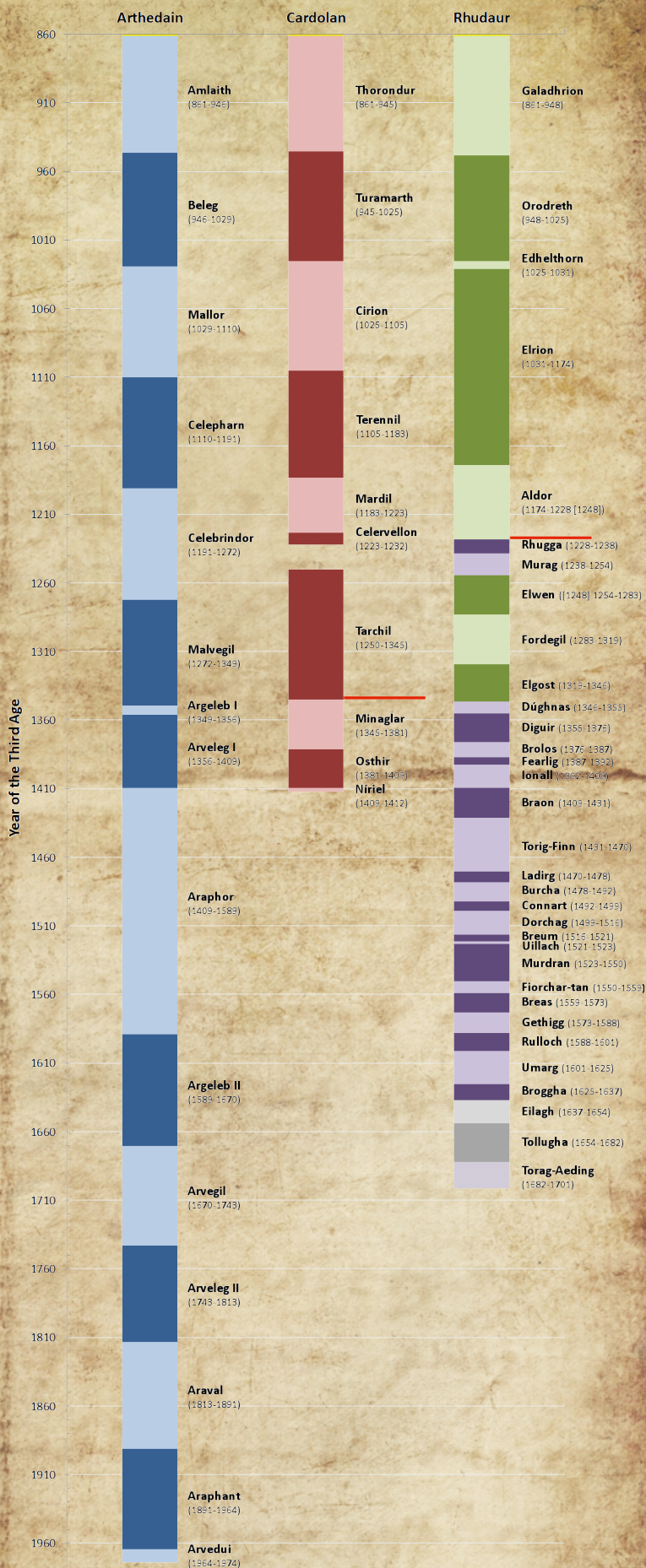
Table 4: The Hillmen Kings

Overview on Rulers

The following graph shows all rulers of the successor kingdoms in chronological order. The tables above and the text below add further detail, but this graph is intended as a way to visualise the different eras and kings in one sweep.

The red bars for Cardolan and Rhudaaur show the end of the direct line of Isildur in both realms. For Cardolan, the years between Celervellon and Tarchil represent *The Anarchy* without a king. For Rhudaaur the green parts represent Dúnadan kings, whereas the purple ones denote Hillman lords. The grey part represents the realm's transformation to a province of Angmar. Finally the last era (shaded grey and purple) represents the time of the final rebellion against Angmar. Afterwards, only the Lowland Hillmen loyal to Angmar remain in the area of former Rhudaaur, but are re-organized into several provinces (see *Other Minds, Issue #13* "Population and Urbanization" for more details on the post-TA1701 organization).

Rulers of Arnor's successor kingdoms
(names & period of reign)



oēhēr pīrīds ārīd hāirīds oēhēr pīrīds ārīd hāirīds oēhēr pīrīds ārīd hāirīds oēhēr pīrīds ārīd hāirīds oēhēr pīrīds ārīd hāirīds

THE ERA OF THE DIVIDED NORTH

The 9th century

The 9th century sees tensions rise within Arnor. The regions of the realm have a diverse background and history. These differences become ever more prominent during the rule of king Eärendur: regional lords vie for attention to their pleas. The main line of division runs through the north-western part of the country that was primarily settled by Dúnedain descended from those who had come over the sea with Elendil. The southern and south-eastern parts between Baranduin and along the Gwathló are home to *Árûwanâi* who had emigrated to Endor before the Akallabêth and later recognised Elendil as the rightful heir to the throne of the Númenóreans. They exhibit strong supremacist views among them – even more than was common among the Númenóreans. In addition, the long years where they had to rely on their own strength to defend themselves in the Second Age had fostered a spirit of independence among them. Third is the Northeast, where the Dúnedain are few and listen much more to the pleas and demands of their numerous indigenous subjects. The Northwest and its lords always hold most of the key positions at court, making the “Elendil families” the key players in the realm – much to the frustration of the older Númenórean “settler” families.

In the early years of the realm, all these differences do not affect the society much – especially as Arnor has other needs, namely the recovery from the War of the Last Alliance. Over time however, the more ambitious lords and families grow ever more frustrated with the very passive politics of Isildur’s heirs concerning imperial policies. At the same time, Gondor begins an era of unprecedented expansion (around the 7th and 8th centuries), step by step forging an empire and increasing its glory.

Finally in the reign of Eärendur dissension in Arnor erupts into open strife. The regional lords openly speak of their dissatisfaction. They demand much greater shares in the realm’s rule and a change in policy, aimed at expansion beyond the confines of Eriador; citing the glory gained by the South-kingdom during Tarannon’s rule as an example to be followed.

Eärendur is largely able to balance all these different groups in his kingdom. Still, this only postpones the confrontation. For long, the three sons of the king have been involved in their father’s efforts to find a peaceful solution, even though they already develop ambitions of their own and are associated with a certain region and its people: Amlaith with the Northwest, Thorondur with the South and Galadhrion with the Northeast.

When Eärendur dies in TA 861, the situation threatens to get out of control. Especially the *arahîri* of Girithlin in the South and Eketta in the Northwest drive the escalation. Thus Eären-



Departure from Gondor © by Anke Eissmann, used with permission

dur's oldest sons are the ones who force the positions of the Northwest and the South while Galadhrion tries to arbitrate to some degree. However, in the summer of that year, civil war seems inevitable when the three brothers muster their forces to enforce their positions. Especially Amlaith as the eldest son is *de iure* the natural heir and under pressure to prove himself worth of this position. Near Amon Sûl the forces are encamped close to each other and tensions are high. This brings the sons of Eärendur together again and they take counsel with each other. Finally Amlaith comes up with a proposal to avoid a civil war: Arnor would be divided into three successor realms, with each brother becoming king of his favourite realm. No one would take seniority over the others and all would be treated as equals, as all of them are rightful sons of King Eärendur. Even though it means the end of Arnor as a united realm, it is thought to be the best solution. So are conceived the realms of Arthedain (Amlaith), Cardolan (Thorondur) and Rhudaur (Galadhrion). Gondor's Kin-strife almost 600 years later shows the wisdom in this peaceful solution, even though it also means a significant weakening of Arnor as a whole.

The next decades see all the realms flourish. Arthedain tries to establish a sea port, though success remains very limited: In the north, adverse climate in the Bay of Forochel prevents any lasting success, while the Elves of Lindon do not allow mannish traffic to pass their lands in numbers. In the south, a small port is established at the mouth of Baranduin, but its capacity remains limited and dependent on the goodwill of Cardolan. Therefore Arthedain remains dependent on Tharbad as its main sea port and accordingly Arthadan politics are



Autumn Wind © by Liga Klavina, used with permission

focussed on securing this access. Amlaith also sends scouts into the Northern Waste and beyond the Hith-aeglr. Their findings form the base for much of Arthedain's knowledge in its later wars with Angmar.

In this time Cardolan focusses on developing its economy. Its main advantage is the nearly exclusive access to the sea, and possession of the major port at Tharbad with secure revenues and its command of the Great Road to Gondor. Its imperial ambitions are

somehow curtailed by a decisive lack of resources (Cardolan being only a fraction of former Arnor) and the unwillingness of its lords to grant the king prestige as a warrior king conquering new territories. In addition, the possible gains (primarily in Enedwaith) are not balanced with the potential problems (especially the Gwathuirim) and thus Cardolan remains within its founding borders. This has some irony, as the primary reason for the secession from Arnor was the will to expand, and now that freedom to make its own policy has been achieved, it is quickly dropped.

In the northeast, Galadhrion has to grant the people of *Meisavis* (a collection of tribes in the area of future Angmar) independence, as they had been instrumental in his bid for regional control of the Northeast and the price for their support was independence for themselves once Arnor was divided. Beside this, Galadhrion invests many resources in increasing the revenues of his realm. These come mainly in the form of mineral riches in the Misty Mountains and their foothills, but he has to come to good terms with the local Hillmen to exploit it. In addition, he intensifies contacts with the people of the Anduin Vales.

The 10th century

This era remains largely quiet. However, it sees the first (minor) war between the sister-kingdoms, when in the year 947, the last surviving son of Eärendur (Galadhrion of Rhudaur) attempts to re-unite the realm by force due to his status as most senior descendant of Eärendur still alive. Despite limited fighting action this short war sees the first spilling of blood between the Dúnadan. Galadhrion's efforts are also frustrated by the relative lack of overall resources of his realm compared to those of his brothers.

The 11th century

This era sees the first apogee of strife among the kingdoms in the middle of the century. It begins with Cardolan and Rhudaur launching a surprise attack on Amon Sûl, which is held by Arthedain. The fortress is lost, but the tower holds out until Arthedain relieves the siege. After two years the war ends inconclusively with more or less the *status quo ante*. Late in that century a similar conflict flares up, again leading to an unclear result.



Sword of Darkness © by Liga Klaviņa, used with permission

Around the middle of this century, Hobbits enter Eriador for the first time and settle between Amon Sûl and the Mitheithel.

The 12th century

The wars between the sister-kingdoms mostly cease in this century. The peace brings benefits for all three realms, especially Arthedain and Cardolan prosper. But there is also good news for Rhudaur, as new silver and gold lodes are discovered in its Hithaeglir

mines. These allow the king in Cameth Brin to hire more mercenaries and generally punch above its weight in the future conflicts with the other realms. Around the middle of the century the Harfoot Hobbits are joined by Fallohides. Stoors also follow and settle mainly in the Angle, in southern Rhudaur. Others wander further south to the region between Tharbad and Dor `Wathui (Dunland).

Overall, the years between ca. 1120 and 1220 are the apogee of the three kingdoms' bliss with little conflict and intensive trade and cooperation. Celepharn of Arthedain, Terennil of Cardolan and Elrion of Rhudaur are the architects of this period of prosperity.

The 13th century

The first half of the century is a turning point for both Cardolan and Rhudaur. King Mardil of Cardolan consolidates the economic growth begun under his father and leads Cardolan to the height of its bliss. In 1223 he visits Gondor and appoints his second son Tarchil as special ambassador to the court of Atanatar II (where Tarchil is deeply impressed by the imperial power and splendour of Gondor), but he dies in a shipwreck on the way back. His son Celervellon succeeds him – an ambitious and brilliant man willing to prove he is cut from the same cloth as his successful father. His chance comes in 1228, when Isildur's Line is ousted by a Hillman usurper named Rhugga, seizing the throne in Cameth Brin. King Aldor flees into the Cardolanian exile, but his entire family is killed during the escape. Celervellon promises to support Aldor in regaining the throne. In return, the latter would then recognise the suzerainty of Cardolan. After careful planning, war is declared in 1231. In this first stage, Cardolan is able to secure all the Watchtowers of the Angle before winter. However, Celervellon fails to decisively defeat Rhugga and returns to Thalion to take counsel with his lords. They are dissatisfied with the limited success in Rhudaur. He convinces them that he will be able to decisively defeat Rhugga the next year and they grant him more troops. The Hillman uses winter to raise support in Meisawis and from the men of the Anduin Vales with promises of gold and plunder.

The next spring fighting re-commences and Celervellon manages to outmanoeuvre and finally catch Rhugga, with the majority of his army in Cameth Brin in summer. The king of Cardolan strives for a quick decision that year and so he launches several attacks with siege engines that clear the outer defences from its fighters. In anticipation of his ultimate victory, he summons all the *arahiri* and many lesser nobles of Cardolan as well as the exiled Aldor plus the royal family to Cameth Brin in order to witness his triumph. Unexpectedly, an army from Meisawis and the Anduin Vales (in the end, Rhugga's pleas were successful) suddenly attack Celervellon's army in the rear when his final assault on Cameth Brin is about to succeed. This turns secure victory into disaster. The

demoralised and without effective leadership since most of the Dúnadan military nobility perished at Cameth Brin. Even though Rhugga's troops suffer as well, he and his allies take the opportunity of Cardolan's extreme weakness to launch a deep raid into the undefended Cardolan, hitting Dyr Erib especially hard. Many villages and towns fall prey to the raiders and only a handful of fortified places are able to resist, of which the great fortress of Crabanost is the best-known. The enemy continues to raid Cardolan north of the Great Road and only retreats when winter sets in.

The death of Celervellon and his family, as well as most of the *arahiri* and a good part of the Dúnadan nobility of Cardolan causes a vacuum that cannot be filled easily. Eventually four



The Black Serpent founders © by Anke Eissmann, used with permission

wrong-footed Cardolani troops, already exhausted from a long day of fighting, are no match for the fresh enemy in their rear. Celervellon is able to rally a defence with his core troops, but they are unable to turn the tide. The king is slain when his position is overwhelmed, while the camp of the Cardolanian *hiri* is overrun and almost all of them killed or taken prisoner. Aldor is able to escape with a few bodyguards. A core of the professional heavy infantry of Cardolan is able to put up a fighting retreat and eventually escape in relative order, but overall losses are appalling, even if a number of stragglers eventually escape.

In the end, only a fraction of the troops that marched to Rhudaur return, and those are

claimants for the crown emerge (backed primarily by Girithlin, Faerdor, Tyrn Hódhath and Dol Caladir respectively). Mardil's younger son Tarchil would be the natural choice as he is (the last) from the Line of Isildur in Cardolan, but rejecting him is the single one thing that all the *arahiri* of Cardolan agree on though¹. Instead they all support claimants of lesser status – none of whom stem from the direct line of Isildur².

¹ In earlier times he had openly voiced his opinion that the king should have much greater power and the *arahiri* should be severely reduced in influence – something that Cardolan's lords never forgot.

² Still Tarchil is the favourite candidate for both Arthedain and Gondor.

Thus follows a dark era of intermittent war with periods of foreign intervention where every faction tries to gain an advantage. In addition, repeated raids by Rhudaur further damage the North – even though Rhugga is finally killed in such a raid in TA 1238. This era shows a general erosion of order and society and is later named *The Anarchy*. The external interventions (primarily by Arthedain to support Tarchil) only lead to the formation of temporary alliances of the other claimants, eventually leading to nought. Finally the Dwarves of Khazad-dûm and Gondor, who are both concerned about a total collapse of order and trade build up pressure to finally achieve a lasting solution. In Thalion (the royal compound in the city of Metraith) a great council is held (the *Diet of Thalion*) that drags on for several months as no one is willing to concede, but eventually Gondor's and Arthedain's unison (supported by the Longbeards) unmistakably promote Tarchil, younger brother of Celervellon as the new king.

In the end this pressure overcomes all resistance (and the implied threat that Gondor would lend Cardolan no further support and remove its troops from Tharbad and the Great Road if they did not come to a solution). An agreement is finally achieved only under guarantee that the lords' inherited rights would not be curtailed. Gondor pledges to act as custodian for this agreement and thus Tarchil is finally crowned late in TA 1250 after 18 years of anarchy.

