

THE HALL OF FIRE FAN WEBZINE



Issue Forty-Four
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The Battle of Helm's Deep – by Darrell Sweet



GREETINGS,

Salutations... Hello All!

It is I, your faithful editor, here, bringing you Issue #44 chock full of interesting new ideas, additions to your game, and overall LOTR RPG goodness. Since the official release of the Lord of the Rings license by Decipher, we are guaranteed not to see any more publications related to our beloved game – we can only hope that if ever things pick up again for Star Trek that we might be able to steal from it. But don't fear, there is still *The Hall of Fire* to light the way.

This month sees a Random encounter centered around some of the vicious wyrms spawned of Utumno, some optional rules for magic, Carangul (but not the one you may be thinking of), and more!

Have fun and roll some dice,

Matthew A. Kearns
aka GandalfOfBorg
Editor

THE MRKX:FR:CM HALL OF FIRE

The Unofficial Lord of the Rings RPG Webzine

IN THIS ISSUE

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS	2
• Minor Wym	
FAN FLAVOUR	4
• Ring of Foresight	
IT'S ALL OPTIONAL	5
• Alternative Magic Rules for CODA	
ALLIES AND ADVERSARIES	7
• Carangul, the Red Wizard	
TRUSTED LOCALES	9
• Ancient Numenorean Camp	
THE ROAD GOES EVER ON...	11
• The Troubles of the Tweenlands, Act 3	
ART CREDITS	21
CALLING ALL GAMERS	22



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RANDOM ENCOUNTERS:

by Matthew "GandalfOfBorg" Kearns

MINOR WYRM

Lurking in the darkest folds of the forest or in the most desperate of mountain passes, Minor wyrms – the outcast breed of the great drakes – make their nests and wait to strike.

Description: This encounter is comprised of a Minor Wym, the stunted drake of the Withered Heath driven off from its home lest it be eaten by its kin.

Type: Combat

Numbers: (Standard) Base creature*
(Advanced) Base creature + additional characteristics

TN Equiv: 12

Locales: Minor wyrms make their nests, and verily their means of snaring prey, in the densest and remotest parts of forests, the mountains, the sea, and underground. They require a place where they can use the terrain to their advantage as they are not as big as their brethren or as strong. These fell creatures also over time adapt to their environment, gaining benefits from it for a further edge seeking out prey.

ENCOUNTER PROBABILITY

Roll 2d6 to determine if there is an encounter. If there is, roll a 1d6 for the encounter's difficulty.

<u>TERRAIN TYPE</u>	<u>RESULT</u>	<u>DIFFICULTY</u>
Forest	5-8	1-3 Standard, 4-6 Advanced
Plains	2, 12	1-2 Standard, 3-6 Advanced
Mountains	4-9	1-4 Standard, 5-6 Advanced
Desert	2	Always Advanced
Swamp	4-8	1-3 Standard, 4-6 Advanced
Tundra	12	Always Advanced
Underground	2, 3, 11, 12	1-2 Standard, 3-6 Advanced
Sea Coast	2, 12	1 Standard, 2-6 Advanced
At Sea	2, 3, 11, 12	1-2 Standard, 3-6 Advanced



STATS

* These are the stats of the base creature template:

Attributes: Bearing 16 (+5), Nimbleness 18 (+6)*, Perception 16 (+5)*, Strength 14 (+4), Vitality 10 (+2), Wits 18 (+6)

Reactions: Stamina +8, Swiftiness +10*, Willpower +10, Wisdom +5

Defence: 16

Movement: 12

Skills: Armed Combat: Natural Weapons (Claws, Maw) +14, Insight +10, Intimidate (Fear) +15, Language: Sindarin +6, Language: Khuzdul +6, Language: Westron +8, Observe (Smell, Spot) +15, Track (Scent) +12

Spells: Break Binding, Evoke Fear, Forgetfulness, Fog-weaving, Misdirection, Power of the Land, Sense Power

Special Abilities: Armour (8), Multiple Attacks (claws, maw), Natural Weapons (claws, 2d6), Natural Weapons (maw, 3d6), Slow Healing, Terror

Size: Large (6 Wound Levels, 2 Healthy)

Health: 14

Courage: 5

Renown: 8

UNIQUE SPECIAL ABILITIES

Slow Healing: Minor wyrms have a slow rate of natural healing. After 1 year of rest, they regain 2 Health points per month.

UNIT STATS

See HOF #25 for how to create a mass combat unit using the following modifiers:

Command +1

Ranged -2

Melee +10

Toughness +10

Support -2

Units of these creatures do not have the class or type descriptors. A mass combat unit of such creatures has 4 Large Minor Wyrms, 2 Mammoth Minor Wyrms, or 1 Huge Minor Wym. Though these creatures are intelligent, they do not normally fight in this fashion and thus have the Beast descriptor.

UNIT STATS

Refer to *The Hall of Fire*, Issue #25, for how to create a mass combat unit.

SPECIAL ENCOUNTER ABILITIES AND MODIFIERS

ADAPTATION

After spending more than 5 years and every 5 years after that in one lair, a Minor wym can choose from the following list of creature special abilities:

- Camouflage
- Chameleon
- Cunning
- Ferocious
- Lure
- Resistance

For each ability chosen, increase the TN by 1.

LAIR

The Minor wym knows the lay of its territory like none other and uses it to good advantage. When a wym is encountered at or near its lair, it receives an affinity bonus from Survival to its Defence. If fighting as a mass combat unit with the same location restriction, Minor wyrms gain an affinity bonus to their Toughness from Survival.



SIZE

Minor wyrms range in size from Large up to Huge. Increase the Strength and Vitality scores and natural weapon damage in accordance to the rules in *Fell Beasts and Wondrous Magic*. Each increase in size increases the TN by 2.

STALKING

When a Minor wym is stalking you and decides to attack, the reckoning can be devastating. The wym receives a +5 bonus to combat skills during the surprise round or a +3 bonus to combat skills during the first round of combat. If wyrms fighting as a mass combat unit have not been detected by their enemy, the unit gains a +1 Strength bonus on the first round of combat between the units.

DEFINITIONS

Fellowship: Number of characters, PC and NPC, in group

Standard: This is the base number of foes suitable for a beginning level group (0-3 advancements)

Advanced: This refers to the base creature template from above augmented with options in the section about special encounter abilities and modifiers.

FAN FLAVOUR

RING OF FORESIGHT by Chrissy Walles (starsuns@yahoo.com)

"You have the gift of foresight. Tell me what you have seen."

"I looked into your future and I saw death."

– Arwen and Elrond, The Return of the King movie

DESCRIPTION

A lesser ring of power made of platinum, it was designed to evoke the night sky. The ring's band is smooth except for seven tiny stars etched on the inside of the band. It is set with a large cabochon of white moonstone flanked by two small diamond chips. A slightly larger diamond, representing the star of Earendil, gleams to the right of the moonstone. It is cool to the touch. A rather large ring, suitable for a man's hand in its natural size, it can change its size to fit its current wearer better.

HISTORY

Long ago in the Second Age, the ring was crafted by an elf-smith as an example to his apprentice. The smith had the gift of Foresight, and he was able to imbue the ring with that power. He gave the ring to his apprentice after its completion, hoping the gift would help his young (for an Elf) apprentice gain wisdom.

But knowledge of the future isn't always a good thing. The elf-smith's apprentice lost the ring, and his life, in an ambush by Orcs. He was traveling through the Misty Mountains on his way to Lórien from Rivendell. The elf-smith apprentice foresaw his own death and tried to avoid it; he took a different path through the mountains than he normally would have, going over the High Pass rather than through Moria, which led him straight into the orcish ambush. The Orcs in turn fell to a troll.

EFFECTS

The ring gives its wearer the gift of Foresight. The moonstone occasionally seems to catch the eye and put the wearer in a very brief trance during which he may prophesy or receive visions. The player cannot do anything else during the brief trance.

In game terms, he gets the Foresighted edge. If the wearer already has that edge, he receives an additional attempt at seeing the future per game session. If the wearer is unaware of the ring's power, and therefore his player isn't asking to make foretelling attempts, he begins to experience mysterious dreams and vague forebodings. The Narrator may choose to have the player make Willpower tests without telling her what they are for, with successes leading to prophetic dreams or visions.

Once the player learns the ring's abilities, the character may attempt to place himself in a trance by looking into the ring's moonstone and making a Willpower test. The TN for the first attempt is 20. Every time the wearer succeeds, or is in possession of the ring for a month, the TN is lowered by five to a minimum of five (the longer she wears the ring, the more used to going into a trance she is, so the easier the Willpower test).