Following this, another Hillman takes the throne of Rhudaur leaving Aldor as an exile in Cardolan. During the *Anarchy* none of the *arahiri* is willing (or able) to lend the exiled king substantial aid to regain his kingdom (they have more pressing issues). Still, over the years he is able to gather a small force to assist him, but the years drag on and eventually he dies while the *Anarchy* is still raging. He is succeeded by Elwen, a descendant of King Edhelthorn, but far removed from the direct Line of Isildur. She takes the throne in exile with little hope of return, but is a capable commander and successfully supports the protection of Tharbad with her forces during the *Anarchy*. Once the dust in Cardolan settles with the coronation of Tarchil, things begin to change. Despite the most pressing tasks (placate the suspicious *arahiri*, rebuild-

ing order) of the new king, he also keeps the issue of the Hillmen in mind – and how they plunged Cardolan into an eighteen-year long chaos. Both Tarchil and Celebrindor of Arthedain carefully follow the developments in Rhudaur, and in TA 1254 they perceive a chance. The kings assemble a not too large but substantial force and march into Rhudaur with the intent of securing the important area of Noddfa Rhaglaw. Murag (the new Hillman on the throne) cannot ignore this and leads his army to counter them. In the meantime, Elwen leads her small force northward along the Mith-eithel and quickly seizes the weakly defended Cameth Brin by surprise. Murag is caught between the combined force of Cardolan and Arthedain and his now occupied home base. He is slain by Elwen in the attempt to regain Cameth Brin. This single act of bravery earns her the support of many Hillmen in the river valleys (who tend to favour the strongest contender) and wins back the throne of Rhudaur. Despite this spectacular success, it is a dearly-bought victory. The Dúnedain in Rhudaur have always been few and especially Celervellon's intervention and the following wave of refugees into Arthedain and Cardolan (where many then perished in the *Anarchy*) further depletes their already low numbers.

Baronne Aubrey © by Gin Hardiarso, used with permission



In Cardolan, Tarchil spends most of the century with rebuilding the shattered and traumatized kingdom. He establishes widespread sheepherding in Cardolan and orders the establishment of a hedgewall (the *Hagavorl*) in Dyr Erib to keep out predatory animals (primarily wolves). Especially the latter succeeds not only in greatly reducing predation on household animals, but also helps to channel traffic. Overall, Tarchil turns out to become an unexpectedly successful ruler. Elwen attempts to strengthen her rule in Rhudaur as best as possible. Arthedain wishes to establish a position of seniority among the three sister kingdoms, but also recognises that this is not the time to press this claim, as this could easily destabilise Cardolan and Rhudaur. Thus it limits its activity to the use of “soft power”.

This era of recovery from *The Anarchy* sees also the founding of the realm of Angmar in the year 1276. For the sister kingdoms this looks as if the disunited tribes of Meisawis had finally found a lord to unite them all under a new name. At the time it remains a local phenomenon, organising itself and keeping peace with its neighbours. Still it proposes an ideology of the self-rule for all Men of Eriador (as opposed to the “foreign” rule by the Númenóreans). This is eagerly embraced by many in the North and Northeast of Eriador and the new kingdom quickly develops a firm grip on the North. One of its first moves is to send an ambassador to Cameth Brin with rich gifts, useful advice and promises of friendship from its lord. Elwen remains wary of this new realm (and its aforementioned ideology), but since it borders her realm, she agrees to regular contacts with the new kingdom. In Arthedain and Cardolan, the envoys of Angmar are greeted with courtesy but relations remain cool despite fair words.

In the last major event of the century (another conflict of the Sister Kingdoms over the possession of Amon Sûl from 1284 to 1287) King Fordegil of Rhudaur is supported for the first time by warriors from Angmar.

The 14th century

Around the beginning of the century and owing to the deteriorating situation in eastern Eriador, Hobbits begin to move westward and settle around Bree. In Cardolan Tarchil proves to be a strong ruler who keeps the power of the *arahiri* in check, strengthens royal power and rebuilds order and economy. One issue looms over his head though – his continued childlessness. In addition, there is no one of close kin and the direct line of Isildur left in his realm, as the disaster of Cameth Brin and the following *Anarchy* severely depleted the royal house. Finally, after the death of Tarchil in TA 1345, Minaglar is elected as new king. He is only distantly descended from the Line of Isildur and by electing a – supposedly – weak king the *arahiri* hope to increase their power again. Sensing coming troubles and his weak position among the powerful Cardolanian *arahiri*, the new king approaches Arthedain with prospects for rapprochement between the long-sundered realms of Isildur. Finally, in TA 1350 an agreement is reached with Arthedain’s new king Argeleb I. Here Minaglar recognises Argeleb’s overlordship over all of former Arnor. Meanwhile, Minaglar’s rule as Prince of Cardolan is acknowledged and his position is strengthened against his ambitious *arahiri*.

This time also sees the final fall of Dúnadan rule in Rhudaur after failure of Isildur’s line following a coup by a new Hillman usurper named Dúghnas (secretly allied with and supported by Angmar, as will be known later). The family of the last Dúnadan king Elgost flees into Cardolanian exile, hoping to return in the future just like their ancestor Elwen once did.

In reaction to these events Argeleb and Minaglar decide that the time is ripe to finally enforce the re-unification of Arnor. They prepare their forces and march against Rhudaur, expecting an easy victory. The Hillmen have however, secretly made an alliance and cunning plans with Angmar and Argeleb and Minaglar are decisively defeated and Argeleb is killed in battle. After the end of hostilities, the new king Arveleg I continues his father’s policies. Arthedain and Cardolan fortify their borders against Rhudaur and Angmar. Later Minaglar is assassinated by a Rhudaurian spy in TA 1381



and succeeded by his son Osthir who continues his father's close alliance with Arthedain.

In these years the Stoors leave the Angle and while some return to Rhovanion, others move south to Dor 'Wathui.

The 15th century

A great host came out of Angmar in 1409, and crossing the river entered Cardolan and surrounded Weathertop. The Dúnedain were defeated and Arveleg was slain. The Tower of Amon Sûl was burned and razed; but the palantír was saved and carried back in retreat to Fornost, Rhudaur was occupied by evil Men subject to Angmar, and the Dúnedain that remained there were slain or fled west Cardolan was ravaged.

— *The Lord of the Rings.*
Appendix B

This century sees the first major war in which Angmar truly pulls all the strings (though this is not known at the time). It starts in 1409 at the same time when Cardolan's integration into a new Arnor is about to take the next step – the arranged wedding of the heirs of both realms (Araphor of Arthedain and Níriel of Cardolan once they are old enough – for the time being their engagement is agreed upon by Arveleg and Osthir). The hopes of Arveleg and Osthir are high as they have prepared their armies and developed a common strategy during the past decades. Unfortunately, the Dúnedain are caught wrong-footed: The extent of Angmar's armament and the skill with which its armies manoeuvre have been grossly underestimated and after the allied armies have been defeated at Amon Sûl, the tower and its fortress are surrounded and besieged while the remnants of the allied armies retreat westward. Osthir rallies his troops on the Barrow-downs, establishing an effective defence using its forts and castles, but the rest of the country lies open to marauding forces of the enemy. Some of his people also take refuge in the Old Forest and beyond – the land later known as Buckland. Angmar splits his forces to simultaneously destroy Cardolan and Arthedain. This brief respite and reduced pressure allows Araphor to

organise an effective defence around Fornost and with elven aid he is finally able to destroy the army sent against him.

During the defence of the Barrow-downs Osthir together with his three sons is slain in the final – victorious – battle. Much of the realm is devastated by the marauding bands of Angmar though – some of them even reaching unto Tharbad and Girthlin. The deaths of the king and his sons are not wholly in vain though, as Tyrn Gorthad also remains free of the Enemy and the local Dúnedain are strengthened by others who flee here during the war's upheavals. Most of them stay even after war ends, making this region the richest and strongest in post-war Cardolan. It takes a long time to finally root out all the marauders after which the damage done to the realm becomes fully apparent. Its king dead and only an underage daughter as an heir, the majority of the armies crippled and thousands of people killed by the enemy's hordes, crops and livestock destroyed on a large scale are only the major problems faced by the survivors. It is only by the skilled leadership of its chancellor Nimhir that the realm escapes a total collapse. Níriel, daughter



Nerdanel © by Līga Klaviņa, used with permission

of Osthir and his only surviving child, is proclaimed Queen of Cardolan, though she is not recognised by Arthedain and Gondor¹. With the help of her chancellor, she masters the immedi-

¹ Both due to her being underage and female.

ate crisis. She visits Tyrn Hódhath frequently, as it is mostly untouched by the war, contains the ancient and revered burial grounds of the Dúnedain and thus is crucial in bringing order back to Cardolan. Only three years later, Nimhir is killed together with Níriel during a botched abduction attempt, burying all hopes for recovery. The following nine years see a drawn-out petty war among the barons for supremacy, in which Arthedain and Gondor finally back lord Annael of Faerdor, who then becomes the *Cánotar of Cardolan*, in theory holding all the power of the king. In practice, however, he is able to do little more than securing the Great Road and Tharbad. Having forsaken hope for a reunification of Arnor after the end of Osthir and his line, the security of Tharbad and the Great Road remains the priority for Arthedain and Gondor. The former royal demesne of Minhiriath with the old capital of Metraith is taken over by a Dúnadan lord and re-named Dol Tinereb. This Second Northern War has also made it clear that Rhudaur now only is a vassal state of Angmar.

Shortly after the end of the worst troubles in Cardolan, the Kin-strife strikes Gondor, affecting even Cardolan when Castamir the Usurper demands tribute for his continued protection of Tharbad and the Great Road. The *cánotar* complies by collecting extra taxes which further erodes his position among the *arahíri*.

While the remainder of the century sees a steady decline of the Dúnedain and the realm of former Cardolan, Arthedain stabilizes and even profits from the small but continuous exodus of Dúnedain coming from Cardolan.



The 16th century

This is generally a quiet century in Eriador. The remnants of the former kingdom of Cardolan have stabilised somewhat. In 1503 a man named Gordaigh ousts the last ruler of Ethir Gwathló and founds the “kingdom” of Saralainn. Through skilled diplomacy, bribery and lack of common action (and interest) among the remaining Dúnadan lords, his petty realm is allowed to remain.

The 17th century

In this century King Argeleb II of Arthedain invites the Hobbits to settle in the Shire (TA 1601) in order to repopulate some lands that fell waste in recent times. Without major conflicts or disease in the first two decades, the prospects for the region of former Cardolan are better than in the past 200 years. In TA 1625, a man named Argil appears in Tharbad and through an alleged descent from the fifth king Mardil (r. 1183-1198) claims the vacant kingship of Cardolan. Even though neither recognised nor given much attention by both Gondor and Arthedain (many men raised similar claims in these times), he is a skilled orator and leader of men and uses his apparent fortune to raise men in order to bring back the rule of law to a country plagued by factions and constant squabbles. His unusual success earns him much attention and he succeeds in gaining substantial support in the northern baronies. In this time the Stoors leave Dor ‘Wathui and migrate to the Shire, where the last ones arrive in TA 1630. Argil is later killed by a commando from Angmar (or so it is said – he had many enemies in the southern baronies and Saralainn...) in TA 1632 when he visits the site of former Amon Sûl where he initiated reconstruction efforts. Shortly thereafter the Great Plague hits Cardolan and wipes out all recovery of the last two centuries, wrecking additional damage beyond recovery. In this time the last Dúnedain flee to Arthedain (and a few to Gondor). Some of the baronies of former Cardolan persist to some degree, but now lesser men rule them. Mostly they claim descent from the old Dúnadan families, but their blood is much mingled and neither Arthedain nor Gondor count them as

Númenóreans any longer. Despite this, Arthedain maintains close contacts with the rulers of Tyrn Hódhath who try their best to fight off the new threat by cruel creatures later known as Barrow-wights who infest the ancient burial grounds here.

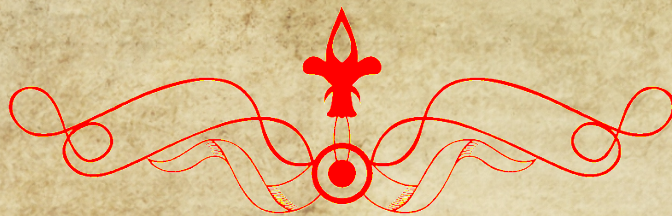
Angmar further exploits the chaos wrought by the Plague in Minhiriath by dispatching an enigmatic creature later known as “The Warlord” to central Cardolan. Unexpectedly successful, he establishes a small domain and profits from the infamous disunity of Cardolan’s lords. Considerable damage is dealt to their lands before he is finally defeated in a (probably last) united action of the petty lords in 1644.

The wake of the Great Plague also weakens Rhudaur and Angmar finally puts an end to the rule of its puppet-kings in 1637 by turning it into a province of Angmar. This does not sit well with many of the Highland clans, while the population in the river valleys is more supportive to Angmar. The relations between the Angmarian faction in the (primarily Mith-eithel) river valleys and the Highland Hillmen are also strained by the declining revenues from the mountain mines: To compensate these losses, the Highland Clans’ shares are greatly reduced (out of proportion) in order to meet the demands from Carn Dûm. In TA 1684, the new governor-lord of Cameth Brin who is partly descended from a captured Dúmadan lady) leads a long-lasting rebellion of the Highland Hillmen (and a number of Lowlanders) against the new masters – openly at first and with considerable success against Angmar’s supporters. Angmar sends its warlord Rogrog to crush the rebels and eventually drives them from the Lowlands. Then the conflict becomes a drawn-out guerrilla war. In this phase,

Rogrog begins a systematic genocide against the rebellious Hillmen to break all resistance and which finally ends in TA 1701 with the capture of the rebel leader and the breakdown of all remaining resistance. The survivors are sent to the gladiatorial pits in Angmar or the orc mines in Gundabad, while the former Hillman lord is publicly and ceremonially executed in Carn Dûm. This long campaign ties up much of Angmar’s resources though, buying Arthedain additional time for its continued struggle against Angmar (especially as Arthedain covertly lends support to the rebels). The remaining men are those “Hillmen” of the river valleys that supported Angmar and constitute the “evil people who fell under the shadow of Angmar” who built and maintained dark towers and forts in former Rhudaur as told in *The Lord of the Rings*.



Romanesque ruins © by Wouter Florusse, used with permission



THE TOLKIEN EMAIL LIST

The eldest of the lists

This Tolkien discussion group has existed since the First Age before the world was made round....

Join and contribute

Our list has existed since the early 1990s with many members who have been here for years beyond count....

Now we have moved to Google and have become a private Google Group.

To request to subscribe to this group, please visit the following page:

http://groups.google.com/group/tolkien_list/subscribe

or contact rossiele@yahoo.com

(Elena Rossi, 1/2 Listowner)



THE BLACK ARROW

By David Cole
(agnot1@hotmail.com)

© 2018

In memory of Ted

ADVENTURE

This adventure was written as a way for the Companions to bridge the time between the Marsh-bell and the first adventure in *Tales from Wilderland*. My players were still fairly new to the system and their characters were inexperienced. I wanted to introduce them to some of Dale's more noteworthy personalities while also testing the limits of their endurance and provide them with some difficult challenges. It also served to set up several story arcs that are still playing out in our current campaign.

It is my hope that this adventure provides the same fun and enjoyment with your group that it did mine. At the very least, maybe it will give you inspiration for an entirely different adventure of your own.

As a final note, I would like to dedicate this adventure to my dear friend Ted, who passed away in July from complications brought on by colon cancer. He was an avid role-player who delighted in sitting around a table and enjoying the company of good friends over a great game. At 49, he died far too young and our games will never be quite the same without him there. In his final days, Ted urged everyone to get screened for colon cancer. His was not caught in time, but yours could be.

"Black Arrow! I have saved you to the last. You have never failed me and always I have recovered you. I had you from my father and he from of old. If ever you came from the forges of the true king under the Mountain, go now and speed well!"

— *The Hobbit.*
Fire and Water

- **When:** Any time; it is particularly suited to take place in the Fall of 2946, just prior to the Gathering of the Five Armies and the first Council of the North.
- **Where:** Esgaroth, Dale, the Waste to the borders of the Withered Heath, and the Northern Dalelands.
- **What:** Bard, King of Dale, has long desired the return of his valued family heirloom, the Black Arrow. With the approach of the first anniversary of the Gathering of the Five Armies and new rumors of the arrow's whereabouts, his desire for its return has prompted him to action.
- **Why:** There are many reasons to assist Bard in seeking out the Black Arrow: The prestige gained from its discovery (plus the riches that Bard promises for its return) should stir any adventurer to action. Second, earning the favour of Bard is no small task. Third, any Barding from Dale would jump at the opportunity to add his name to those within the legend of Smaug's slaying. Finally, this adventure should bring them to a Year's End Fellowship Phase just in time for the Council of the North; a perfect ending for adventurers who may have some new-found standing among the court in Dale.
- **Who:** Not only do the adventurers have an opportunity to impress Bard, they will meet the shade of Lake-town's old Master, battle the terrible Serpent, and pass over the blighted bones of the once-terrible Smaug.

ADVENTURING PHASE

The company is called to Dale at the request of Bard to seek out his most-prized family heirloom, the Black Arrow that sent Smaug to his ruin and was subsequently lost in the destruction of old Lake-town. On the road to its recovery, they will learn from a former accomplice that the old Master of Esgaroth recovered the arrow, they will follow in his footsteps, encounter his shade atop a *Chill and Windswept Grave* deep in the Waste, recover the arrow from the Serpent who recently stole it, and be betrayed by those whose schemes laid the foundation for the arrow's recovery. In the end, their choices will have a profound effect on the lives of many.

Many of the NPC's and locations for this adventure are taken from *Erebor, The Lonely Mountain*. A copy of it is strongly recommended to make full use of this adventure.

PART ONE - Highly Regarded, Indeed

If the company completed *The Marsh-bell*, then tale of their deed has spread throughout Lake-town and Dale, eventually reaching the ears of Bard. Holgeir, a pickpocket who was apprehended in the Market Square, claims to know the resting place of Lake-town's old Master and has even suggested that he possessed the Black Arrow upon his death. Having deemed it lost forever, Bard summons the adventurers and bids them to find it for him.

PART TWO - FORKED TONGUES AND FORKED BEARDS

The company speaks with Holgeir, the pickpocket who claims to know the whereabouts of the Black Arrow. He shares with them the tale of his time in the company of the old Master, as well as the path the old Master took into the Waste. Trugdel, an old Dwarven smith that met the old Master shortly before he departed into the Waste, also knows a thing or two... if they can get an appointment.

PART THREE - Digging Through the Ashes

The company endures a difficult journey deep into the Waste to find the location where the old Master and his company parted ways. Once found, they hope to track the old Master to his final resting place. Things take an unexpected turn when they locate both his grave and his sorrowful shade only to discover that the Black Arrow and Lake-town's missing treasure has been stolen by the Serpent.

PART FOUR - THE SERPENT'S PRIZE

The company is forced to contend with the Serpent, a devious orc chieftain who has taken possession of the Black Arrow. They will have to use all of their strength and cunning to outwit the orcs and reclaim the Black Arrow for Bard.

PART FIVE - FRIENDS AND FOLLIES

When at last the worst seems behind them, the company is betrayed and learns that they have been pawns at the hands of Hakon, a political schemer bent on increasing his status in the court of Dale by any means. Hakon seeks to steal the Black Arrow from the company and use it as leverage against Bard. If their words fail to sway Hakon from his dark path, then steel must suffice.

PART SIX - THE BELL'S TOLL

The company returns, exhausted and hardened from their travels, to Dale where they are to deliver the Black Arrow. Hakon's plans are revealed and a troubled Bard, along with the companions, must decide Hakon's fate and the fate of his accomplices. The curse on the Black Arrow will weigh heavily on Bard's heart and his reaction to its unveiling could have dire consequences for all involved.

Epilogue - Desolation's End

If Bard resists the temptation of the Black Arrow, the company will be given one final task, to return the Black Arrow to its resting place among the rotting remains of Smaug.

A Word on the Old Master's Name

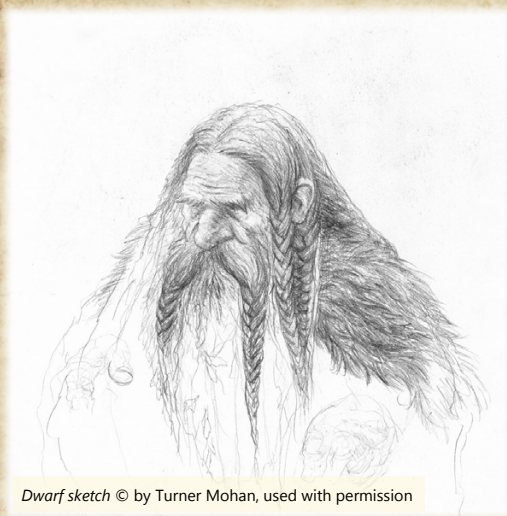
The Hobbit makes no mention of the old Master's name. Throughout this adventure, he is simply referred to as "the old Master". If you wish to give him a name or explain why no one speaks his name there are a couple of options. First, no one will speak his name due to his treachery. He is cursed and any mention of him is anathema to the settlers surrounding the Long-lake and Dale. Second, you could simply choose a suitable Northman name.

- PART ONE -

Highly Regarded, Indeed

One morning, while the companions are enjoying their stay in Lake-town, Hraf the raven brings them news that Gloin wishes to see them immediately. The dwarf has been entrusted by Bard to deliver a letter of great importance. It is a summons for the company to meet with Bard at his Royal Palace in Dale. There, they are given a task of great personal importance to him.

Encountering Gloin



If the company completed *The Marsh-bell* and are on friendly terms with Gloin, he will summon them early one morning when the first cool winds of autumn begin to blow across the Long-lake. Hraf son of Hrabín, a Raven of the Mountain, will find them wherever they may be

throughout the town and bid them to come at once to Gloin's manor near the Master's house. Once the company arrives at his home, Gloin will greet them warmly and present them with a letter, which is tied with shimmering silver string and bears the symbol of the King of Dale.

"It seems the tale of your rescue of my brethren from the Long Marshes has reached many important ears, indeed. And justly so! See here, a letter from Bard! It arrived first thing this morning and knowing you would want to see it immediately, I wasted no time sending Hraf to fetch you."

There is no reason to play this as a social encounter if the company successfully completed *The Marsh-bell* and are on good terms with Gloin. He considers them friends and will treat them as such unless their subsequent behavior gives him cause to change his opinion.

If the players did not play through *The Marsh-bell*, then some adjustment will need to be made to explain how the players came to Bard's attention. If this is the case, treat this as their first meeting with Gloin and set Tolerance as usual. Gloin favors Valor over Wisdom. He will refuse to deal directly with an Elf and his Tolerance should be decreased by one if there are any Elves in the party, to reflect his prejudice. However, he is delivering a letter at Bard's request, so his Tolerance rating receives a +1 adjustment. If the encounter plays out favorably, he will deliver the letter and provide them with assistance getting to Dale. If the companions fail the encounter, he will give them the letter and dismiss them with a grumble, providing no further assistance.

Gloin does not know the content of the letter, but will be happy to discuss it with the company should they seek his counsel. After reading it, he will offer them wise words and encourage them to respond promptly. This is what the letter says:

*"By the order of King Bard,
You are hereby summoned to attend court with all haste to discuss a matter of great importance."*

If the company are friends of Gloin, then he will arrange passage for them on his personal boat. His son Gimli has been in town for the last

several weeks and is preparing to leave for Erebor later that afternoon. If the companions wish, they may travel with Gimli as far as Dale. If they accept his offer, then no Fatigue tests will be necessary as the Lake-men take them north to Dale where they will arrive just as evening approaches.

Gimli

In the year 2946, Gimli is 67 years old. He spends much of his time helping his father, Gloin, with his duties in Lake-town when not in Erebor. He has no particular interest in the company other than completing his duty as assigned by his father.

Attribute Level	
4	
Specialties	
Orc-lore, Mountaineer	
Distinctive Features	
Bold, Forthright	
Relevant Skills	
Axe ♦♦♦	Travel ♦♦
Insight ♦♦	

ARRIVING in Dale

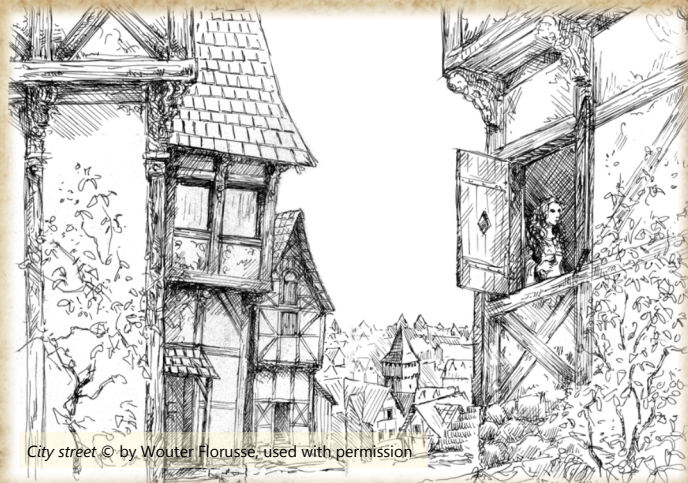
As the company sails up the river towards Dale, they will hear the tolling of the bells signaling the end of the day and the formal closing of the Market. Their boat will dock along the southeastern quays where Gimli will argue with the dock wardens over paying the docking tax. Hearing the commotion, Lodin, the Reeve of the Quays (*Erebor*, pg. 39), intervenes to settle the matter.

Lodin will insist that the companions pay the tax unless they present him with their letter from the King. Upon seeing the letter, he will apologize and offer to take the company to the Royal Palace gates. Lodin will escort them uninterrupted through the city until they reach the palace gates where he will announce them before taking his leave.

If this is the companions' first time in Dale, feel free to use the Reeve as a tour guide for them as they head west through Dale along the

canal before crossing Red Row and turning right onto the River Road, which enters the Market from the south. Points of interest he may mention would include the Market Square, the Missing Scale, Anvil Way, and the Royal Palace. Dale is a city reborn that is just beginning to reclaim the glory of its past. Be sure to describe how the city is in constant motion with new construction occurring daily, merchants and adventurers of all stripes walking the streets, and the sounds of people and trade filling the air. There is a great description of life in the city of Dale in *Erebor*, pg. 38.

Encourage the companions to explore the city if they choose. They may feel that disturbing the king at such a late hour would be impolite and decide to wait until morning. If so, the Missing Scale (*Erebor*, pg. 43) would be a great atmospheric place to spend an evening. Alternatively, they may walk the streets and visit some of the shops that keep open at late hours. Either way, do not discourage them from exploring a bit. There is no rush, and Dale has many wonders to show them¹.



City street © by Wouter Florusse, used with permission

Once the company decides it is time to approach the Royal Palace, they will be immediately escorted inside upon presenting the letter. There, they will be provided with refreshments while they wait until called upon to speak with Bard.

¹ A full description of Dale can be found in *Erebor*, pgs. 36-52

Encountering Bard

King Bard waits for them inside his throne room. The palace is a wonder of Dwarven construction. The main hall is made of dark polished stone and massive marble pillars stretch to a high vaulted ceiling. Among the upper reaches are narrow windows that allow light to illuminate the room during the day; while, at night, lanterns that hang from the ceiling on thick chains, light the room. Bard's throne, a gift from the Elvenking, sits on a raised dais at the end of the hall. It is made of intricately carved wood that depicts the story of the Black Arrow.

Set Tolerance

Bard is a grim, but fair king, who favors Valor over Wisdom¹. He does not harbor any prejudice against Wilderland's various cultures; however, he prefers speaking directly with a Barding, thus adding +1 to his Tolerance rating. If the company successfully completed *The Marsh-bell*, then Gloin has spoken very highly of them, which will grant them an additional +1 Tolerance. Finally, the company will earn an additional +1 Tolerance due to Bard's desire for the return of his family's heirloom.

Introductions

The companions may introduce themselves separately or elect a spokesperson; following Gloin's tale of their adventures in the Long Marshes however, Bard would actually prefer to hear their introductions individually.

When the company is announced, Bard will call for the clearing of the courtiers, leaving only a handful of guards and his most trusted advisors.

Bard stands up from his throne. He is tall and hale for a man his age with black hair just beginning to show grey, brought forth his crown's weight. His stern gaze falls on the company as he begins to speak...

"The Black Arrow! It is a legacy that my family, the line of Girion, bore for generations only to be lost at the moment of our greatest triumph. Always had I recovered it until that day, it sent Smaug to his ruin. But new hope for its recovery

¹ His stats can be found in *Erebor*, pg. 48

beacons to me as word has come that it may not be lost after all. At the passing of the new moon, a pickpocket was caught in the Market Square. A man haggard and stooped by regret, he would beg for leniency by offering up a tale of my family's heirloom, which he claims may be found with the remains of the old Master of Lake-town. His tale seems fanciful, but it has stirred a longing within me to see the Black Arrow returned."

"My duties here prevent me from seeking the arrow myself. Are you the ones who can do it?"

What Bard Knows

Holgeir, the pickpocket, has told Bard that he was part of the old Master's company when they fled with Lake-town's treasure. He claims that the old Master had the Black Arrow with him when they abandoned him in the Waste and that he can draw a map back to the place where they parted ways. He is holding out hope that he can buy his freedom in exchange for more information. Bard will insist that the company speak with the pickpocket; but, he will not allow any harm to come to the prisoner while in custody.

What Bard Does Not Know

Bard does not know how the Black Arrow came into the old Master's possession. Also, he does not know the full tale of the old Master's journey (as related in Part Two).

The Old Master's Tale

Everyone has heard some variation of the tale of the old Master's betrayal. Sometime after the Battle of Five Armies, the old Master fled north with Lake-town's share of Erebor's reclaimed treasure that was to be used to rebuild the town. He died in the Waste, betrayed by his accomplices, his treasure stolen.

As part of this adventure, the company will slowly uncover all details of the old Master's betrayal, the events that led to his death, and his shade's desire for absolution. If a member of the company so chooses, he may undertake Completing the Old Master's Tale during his Fellowship Phase and give a full account of the old Master's tale, resolving the narrative as he sees fit.

Useful Skills

Insight: A Success reveals that, despite his taciturn demeanor, Bard is truly delighted at the possibility of the Black Arrow's recovery. A Great Success reveals that the arrow is of supreme importance to him. An Extraordinary Success reveals that he covets the arrow greatly, perhaps too much.

Lore: Bard is usually grim and does not have time for individual introductions; but this is a matter of personal importance to him and he is happy to meet those who helped Gloin find his missing brother. Also, an astute player will notice that Bard's throne depicts the story of Smaug's attack on Lake-town and his death by the Black Arrow.

Courtesy: Bard expects a well-spoken and forthright introduction.

Riddle: Bard does not suffer fools. If a companion fails a *Riddle* roll against him, count it as two failures instead.

Persuade: The best means to convince him that the company is up to the task. The Target Number may be reduced if they had any Great Successes or better on their *Courtesy* or *Song* tests.

Song: At some point in the conversation, Bard will want to hear of their adventures from *The Marsh-bell*. He has heard the tale from Gloin more than once already, but he wishes to hear it directly from the company. This is also a good way to impress him and boost the final encounter resolution.

If the company botches the encounter with Bard, they can still pursue the quest in the hopes of earning back his favor.

If the company succeeds in their encounter with Bard, he will lend them aid based on the measure of their success.

1-4 **Success:** Bard will task them with finding the Black Arrow and provide them with a writ that they can use to procure basic necessities for the trip and to provide for lodging at a place of their choosing.

5-6 **Great Success:** Same as with a Success, but Bard will also invite them to stay for dinner to share more tales of their adventures.

7+ **Extraordinary Success:** Same as a Great Success and Bard will provide the players with lodging at the Royal Palace.

Bard will promise to reward the players "handsomely" for their efforts, but he will not be drawn in to haggling over money.

A Word on Horses

It has been five years since the fall of Smaug and though the communities have recovered, not everything is readily available. Before Smaug's demise, ponies were frequently used to transport goods. Horses however, were rarely, if ever, owned. Since his defeat and the reopening of trade with the south, more citizens own and use horses in Dale, but they are still scarce and highly prized. Finding any for sale in Dale will be nearly impossible and no one is likely to sell a horse to a companion if they learn of their intent to take it into the Waste.

After the company has concluded their encounter with Bard, they have some time to decide on their next course of action. Now would be a good time to explore the city or perhaps search for additional clues. Move on to Part Two when they are ready to speak with Holgeir, the pickpocket.



Shadowfax © by Angels T.I.,
used with permission

oEhEr pñrds ãrð hãrds oEhEr pñrds ãrð hãrds oEhEr pñrds ãrð hãrds oEhEr pñrds ãrð hãrds

- PART TWO -

FORKED TONGUES AND FORKED BEARDS

In Part Two the company will have an opportunity to speak with Holgeir, the pick-pocket who claims that the Black Arrow was taken by the old Master before he fled with Lake-town's treasure years ago. By the end of Part Two the company should know another piece of the old Master's tale and the route he took towards the Grey Mountains beyond the Waste. They may also speak with Trugdel, an old Dwarven smith, who met with the old Master shortly before Lake-town's treasure was stolen.

Encounter with Holgeir, the Pickpocket

Holgeir is being held in the city jail, attached to the city watch headquarters. The watch already expects the company and they are allowed to see him without any delay.

Holgeir is a man in his mid-thirties whose hair has already thinned and turned grey. He is gaunt and drawn, clearly a man living a beggar's existence. Because he knows why the company wants to see him, he will give them a welcoming yellow smile as they enter his cell. He will remain cordial at all times because he knows that his future relies in part on their goodwill. However, this does not mean that he is forthcoming with all the details. He will attempt to withhold any information that makes him look complicit in any crime.

Set Tolerance

Holgeir values Wisdom over Valour. His Tolerance is increased by one if there are any Bardings or Lake-men in the party but decreases by one if there any Dwarves are present. He still blames the Dwarves for bringing Smaug's wrath upon Lake-town, which subsequently deprived him of his place of prestige among the old Master's hooligans. Finally, his Tolerance is increased by two because he knows he must deliver all the information the company requires to find the old Master in order to fulfill his part in Hakon's plan (see *Hakon's Scheme* in Part Five).

INTRODUCTIONS

Holgeir would prefer for the company to select a spokesperson, as that would limit the amount of input and questioning from the other company members.

Once the company opens a dialogue with Holgeir, he will tell them the following tale with as much embellishment and hyperbole as he can muster. He is desperately trying to capture their interest as he relates a part of the old Master's fate that few have ever heard.