As specified in the Core Book (pg. 165-166), the Narrator is in control of what the character learns. The ring was crafted using Sauron's techniques and so is ultimately corrupting to mortals, requiring Willpower tests to resist Corruption (pg. 234, *Core Rule Book*) and addiction (pg. 85, *Fell Beasts and Wondrous Magic*). Corruption is not actually acquired unless the ring is deliberately used by the wearer. Addiction tests begin after the wearer receives his first vision, whether it was invoked on purpose or not.

USAGE

The ring could be found in a troll hoard, or on the hand of the troll's killer or his descendants, as a family heirloom. If the Narrator wants the troll to be one of the ones who was killed by Gandalf in *The Hobbit*, the ring could be in the town of Dale or the Lonely Mountain, a bit of loot that the one of the Dwarves brought with him when he went after Smaug. Player characters might receive it as a "reward" from a corrupted individual or it could have been stolen and the owner wants the heroes to get it back for him. It might be on the hand of a bandit-chieftain who always seem to know when guards or a caravan are coming, a tempting prize once the bandits are defeated.



IT'S ALL OPTIONAL

ALTERNATIVE MAGIC RULES FOR CODA by Steve Landers

This set of alternative magic rules introduces new primary and secondary attributes, a new reaction, and a new skill.

THE "AURA" ATTRIBUTE

Aura is a primary attribute that represents a character's general magical nature. It governs the character's ability to use magic, and to some extent to defend against it.

Apply a character's racial modifier to his or her Aura score.



Race	Modifier
Man	+0
Man - Dunedain	+1
Man - Elf Blooded (stacks w/ Dunedain)	+1
Hobbit	-1
Elf - Noldor	+4
Elf - Sindar	+3
Elf - Sylvan	+2
Dwarf	-1
Orc	-3
Troll	-5



LEVEL	PENALTY
1. Normal	0
2. Challenging	-2
3. Difficult	-4
4. Dangerous	-8
5. Insane!	-16

Note: Elves will never let their Manna level drop below the Difficult Level because of their strong awareness of the nature and danger of magic.

OPTION: THE "MAGIC" SKILL

This skill can be used in place of the Magery reaction score.

The Magic skill's governing attribute is Aura.

This is the ability to learn about magic, and more importantly to cast spells. Whenever an initial spell test is needed, this is the skill that should be used.

THE "MAGERY" REACTION

The Magery reaction score is determined by adding together the character's combined Bearing and Aura modifiers.

This reaction is the character's ability to use magic. It is what is used for casting magic, and also determines how much magic a character can cast during any day. This reaction score cannot be improved.

THE "MAGIC POINTS" ATTRIBUTE

Magic points, also called *Manna points*, work similarly to Health points. As a character casts spells, he uses Magic points to fuel them. As he passes levels of uses it becomes more difficult to cast spells, and the effects of failures become more hazardous.

There are five (5) levels of Magic points. Each level holds a number of points equal to the character's Magic reaction score.

CASTING SPELLS

In order to cast a spell, the character must make a Magic test or a Magery Reaction Test against the Weariness TN of the spell being cast. Subtract the Magic Penalty as well as weariness level from the Magic Test. Use the current penalty level, not the level that they will be at after the spell is cast. Thus, if a mage has one point left in the Normal level, and he casts a 2 point spell, he would still test for this spell as if he were at the Normal level.

If the test is successful, then the spell is cast as normal. If it fails, then go to the Calamities section to see what the result is.

In either case, the character will have to use his Magic Points to fuel the spell. If the character succeeds with a superior Success or better, then the cost of the spell is halved. If it is a 1 point spell, it is cast for free.

The cost of each spell is equal to the Weariness TN divided by 5 and rounded up. So a spell that has a Weariness TN of 6 would cost 2 points.

ALLIES AND ADVERSARIES

CARANGUL, THE RED WIZARD by ZehnWaters (zehnwaters@hotmail.com)

With the invasion of Rohan nigh and Saruman's great victory to be had, the White Wizard felt it time to scout out new locations for breeding and training. Valecarn, Saruman's magician apprentice, and a few of Saruman's other overseers were chosen to complete this mission. They left shortly before his army departed for Helm's Deep and Isengard's destruction. When word came of the White Hand's fall, they and their underlings scattered to the wind.

Valecarn returned to Umbar and the comforts of his wealthy and powerful family's home. There he accumulated ancient texts and influence over the people for he had learned much from Saruman about the ways of influencing others. A crafty and great speaker was he (though not as skilled as his teacher) and more so once he was able to charm some old noble out of an ancient tome.



While poring over his most recent prize, Valecarn came across a mysterious reference to a sorcerer named Carangul. Scouring his library Valecarn was unable to find any more information on this mysterious and dark figure. Intrigued, he sought out more information from without but found nothing more than cryptic letters or brief encounters. Unable to find anything solid on object of his obsession, Valecarn instead attempted something quite dangerous: he took Carangul's name. His plan was to draw out the sorcerer, hoping that stealing his name would prove an insult, and confront him. Alas, for him it was not to be, as the original was no longer.

In an attempt to bring forces to back up his exceptional mind, the newly renamed Carangul sought out the others with whom he escaped the destruction of Isengard, using what contacts and influence he still had in the orkish society. He soon found that

the other overseers were still alive, hiding in the Misty Mountains, in the crags of what remained of Mordor, or scattered abroad in the East or South. He invited them to the ruins that lie outside Umbar.

There they devised a most devious plan to regain lost power. Since King Elessar hunted the Orcs endlessly, they were scattered and, without leadership, they were easy prey. However, united they could prove a powerful force. Distrustful as they were, the overseers saw few other options and the hope of mortally wounding the Gondorians was too sweet to pass up. Carangul sent them to gather up all the Dunledings, Orcs, Uruks and Half-Orcs that they could find and gather them in secret to the ruins.

While waiting for the scattered minions to resurface, Carangul traveled North to the Shire in search of any of Saruman's remaining treasures. Arriving at the borders to The Shire, he was thwarted in progress as King Elessar had declared the land of the Hobbits off-limits... thwarted, yes, but only for a moment. Putting all his powers to work, Carangul slipped past the guards and into the land of the Hobbits. There he found Saruman's Ring of Command in the property of a silly hobbit farmer. Upon stealing the ring from the hobbit, he returned south to his home in Umbar.

Using all the eager servants at his disposal, the ruins were rebuilt into a large fortress with a tall central tower. He called it Minas Caraband, the Tower of the Red Fortress, for he had all of the building stones dyed crimson. The Half-Orcs, Haradrim and few Dunledings worked during the day and the Orcs and Uruks worked during the night to keep quiet his true motivations.

The place of his power complete, Carangul set up the hierarchy of his forces. Dùach* became lieutenant of the Tower and Mòg* became General of Carangul's forces. Wrnach, Lughùr and Radlùk* all retained their old positions, working in the labyrinthine structures that were built as the basement beneath the massive fortress.

Eventually Carangul gained great favor among the Umbareans because of the way that he had strengthened their proud city with his mighty fortress, and they made him their Mat-P'tan, or High Chief. He soon sent out spies and agents in an attempt to destroy the West through subterfuge, encouraging, or instigating, riots, feuds and other mischief. With the forces of the West distracted with their own problems, they were too busy to pay attention to what transpired in the South.