HOLGEIR'S STORY

"Listen now as I tell you a tale few know. Such was the Master's greed that even his theft of Lake-town's treasure could not slate his lust for riches. The old Master rowed out to where Smaug's body lay rotting among Lake-town's ruins and had us pluck the precious stones right from his belly. It was there that he saw the Black Arrow lodged in ol' Smaug's chest where the flesh had sloughed away. With a great yank, he pulled it free and I swear his eyes gleamed as if they'd been lit by the very fires of Smaug's breath."

"From there we crossed to the east bank and began to push for Grimarr's Hall on the eastern edge of our lands. Or so he had told us. Without warning he turned north and took us into the Waste. Everyone protested, but he would not be swayed from his course, nor would he tell us where we were headed. It was not long before many of us began to grumble. Out in the Waste the talk among the men turned to going home, or maybe even stealing the Black Arrow and using it as a means to stay Bard's wrath at our return. Some plotted to assassinate the old Master. An attempt was made, but they botched it by only wounding him. A scuffle turned into a skirmish and as one turned against the other many were killed or wounded. After that, we turned our backs on the Master and headed south toward the Marches. For his part, the Master turned northwest towards the mountains. He was clearly not in his right mind, for he clutched the arrow close and never let it leave his sight."

Holgeir will try to leverage whatever information he has to manipulate the companions into advocating his release, or at the very least his leniency. If his efforts seem to be failing, he

will sweeten the pot by tempting the players with the location of his part of the stolen treasure that he hid before entering the Waste. The treasure is buried just inside the Upper Marches, outside the Waste and along the route they originally took with the old Master. It amounts to four Treasure points and if the players accept his bribe, consider it a Misdeed worth three Shadow points.



HOLGEIR, THE PICKPOCKET

Holgeir is a man whose features are aged well beyond his true years. Although he is in his mid-thirties, he seems almost elderly. Long wisps of thinning hair hang about his shoulders. His teeth have yellowed and his tattered clothes hang loosely as if he was once very fit, but hard times have stripped him of all his vigour.

Attribute Level	
2	
Specialties	
Burglary, Story-telling	
Distinctive Features	
Secretive, Clever	
Relevant Skills	
Riddle ♦♦♦	Courtesy ♦♦
Insight ♦♦	

WHAT HOLGEIR KNOWS

Holgeir can detail the exact route the old Master and his company took out of the old refugee camp on the west bank of the Long Lake (see Journey Summaries for details of the travel to A Chill and Windswept Grave). He can give a full account of what happened during the skirmish that ultimately led to them abandoning the old Master before they fled back south. He also knows that the old Master was last seen heading northwest towards the gap in the Grey Mountains. Holgeir is also aware that the old Master went to visit Trugdel, an old Dwarven smith who had just returned from the Iron Hills in the weeks prior to their departure. However, he does not know what they spoke about.

If questioned about the fighting among the crew, Holgeir will state that they had gotten along fine until the old Master took possession of the Black Arrow. From that point onward, things became tense and many began scheming to steal it.

WHAT HOLGEIR DOES NOT KNOW

Holgeir does not know what the old Master's plan for Lake-town's treasure was or why he coveted the arrow so much. He also does not know what the old Master's destination beyond the Waste was, nor what became of him ultimately.

Useful Skills

Lore/Riddle: On a Success, the companion recognizes Holgeir as a former henchman of the old Master. A Great Success reveals that he has fallen on hard times since his return to Dale. An Extraordinary success reveals that recent rumors suggest he may have come into a little money, as he has been seen around town with more coin than a beggar should possess (the extra money comes from being on Hakon's payroll, but Holgeir will claim it is from his hidden portion of Lake-town's treasure).

Insight: On a Success, the player knows that Holgeir is withholding information about the attack on the old Master. A Great Success reveals that he was part of the plot to kill the old Master. An Extraordinary success reveals that he was the would-be assassin and that he is a liar who cannot be trusted!

Awe: If the players grow frustrated with Holgeir's evasiveness while haggling for his release, they may use *Awe* to try and press him into revealing more information.

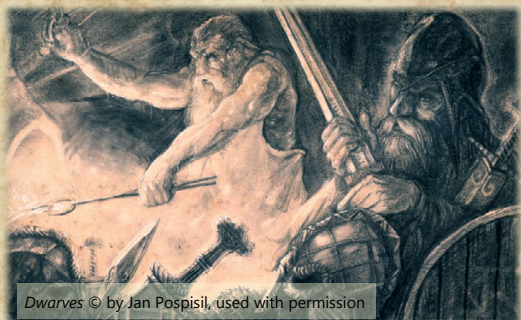
Persuade: May be used to convince Holgeir to divulge additional details or to reveal details that he may not realize are relevant, such as the old Master's visit with Trugdel.

Riddle: May be used to ascertain the full truth from Holgeir's many half-truths and it may be used to discern how uncomfortable Holgeir was around the arrow or that he is clearly not revealing all that he knows. An Extraordinary result reveals that Holgeir is withholding something important, but he will not divulge it (see Loremaster's Note).

Hakon's Schemes

Holgeir is an employee of Hakon (Erebor, pg.58) and is being used to set in motion a series of certain events. Hakon hopes they will lead to his return as a prominent power-player in Dale's political scene. At Hakon's direction, Holgeir allowed himself to be caught and arrested, so that he could share his tale (which is true) to dupe both Bard and the company into become unwitting pawns in Hakon's machinations. More details on Hakon's scheme are presented in Part Five. Holgeir will only reveal his connection to Hakon under severe physical torture or threat of death. As Hakon knows, both things Bard has strictly forbidden the company from using.

ENCOUNTER WITH TRUGDEL, DWARVEN-SMITH (OPTIONAL)



Dwarves © by Jan Pospisil, used with permission

The encounter with Trugdel is optional since Holgeir will have provided the company with all the information they need to track the old Master's route. However, they may wish to have a deeper understanding of his motivations, something which Trugdel can provide.

Trugdel owns a shop called *The Crooked Nail* that can be found along the Anvil Way. If the company seeks him out, they will first have to get past his assistant Nogo, who schedules all the smith's appointments. Trugdel is a highly regarded smith and does not have the time or patience to meet with just anyone. If the players wish to schedule an appointment, they will have to wait nine days before they get to see Trugdel. Alternatively, they may try to facilitate an earlier meeting by convincing Nogo of the importance of their task.

It will take four Successes in a row of *Persuade* or *Awe* tests to convince Nogo to allow the companions to see Trugdel right away. If they fail twice during their attempts, he will schedule their appointment as usual and turn them away. As usual, a Great Success counts double and an Extraordinary Success counts tripple.

Once they get in to see Trugdel, he will meet with them in the back of his shop in a small office he reserves for discussing commissions with wealthy clients. Trugdel is an old dwarf with impressive biceps and an even more impressive beard. His beard is forked from his chin to his toes with the tips dyed a bright blue. Lustrous silver and gold (and is that mithril?) ornaments hang throughout his beard, making a gentle tinkling sound whenever he talks. He is short on time and a blunt speaker, but will listen to the company's tale and answer any questions he can.

WHAT TRUGDEL KNOWS

The old Master came and asked Trugdel about the history and whereabouts of the old dwarven outpost of Zirakinbar¹ to the north in the Grey Mountains on the edge of the Withered Heath. Trugdel gave what lore he had concerning the old dwarven outpost to the old Master and explained to him where it was located; however, he warned him that it was likely occupied by orcs or worse since it has been abandoned for many years. He took the old Master at his word that his inquiries were nothing more than academic, but he suspected that is where the old Master met his untimely end ever since.

¹ For more information on Zirakinbar, read *The Watch on the Heath* in *Tales from Wilderland*. Clearly, adjustments must be made if the players complete this adventure and recover the old Master's portion of Lake-town's stolen treasure.

What Trugdel Does Not Know

He does not know why the old Master was asking for the location of Zirakinbar. As far as he knows, it was for purely academic reasons. He also had no part in the old Master's plan to steal Lake-town's gold.

The company has some time to prepare for their journey into the Waste. Give them the opportunity to make their preparations and to procure anything they need - within reason - using the writ that Bard gave them. Once they have made their preparations and depart for the Waste move on to Part Three.

The Old Master's Tale Retold-Part One: What We Thought We Knew

Everyone knows the tale of the old Master stealing Lake-town's gold and his disappearance into the Waste, but why was the old Master tempted to go to Zirakinbar? Agents of the Gibbet King¹ visited the old Master when his jealousy and spite for Bard was at its height. They convinced him that it was their master's wish to see him rule over both Dale and Lake-town one day. All he had to do to prove his loyalty was to bring Lake-town's treasure to Zirakinbar. The old Master allowed his wounded pride to steer him down a doomed road without return. He stole Lake-town's treasure and fled south to old Lake-town where he plundered what jewels he could from Smaug's remains. It was here that he also discovered the Black Arrow, still lodged deep in Smaug's breast. Knowing its importance to Bard, he considered it one last spite to his enemy to pluck it from Smaug's chest and add it to his ill-gotten gains. With the treasure and arrow in hand he fled across the Waste, accompanied by a company of his most loyal followers.

In the Waste, he was betrayed and severely wounded when his followers turned on him, their loyalty only as strong as their supply of provisions. They stole the remaining food and left the old Master to die in the Waste with his treasure. Intent on making it to Zirakinbar, the old Master took his last remaining loyal guard and headed north toward the pass leading through the Grey Mountains. Fearing betrayal by the Gibbet King's agents, he hid a portion of Lake-town's treasure at the base of the Grey Mountains before the meeting at Zirakinbar. What was discussed there, no living person knows; what is known is that the old Master traded the remaining treasure he stole from Lake-town to secure his glorious future-return as Dale's king. The agents of the Gibbet King hid the stolen treasure deep in the tower's vaults and the old Master left Zirakinbar to return south to bide his time until the Gibbet King's schemes came to fruition. On the way south the Curse of the Black Arrow finally got so strong that he was deserted by his last follower. The zeal of his triumph quickly faded to despair when he lost his provisions and his wound began to trouble him more. Finally he died in the Waste from hunger while attempting to recover his hidden portion of the treasure, the Black Arrow still clutched tightly in his hand. Later on his last servant, who deserted him previously, re-discovered his loyalty and searched for his master. However, he could only pay him one last service and buried him where he died.

¹ For more information on Zirakinbar and what the Gibbet King intends to use the treasure for, read *The Watch on the Heath* in *Tales from Wilderland*. Clearly, adjustments must be made if the players complete this adventure and recover the old Master's portion of Lake-town's stolen treasure.



Swamp's End (cropped) © by Ari Suonpää, used with permission

- PART THREE - DIGGING THROUGH THE ASHES

During Part Three, the company will follow the path the old Master took as he fled with Lake-town's treasure. They will travel east through the Upper Marches, then turn north into the Waste to search for the site of the *Skirmish among the Ashes*. From there, they will track the old Master northwest until they encounter his shade at *A Chill and Windswept Grave*. Finally, they will learn of his fate and that of the Black Arrow.

The Upper Marches¹

Travel through the Upper Marches is relatively easy. Since Dale's re-founding, many farmers have settled here and the landscape has become dotted with their fields and homesteads. This area was never desolated by Smaug and so has remained a rough, but fertile and verdant country for the past two hundred years. With Dale's rise, it is also seeing a steady increase of settlers. However, the population is still relatively sparse and the company can easily avoid any settlements if they choose to. As they approach the Waste foul winds blowing ash will sting their eyes and corrupt the air. No farmers have settled close to the edge of the Waste.

HOLGEIR'S TREASURE

Holgeir's treasure is also buried here near a large pile of stones just south of where the Upper Marches touch the Waste. Since several years have passed since he buried it here, the company has no chance of finding it without Holgeir's guidance. Four points worth of treasure are buried here.

Have the players make their first Travel test (TN 16) before entering the Waste.

¹ More information on the Upper Marches can be found in *Erebor*, pg. 64

The Waste²

Slowly the green grasses and shrubs of the Upper Marches give way to parched, stony soil and dead vegetation. Abruptly, the Waste is upon them and the company is looking across a desolate wasteland comprised of ash and sand whose horizon is dotted with piles of sharp, misshapen stones. Water can only be found in scarce pools, most of which are just barely safe to drink or poisonous. It is a miserable place where ash storms, lack of adequate shelter, and the taint of Smaug's Desolation make journeys an arduous affair for even the hardest of adventurers. The Waste is considered a Blighted Shadowland and players are required to make a Corruption Test (TN 14) every day they spend there to avoid gaining a Shadow point.

Tracking the Old Master

The route that Holgeir has provided to the company is as accurate as he can recall, but the Waste provides little in the way of landmarks that a Guide can follow. A Scout or Guide will need a series of six Successes on an *Explore* test to locate where the *Skirmish among the Ashes* took place. Each Guide or Scout may make two checks per day.

ENCOUNTER: SKRATH'S PACK

Unbeknownst to the company, a pack of wolves led by the Warg Skrath, has been shadowing them since they entered the Waste. Skrath and his pack are survivors of the Battle of Five Armies who fled east into the Waste to avoid the Great Eagles' wrath. Here they have lead a meager existence, killing what little prey can be found. Recently, with more settlers moving into the Upper Marches, they have grown bolder and have begun to raid the farmer's herds of sheep and cattle that stray too close to the edge of the Waste. Skrath caught the company's scent as they entered the Waste and his pack has been following them ever since, looking for an opportunity to attack.

² More information on the Waste, as well as Hazard suggestions, can be found in *Erebor*, pg. 56 and *Tales from Wilderland*, pg. 140.

Look-out men within the company may detect the pack with a series of four Successes on an *Awareness* check (TN 14). If the pack is not detected, it will try to surprise the players at night once they find the *Skirmish among the Ashes* or if the players have a particularly unfortunate Hazard episode while journeying. If the company does detect their followers, they will have to decide how best to deal with them.

Both Skrath and his wolves are not at full strength due to the harsh conditions of living in the Waste. Apart from the Skrath there are two starving wolves for each company member.

SKRATH - Wolf Leader

Attribute Level				
4				
Endurance	Hate			
15	2			
Darry	Armour			
5	3D			
Skills				
Personality ♦♦	Survival ♦♦♦♦			
Movement ♦♦♦♦	Custom ♦			
Perception ♦♦	Vocation ♦			
Weapon Skills				
Bite ♦♦♦♦				
Rend ♦♦				
Special Abilities				
Fear of Fire, Savage Assault, Strike Fear				
Weapons				
Name	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Bite	Attr. Lvl	10	14	Pierce
Rend	Attr. Lvl	👁️	14	
Special				
Pierce: If a Piercing attack hits, it automatically causes a Wound				



Celtic Storms © by John Emanuel Shannon, used with permission

Starving Wolf

Attribute Level				
2				
Endurance	Hate			
8	1			
Darry	Armour			
3	2D			
Skills				
Personality ♦	Survival ♦♦			
Movement ♦♦♦	Custom ♦			
Perception ♦♦	Vocation ♦			
Weapon Skills				
Bite ♦♦				
Special Abilities				
Fear of Fire, Great Leap, Seize Victim				
Weapons				
Name	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Bite	Attr. Lvl	10	14	Pierce
Special				
Pierce: If a Piercing attack hits, it automatically causes a Wound				

Have the players make their second *Travel* test (TN 18) once they arrive at the *Skirmish among the Ashes*.

Skirmish among the Ashes

As the company approaches the location where the old Master and his accomplices parted ways, there is little left to see. Although it is still apparent that something occurred here several years ago, the harsh conditions of the Waste have taken their toll on any remains. A rough ring of misshapen and melted rocks marks the spot where the skirmish began. Remnants of canvas tents, rusted weapons, and the dismembered skeletal remains of a few humans lie partially buried in the ash.

This site has little to offer except to serve as a point-of-reference for where the old Master travelled to next. However, some good skill test results may yield valuable information that could help complete the tale of old Master.

Useful Skills

Search: A thorough search of the area will reveal a few details. On a Success, the companion will uncover the remains of three human

skeletons whose bones are spread out across the camp. A Great Success reveals that the people died of obvious combat-related injuries, broken bones, hacked limbs, etc... An Extraordinary Success reveals that the bones also show the hallmarks of being gnawed on by wild animals, a sign of wolves in the area.

Hunting: A Success reveals that animals have chewed on the bones. A Great Success reveals that it was wolves that chewed on the bones. An Extraordinary Success reveals that at least one of the victims was alive when they were devoured. This roll may also be used to help alert the company to Skrath's presence, if he has not already attacked.

Lore/Explore/Hunting: Using the information provided by Holgeir, a Success allows the player to discern the most likely path that the old Master took towards the gap in the Grey Mountains to the northwest.

Battle: A Success discerns that the old Master was clearly outmatched, but somehow managed to escape alive. A Great or Extraordinary Success discerns the full details of what happened in the skirmish. Approximately ten men attacked the old Master and his guard after the initial assassination attempt failed. Three men were slain before the accomplices ceased their attack and fled with all of the supply-laden ponies.

Once the company turns northwest, they will have to succeed on a series of *Explore/Hunting* tests to stay on the correct path. They will need six Successes to locate the *Chill of Windswept Grave* of the old Master. Reveal one of the following clues after every two Successes.

- The skeletal remains of a pony jut from the ash. Its rotted harness and empty saddlebags lie beside it.
- Periodically, the company catches a glimpse of a gold coin or precious gemstone peeking out from under the ash. These fell out of the old Master's bags as his journey became more desperate.
- In the distance, melding with the sound of the gales that perpetually blow over the ashen landscape, a mournful howling can be heard. Or is it just the wind?

Once the company has found the *Chill and Windswept Grave*, have them roll their third *Travel* test (TN 18) for the journey.

Optional Encounter: Erna's Aid

If the toll of the Waste on the company is becoming too great, they may have a fortuitous encounter with Erna (*Erebor*, pg. 58). She has been living in the Waste for many years hunting



the remaining Cold Drakes that live there as revenge for her family's death during Smaug's attack on Esgaroth. Erna is a fair woman with blonde hair, whose disposition is hard and unflinching. On her back, she carries the savage looking great spear that she uses to hunt the Cold Drakes that still make their home in the hills beneath the Grey Mountains. She will guide the company to a haven among the craggy ravines where they can spend the night and recuperate Endurance equal to their Heart rating. Her assistance comes at no cost, but she will leave them in the morning, travelling northeast to resume her hunt.

A Chill and Windswept Grave

As the company approaches the final resting place of the old Master, a fierce wind blows out of the Grey Mountains, as if trying to push them away. As they step into the ring of stones that marks his grave, the winds will stop leaving only the sorrowful moans of the old Master's shade to break the silence.

The old Master's grave lies next to one of the few pools of drinkable water that the Waste has to offer. It is enclosed by a perfect ring of stacked stones enclosing both the pool and his grave. Next to the pool is the stack of stones that once covered his body. The stones have been cast off the grave by orc looters from Rugash the Serpent's tribe (see Part Four) and a portion of the old Master's remains have been left uncovered. Standing over the remains is the shade of the old Master.

The old Master's shade appears as a wretched snapshot of what he looked like. He was once a noble Northman whose countenance has drawn thin and his gaunt expression reveals a desperate longing buried deep behind his hollow, pale eyes. The richly-made robes that once denoted him as a man-of-office are now filthy, threadbare and tattered. His robes and stringy hair now blow in an unseen wind that seems to be tearing at him. Above his right shoulder his clothes are rent from the assassination attempt and the wound in his neck still spills blood down the front of his robes.

He speaks in a distant, moaning voice that is full of fear, regret and desperation.

"Woooooooe, to the faith-breaker! Woe, to the thief! Woe, to he who betrayed his kin in their time of most urgent need! Seduced by greed, overtaken by jealousy, now I lie defiled in this inhospitable land. A bitter end for one who committed so bitter a deed. Though you owe me nothing, take pity. I beg thee to do this task for me, for I have no other hope but that which I place in you. Reclaim Esgaroth's gold and the Black Arrow from the Serpent that stole it from me, return them to their rightful owners and see my spirit freed from this wretched existence. To the west, in the mountain's shadow you will find the Serpent and all that I stole."

The Old Master's Tale Retold - Part Two: Absolution

The discovery of the old Master's wretched shade at his desecrated grave deep in the ruins of the Waste is enough to instill pity in even the hardest of men. His desperate plea for the company to free him from his miserable state is earnest and sincere. Without their efforts to recover Lake-town's lost treasure and the Black Arrow from the orcs who defiled his grave, his spirit is doomed to haunt the Waste for eternity. It is up to the company as to whether his spirit will ever be freed.

Any non-elven companion wishing to converse with the shade of the old Master must first pass a Fear test (TN 14) or be struck speechless with terror. When questioned, the old Master will only give vague responses that frequently refer to his poor choices and the consequences they have brought him. He will never speak directly of the orcs who defiled his grave, and vague hints to their leader, "the Serpent".

If asked about the Black Arrow, he will only say that "it only brought me ruin. The dragon's-sickness lies heavily upon it and I did not see before it was too late. Far too late..." A suitable Insight/Riddle test will reveal what some in the company may already suspect: the Black Arrow has become cursed. A companion with Shadowlore may also recognize the arrow as cursed based on the old Master's description of it.



Speedpainting 5 © by Wouter Florusse, used with permission

None of the treasure that was buried with him remains, except for the odd coin or tiny gem lost beneath the ash. Rugash has stolen all of it including the Black Arrow.

If asked about why he went to Zirakinbar¹, he only says that he was “*led there by folly of my own choosing. There is only death there. Go not!*”

RESTORING THE OLD MASTER'S GRAVE

If the company take time to repair the damage of the old Master's grave by the looting orcs, each of them may reduce their Shadow rating by one, as good deeds can make even the most inhospitable land seem less so briefly.

Move on to Part Four once the company is ready to turn west and track down the Serpent.

~ PART FOUR ~ THE SERPENT'S PRIZE

In Part Four, the company will track down the Serpent and recover the Black Arrow. Its curse has already taken hold and Rugash's jealousy over it is creating discord within his camp. If they are clever, the companions will be able to use this to their advantage. If not, then they must use all their combined skills to defeat Rugash and recover the Black Arrow along with Lake-town's stolen treasure.

TRACKING THE SERPENT

Rugash's camp is currently settled in a low valley underneath the shadow of the Grey Mountains, twenty-five miles east from where the western border of the Waste touches the Northern Dalelands. It is sixty miles over “hard” terrain from where the company left the shade of the old Master. At this point in the adventure it is highly possible that they are feeling the weight of having been in a “Shadow” land for so long. They may need to find a means other than direct conflict with Rugash's tribe to retrieve the arrow and Esgaroth's stolen treasure.

The company's Guide and Scouts will need six Successes on an *Explore/Hunting* tests to track and locate Rugash's encampment. Reveal one of the following clues after every two Successes to confirm they are on the right trail.

¹ For more on what the players may encounter at Zirakinbar, see *Tales from Wilderland* pg. 146. The company likely will not survive if they are foolish enough to travel there at this stage in their adventuring career.

- Large swaths of disturbed ground where sand and ash have been pushed into unnatural piles.
- Carcasses of devoured animals. Bones of wolves and orcs.
- At first glance, it appears that a heavy animal has drug itself through the ash in a snake-like pattern, perhaps a cold drake. A Great Success on a *Hunting* skill test reveals that there are orc tracks under the sand and ash that have been covered by dragging something heavy over them (Rugash has the tribe drag heavy sleds behind them to mask their tracks and give the appearance of a cold drake's passing to ward off potential enemies). The company can follow the drag marks straight to the valley that hides Rugash's camp.

Once the company locates Rugash's camp, let them make their fourth *Travel* test (TN 18).

SLAYING THE SERPENT



Rugash's camp is comprised of several animal hide tents surrounding a larger tent, atop which flies a crude banner adorned with the image of a serpent. There are approximately seventy orcs in the camp, of which fifty are fighting males. Feel free to use any combination of Orcs from Mount Gram to suit your company's size and composition. Their stats can be found in *The One Ring*, pgs. 239-240. Rugash's stats can be found in *Erebor*, pg. 58. The old Master's forty points of Treasure are in

Rugash's central tent and are protected by two Orc Guards at all times. The Black Arrow is always tucked into Rugash's belt, even when sleeping. He has taken to keeping it on him at all times, as its curse has thoroughly corrupted his already dark heart.

Once the company locates the camp, there are many possible approaches they may use to retrieve the Black Arrow. A few possible suggestions include:

- Attacking the camp;
- Sneaking in during the day and stealing the arrow;
- Luring the orcs out and picking off a few at a time;
- Creating discord in the camp in the hopes that they will tear each other apart; or
- Scaring the orcs into fleeing.

The Loremaster will have a great deal of leeway in how this part of the adventure is resolved, but Rugash is cunning for an orc and should be played as such.

The routines of the camp are presented here to set the scene for the company.

At Night: The camp is full of activity.

Scouts are sent on patrol and hunting parties are sent out in search of food. Guards are on high-alert and are stationed at all entry points into the camp. Rugash and his entourage are usually located at his tent or the camp's central fire.

During the Day: Most of the camp is asleep in their respective tents. A few bleary-eyed orcs stand watch in the shadows of the rocks as they shift with the sun's movement.

The Madness of Rugash

Should the company decide to scout the camp at night, they will see the following event unfold around the great campfire outside of Rugash's tent. One of Rugash's Orc Guards challenges him for leadership and attempts to take the Black Arrow by force. Rugash flies into a rage and with savage quickness slays him and any nearby orcs with his great spear. He then parades the orc's head around the camp atop the tip of the Black Arrow while screaming hysteri-



Orc soldier © by Steve Bellshaw, used with permission

cally at the rest of the tribe to stay away from his prize. Companions with *Orc-lore* realize that Rugash is acting irrational even by orc standards. Witnessing such a violent and chaotic event should further cement the danger that possessing the Black Arrow holds. This scene can also be used to diminish the strength of the orc force should players be significantly weakened by their journey so far.

The Black Arrow of Bard	
Type:	Arrow
Craftsmanship:	Dwarven (Erebor)
Banes:	Dragons
Qualities:	1. Sure Shot
	2. Keen
	3. Fell
Cursed:	
Thieving (Dragon-Sickness): After having sat in the breast of Smaug, the Black Arrow has taken on a strange variation of this curse wherein the possessor of the arrow covets it so much that he sees all others as rivals for its ownership and will go to any lengths to protect it from them.	

Possessing the Black Arrow

Upon seeing the Black Arrow, a player will need to pass a Corruption Test (TN 14) to resist gaining a Shadow point and being drawn to pick it up. Players may attempt to stop another player from picking it up by passing an Athletics test (TN=Target's Body +10). If a player

allows his bare flesh to touch the arrow, he will have to make a Corruption Test (TN 18) to avoid having its Curse take immediate effect on him. If the Curse does take effect on a company member, then treat it just as if he is undergoing a Bout of Madness for as long as he has possession of it. This should leave no doubt to the company that the Black Arrow has become cursed. Also, a player possessing Shadow-Lore may test to recognize the curse on the Black Arrow if he is near it, since the arrow causes uneasiness in many who stay close.

Once the company has possession of the Black Arrow, it is time for them to begin the long journey back to Dale. Fortunately, they are very close to the Northern Dalelands, which will make for a pleasant journey home once they exit the Waste. If they also recovered Laketown's stolen treasure they will be heavily laden with the additional forty points of Treasure. If the treasure is too burdensome for the company, they can always bury it and return for it later, such as Bilbo and the Dwarves did in the The Hobbit.



Aredhel © by Nolanos, used with permission

- PART FIVE - FRIEND'S AND FOLLIES

In Part Five, just when things are improving for the company, they will be met by the stunning realization that all their hard work and sacrifice have been part of the orchestrations of Hakon, a disgraced and vindictive noble of Dale. Using Holgeir's natural gifts of deception and his knowledge as a former accomplice of the old Master, he set the events in motion that led to the player's journey into the Waste to recover the Black Arrow. Now that they have it, Hakon will spring his trap and use whatever means necessary to take it from the company.

The Northern Dalelands

The company's spirits will steadily rise as they leave the Waste behind and enter the lush, pastoral hills of the Northern Dalelands. The cool, fresh breeze that blows off the Grey Mountains fills their lungs with vigor and the cheery songs of robins will lighten their mood. In the distance, scattered among the copses of newly growing trees and old stone cairns are the farms, fields and herds of the settlers who have laid their hopes on Dale's growing prosperity. The land here is rich in game and should the players choose so, they may *Hunt* for what is likely their first good meal in weeks. If the hunt yields a Great Success, reduce each player's Shadow score by one as they enjoy a well-deserved respite from their troubles.



The Old Ways © by Jenny Dolfen, used with permission

Hakon's Schemes

The first spark of Hakon's scheme to blackmail Bard was struck well over a year ago when he took Holgeir into his employ and subsequently heard the tale of his travels with the old Master. Realizing he could use this knowledge to his advantage, he convinced Holgeir to get arrested in Dale so that he could share the tale with his jailors, which he knew would eventually reach Bard's ears. Hakon knew that Bard himself could not pursue the quest for the arrow, so he waited and watched as the company was summoned and sent out to retrieve the Black Arrow. Since that time Hakon's scouts have been watching for their return to the Dalelands. When he heard that they were returning via the Northern Dalelands, he contacted a friend he could easily manipulate, Bryni. He deceived him into thinking he was doing Bard's will by aiding, but ultimately delaying, the company. Once Hakon and his sellswords catch up to the players, he intends to kill them and steal the Black Arrow.

Hakon plans to use the Black Arrow to blackmail Bard into granting him the status and influence he held before old Lake-town fell to ruin. He understands the great personal value the arrow poses for Bard and hopes to use that as his leverage. However, he has no idea that the arrow has become cursed and that it brings ruin to whomever possesses it.

It may seem that the worst of the company's troubles lie behind them, but the pleasant fields of the Northern Dalelands are hiding a more insidious threat. Here, as well as throughout the lands around Dale, Hakon has had his scouts watching for the company's return. Now that they have brought the the Black Arrow, word has been sent to him in Dale, where even now he is riding out with his entourage to waylay the company and steal the arrow.

ENCOUNTERING BRYNI, LORD OF STRANDBURG

Hakon has an unwitting accomplice in these lands, the young but not particularly savvy Lord of Strandburg (*Erebor*, pg. 54). Bryni is a recently appointed lord who has forgotten the needs of his subjects while in pursuit for more personally advantageous goals. He dresses and acts pretentiously, wearing the finest robes and armor and carrying a sword of unsurpassed beauty that has likely never left its sheath. He speaks in a haughty manner, but is very courteous and generous with his wealth, to the right people. Bryni has led a very fortunate life, but in his heart he is coward. He will not deliberately place himself in physical danger.

Hakon has duped Bryni into joining in his schemes, and Bryni does not know the full extent of Hakon's plans. As far as Bryni knows, he is under orders from Bard to entertain and grant respite to the company while they wait for their escort to arrive from Dale. Bryni has no idea that Bard has issued no such orders and that Hakon rides from Dale bent on slaying the company and stealing the Black Arrow.

At Hakon's request, Bryni has ridden out to meet the players along their road back to Dale. He will introduce himself and inform them that he was sent at Bard's request to offer them hospitality, food and shelter at his nearby manor in Strandburg. Nice rooms, sumptuous meals and medical care will all be provided while the company waits the two days it will take for their escort to arrive.



© by Pierre Joubert, Edition Hachette

Pushing On

The company may very well decide not to take up Bryni on his offer or they may grow suspicious of him and leave Strandburg early. If so, skip ahead to their encounter with Hakon; but have it take place on the road somewhere between Strandburg and Dale instead of at Bryni's manor.

Have the company make their fifth Travel test (TN 14) when they arrive in Strandburg.

ENCOUNTERING HAKON



Rider of Rohan © by JLazarusEB, used with permission

On the evening of the second day since their arrival in Strandburg, Hakon will arrive on horseback with an escort of two sellswords per company member. The sellswords are on foot and are led by Captain Öldür. Hakon is mounted on a dappled riding horse and dressed for travel. He wears a nice, but well-worn set of breeches and a weathered riding coat. His long, grey hair is windswept and tussled by the ride. On his hip rests a practical, but finely wrought fighting sword. Hakon will not dismount, but walks his steed to within a few feet of the company. He will speak to them in curt demanding tones, making no effort to veil his contempt. He is arrogant and confident in his position.

Set Tolerance

Hakon will disregard any player's Standing that is less than four due to his massive ego and treacherous nature. He cares little about what someone's reputation is, only that they are standing in the way of his ambitions. Wisdom is valued over Valor. Reduce his Tolerance Rating by one if the party contains any dwarves, since he blames them for the destruction of old Laketown and his subsequent misfortunes. Reduce his Tolerance Rating by another two points to reflect that he has little patience for dialogue, unless the company meets his demands.

Introduction

Hakon has no patience for individual introductions.

Changing Hakon's Mind

Should the company attempt to convince Hakon of the folly in his plan (no easy feat) or appeal to his better nature, they will need an Extraordinary Success (8 Successes) on their Encounter Result with him. If they are successful, he will abandon his schemes and leave them unharmed. Move on the Part Six. Anything less and he will order his men to seize the arrow.

Hakon's aim is to waylay the players and attempt to convince them to give him the Black Arrow. He will begin by trying to bribe them with promises of wealth and holdings should they choose to help him. If that fails, he will threaten them making pointed references to

their families should they be locals. Finally, he will have his men attack the company.

Additional information on Hakon and his stats can be found in *Erebor*, pg. 58.

Useful Skills

- *Lore*: A Barding player will immediately recognize Hakon. He has a devious and seedy reputation among both the courtiers and the citizens of Dale. Non-Bardings will need a Success in order to recognize him. A Great Success or better reveals details of his past.
- *Riddle*: To trick Hakon into gloating over the success of his plan and revealing Holgeir's part in the conspiracy.
- *Insight*: To know that despite his kind words and generous offers, Hakon has no intention of leaving anyone of the company alive.
- *Awe*: If the players are attempting to convince Hakon to abandon his plans, a Success could be used to grant them additional Tolerance as he rethinks the wisdom of his actions.
- *Persuade*: To convince Hakon to change his ways.
- *Awareness*: To recognize that Hakon's sellswords are not men of Dale. Both their dress and manners reveal them as Easterlings. They also appear tense, indicating that they know a fight is imminent.