* *Isengard Sourcebook*

CARANGUL, THE RED WIZARD

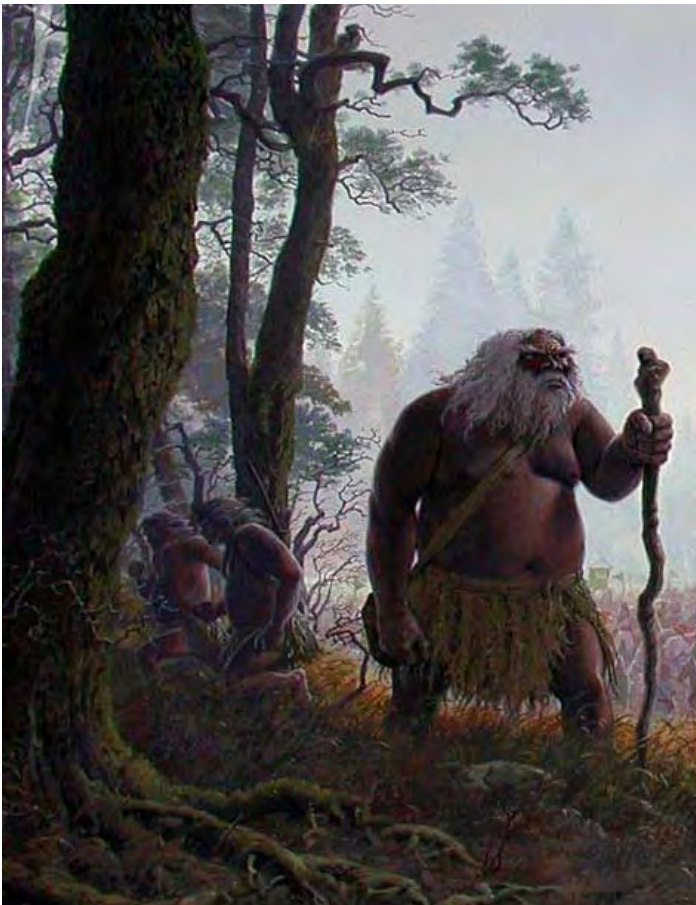
RACE:	Dunédain (Black Nùmenorean)
RACIAL ABILITIES:	Adaptable (Willpower), Dominion of Men, Skilled
ATTRIBUTES:	Bearing 13 (+3)*, Nimbleness 8 (+1), Perception 8 (+1), Strength 8 (+1), Vitality 8 (+1), Wits 14 (+4)*
REACTIONS:	Stamina +3, Swiftmess +3, Willpower +7*, Wisdom +5
ADVANCEMENTS:	72
ORDER:	Loremaster, Magician, Wizard
ORDER ABILITIES:	Ancient Scripts, Charm of Power, Cross-Order Skill (Smithcraft, Stonecraft), Expertise (Black Nùmenoreans), Imposing, Longevity 3, Magicians Charm, Mastery of Magic, Robe of Authority, Sanctum, Sanctum Power, Scroll Hoard (Lore/History: Umbar (Black Nùmenoreans)), Sense Power, Servant of Udûn, Spellcasting 7, Spellcasting Specialty (Sorcery), Staff, Student of the Shadow, Wizard's Heart, Wizardly Power, Wizard Spellcasting 4
SPELLS:	Blast of Sorcery (practiced 2), Crafting-spell, Create Light, Display of Power, Enslave Beast, Evoke Fear, Farseeing, Fair-seeming, Fiery Missile, Finding and Returning, Fire of Udûn (practiced 2), Fireshaping, Flame Arrow, Forgetfulness, Fortify Works, Kindle Fire, Lame, Mind Speech, Misdirection, Quench Fire, Quicken Orc-spawn, Sap Strength, Sense Power (ability), Shadows and Phantoms, Slumber, Smoke-weaving, Spawn-were, Spoken Thoughts, Steady Craft, Uncanny Industry, Veiling Shadow, Voice of Suasion (no incantations), Vulnerability to Fire, Watershaping, Wind-mastery, Wizard's Fist, Wizard's Guise, Wizard's Hand
ROBE ABILITIES:	Blinding Light, Defense, Hue Shift
CHARM ABILITIES:	Defense, Spell Patterns (Create Light, Fireshaping, Kindle Fire, Smoke-weaving, Quicken Orc-spawn, Sap Strength)
SKILLS:	Appraise (Ores) +4, Armed Combat: Clubs (Staff) +5, Craft: Breeding (Orcs, Uruks, Animals) +5, Craft: Industry (Wheels and Gears) +4, Debate (Negotiate, Parley) +10, Inquire (Converse) +7 Insight +10, Inspire +8, Intimidate (Power) +7, Language: Adûnaic +8, Language: Elvish (Quenya) +8, Language: Elvish (Sindarin) +8, Language: Mordor (Black Speech) +4, Language: Orkish (Isengard Dialect) +4, Language: Dunlendish +8, Language: Haradric (Umbarean) +9, Language: Westron +8, Lore/Race Elves (Silvan Elves, Realms) +4, Lore/Race: Men (Realms, Southrons, Black Nùmenorean) +9, Lore/Race Orcs (Breeding, Realms) +5, Lore/Race Uruks (Breeding, Realms) +5, Lore/Realm Gondor (Harondor) +4, Lore/Realm: Nan Curunir (Geography) +4, Lore/Realm: Near Harad (Umbar, Geography) +8, Lore/History: Umbar (Black Nùmenoreans) +12, Lore/Spellcraft: Enchantment Items +10, Lore/Spellcraft: Fire +6, Lore/Spellcraft: Sorcery +10, Lore/Wilderness: Fell Beasts (Breeding) +6, Observe (Spot) +7, Persuade (Charm, Fast Talk, Oratory) +7, Ride (Warg) +7, Search (Research) +10, Smithcraft (Silversmith, Weaponsmith) +5, Stealth (Sneak) +6, Stonecraft (Building, Fortification) +5, Survival (Desert) +6
EDGES:	Accurate Recall, Command 4 (Legions of Umbar), Craftmaster, Curious, Fair, Hoard 7 (Minas Carangul, Umbar and all they hold), Natural Archivist, Rank 4 (Mat-P'tan of Umbar) Strong-Willed
FLAWS:	Arrogant, Dark Heart, Proud
HEALTH:	7
COURAGE:	4
REOWN:	10
CORRUPTION:	Corrupt
EQUIPMENT:	Medallion, robes, Saruman's Ring of Command, scrolls, staff

TRUSTED LOCALES

ANCIENT NUMENOREAN CAMP by David "Issachar" D.

The Eryn Vorn, also called the Black Woods, lies on a peninsula on the southern coast of Eriador, just east of the point where the Brandywine river empties into the ocean. Wild Men still dwell in the forest there, a bare remnant of the tribes that once ranged across Minhiriath.

As the Eryn Vorn is fairly near to Lindon, the Blue Mountains, Cardolan and Dunland, adventurers from these regions might occasionally encounter the Wild Men of the Eryn Vorn. Though most are secretive and fearful of outsiders, the clans that live nearest the forest borders have learned a little of the ways of neighboring folk, and at times have traded with them.



An encounter with two Wild Men not far from the forest edge leads to the discovery of the locale in this article. (The Wild Men speak broken Westron, having only 2 ranks in that Language skill, so there may be some difficulty communicating.) In addition to the expected assortment of pelts, carved stone and ivory figurines, and beads of semi-precious stones, these Wild Men also offer in

trade the long leaves of a dried plant, which they describe as a "magic plant" that heals wounds and sicknesses.

With a TN 10 Lore/Wilderness: Herbalism test, the PC's can identify the plant as *athelas*, and will recall that the plant grows only where the men of Numenor once lived or camped. If they inquire further about the *athelas*, the Wild Men will say that there is a place not far away where the plant grows.

If the PC's do not recognize the *athelas* or understand its importance, they might notice (TN 7 Observe (spot) test) that on the necklace worn by one of the Wild Men, there hangs a silvery piece of metal curiously out of place among the other dangling ivory beads and figures. Though worn with age, the oval-shaped piece of metal still visibly bears the etched shape of a stylized tree.

A TN 10 Lore test that deals with the history or culture of Gondor or Numenor will let the PC's recognize this emblem as the **White Tree**, the symbol of the Numenorean kings. The emblem is ancient, and has been an heirloom to the Wild Men for countless generations.

If asked about the piece, the man will say that it is very old, and came from the Tall Men from across the water. Long ago they had dealings with the forest folk, he says, and there is a place where the Tall Men once tarried to meet with their chieftains. In that place, the magic plant has always grown since the days before his fathers' fathers.

If the PC's have shown themselves to be friendly, the Wild Men might offer a new trade: to take them to see the place where the magic plant grows and where the Tall Men once stayed. They will ask for something valuable in return, and might negotiate awhile before concluding terms that are acceptable to both sides.

It takes about six hours of travel through the Eryn Vorn before the group arrives at the site, which is a bare hilltop marked with a ring of moss-covered boulders. The two guides tell the PC's that this is the place where the Tall Men met and talked with the chiefs of the forest folk, and that the Tall Men slept not far away, by a small stream on the other side of the hill.

It turns out that *athelas* does indeed grow on the banks of that stream. There is also a stone marker that must once have been sharply chiseled, but is so worn with age and weather that its edges are blunt and the etched writing on its surface is almost faded away entirely. The inscription is in Adunaic, the language of the men of Numenor, and a TN 7 Language: Adunaic or TN 20 Language: Westron test is required to understand it.

The inscription briefly recounts the year of the Numenoreans' arrival and the terms of friendship agreed upon between them and the Druedain (Wild Men) of the forest. Some of this writing is obscured by moss. If the PC's scrape away the moss, they might notice (TN 8 Observe (spot) test) that there appears to be other writing lower down on the face of the stone.