To the death © by Wouter Florusse, used with permission

Hakon Attacks

If Hakon cannot convince the company to join in his schemes, he will order his men to kill them and take the arrow.

The Redwater Raiders (Captain Öldür's Company)



Seljuks © by Onur Bakar, used with permission

Captain Öldür is a seasoned veteran of many battles and is a competent leader. Even in his forties he is an imposing figure with his gleaming mail and shining long sword. His company is well funded and outfitted with high quality armour and weapons. Each man has been rigorously trained in the art of fighting with short sword, spear and buckler. Although they hail from the East, the company has traveled far and wide throughout Wilderland. Recently, they have been employed by Hakon, as he has need for men that are willing to do unsavoury work. As willing as Öldür is to fight for Hakon's coin, he will not lead his men into a fight they cannot win. If more than half of his men fall during their confrontation with the company he will call a retreat.

Captain Öldür

Attribute Level				
4				
Endurance		Hate		
21		3		
DARRY		ARMOUR		
5+2 (Shields)		2D		
Skills				
Personality ♦♦♦		Survival ♦♦		
Movement ♦♦		Custom ♦♦		
Perception ♦♦		Vocation ♦♦		
Weapon Skills				
Long Sword ♦♦♦		Spear ♦♦		
Bow ♦♦				
Special Abilities				
Commanding Voice, No Quarter				
Weapons				
Name	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Long Sword	5	10	16/18	
Bow	5	10	14	Pierce
Spear	5	9	14	
Special				
Pierce: If a Piercing attack hits, it automatically causes a Wound				

Easterling Sellswords

Attribute Level				
3				
Endurance		Hate		
15		2		
DARRY		ARMOUR		
4+1 (Buckler)		2D		
Skills				
Personality ♦♦		Survival ♦♦		
Movement ♦♦		Custom ♦		
Perception ♦♦		Vocation ♦		
Weapon Skills				
Short Sword ♦♦		Spear ♦♦		
Bow ♦♦				
Special Abilities				
No Quarter				
Weapons				
Name	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Short Sword	Attr. Lvl	10	14	Pierce
Bow & Spear	as for Captain Öldür			
Special				
Pierce: If a Piercing attack hits, it automatically causes a Wound				

Hakon's Escape

Hakon will attempt to flee on horseback if the company seems to be winning the fight. He will not return to Dale, but will instead return to his secret holdings in the Upper Marches where he will plot his next move. A determined companion may hunt him down in the next Fellowship Phase if Bard is convinced of his guilt.

Hakon's Capture

If Hakon fails to escape or is wounded he will surrender immediately. He has survived much worse situations in the past and prefers to live to fight another day if possible. Should they decide to capture him, the company should escort him back to Dale to stand trial for his treason. Of course, he will use all means at his disposal to escape or convince them to release him. A particularly nasty Hazard episode might enable him to escape.

Hakon is Killed

If Hakon surrendered but the company killed him anyway, treat this as Murdered, earning them five Shadow points from the Misdeed table. If he was killed unintentionally, then the players will have to respond to a very displeased Bard to explain the situation.

If the company gives Hakon the Black Arrow

Should the company decide to hand the Black Arrow over to Hakon willingly, each will receive three Shadow points for two reasons. Firstly, they know the arrow is cursed and they are willingly allowing another to fall under its influence and secondly, giving the arrow to Hakon directly violates their agreement with Bard. Once Hakon has the arrow, he will direct his sellswords to kill the company and then flees on horseback. Afterwards, he will never be seen again, since the curse drives him to live as a recluse in the wilderness, away from potential thieves.

Bryni's Involvement

Bryni is not an evil man; He has simply become Hakon's unwitting patsy. If things do not go as planned, Hakon will happily sell out

Bryni to ward off suspicion to him. For his part, Bryni does not know the full extent of Hakon's conspiracy and is convinced that he is doing a noble deed for which Bard will reward him. Consequently, he will rightly deny any knowledge of Hakon's plan to attack and kill the players. He will be horrified to learn that he has been manipulated and is terrified of Bard's wrath. Once he understands the true part he played in Hakon's scheme, he will immediately ride to Dale to beg for Bard's forgiveness. Any friendship or loyalty he showed Hakon will evaporate.

Once the company has resolved their encounter with Hakon, have them roll their sixth *Travel* test (TN 14) as they approach the Ravensgate of Dale.

~ PART SIX ~ The Bell's Toll

In Part Six, the company returns to Dale exhausted but hardened from their travels, where they are to deliver the Black Arrow. Hakon's plans are revealed and a troubled Bard must decide Hakon's fate and the fate of his accomplices. The curse on the Black Arrow will weigh heavily on Bard's heart and his reaction to its unveiling could have dire consequences for all involved.

As the Ravensgate comes into view, the bells of the city will begin to toll welcoming the company. At Bard's orders, the watchmen along the walls have been on the lookout for the company's return all week. Lodin the Reeve of the Quays, a trusted and familiar face, will be waiting by the gates with guards to escort them straight to the Royal Palace.

The remainder of the adventure is an extended social encounter with Bard. It is not necessary to make formal introductions again. Bard's previous Tolerance Rating will increase by two points to reflect his eagerness to hear of the company's success. During this encounter the company will return the Black Arrow to Bard and discuss how to deal with Hakon's betrayal and the curse.

The Matter of the Black Arrow

By now the company should be aware of the Black Arrow's curse and they should have decided on how to best approach Bard with this issue. It may cross their mind to refuse Bard the arrow to protect him. But withholding this treasured heirloom from him is a good way to end up in the dungeons. As reasonable as Bard is, the players should think on how to explain the nature of the curse to him.

Giving the Black Arrow to Bard

Even when warned of its curse, Bard will insist upon judging the nature of the arrow for himself. When the company returns it to him, have him make his Corruption Test using a Wisdom Rating of four. If he passes the test he will mourn the loss of such a treasured heirloom and instruct the company to return it to Smaug's grave (see Epilogue).

Should he fail the test his mood will turn dark as his heart fills with jealousy over the coveted arrow. He will reward the players with six points worth of Treasure each, but will

Where's Bryni?

Whether Hakon was captured or not, Bryni will arrive shortly after the company begins their discussion with Bard. He is terrified of the consequences of his actions and rode all night to plead his case before Bard in person.

dismiss them promptly as he retreats to his chambers to study the arrow. Once the curse of the arrow has hold of him any compassion he may have had towards Hakon and his accomplices will vanish. He now knows that they seek to steal the arrow from him and there is little the companions can say to change his mind. Their fate is sealed.

Dealing with Hakon's Betrayal

Once Bard has seen the arrow - assuming he did not succumb to its curse - it is time to address the fate of Hakon and his accomplices, Bryni and Holgeir. Since the companions were the ones most directly affected by Hakon's actions, Bard will highly regard their advice

throughout this encounter. The company should utilize *Persuade*, *Awe* and *Song* to weave their narrative and convince Bard of the truth of their tale. *Insight* will be useful in revealing Hakon's deceptions.

If Hakon Escaped

If Hakon escaped it will be up to the company to convince Bard of his treachery. They can do this by detailing Bryni's involvement, or if Hakon was particularly loose



tongued they may know of Holgeir's involvement in the plan and call upon him to account before Bard. If they can convince Bard of Hakon's involvement then he will issue a search party to find and bring Hakon back to Dale for inquiry. A company member can participate in this hunt as part of the Fellowship Phase afterwards (see *Fellowship Phase: The Hunt for Hakon*).

If Hakon was Captured

If Hakon is present during the encounter, he will vigorously defend his innocence. Treat him as having a Tolerance Rating of three with Bard.

Each Success he gains by defending himself will negate one of the company's Successes in convincing Bard of his guilt. He will argue until he uses up his Tolerance and Bard loses his patience with him. The companions are free to continue arguing their case until their Tolerance is used up or they succeed in the encounter.

Hakon will deny all charges against him. He will lay the blame squarely on Bryni and present himself as an innocent pawn in the nefarious schemes of Bryni, claiming ignorance of any ill intentions. For his part, Bryni will beg for mercy and claim ignorance also, stating that he was unaware of Hakon's scheme and thought he was following Bard's commands. It is up to the company to help sort out the details and influence Bard's judgement for a just outcome. If found guilty, Hakon will be banished from the Dalelands and be under penalty of death should he ever return.

Bryni's Fate

If Bryni can convince the company and Bard of the truth of his tale he will only lose his lands and title due to not actively acting against the conspiracy. If Bard is not convinced, then he will be placed in chains and taken to the dungeons below until his part in the conspiracy becomes clear. The Loremaster may allow compassionate companions to take pity on Bryni and argue for an alternate course of action (see *Fellowship Phase: Compassion for the Guilty*).

Holgeir's Fate

If brought before Bard for questioning, Holgeir will react in one of two ways. If Hakon is present, he will denounce Bryni as the main conspirator in an effort to bolster support for Hakon. He knows that their fates are now tied together. However, if Hakon was not captured, he will give a full account of his part in the scheme, declaring himself a victim and hoping for Bard's mercy. If he is judged guilty Bard will banish him from the Dalelands as well.

Bard's Judgement

The players will need a minimum of three total Successes to sway Bard to their side. Use the table below to adjudicate Bard's ruling.

0-2 Fail: "Although this tale troubles me, I cannot pass judgment based solely on the words of these few, no matter how trusted."

3-5 Success: "The guilt of Hakon has been made clear to me. However, I will reserve my judgment until such time as he is brought before me to answer for his crimes in person."

6+ Great Success: "Hakon's guilt cannot be denied! He is hereby banished from the Dalelands upon penalty of death should he ever return."

What of Lake-town's Stolen Treasure?



Once Bard has made his judgement on Hakon, he will address the issue of Lake-town's stolen treasure. If it was recovered, he will allow the company to distribute it during the Fellowship Phase (see *Fellowship Phase: Returning Lake-town's Stolen Treasure*); however, he may also inform them that there was substantially more than forty point's worth of reasure stolen

by the old Master. If it was not recovered he will ask for the details of its whereabouts, but will not not accuse the players for leaving it behind given the arduous circumstances they were facing.

- EPILOGUE - DESOLATION'S END

If Bard resisted the curse he will give the company one last task, To return the Black Arrow to its proper resting place alongside Smaug in the ruins of old Lake-town. Before they disembark, healers from the city will provide them with a tea made from Hagsweed that will reduce the difficulty of their Corruption tests by two for the next 24 hours. It will take most of the day to row back to where Smaug fell and to drop the arrow back into the lake's waters.

Old Lake-town is now considered a Blighted area due to Smaug's remains. The players should only spend the briefest of moments in the area, so a *Travel* test (TN 14) is optional. However, a Corruption test (TN 14) must be made to resist the numerous gemstones that litter the lake floor under Smaug's remains.

All that is required of the company is that they drop the arrow back into the lake to lie among Smaug's bones.

A wave of relief washes over you as the Black Arrow sinks back into the depths of the lake, coming to rest among the bones of the once terrible Smaug. Reflecting on how difficult your journey was to reclaim it, you are almost saddened by its loss; but in your heart you know that by your actions great wrongs have been set right again. And that gives you comfort.

AFTERMATH

Regardless of the trial's outcome, Bard will be pleased about the return of the Black Arrow. Even if he must see it lost again, this time it was in a manner of his choosing. He will extend his warmest and most sincere thanks to the company for their efforts. The night after the company returns he will give a feast in their honor and announce the new Lord of Strandburg. He will also grant each companion a small Holding in the Northern Dalelands should they

The Old Master's Tale Retold - PART THREE: How Does It End?

The conclusion of the old Master's tale is left in the hands of the company. Did he receive his just fate in the Waste, or did he finally receive absolution for his crimes? How will they speak of him at the end of the tale? Was he a repentant man, whose story could hold hope for even the worst among us, or is his tale a warning to others that their misdeeds could lead to eternal suffering? It is up to the company to decide how the old Master is remembered.

desire it. Furthermore, he will make it known to all present that he will always welcome the company to Dale as one of their own.

REWARDS

1. Recommended: Six Experience; + 1 for great roleplay; + 1 if Hakon did not escape.
2. If the players succeeded in recovering the Black Arrow, they are rewarded with six Treasure points each, plus an additional two Treasure points as their share for recovering Lake-town's treasure (if they returned with Lake-town's stolen treasure).
3. Granted portions of land surrounding Strandburg. Rating 8 Holding.
4. Barding heroes receive a permanent +1 Standing increase.
5. Bard may be taken as a Patron.
6. Dale opens as a Sanctuary to all the company members. They need not spend a Fellowship Phase to open it as such. The city of Dale will always welcome the company into its lands.

Fellowship Phase

Here are some additional Fellowship Phase undertakings that the companions may choose to participate in.

Compassion for the Guilty

If a companion wishes to show true compassion and argue for leniency for Holgeir or Bryni, then he may do so by making a *Persuade* test to convince Bard of an alternate punishment. On a Success, the player loses two Shadow points. It is left to the Loremaster's discretion as to how Bard alters his original judgement.

Complete the Old Master's Tale

A companion may choose to spend his Fellowship Phase crafting the full tale of the old Master that includes all the history they have uncovered throughout the adventure, as well as his desire for absolution. If they do so, pass a *Song* test to lose two Shadow points and to gain a bonus die on both *Song* and *Lore* tests for the next Adventuring phase. Alternatively, a player could turn the tale into a *Song* as per the rules given in the *Rivendell* supplement.

Return Lake-town's Stolen Treasure

If the company recovered Lake-town's stolen treasure they may see to its return to Lake-town with Bard's blessings. When they do, their hearts will swell with joy knowing that the old Master's spirit is released from the mortal realm. Regain +1 Hope.

The Hunt for Hakon

Any number of company members may participate in the hunt for Hakon. To find his hidden holdings in the Upper Marches and bring him to justice a participant will need to make a *Hunting* or *Explore* test at TN 18. If more than one company member participates, the Target Number is reduced by two for each additional tracker beyond the first. Only one company member rolls the skill test. If they succeed they will be rewarded with one additional point of Experience. A Great Success or better will also

grant an Advancement point in either *Hunting* or *Explore* in addition to the experience gain. If they fail Hakon manages to elude them and continues his scheming.

Loose Ends

If you choose to run The Watch on the Heath from Tales from Wilderland in the future some thought must be given as to how the events of this adventure may change some of those scenarios. For example, the players encounter the old Master on their journey to Zirakinbar; but if his spirit is released as a result of the player's actions in this adventure he should no longer be there. One possibility is to simply leave him out of The Watch on the Heath. However, it may be better to leave him in and have him appear as a friendly face, whole again thanks to the player's actions in this adventure, who lends them a helping hand in guiding their actions in The Watch on the Heath. Ultimately, these choices are all left to your discretion.

REFERENCES

Erebor: The Lonely Mountain for information on Dale and its surrounding areas, the Waste, A Chill and Windswept Grave, Hakon, Bryni, Erna, Rugash, and the Black Arrow.

Tales from Wilderland for information on the Waste and its Hazards, Zirakinbar, and the old Master.



Parting is always sad © by Liga Klavina, used with permission

JOURNEY SUMMARIES

The following journey summaries follow the path of the old Master and are provided solely as a means to speed up play. Adjustments will need to be made if your company travels in a different season or takes an alternate route.

Esgaroth to Skirmish among the Ashes

60 miles east across the Upper Marches through Moderate (Wild Lands) before turning north into the Waste and traveling 30 miles through Hard (Shadowlands) terrain; (6 days).

Fatigue Tests: 2 (Autumn) – 1 (TN 16) & 1 (TN 18)

Skirmish among the Ashes to A Chill and Windswept Grave

40 miles northwest across the Waste through Hard (Shadowlands) terrain; (4 days).

Fatigue Tests: 1 (Autumn) – 1 (TN 18)

A Chill and Windswept Grave to Rugash's Camp

30 miles across Hard (Shadowlands) terrain; (3 days).

Fatigue Tests: 1 (Autumn) – 1 (TN 18)

Rugash's Camp to Dale

10 miles across the Waste through Hard (Shadowlands) and then 70 miles across the Northern Dalelands through Easy (Borderlands) terrain; (5 days).

Fatigue Tests: 2 (Autumn) – 2 (TN 14)



BUCKLEBERRY TALES

By Peter Bergman
(bergman.shiatsu@gmail.com)

© 2018

supplementary stuff

This is Peter's first contribution to *Other Minds* and it already is a great one — providing life and vivid information about a small but bustling part of hobbitish territory: The border march of Buckland — home Meriadoc Brandybuck!

This guide shall be a source of inspiration, peril and daring adventure beyond the safe borders of the Shire. It is a modest homage to some of the wonders that made me fall in love with the works of Prof. J.R.R. Tolkien and Middle-Earth in the first place. It draws from *The One Ring Roleplaying Game* as designed by Francesco Nepitello and Marco Maggi, published by Cubicle 7.