If uncovered, the lower inscription proves to be quite different: it is scratched shallowly and unskillfully into the stone, and its style, for those that can read it, is not that of an official decree but a common soldier's statement. The scratches record the death of Celebin, soldier of Numenor, friend and brother to his comrades. "We laid him by the clear water," the inscription ends.

Some twenty feet from the edge of the stream, athelas grows thickly around the base of a small mound which, when inspected more closely, turns out to be a cairn of rocks on which tufts of grass have grown in the thin dirt.

The party might feel it improper to open the grave of a warrior who, as far as they know, perished nobly in the service of his country. If they are well-versed in Numenorean lore (TN 18 Lore/

History: Numenor), however, they might recall that the customary burial practice for a soldier away from home was to lay the body with the head facing west toward the Undying Lands, and the soldier's belongings at his feet. With a bit of care, the PC's can uncover these belongings without disturbing the body.

If they do so, the PC's will find the following:

- A long knife
- A longsword
- A helmet
- A coat of mail

No other items survived the passage of the millennia, but such was the workmanship of the smiths of Numenor that these arms and armour, though dirt-covered, are only a bit tarnished and have not been eaten by rust. None of the items is magical, nor confers any special bonuses to its wearer or wielder. But they are worthy pieces all, and might in time achieve heroic status in the hands of those who fight against the Shadow.



THE ROAD GOES EVER ON...

THE TROUBLES OF THE TWEENLANDS by David "Issachar" D.

ACT 3: SHROUDS

In which heroes challenge the warlord Maradoc in his stronghold and break his reign of terror over Minhiriath.

INTRODUCTION

This chronicle takes place in Minhiriath, also known as Cardolan, the southernmost part of the divided kingdom of Arnor. It is set early in the year 3019 in the Third Age, concurrent with some of the events in J.R.R. Tolkien's book *The Fellowship of the Ring*. The adventure is suitable for low-level characters with 0 - 2 advancements.

In Act 2 (*Hall of Fire* issue 43), the heroes defended the village of Chalnen against an attack by soldiers of the warlord Maradoc. They then forged a false report on the outcome of the battle, donned soldiers' garb and delivered it to the garrison in disguise.

The garrison sent out a messenger to deliver the report to Maradoc himself, whose location is unknown save to his closest associates. The messenger, a man named Connor, is a favorite of Maradoc's, and the PC's hope to follow him to his master and thereby surprise the warlord in his lair.

SCENE 1: BEASTS

It is fifty miles from the garrison at Argond to Maradoc's secret stronghold at the ruins of Delbarad. The first leg of the journey follows a road used by merchants and other travellers. About 15 miles out from Argond, the road crosses a river at a ford, and shortly beyond this point the messenger, Connor, will leave the road and set off across country. By that time it is growing dark.

Connor is on horseback, but is moving at a walking gait, not a gallop. If the PC's have no horses of their own, they must follow the road as quickly as they may. The Narrator should provide signs to let the group know that they are still on the right track. For example, let them reach the crest of a hill and see Connor at a distance on the road below them, having stopped to give his horse a short rest.

If the party does not witness Connor leaving the road after he fords the river, place a travelling NPC or two nearby who can inform the PC's that they recently saw a rider leave the road and head almost due north across the countryside.

After leaving the road, Connor does not travel far before he stops to make camp at the edge of a small wood. As night falls, his small fire should help the party locate him if they were not able to keep up with him.

Connor will eventually become aware of his pursuers, either through his own alertness or through an animal bound by sorcery to Maradoc, probably a crebain or a large, dark grey squirrel. Although Connor cannot communicate with beasts, the animal's behavior will make him understand that something is amiss.

When Connor realizes that he is being watched and followed, he will swiftly leave the fire and his horse and disappears into the trees. The PC's must make Track tests opposed by Connor's Survival tests to pursue him. However, even if he eludes the party, Connor will not stray far, but will attempt to watch them covertly and determine who they are and what they are up to. If this happens, Connor may inadvertently give himself away by stepping on a dry stick or making some other noise, and the party should have a good chance of capturing him.

If the party captures Connor, he pretends to be a frightened man pressed into service and terrified of Maradoc's uncanny magics. (In fact, he desires to wield the same power that Maradoc does, and has begun to apprentice himself to the sorcerer warlord.) Connor will use his social skills to allay the party's suspicions of him, and will promise to lead them to Delbarad without betraying their presence or purpose.

The party's interaction with Connor constitutes a substantial portion of this scene. Play Connor as a talented confidence artist who knows how to adapt quickly to a situation, make himself seem genuinely likeable, and conceal his true motives.

The story Connor tells the PC's is that he is a conscript to Maradoc's army, formerly a tinker in Finnsburh, a small town close to Argond to the southwest. He serves Maradoc because he fears for himself and for his family.

Connor's true past is quite dark. He views other people as pawns, and has committed theft, rape, murder and other dark deeds in the pursuit of personal gain. However, although his conscience is hardened it is not dead altogether, and if a PC's questions become too probing, Connor might let his friendly facade slip a bit and show anger.

Connor will ask many questions about the PC's, trying to seem innocently inquisitive. He wants to gather as much information as he can before escaping to report to Maradoc.

Connor sets out again around dawn, although the sky is so overcast that no sunlight appears on the horizon through the thick shroud of heavy clouds. Traveling to Delbarad should take nearly all day, over hilly and sometimes wooded lands.

Three encounters occur during this trek.

ENCOUNTER A

As the group travels through open land, they notice large birds, dark against the iron-clad sky, wheeling far overhead. These crebain observe the travelers for awhile before departing and flying north in the direction of Delbarad, one or two at a time.

As the party travels through forested land, they occasionally glimpse a wolf distantly through the trees. From time to time one wolf will stop following the party and depart, but another will appear soon after.

These are not combat encounters, but mood-setting events. They feed the belief that the party is being watched and followed by beasts in the service of Maradoc.

ENCOUNTER B

This encounter takes place in an area where the forest has grown thicker. The party is ambushed by three wild boars and a brown bear lying in wait behind trees and bushes. A TN 12 Observe (Spot) test is required to notice the beasts before they attack.

Boars

Brg 5, Nim 10 (+2), Per 9 (+1), Str 11 (+2), Vit 11 (+2), Wit 3

Stam +2, Swift +2, Will +0, Wis +1

Defence 12, Health 13, Move 6, Size Medium

Skills: Armed Combat: Natural Weapons (tusks) +5, Run +5, Stealth (sneak) +3, Survival (forest) +4, Swim +8

Special Abilities: Armour 2, Natural Weapon (tusks, 2d6+4)

Brown Bear

Brg 8 (+1), Nim 6, Per 6, Str 18 (+6), Vit 16 (+5), Wit 4

Stam +6, Swift +0, Will +1, Wis +1

Defence 10, Health 22, Move 12, Size Large

Skills: Armed Combat: Natural Weapons (Paws) +3, Climb +8, Intimidate (fear) +4, Observe (hear) +2, Run +8, Survival (forest) +4, Swim +7

Special Abilities: Armour 3, Bear Hug (on superior success w/ claw attack, auto-grab and hug for 2d6 dmg), Natural Weapon (2d6, claw)

If Connor is with the party, he takes this opportunity to attempt an escape. If he is bound with ropes, squirrels will approach and gnaw through them to release him. If Connor escapes, he hurries north to Delbarad. However, the party will discover that they no longer need him as a guide, for if they continue north they soon emerge from the forest and see a broad open area of hills and downs ahead. From the top of the first rise, the fortress of Delbarad can be seen in the distance, only a mile or so away.

ENCOUNTER C

Delbarad looms atop a tall hill. Partway up the hill, the PC's hear hoarse cries and see the shapes of men hastening down the slope toward them. As the figures draw nearer, their frailty becomes apparent. These men are gaunt and bedraggled, with wild, unkempt hair; some of them are naked. They are unarmed, but leap and stumble down the hill toward the PC's and attack them with bare nails and teeth.

These are prisoners of Maradoc on whom the warlord has practiced his sorcerous arts for many weeks and months. Most are deranged and remember little, if anything, about their lives before their imprisonment. Fear of Maradoc drives them with an bestial ferocity that compensates for their physically weak state.

These poor creatures were not released as a serious line of defense, but to dismay the heroes for Maradoc's amusement. There are at least five of them, or as many as eight if the party of PC's is large. The heroes will have to decide quickly whether or not to defend themselves with deadly force. If they opt to be merciful, they will find stunning attacks effective against the frail men. Magical displays such as *Display of Power* or *Evoke Awe* will cow the men, or the PC's might attempt more mundane methods of intimidation. In the latter case, the PC must succeed a TN 15 Intimidate test to make the men afraid enough to temporarily forget their fear of Maradoc.