Long ago Gorchendad Oldbuck, head of the Oldbuck family, one of the oldest in the Marish or indeed in the Shire, had crossed the river, which was the original boundary of the land eastwards. He built (and excavated) Brandy Hall, changed his name to Brandybuck, and settled down to become master of what was virtually a small independent country. [...] That was the origin of Buckland, a thickly inhabited strip between the river and the Old Forest, a sort of colony from the Shire. Its chief village was Bucklebury, clustering in the banks and slopes behind Brandy Hall.

— *The Lord of the Rings.*
A conspiracy unmasked

BUCKLAND

Beginnings

Imagine yourself riding along the Great Eastern Road, having left Bree-Land and the haunted hills of the Barrow-downs behind you, heading west towards the Shire. As you watch the landscape transforming slowly, the eastern wilderness of Eriador gives way to a green and pleasant land of soft, rolling hills and cultivated farmlands, a great and ominous forest passes in and out of sight to the south. Locals fearfully refer to it as the Old Forest and have nothing but dark and unnerving stories to tell when the embers of the fire burn low.

Some way further ahead, where the banks are lower and the water is shallow, a great stone bridge spans the brown water of the Brandywine river as it flows south, allowing the traveler to reach the Shire and the Grey Havens beyond. But on your left and some distance ahead of the bridge, you see a great hedge running up from the south to meet the road.

Tall and green, it rises high against the deep shadows of the forest and continues all the way up to the main road where an arched gate marks the entrance to a region on the eastern side of



Bearings

Buckland's eastern border is naturally defined by the Old Forest, an ancient wood of massive trees and watchful birds that follow every step you take. Within the forest paths move and change with an unseen will pulsing through the veins of its soil and so the reason why the Brandybucks raised a great hedge all along its eastern border is not as a mark of property, but to keep the Bucklanders safe and out of harm's way. It is a strange place, with beauty that lingers in the heart of every ancient forest, but carrying with it something sinister and hateful, quietly waiting, slowly moving and shifting.

Heading north and following the High Hay, Brandywine Bridge and the river comes into view with Buckland Gate marking the northern border along the Great Eastern Road. From here an old and well travelled road leads south through Buckland, passing through the villages of Newbury, Crickhollow, Bucklebury, Standelf and finally ending at Haysend, a secluded collection of smials spread out on a woody promontory overlooking the Withywindle as it flows out of the Old Forest and joins Brandywine River. Haysend marks the southern end of the High Hay as well as the southern border of Buckland proper. This part of Buckland sees less visitors than the north, though they do have dealings with the hobbits of Rushey and Deephallow on the Marish side of the river.

But Haysend isn't the only 'natural' border to the south. Just a little further down the Brandywine on its western bank lie the Overbourne Marshes, a wide stretch of treacherous wetlands created by the Brandywine's meeting with the River Shirebourn coming out of Green Hill Country to the west. There are many stories and rumors about the marshes, shapes that wander aimlessly in the distance and mournful voices calling from the mist. But even without the tall tales, it is a dangerous place to get easily lost in.

To the west, the Brandywine River draws a clear line between the Marish and Buckland. This deep river, with its beginning far to the north in the wilderness that was once Arthedain, has only two accessible crossings. The first is the old and reliable Brandywine

the river. Beyond the gate, you see a smaller road disappear among waves of low hills. Groves of willow, oak and ash are everywhere, with waist-high grass dancing in the scattered open patches between them. Overgrown walls of stone hint of orchards hidden behind them together with secluded farms. The weather beaten sign at the crossroads is hard to read but gives you two destinations.

Keep going west over the Brandywine Bridge and you'll enter the Shire, or turn south and pass through Hay Gate (also known as Buckland Gate or North Gate) and you'll have entered a region that some Shire-folk speak of in hushed voices and with a tone of suspicion: Welcome to Buckland.

Bridge to the north, while Bucklebury Ferry about twenty miles due south of the bridge, close to Brandy Hall and the teeming village of Bucklebury, is the second.

The hobbits of Buckland are all much more comfortable with boats and water than most Shire-hobbits. They use the river for travel, fishing and trade, additionally providing the Bucklanders with a safeborder. As such the river has become not only the defining western border of their lands, but more so the very heart and life-line of their community.

Buckland is also the primary destination for people coming from Bree, making the Bucklanders somewhat more cosmopolitan than the Shire-Hobbits (relatively speaking).

THE TALE OF YEARS

Strictly speaking not even counted as part of Eastfarthing, let alone the Shire for that matter,

Buckland was originally a Stoor colony consisting mostly of Oldbuck families that moved east across the river from the lowland farms and fields of the Marish in the year **T.A. 2340** (year **740** by Shire reckoning). The head of the Oldbucks, an unusually adventurous hobbit and twelfth Thain of the Shire named Gorchendad Oldbuck, took it upon himself to rename the clan Brandybuck in the process and relinquished the office of Thain to the Took of the Marish as he established his seat of power with the building of Brandy Hall at Buck Hill. This was the highest hill in all of Buckland and offered a grand view of the Brandywine River, a fitting home for the Brandybucks as they slowly established a community of notably hardy hobbits and a dynasty worthy of the name.

Over the years, with the growing population of hobbits in Buckland Brandy Hall expanded to grand proportions and Buck Hill essentially became by far the largest smial in the region,

with a vast system of passages, dining-halls, kitchens, pantries and living-quarters for the Brandybucks and their many relations.

It was around this time that the Bucklanders also began to see a need for something to stand guard against their eastern neighbour. The Old Forest stirred and croaked when the newcomers wandered under its gnarled branches. Brave hobbits came back from the forest shaken and afraid, recounting tales of moving trees, paths that change and a world of deep green twilight with a will of its own. Some never returned at all, and it was clear even to the early Bucklanders that all was not well in the ancient wood.



Budgeford © by Matej Cadil, used with permission



High Hedge © by Matej Cadil, used with permission

And so the High Hay was planted, beginning in the **25th century** as Rosalythe and Permiend Brandybuck brought the first seeds of a hardy hawthorne from beyond Bree to Buckland, and a watchful peace was established. Those who passed the hedge and entered the forest did so of their own accord and would pay a steep price should they venture too far.

But not only Brandy Hall and the Old Forest saw the inevitable changes that came with settlement. Close to Buck Hill and not far from the banks of the Brandywine River, the village of Bucklebury began to spread out. Slowly growing to become the largest community in Buckland, it soon included a small jetty for the many dinghies, river-boats and barges that traveled up and down its waters and of course Bucklebury Ferry.

Since the Brandywine Bridge is located twenty miles further up north, the Bucklanders saw a pressing need to be able to cross the river into the Marsh and Shire proper. Being river-hobbits by blood and birth, the Brandybucks built wooden landings for a ferry on both sides of the Brandywine and dug out a road up the eastern bank leading all the way to Bucklebury no more than a mile from the edge of the water. You can see the ferry as well as the road from Brandy Hall. But there is no official running of its traffic, since there is no ferryman to take toll

or navigate the river. So the Bucklanders and the occasional traveler have to manage it themselves which can become quite an adventure when it comes to passage after nightfall.

And so life in Buckland went on for many years with the little villages growing at a comfortable pace and the Brandybucks offering good food and outstanding pipe-weed for travellers of both east and west. Bree-landers often came to visit and share the news of the world and with time a culture of trade began to develop between the Shire, Bree-Land and Buckland. The hobbits of the Shire lived a somewhat isolated and protected life compared to Buckland and Bree, whose borders were dominated by a vast and dangerous wilderness and the haunted ruins of a long forgotten kingdom.

Trade became a vital factor in building a vibrant community, as well as strengthening the bond between villages, families and relations in terms of culture, politics and security. But Buckland, as it always had, continued to struggle with a reputation for being reckless, foolhardy and even mad for settling so close to the Old Forest and for having such disrespect for the dangers of boats and rivers in general. By comparison, Buckland also saw far more non-hobbit visitors than the Shire, which in itself was a sure way of sowing suspicion and mistrust among more settled and sensible hobbits.

But during the Long Winter of **T.A. 2758** the true strength, courage and loyalty of the hobbits would show itself as massive amounts of snow covered the lands in the deadliest winter northwestern Middle-earth had ever seen. The devastating cold and the accompanying hunger when the stocks of food ran out, took lives far too many to count and left no hobbit untouched as they struggled to survive. Many families perished altogether and it is said that of those families that survived at least one member fell victim to the vicious winter. Yet the troubles of Buckland were far from over.

Though the hobbits had received help from Gandalf the Grey during this time of need, the wizard was quite astonished by their strength and courage, which gained the Shire-folk a warm place in his heart. But crops and stores were still inevitably ruined by the harsh condi-

tions and a ruthless famine reigned for over a year. By **T.A. 2760** the population of the Shire and Buckland was severely diminished and the effects would be felt for generations to come.

Unfortunately, about one and a half centuries later, in November **T.A. 2911**, another winter of drastic proportions swept down from the cold north. The Bucklanders watched with fear as the great flow of the Brandywine froze solid and memories from the Long Winter were whispered over increasingly meagre meals at Brandy Hall.

And that's when they came. Driven mad by hunger and perhaps urged on by some evil will, great packs of ravenous white wolves crossed the frozen river from the northern lands and attacked the Shire and Buckland in their desperate search for food. As they came howling out of the biting storms and starless nights in that merciless winter the Horn-call of Buckland was sounded to gather those able to fight and fend off the enemy. This was one of the very first recorded occasions in the history of Buckland that the horn was sounded. From that day forward the horn-call was a well honoured tradition and system of defence should a new threat ever appear on the horizon.

As soon as the bitter cold finally gave way and the river started to melt the water levels of the Brandywine and many other rivers with it rose dramatically and massive floods plagued the region. Rumours speak of a great city to the south that was all but completely ruined but also in Buckland the flood left death and sorrow in its wake. Some say that the reason why the Overbourne Marshes cover such a large area today is because of that very flood. The water levels never quite receded back to their former level and now people sometimes even whisper of how those taken by the unnatural cold and famine haunt that bleak landscape.

Now, in **T.A. 3000** (1400 by Shire-reckoning) and almost a century after the Fell Winter, the stories and dark memories of wolves and snowstorms are told less and less often as the comfort and safety of warm fires drive them away. But as with the Overbourne Marshes there are other stories that simmer up to the surface when lights grow dim; tales of shadowy

corners in Buckland and the Eastfarthing where no hobbit dare tread and songs that hint of old and forgotten magic. Travelers whisper of strange and unwholesome creatures waking from slumber under root and stone. The Old Forest watches with a menacing and almost palpable hostility towards any intruders and there are those who would swear that the trees have moved even closer to the High Hay, pressing maliciously against Buckland's borders. To counter this and protect themselves from the forest, the Bucklanders planted the High Hay at the beginning of the first half of the 25th century when Rosalythe and Permiend Brandybuck brought the first seeds of a hardy hawthorne from beyond Bree to Buckland.

THE LANDS OF BUCKLAND

While the Marish boasts a fertile land of many villages, farms and pleasant vistas of tilled fields and trimmed hedges, Buckland is by some measure still a farming community, though wilder in its appearance and far less settled.

A small and largely wooded country with a few villages and farms scattered across its rolling landscape, Buckland slowly rises from the lowland valley of the Brandywine River and paints a beautiful canvas of small hills, meadows and rippling streams all the way up to the High Hay. Farmers combine their narrow fields with walled-in herb gardens, fruit trees, currant bushes and beehives, while the quaint villages of the region are encircled by low stone walls and sport both smials as well as houses.

The area surrounding Brandy Hall and Bucklebury is less forested than other parts of Buckland due to the large amount of houses, boats and barges built over the years, but it is still by no means open country.

Brandy Hall

Brandy Hall © by Matej Cadil, used with permission



Gorhendad Oldbuck chose Buck Hill for many reasons when he started building Brandy Hall. It was the highest hill in the region and provided him with a good overview of Brandywine River and the Marish to the west, as well as the Old Forest to the east.

No hill was better suited for digging out the largest smial (larger than any in the whole of the Shire) and soon became a significant symbol for both Buckland in general and the Brandybucks in particular. This was to be the seat of the Master of the Hall, Buckland's honourable title of leadership and here sounds the Horn-call of Buckland when danger is afoot in the region.

Brandy Hall today is a web of housings connected through tunnels and stairways dug out over the centuries and houses a great number of families both close and distantly related to the Brandybucks.

Aside from its grand main entrance-hall, displaying many rare artefacts from the history of Buckland, the Shire and Eriador, there are many separate doors entering the main body of the smial. Here you'll find not only the dwelling of the Brandybucks, but the largest library in the region with an impressive collection of texts on

both history and culture together with a beautiful council hall built more than four centuries ago and said to have been visited many times even by Gandalf himself.

The library is cared for and managed by Odovacar Brandybuck, a scholar of the region with a love for books second to none in both the Shire, Buckland and Bree combined. When it comes to the culture and history of hobbits, his enthusiasm is quite contagious and he spends his nights writing a complete set of chronicles on the history of Buckland and the Shire.

There is, not surprisingly, a very large and comfortable dining hall right in the centre of Brandy Hall connected to a kitchen of some renown and providing residents and guests with remarkably excellent food and drink, even by hobbit standards. The hall retains the feeling of a bustling tavern, with a huge fireplace in its centre, drinking songs sung over pints of ale and the earthy scent of pipe-weed heavy in the air.

Brandy Hall, such as it is, serves as Buckland's official center for civil authority. The Shirriff of Buckland is always appointed by the Master of the Hall and has an office in Bucklebury. It is generally known that there is little to

no crime in the Shire; Buckland on the other hand, being kind of a border march, gets its fair share of strangers and rough characters that cause trouble sometimes. Add to this the dark nature of the Old Forest and the need for keeping a sharp watch over the land becomes paramount.

Needless to say, Brandy Hall has a small but permanent company of Bounders, hobbit rangers skilled in hunting and tracking that patrol the borders of Buckland and report back to the Shirriff in Bucklebury should they find anything of a suspicious nature.

The current Master of the Hall is Rorimac Brandybuck, approaching his hundredth birthday. Apart from his two sons Saradoc and Merimac, he lives with his wife Menegilda and their foster-son Frodo Baggins, whose parents Primula and Drogo drowned in the Brandywine some years back. Rorimac has already announced that his son Saradoc will take on the mantle as next Master of the Hall when the time is right. Hobbits are generally not ones for political intrigue, but there are some rumours that Merimac holds a grudge for not getting the title himself.

Bucklebury

In the heart of Buckland, not far from the banks of the Brandywine River and within walking distance from Brandy Hall, lies Bucklebury nestled in a small and fertile valley with many streams and alder and great oaks scattered among its green slopes, gently opening westward to meet the river.

The main road comes down from the north, passing Brandy Hall just before it descends into the valley by way of an alley and enters Bucklebury through a small gate in the surrounding stone wall. The road continues, passing many quaint houses and smials that blend with the lush landscape of gardens and small fields framed in by trimmed rose-bushes, gnarled apple-trees and leaning fences.

From the little square at the centre of village the road breaks off to the west. A wooden sign with green letters points the way to Bucklebury Ferry and the harbour about a mile's walk down to the river. Standing in the square, Brandy Hall can be seen at a distance overlooking the village itself as well as the ferry.

Bucklebury consists of both old traditional smials with beautifully carved doors and well-kept kitchen gardens, as well as low-built stone houses with thatched roofs. There are even some buildings fit for tall-folk who come to visit. Bucklebury is the heart of Buckland and sees more of the outside world than most villages in the Shire.

A wide variety of cosy shops can be found in the central parts of the village, while traders keep their stores in warehouses down by the marina where most of the deliveries come in by barge. You'll find few exotic wares, though some turn up occasionally; many of the more traditional shops have been here for centuries and hold an exceptionally high standard. Many customers travel here from as far away as Westfarthing or Bree just to purchase pipes of unri-



Buckland © by Ralph Damiani, used with permission

valled craftsmanship, dark ales brewed from secret recipes and tobacco of excellent quality.

The ferry is a simple construction located upriver from Bucklebury harbour just south of Brandy Hall. The sloping banks on this side of the river are covered with great and densely growing willow-trees hanging over the water. The road up to Bucklebury, like the one on the western side, is edged by white-washed stones. The ferry itself is a wooden raft operated with a rope connected to either side of the river. Poles for a faster passage lie to the side. On the landing two wooden poles with mounted lamps mark the Buckland side after nightfall.

Not far from the ferry, around a gentle bend in the river the small harbour spreads out along the riverbank. Boats, barges and rafts of various sizes are tied to wooden gangways or anchored further out on the water. Masts create a forest of wood and rope reflected in the calm surface of the river.

The harbour has become the natural meeting place for traders and travellers in the region. Over the years a small promenade south of the harbour with rickety stalls selling fresh food by the Brandywine has grown to become permanent. At the further end of the street there is an old barge that has been turned into a tavern.

Among locals it is usually referred to as *The Barge*, though its full name on the sign says *The Old Barge Tavern* and it is owned by Hamfast Brownlock who serves fine food and ales to the weary. He is a hobbit know throughout Buckland for his pleasant ways and immense knowledge of the history of the region. He helps Odovacar in the library at Brandy Hall when he has time to spare and is more than happy to share tales when he's not tending to his guests.

The Barge is almost a legend in these parts and after a long day you can sit on the deck, throw your feet up and enjoy your pipe while watching the last boats of the day return to port.

Crickhollow

For many Brandybucks and their fellow Bucklanders who prefer peace and quiet, the life of Brandy Hall and Bucklebury might sometimes be a bit too hectic. The Hall almost houses enough hobbits to be counted as a village all on its own and Bucklebury is the very heart of a region where even tall-folk and dwarves come through from time to time.

Though actually closer to the Great Eastern Road, Crickhollow offers a pleasant escape from the bustling activity of Brandy Hall and is a sleepy little community of traditional farms and orchards connected by roads that curve and bend under the arched branches of apple-trees and thick oaks. Most farms can't even be seen from the main road. Crickhollow lies to the east and many travellers pass by without noticing.



There is some dispute among the Bucklanders regarding the name, but most would say that Crickhollow got its name from the very first farm built in the area. The Brandybucks still use it, but more so for a few pleasant dinners in front of a crackling fire, a quiet cup of tea in the garden or falling asleep under a shady tree.

There are no shops, nor are there any taverns. No traders hoping to sell their wares and certainly no guest-houses. It is almost a forgotten place, kept hidden from time and a reminder of the first settlers of Buckland. Beautiful and very old traditional dwellings of a bygone era can be found among the hills. Those who live and visit here treasure it with great fondness.

Haysend

Many Shire-hobbits would say that Buckland is a secluded place – or even isolated and dangerous. But of all the places in Buckland, Haysend by any measure would be the one village in the region to live up to that reputation.

Where the Brandywine River meets River Withywindle, the Great Hay rises into view as it ends on a slightly elevated promontory overlooking the two rivers and the lands beyond. It cuts off the Old Forest from the foreland and in the distance to the southwest the mists of the Overbourne Marshes are ever present; at night the lights from Rushey and Deephollow can be seen twinkling beyond the waters of the Brandywine.

Most of the hobbits here make a living as hunters and gatherers and it is no mere coincidence that many of the Buckland Bounders are from Haysend. They are rangers that know the nearby forests like no others. You'll find no farms in these parts, only well-hidden smials and houses built in such ways as to preserve the grandness of trees and the gentle flow of the landscape. Haysend is a hobbit village alright, but for many their ways might seem just a bit on the rough side and far too wild to be healthy.

The leader of Haysend's rangers, their most accomplished guide, tracker and weather-beaten hiker is undoubtedly Lily Rumble. Her skill is widely recognized and many put their trust in her when it comes to assuring the safety of Buckland. The appointing of every Bounder officially falls under the office of Brandy Hall, but everyone knows that none are appointed by the Master of the Hall who haven't first been tested and approved by Lily.

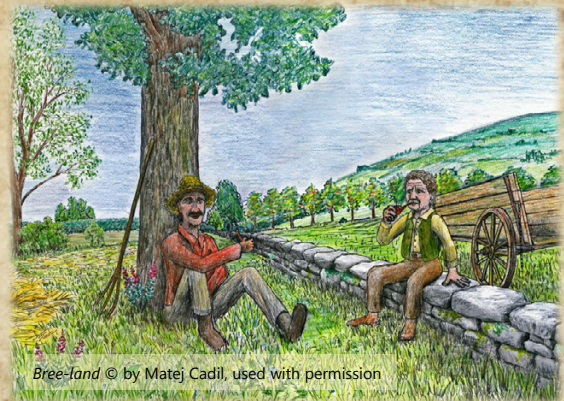
Haysend is a vibrant and strong community that bears no fear of outsiders or strangers. The hobbits of the village have an old and deeply rooted connection to both Buckland and the Marish as they've wandered the wilds of the eastern as well as the western shore, but they also have a somewhat secretive air about them; a seriousness that shines through when they talk of the marshes or the cold waters of the Withywindle.

Newbury

Closest to the Great Eastern Road and to many travellers a welcome stop on the way to Bree, Newbury sees more outsiders than most if not all of the villages in Buckland and the Shire.

Like Crickhollow it is some distance to the east of the Buckland main road and still a small community by any measure. But ever since visitors first discovered its quaint houses and excellent ales, rumours travelled fast. Hidden from view behind the rise of a gentle hill and located on the edges of a small lake, Newbury is centred around a large and comfortable inn.

The Crooked Willow was originally only a traditional smial (though of considerable size) and served as a guest-house for Bucklanders on their way to Bree or the Shire. But over the years as the numbers of customers grew, they built a stone house to accommodate. The foundation of the new house partly rests on the roof of the smial, has two stories and connecting tunnels for easy access. Later, stables were added as well as several storage facilities and outhouses.



Bree-land © by Matej Cadil, used with permission

These days the Crooked Willow is owned by Dora Took, a young and industrious hobbit who hopes to carry on her parents' legacy after they disappeared in the wilds one day, never to be seen again. She carries the name with great pride, but when the days are long you might catch her staring with sadness through a window, hoping to see them returning home over the fields to the east.

The surrounding landscape of Newbury is more open than most of Buckland and shows many fields of hops and barley enclosed by stone walls. Collections of beehives can be seen on

the outskirts of the village and the hobbits of Newbury take great pride in the quality of their honey as well as their famous ales. There are several families whose sole occupation is the brewing of ales and stouts and the customers of the Crooked Willow usually leave the Great Eastern Road because they know it and don't want to pass such a good pint and a peaceful nights rest.

Newbury is largely self-supporting, but like all villages in Buckland they use the Brandywine to visit Bucklebury and to trade for what they can't produce themselves. The river is some way from the village, but the road down to the riverbank is well travelled. Some visitors stay over night at the Crooked Willow and then take a barge down to Bucklebury harbour, enjoying the hidden beauty of Bucklebury and Brandy Hall before returning north.

Standelf

Between the villages of Bucklebury and Haysend the soft rolling hills of Buckland are momentarily interrupted by a wide stretch of lowland similar to that of the Marish. The high green grass spreads out towards the river and the trees recede, giving way to islands of large boulders and rocks jutting out of the ground. As in the valley of Bucklebury, small streams flow westward through the lush plain to join the river.

Standelf makes use of the rocky outcrops to support their dwellings, creating pleasant smials of white stone that stick out from the green land. These hobbits are more prone to fishing among the reeds and rocks of the streams than actual farming and whatever crops they need grow in the gardens of their dwellings.

Beneath this open and fair landscape many caves and underground streams burrow their way through the earth and some hobbits have used it to build and expand their own houses. Many have created ingenious cellars for storing food and providing shelter when hard winds blow.

One hobbit of notable reputation that hails from Standelf, who is known for defying all warnings regarding dangerous caves and marshland mists, is Poppy Maggot. She is not a ranger from Haysend, but rather an independent explorer as she herself puts it; she walks along untrodden paths to map out the forgotten outskirts and deeper secrets of Buckland and beyond. Sometimes she's gone for weeks at a time and when she returns she usually has a spring in her step and a wild look in her eyes.

But there is much yet to explore and some would say that it is dangerous to venture too far east along underground streams. You might find yourself on the wrong side of the High Hay, drinking water that makes you fall asleep in the darkness under root and stone.



Bywater © by Ralph Damiani, used with permission

LOREMASTER CHARACTERS

Rorimac Brandybuck,
Master of the Hall

Attribute Level	
7	
Specialties	
Leadership	
Distinctive Features	
Patient	
Relevant Skills	
Awareness ♦♦♦	Lore ♦♦♦
Insight ♦♦♦♦	Persuade ♦♦♦♦



Saradoc Brandybuck, 2nd son
of Rorimac Brandybuck

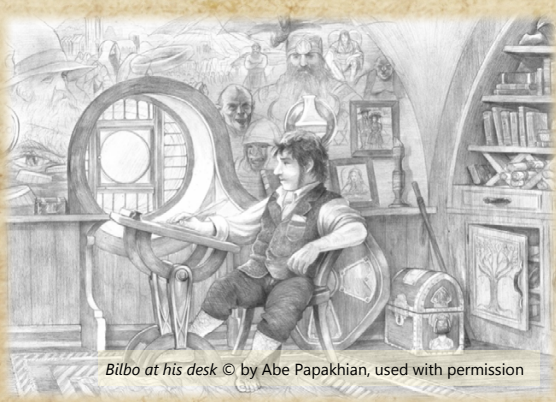
Attribute Level	
4	
Specialties	
Leadership	
Distinctive Features	
Wood-craft	
Relevant Skills	
Awareness ♦♦	Courtesy ♦♦♦♦
Insight ♦♦♦	Song ♦♦♦
Persuade ♦♦♦	

Merimac Brandybuck, 1st son
of Rorimac Brandybuck

Attribute Level	
3	
Specialties	
Old Lore, Smoking	
Distinctive Features	
Willful, Reckless	
Relevant Skills	
Athletics ♦♦♦	Stealth ♦♦♦
Courtesy ♦♦	Persuade ♦♦
Song ♦	

Odovacar Brandybuck,
Loremaster of Brandy Hall

Attribute Level	
6	
Specialties	
Buckland-Lore, Folk-Lore, Old Lore	
Distinctive Features	
Curious, Keen-Eyed	
Relevant Skills	
Awareness ♦♦♦♦	Lore ♦♦♦♦
Craft ♦♦♦	Song ♦♦♦
Insight ♦♦♦	



Bell North-Tooks, Buckland Shirriff

Attribute Level	
5	
Specialties	
Region-Lore, Beast-Lore	
Distinctive Features	
Gruff, Suspicious	
Relevant Skills	
Awareness ♦♦♦♦	Insight ♦♦♦♦
Athletics ♦♦♦	Persuade ♦♦♦♦
Hunting ♦♦♦	

Oora Took, Manager of the Crooked Willow

Attribute Level	
4	
Specialties	
Cooking, Trading	
Distinctive Features	
Energetic, Proud	
Relevant Skills	
Courtesy ♦♦♦	Inspire ♦♦♦♦
Craft ♦♦♦♦	Persuade ♦♦♦
Healing ♦♦♦	



The horn of Boromir © by Abe Papakhian, used with permission

Poppy Maggot, Explorer from Standelf

Attribute Level	
6	
Specialties	
Buckland-Lore, Boating, Map-Lore	
Distinctive Features	
Adventurous, Elusive	
Relevant Skills	
Athletics ♦♦♦♦	Explore ♦♦♦♦
Awareness ♦♦♦	Stealth ♦♦♦
Craft ♦♦♦	

Hamfast Brounlock, Manager of the Old Barge Tavern

Attribute Level	
5	
Specialties	
Trading, Buckland-Lore	
Distinctive Features	
Clever, Energetic	
Relevant Skills	
Awareness ♦♦♦♦	Persuade ♦♦♦
Craft ♦♦♦	Riddle ♦♦♦♦
Lore ♦♦♦♦	

Lily Rumble, Ranger from Haysend

Attribute Level	
7	
Specialties	
Beast-Lore, Herb-Lore, Shadow-Lore	
Distinctive Features	
Determined, Hardened	
Relevant Skills	
Athletics ♦♦♦	Hunting ♦♦♦♦
Awareness ♦♦♦♦	Stealth ♦♦♦♦
Explore ♦♦	

STORY SEEDS

Stranger Apples

Hogo Brandybuck is an enthusiastic and some would say quite eccentric apple farmer in Buckland. His orchards seem to yield more with every harvest and rumours abound on what he does to his trees in order for them to grow so big. It is very likely “unnatural”, as some of the more sensible Hobbits would say.

A bit of a recluse, Hogo sells his famous apples and cider straight from the farm with the help of his brother Isengar and together they have a small but very prosperous business, attracting customers from the whole of Shire.

Recently, several customers have returned disappointed and empty-handed to Bucklebury, having found the secluded farm wildly overgrown and seemingly abandoned overnight. The Company is asked to find out what has become of the brothers, the reason for their sudden disappearance and the unnatural quick growth of the plants in the garden.

Crow's Nest

Villages and farms close to the High Hay have reported thefts of precious items. Strangely, crows have reportedly been seen leaving the rooms through the window with the items in their beaks. At first they were just a few seemingly unconnected events, but lately there have been so many cases that this has become hard to ignore.



Raven © by Līga Klaviņa, used with permission

The fact that the crows all escape over the hedge and disappear among the shadows of the Old Forest discourage many Bucklanders to further pursue the matter. But when the gilded

and ornate cup of the Buckland Brewers Guild is stolen, the Company becomes part of an effort to finally set these things right.

Trials and troubles

The time has come to find new ranger recruits for the Buckland Bounders and Lily Rumble is more determined than ever to make sure only the hardiest of hobbits join their ranks.

The trials will be held in the Overbearing Marshes, testing wits, toughness and wisdom of those willing to try. For the next three days, skills in tracking, hunting and survival in the wilds will be crucial for success as they move through the treacherous and challenging landscape.

It's always a hard but fair trial, ending in a merry feast in Bucklebury for all candidates, though something leaves Lily unusually worried this year. Something stirs in the mist, strange sounds echo over pale waters and wildlife that once wandered the marshes has become more and more rare.

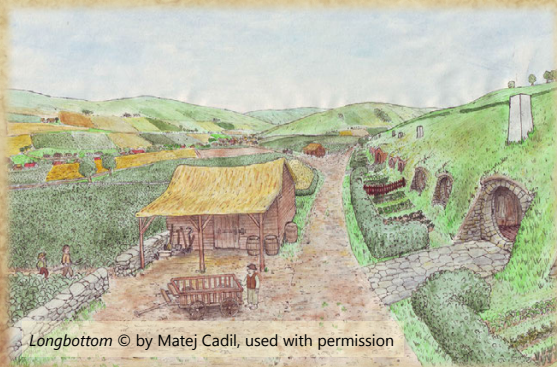
Memories under a tall oak

Annabella Maggot, a hobbit from Bucklebury, wanders off into the woods one afternoon and returns only several days later with muddy clothes, twigs in her hair and utterly confused as to where she is, how she got there or why she was away for so long.

She keeps humming a song to herself with a strange melody, singing of a time when a vast forest covered the lands. Annabella has no recollection of what happened to her, but after a few days she starts telling stories of people with strange names and places that no-one has ever heard of. After a week she disappears again without a trace and her family asks the characters to help find Annabella and bring her home again.

Old people

The Wedmath Feast in Bucklebury is always a day of much merry-making, markets and friendly competition. One of the most enjoyable events during this week-long party is the Brandywine Fishing contest, with many a Bucklander sitting leisurely on the docks, smoking pipes and watching more ambitious friends try to catch the biggest fish of the day.



Longbottom © by Matej Cadil, used with permission

This year however, the hobbit that got the most attention was old Moro Twofoot – not due to his fishing success, but from pulling up a wooden figure out of the water. Weed-covered it was, weirdly carved and shaped like a short and very broad man. Most of the onlookers laughed and told him to give it back to the river, but Moro took great pride in his catch and brought the figure home with him to Newbury and that's when trouble started.

It began with small accidents and strange occurrences: a chair tipping over by itself and candles blowing out without obvious reason. Then it escalated and Moro began fearing that he wasn't alone in his little smial anymore and he felt as if being watched. Cold air and bad dreams making his home feel less safe than before and then the neighbours began having problems too. When the characters are asked to help, fear already holds a firm grip on both Moro's mind and heart and he is quite desperate to escape his ill fate and whatever caused it.

Down the rabbit-hole

Hidden on an irregular mound of rocks and boulders and surrounded by the green flats of Haysend, the crumbling circle of an old well can be found, whose stones are slowly swallowed up by earth and grass. Though abandoned and for-

gotten for many years, the water is still fresh. But the shaft is deep and there are no means of reaching the water in the darkness below unless you bring your own rope and bucket.

There is no settlement close by and no remnants of older buildings from the time when the well was supposedly in use can be found. There are even rumours that elves built the well long ago and used it when passing through the area.

Now, Poppy Maggot has gotten hold of an old yet incomplete map showing that the well might lead to something more than just cold water. It seems to grant access to a deeper passage and she plans to explore it thoroughly at the next opportunity. But she of all hobbits knows the dangers of walking into uncharted tunnels and asks the characters to follow her down the well and find out how deep it really goes.

Trouble on the border

The Bounders come in with reports of big-folk settlers coming up from the South who after crossing Sarn Ford, established an outpost on the eastern banks of Brandywine river, south of the Overbourne Marshes.

Normally this wouldn't worry the Bucklanders, as settlers come and go. But these men attack travellers to steal their food and equipment and apparently have no problem taking lives if need be. Worrying news from Longbottom tell of a whole caravan gone missing and the settlers have now begun to explore upriver by boat. It is feared that they will try to gain a foothold in Hobbit territory.

The Bounders have brought all these news to the Master of Buckland and he has called for a council in Brandy Hall. The characters are invited and asked to assist in this most serious situation.

SOURCES

- The Lord of the Rings, Appendix C
- Tolkien Companion
- Tolkien Gateway
- The One Ring Roleplaying game

APPENDIX

In the Appendix you find the following full-scale images:

- The line of rulers for Arthedain, Cardolan and Rhudaur (smaller version shown on p. 79) from *Divided Arnor*
- The campaign map for *The Black Arrow* (smaller version shown on p. 118).