Bestial Men

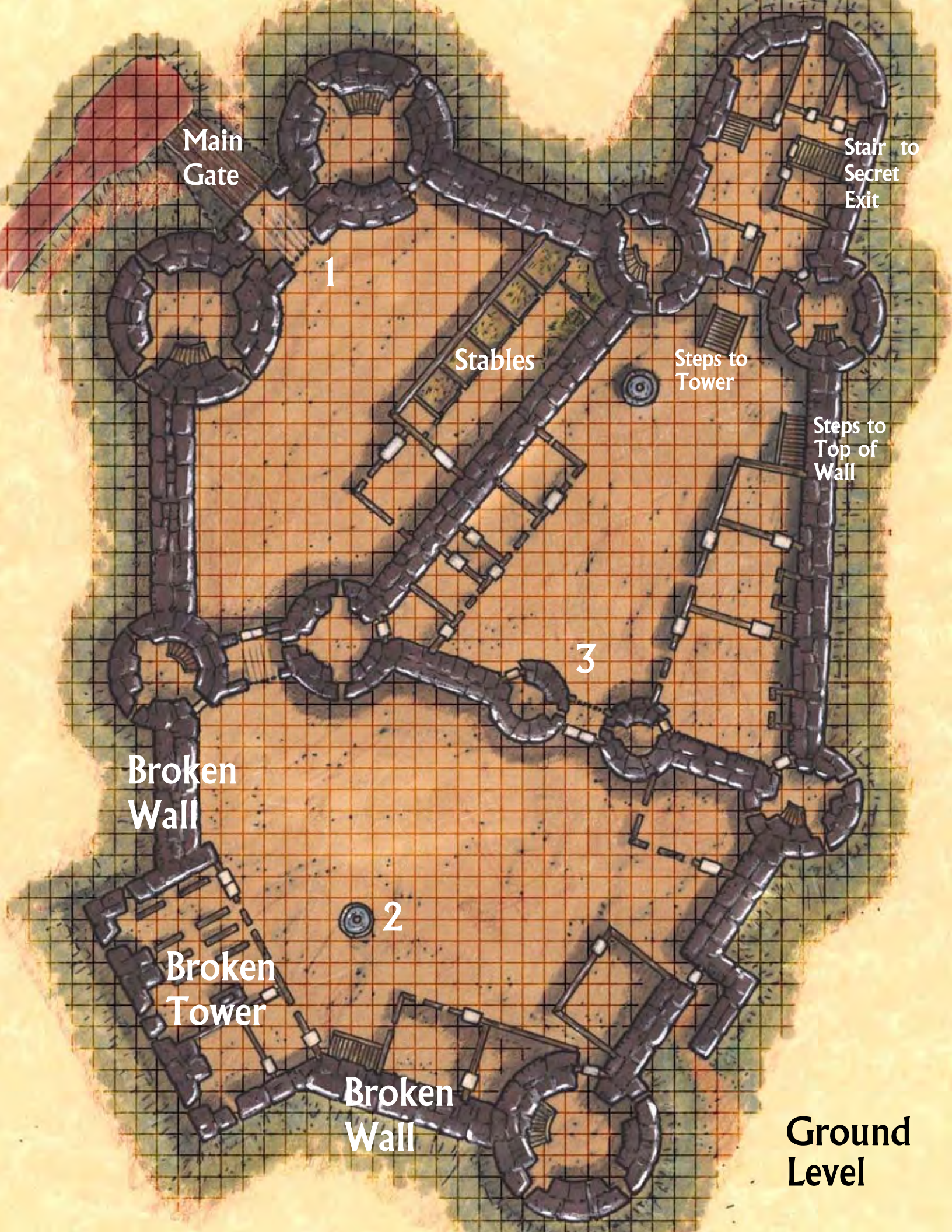
Brg 5, Nim 6, Per 6, Str 5, Vit 5, Wit 5

Stam -1, Swift 0, Will -1, Wis 0

Defence 10, Health 4, Move 6, Size Medium

Skills: Unarmed Combat (brawling) +2





Main Gate

Stair to Secret Exit

1

Stables

Steps to Tower

Steps to Top of Wall

3

Broken Wall

2

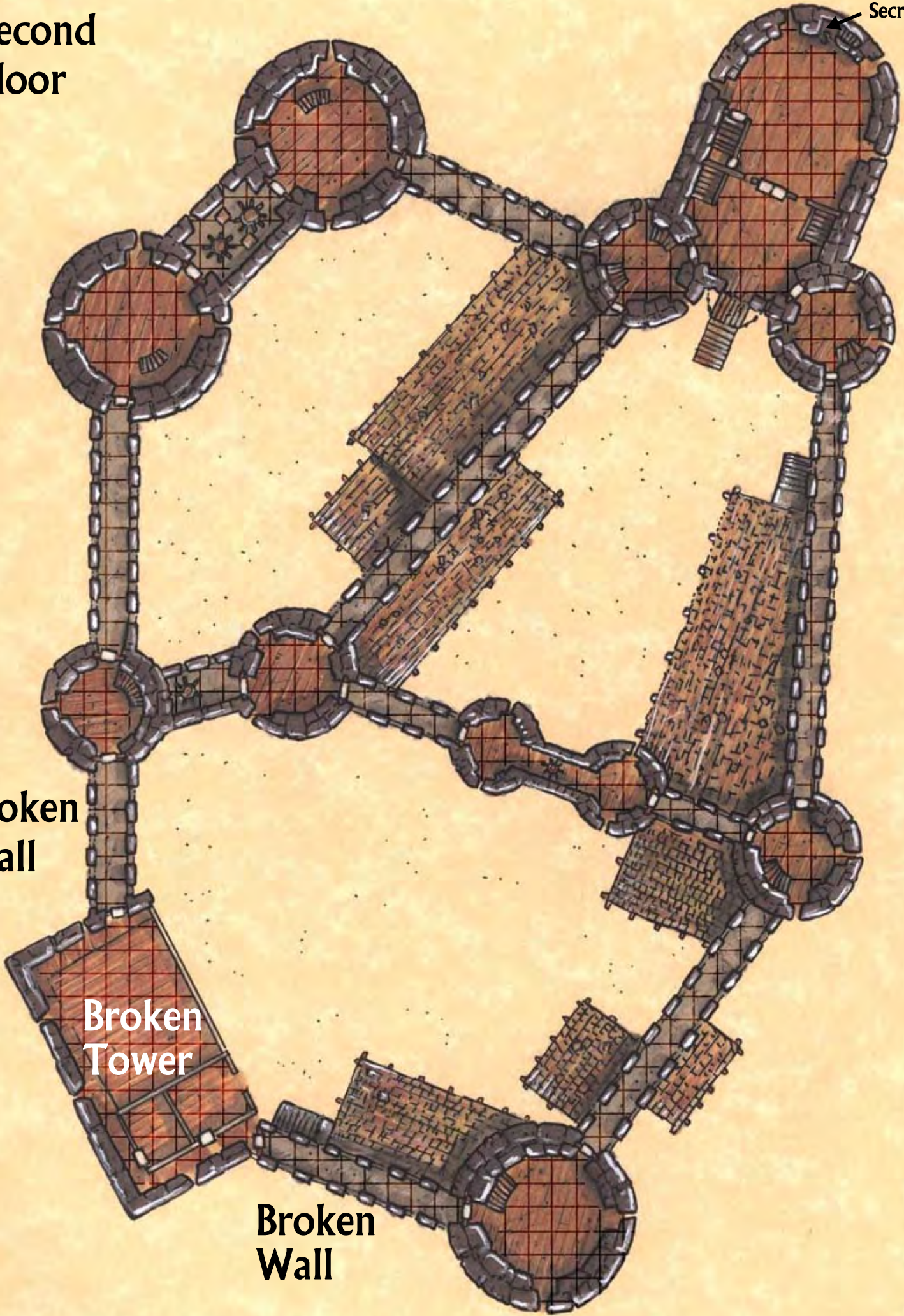
Broken Tower

Broken Wall

Ground Level

Second Floor

Secret Door



Broken Wall

Broken Tower

Broken Wall

SCENE 2: SHADOWS

As soon as the PC's near the crest of the hill, the soft evening light grows suddenly dark, as though night had fallen in the space of only a few moments. If a character succeeds a TN 10 Willpower test, the darkness quickly passes and they see that it is still evening after all. Otherwise, the character behaves as though he were acting in dark conditions with the associated penalties.

A character who sees through the shroud of false darkness can tell this to the others, granting them a second Willpower test which they make with a +2 bonus. Some characters might still be unable to pierce the veil over their sight, and must continue to act as though it were fully night.

ENTERING DELBARAD

Delbarad is a ruined keep, but unlike many other old fortresses across Cardolan, which have been torn down to their very foundations, most of it remains standing, perhaps because of its desolation – there are hardly any inhabitants for leagues around.

Nonetheless, all the doors and gates in Delbarad are broken and stand open. The roofed square tower in the lower left corner of the map has collapsed, along with most of the wall on either side of it. It lies in rubble now and is a possible means of entrance (Climb test at TN 7) if the party wishes to avoid the main gate.

The narrow entrance at the rear of the keep is also open and unblocked, if the PC's venture far enough around the building to discover it. The hill drops away sharply just beyond the walls on this side of the keep, and a narrow footpath along the rocky brink offers the only access to the rear door.

Within the keep, most of the interior buildings on the ground level are collapsed or in disrepair, their wooden roofs having fallen in and decayed long ago. One exception is the stables, over which a partial roof has been crudely rebuilt. Three horses are tethered beneath this shelter.

Note that the wedge-shaped inner section of the keep is self-contained, accessible only by its gate. The walkways atop the outer walls, should the PC's climb up to them, do not connect through any towers to those atop the inner walls.

SHADOWY ENCOUNTERS

After releasing his hapless and bestial prisoners against the PC's, Maradoc casts *Shadows & Phantoms* to fill his fortress with dark and unearthly visions. The PC's will see shadows creeping at the corners of their vision, but upon turning to look they will find nothing. At three numbered points on the map, these illusions create encounters for the party.

At point number 1, just inside the main gate, a low creaking noise is accompanied by the illusion of a heavy black portcullis lowering very slowly between the gate-towers. At once, a group of twenty phantom guards in black, face-concealing armor approaches the party from multiple directions, brandishing spears with wickedly

barbed tips. A PC who believes the guards are real may try to retreat from the castle before the illusory portcullis traps them within the walls. Upon attacking the guards, their phantom nature is immediately revealed, and they fade into nothing. The phantoms themselves never attack the party, but only stand menacingly in their path.

At point number 2, a horde of shadowy spiders the size of large dogs appears to climb up out of the dilapidated well in the castle yard. Like the phantom guards at the gate, these monsters do not attack the PC's, but they block the path to the inner gate.

At point number 3, just before the PC's move beneath the gate into the inner courtyard, two large black horses with riders cloaked in black step from behind the gate-towers on either side and confront the party. A wave of fear hits the PC's like an almost physical force. "Leave now, or die," says one rider in the Dunlendish tongue, his voice deep and gravelly.

Maradoc has heard of the Black Riders, as have many in the northern parts of Cardolan since the Nazgul overran the Ranger camp at the Sarn Ford four months ago. Whispers of the terrible Riders have made their way across the land even while Maradoc waged his campaign to seize power. Now he uses the reputation of the Black Riders to his own advantage by conjuring up forms that resemble them, while at the same time casting two new spells: *Evoke Fear* and *Shadow of Fear*. As an added measure, the forms of the Riders conceal two living warriors; it is one of these who speaks the warning.

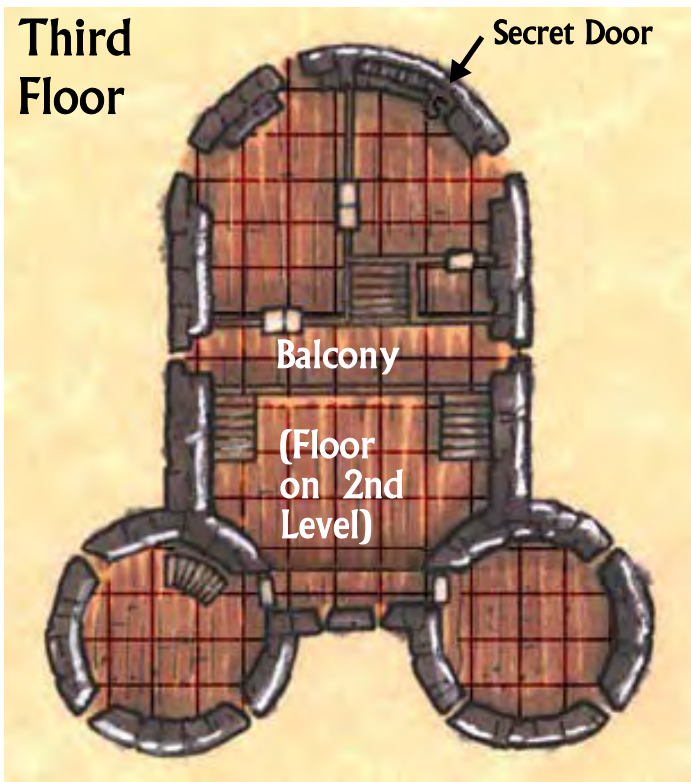
Bolstered by the *Evoke Fear* spell, an average Intimidate (fear) test result by Maradoc will be 25. This is far higher than the opposing Willpower test of most PC's, so it is likely to produce debilitating fear. However, the heroes have a few factors in their favor. Firstly, each PC receives a +2 bonus to the Willpower test because they have already discovered the phantom nature of the illusions Maradoc has thrown at them so far. Any PC who resisted the shroud of darkness that fell when they approached Delbarad gets an additional +2 bonus.

A TN 10 Lore test using a Lore skill that concerns either the servants of the Shadow -or- current events in the region will allow a PC to realize that the Rider's voice does not at all match reports of Nazgul speech. This gives a +3 bonus to the Willpower test. (That the voice spoke in Dunlendish is unremarkable, since Nazgul can most likely speak that language.)

A TN 10 Observe (spot) test allows a PC to notice glimpses of the real warriors beneath the illusions of the Riders; this gives an additional +3 bonus to the Willpower test.

Beyond these factors, PC's can attempt Inspire tests and spend Courage points to overcome the effects of the sorcerous fear. As soon as any PC attacks the phantom riders, the illusion vanishes and the real warriors are revealed. They attack the party at once. (Note that the *Evoke Fear* spell remains in effect for twelve rounds once Maradoc casts it.)

Third Floor



THE MAIN TOWER

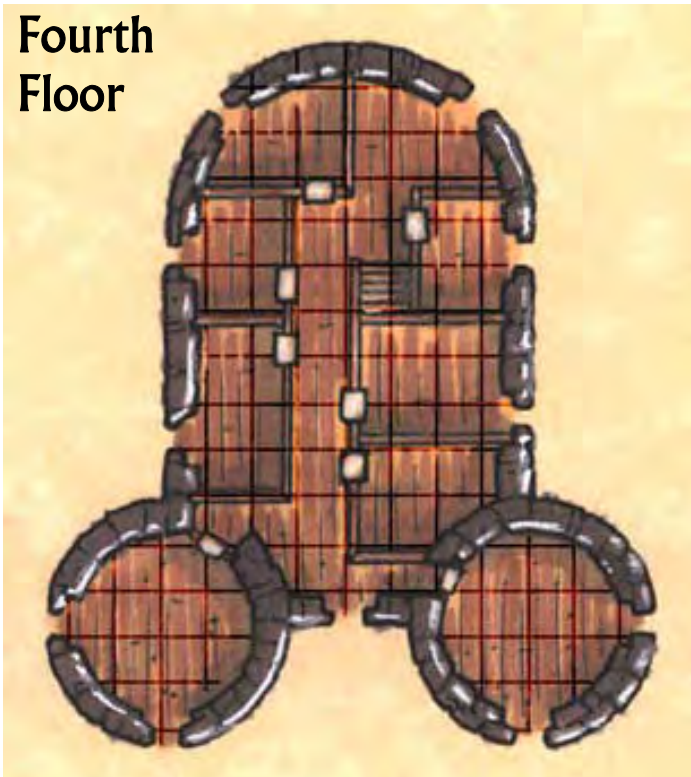
There is no door at ground level that permits access to the main tower. Instead, near the tower wall a set of stone steps rises from the courtyard to a height of about fifteen feet. Long wooden planks laid side by side span the eight foot gap between the top of these steps and the doorway to the second floor of the tower. (In former days, there was a small drawbridge into the tower.)

As the party draws near, however, soldiers appear at the open doorway and withdraw the planks, leaving no platform by which to cross the gap and enter the tower. A PC can attempt to leap over the gap, but this is difficult (TN 10 Jump test) because there is no room at the top of the steps to get a running start. In addition, the two soldiers lurking just inside the tower doorway will attack any PC who jumps across, attempting to push the PC back out the door and down to the courtyard fifteen feet below.

An alternative means of entry is to climb the nearby steps to the top of the wall and enter through one of the small round towers. These steps were built of wood and are long gone, but stones that once supported the wooden boards still jut from the castle wall itself and can be climbed as if they formed a narrow stairway. This requires a TN 10 Acrobatics (balance) test. A character who successfully mounts to the top of the wall can lower a rope to assist other climbers, giving them a +2 bonus on the test.

Although Maradoc's soldiers are not armed with ranged weapons and cannot shoot at the PC's, they will watch and prepare to defend whatever entrance they think the PC's will use. (Remember that all the doors shown on the map are gone, leaving open doorways.)

Fourth Floor



The second floor of the main tower consists of two large rooms. The outer room is double-height, its ceiling thirty feet above the floor, with twin staircases rising to a third-floor balcony. The inner room has a staircase leading down to the ground floor, and a secret door in the back wall that conceals a narrow stairway to the third floor. The third and fourth floors of the tower contain many residential rooms that Maradoc and his accomplices have been using.

The main confrontation with Maradoc's remaining soldiers will take place in the large open outer room on the second floor of the tower. Maradoc himself does not take part in the fight, for his spellcasting has wearied him and he has no spells that are of much use in combat. (He will cast *Voice of Command* to stop a PC who gets past the soldiers and approaches him.)

Maradoc observes the fight from the balcony until it seems that his men are losing, at which point he disappears behind the balcony and goes to the secret door on the third floor. He waits until the PC's are searching the third floor for him, then descends to the second floor, leaves the secret passage, and continues down to the ground floor. Here there is a stairway down to a tunnel, which leads to a hidden exit on the rocky side of the hill.

ESCAPE?

Maradoc will attempt to escape from Delbarad by leaving the hidden exit, coming back around and re-entering the castle through the main gate, and retrieving his horse from the stables. He casts *Shadows & Phantoms* once again to cloak himself and his mount in darkness, before riding off across the hilly lands. By this time night has truly fallen, and it will be quite hard to detect or track the sorcerer.

If you want to end the adventure here with a victory for the PC's, allow them plenty of chances to catch Maradoc in his hiding place and along his escape route. However, the chronicle as designed continues for two additional chapters before Maradoc's ultimate defeat. These chapters are provided in outline form at the end of this article (I have never developed them beyond the outline stage).

**SCENE 3: SUMMONS**

The heroes make some interesting discoveries after they defeat Maradoc's soldiers and begin to explore the main tower. In a fourth-floor tower room, they find scrolls that Maradoc was studying. A TN 10 Language: Black Speech test reveals that these scrolls were written by cultists of Morgoth and they describe how to harness the lingering power of their dread lord to call and command lesser spirits that he corrupted. With a TN 10 Lore/Spellcraft test, a PC examining the room can determine that Maradoc's preparations for attempting this magic were nearly complete. He might have soon summoned such a being had the PC's not intervened when they did.

On the ground floor of the main tower, the party finds prisoners who were not yet driven to madness by the sorcerer's devices. One of these, Lut, was a high-ranking member of the Folcwalda clan prior to Maradoc's takeover. He thanks the heroes for their rescue and vows to set things back in order. This will require secrecy at first, since Maradoc's remaining captains will not relinquish power easily. Lut intends to summon other former Folcwalda clan leaders to a secret meeting to discuss their plans.

Because he was forced to leave in such haste, most of Maradoc's belongings are still in the tower. These include the following:

- A small locked coffer (TN 12 Legerdemain (lockpicking) test to open) containing 912 copper pennies, 38 silver pennies, and 11 silver pieces
- Two well-made cloaks trimmed and lined in fur
- A broad leather belt with a silver buckle
- A beaded necklace strung with several carved boar's tusks
- A tortoise-shell comb and two silver hair clasps

These treasures were looted from conquered towns, and Lut insists that the money must go to the legitimate Folcwalda clan leadership, to help them defeat Maradoc's remaining army.

However, Lut concedes that the PC's have earned a reward for their deeds in overthrowing the warlord. He offers them a tenth of the coins and whatever lesser items of value they wish to take. (Any of the aforementioned items are available, and Narrators should feel free to add others that are suitable for the characters in their game.)

CONCLUDING ACT 3

Reward each PC with 500 XP at the conclusion of this Act, plus any additional experience point rewards you wish to give out for good roleplaying.

Caranlas the Elf, his errand completed, asks the PC's to return with him to Rivendell, where he is certain they will be summoned before Lord Elrond to provide an account of Maradoc's doings and other news from Cardolan.

If the PC's decide to accompany Caranlas, the journey to Rivendell will be uneventful. However, upon arriving there, they will find the house of Elrond in mourning – word has just arrived from Lorien that Mithrandir has perished in the mines of Moria. Thus begins the next chapter in the chronicle *The Troubles of the Tweenlands*.



NPCs

CONNOR

Race: Middle Man **Gender:** Male

Racial Abilities: Skilled, Adaptable, Dominion of Man

Attributes: Bearing 8 (+1), Nimbleness 10 (+2)*, Perception 10 (+2), Strength 7, Vitality 8 (+1), Wits 8 (+1)*

Reactions: Stam +1, Swift +2*, Will +3, Wis +2

Defence: 12 **Health:** 8 **Courage:** 4

Orders: Rogue **Advancements:** 2

Order Abilities: Breadth of Skill (HOF 35:11), Fleet-footed

Skills: Armed Combat: Blades (short sword) +5, Climb +2, Conceal (weapon) +2, Guise +2, Inquire (converse) +3, Jump +2, Language: Dunlendish +7, Language: Westron +5, Legerdemain (pick pocket) +2, Lore/Group: Dunlendings +4, Lore/Realm: Cardolan +4, Lore/Spellcraft: Beasts and Birds +1, Lore/Wilderness: Survival +2, Lore/Wilderness: Wild Beasts +1, Observe (hear) +4, Persuade (charm) +5, Ranged Combat (shortbow) +3, Ride (horse) +1, Run +3, Search +2, Stealth (hide) +4, Survival (forest) +3

Edges: Dodge, Furtive, Honey-tongued

Flaws: Dark Secret, Fealty (Maradoc)

Gear: Short sword, Shortbow, 20 arrows, Gold necklace



MARADOC'S SOLDIERS (8)

Race: Middle Man **Gender:** Male

Racial Abilities: Skilled, Adaptable, Dominion of Man

Attributes: Bearing 6, Nimbleness 8 (+1), Perception 6, Strength 10 (+2)*, Vitality 8 (+1)*, Wits 6

Reactions: Stam +4*, Swift +2, Will +0, Wis +0

Defence: 11 **Health:** 10 **Courage:** 4

Orders: Warrior **Advancements:** 2

Order Abilities: Warrior-born

Skills: Armed Combat: Polearms (Spear) +9, Intimidate (Power) +7, Language: Dunlendish +5, Language: Westron +3, Lore/Group: Dunlendings +4, Lore/Realm: Cardolan +3; Observe (Spot) +3, Ranged Combat: Spears (Spear) +6, Ride +5, Siegecraft (Unit Leadership) +6, Survival (Forests) +4

Edges: Dodge, Hardy, Warwise **Flaws:** None

Gear: Spear, Leather armour

MARADOC

Race: Middle Man **Gender:** Male

Racial Abilities: Skilled, Adaptable, Dominion of Man

Attributes: Bearing 12 (+3)*, Nimbleness 6, Perception 8 (+1), Strength 6, Vitality 8 (+1), Wits 10 (+2)*

Reactions: Stam +5, Swift +1, Will +6*, Wis +3

Defence: 10 **Health:** 8 **Courage:** 4

Orders: Noble, Magician **Advancements:** 5

Order Abilities: Courtier, Magician Spellcasting x2

Skills: Armed Combat: Blades (Long knife) +2, Debate (parley) +5, Inquire (interrogate) +6, Intimidate (fear) +6, Language: Dunlendish +7, Language: Westron 6, Language: Black Speech +5, Lore/Group: Dunlendings +4, Lore/History: Cardolan +3, Lore/Realm: Cardolan +3, Lore/Spellcraft: Beasts and Birds +3, Lore/Wilderness: Wild Beasts +3, Observe (Spot) +6, Persuade (charm) +6, Ride (horse) +3

Edges: Rank 1, Resolute, Stern, Tireless

Spells: *Beast Speech, Beast Summoning, Enslave Beast, Evoke Fear, Forgetfulness, Shadow of Fear, Shadows & Phantoms, Voice of Command, Voice of Suasion*

Gear: Long knife, gold ring set with an emerald

THE TROUBLES CONTINUE!

The Troubles of the Tweenlands is designed to be a three-chapter chronicle, with three Acts per chapter. Only the first chapter with its three Acts has been developed fully and published in *The Hall of Fire*. The remainder of the chronicle is stubbed out in outline form and presented here for Narrators who wish to use it, or just to see how the story ends.

CHAPTER 2: WIZARD'S WAKE

ACT 1: THE LAST HOMELY HOUSE

Scene 1: A Farewell

The Elves of Rivendell hold a long vigil in memory of Mithrandir, without whom many believe there is now no hope. The PC's have time to explore Imladris and learn from the Elves while the time of mourning lasts. Meanwhile, Elrond has not forgotten the threat of Maradoc the Dunlending sorcerer, and within a fortnight his scouts are reporting new rumors of trouble around Bree.

Scene 2: A Leave-taking

Elrond commissions the PC's to journey to Bree and try to pick up Maradoc's trail from there. They depart Rivendell with gifts of *Iembas* wrapped in silver leaves and with other tokens of goodwill, and set out westward for the Bree-lands in the company of a few Elves who are bound for the Grey Havens.

Scene 3: A Separation

The traveling company is attacked by a gang of ruffians led by a Half-orc. In the Half-orc's possession is a tattered note that describes a simmering conflict between two rogue factions in Bree. As the company nears the town, the Elves take their leave of the PC's and journey onward to the Grey Havens.

ACT 2: BREE-MEN

Scene 1: Butterbur

At the Inn of the Prancing Pony, the PC's learn of the terrible recent events in Bree, and the continuing danger from rough men who come from "away south".

Scene 2: Ferny

Bill Ferny, the target of Butterbur's strongest suspicion and disapproval, is not at home and appears to have been gone for some time. In his house, the PC's find more details of the split between ruffians who work for "Sharkey" and those who have shifted their questionable allegiance to a new, more local, leader. They also learn of several places where Ferny has had meetings with one side or another.

Scene 3: Nagluk

Pursuing these new leads, the PC's venture outside Bree to a cabin where they surprise and confront the Half-orc Nagluk and several of his comrades. These men are in Maradoc's service, and have recent instructions from the sorcerer. These documents speak of new raids in Minhiriath and taking control of the Old South Road, better known as the Greenway.

ACT 3: THE GREENWAY

Scene 1: White Snows

After replenishing their supplies in Bree, the PC's head south along the Greenway. The recent snow makes travel slow and difficult, and white wolves assail the group as they enter the untamed lands.

Scene 2: Black Ashes

The PC's encounter a raided and burned hamlet along the Greenway. Several miles further on, they find another, also ravaged. The trail is growing warmer, and they hurry to catch up to Maradoc's forces.

Scene 3: Red Flames

As the PC's approach a third village, they hear shouts and see curls of smoke just starting to rise. Rushing to the villagers' aid, they discover that this is a trap. The shouts and carefully-controlled fires are from Orc soldiers, who spring their ambush and surround the PC's. A hard battle ensues, and afterwards the victorious PC's take shelter in the gutted village as another heavy snowfall begins. The blizzard prevents them from resuming their journey for several days.

CHAPTER 3: RUIN

ACT 1: BEGGAR'S ROW

Scene 1: Cat and Mouse

The PC's arrive at Tharbad to find the ruined city occupied and held by Maradoc's minions: Orcs, Half-orcs and Men. Though the foes are too numerous to challenge, Tharbad is a large city and the patrols are unable to prevent the PC's from sneaking into the ruins. Once inside, the PC's use stealth to learn what part of Tharbad Maradoc is using as his headquarters.

Scene 2: Rat Trap

The PC's don't realize that they are walking into a trap. Maradoc has allowed them to remain "undetected" and to learn false information about his location. When the PC's take an opportunity to trail an Orc lieutenant to Maradoc's presumed hiding place, the trap is sprung, as the heroes discover that the building they have been led to shelters a large troll, armored and wielding an enormous hammer. The troll's wild attacks, however, go awry and shatter the columns supporting the ancient structure. It and the PC's are buried beneath tons of fallen stone as the building collapses.

ACT 2: THIEVES' QUARTER

Scene 1: Alive Without Breath

Tharbad's builders did their work well, and the PC's have a couple of rounds to react as the structure breaks apart around them. A massive chunk of stone falls through the floor, revealing a cavity beneath filled with swiftly moving water. Escaping into the subterranean flume, the PC's are swept along for a hundred yards or so before crashing against an iron grate. Desperately, they break through the brittle bars and emerge into an ancient chamber. As they recover their breath, a pale, luminous figure appears among them. This is the ghost of Ingbor, a knight of the city who dishonored his sworn duty through greed and cowardice. The Elves of Eregion had brought a gift to Tar-Aldarion, King of Numenor, who was visiting the city he had founded. Charged with guarding this treasure, Ingbor coveted the item so much that he contrived to steal it and to let the blame fall upon a fellow guardsman. His ghost has remained in Tharbad through the weary centuries, and he implores the PC's to help him restore his honour so that he may depart this world.

Scene 2: As Cold as Death

Guided by the ghost of Ingbor, the PC's venture through frozen, long-forgotten tunnels below the Thieves' Quarter of Tharbad, contending with ancient locks and traps, some of which are still in operable condition. At last they arrive at the place where Ingbor hid the treasure while he was still a living man: a burial vault.

Scene 3: All in Mail

The vault is vast and filled with the catacombs of Tharbad's honored knights, their bones still clad in ceremonial armor. Ingbor's own tomb is among them, for his guilt went unknown until his death. The ghost indicates a stone that may be removed from its place in the wall, and in the niche behind it the PC's discover the treasure: a jewel beautiful to behold, with a white stone in a silvery setting. Ingbor tells the PC's that there is a virtue in the jewel to drive away the dark, and that its makers of old would be glad to have it used against such an evil as the sorcerer Maradoc. So saying, the ghost fades into the dim air, and where he stood the PC's now see a narrow stair carved into the wall, spiraling up.

ACT 3: KING'S HALL

Scene 1: Fear

At the top of the stair, a lever causes a stone block to move aside, and the PC's emerge into a back room of the King's house. The jewel suddenly blazes with glory, creating an *Evoke Awe* effect before which foes such as the lesser Orcs flee away. The Dunlendings and Uruk-hai, however, stand and fight, and it is clear from their shouts that Maradoc occupies the upper level of the house.

Scene 2: Fire

As the PC's advance through their ranks, the defending Orcs desperately set fire to the staircase in the grand hall to prevent the heroes from accessing the upper floors. While the party is kept busy fighting their enemies, the staircase collapses. The fire is now spreading. As the PC's search for another means of gaining the second floor, they discover a dumbwaiter shaft in the kitchen, through which one person at a time may ascend. As the PC's move from room to room on the second floor, they find the most direct path to the stairs blocked by flames. At last they gain the stairs and ascend to the top floor.

Scene 3: Foes

The roof above this large room has caved in, revealing a dusky sky shrouded in grey clouds. At the far end of the debris-littered room stands Maradoc with an unusually large Uruk-hai bodyguard. This creature's mind has been stripped away and its body possessed by an evil spirit. Flames dance in its eyes and it grins wickedly as it hefts an enormous mace, on which Maradoc has laid ruinous spells. As flames begin to consume the ancient floor one section at a time, the final battle with Maradoc begins. If the PC's are victorious, they can only escape the conflagration by leaping from a corner of the house into the river below. The rushing water buffets them and they are quickly swept downriver.

Scene 4: Awake!

The PC's regain consciousness in the care of a group of Rangers of the North, who arrived in time to witness the conflagration and dispatch the remaining Orcs and Dunlendings. Word of Isengard's fall has just arrived that night, and a clear sunrise over the pristine snow seems to hold out the promise of new hope.



ART CREDITS

Cover: "The Battle of Helm's Deep" by Darrell Sweet	p 7: "Edwin" by Bioware, altered by David "Issachar" D.
p 1 (background): "Fellowship at Caradhras" by unknown	p 9: "Ghan-buri-ghan" by Ted Nasmith
p 1 (top corner): "Houses of Healing" by the Hildebrants	p 10: "Map of Middle Earth, version 7" by Thierry Jungels
p 2: "Bairanax" by Rob Alexander	p 12-13, 15: Castle maps by Wizards of the Coast
p 3: "Bairanax at home" by Rob Alexander	p 16: "Bird Symbol" by Becky Carter-Hitchin
p 4: "Moonstone ring" by unknown, altered by David "Issachar" D.	p 17: "Beren" by E.W.
p 5: Clip art wizards by unknown	p 20: "Grey Havens Departure" by David Wyatt
p 6: "The One Ring in Tengwar" by Thorondor	

WHAT'S OUT THERE

This is a list of Web sites along with Decipher's official Web sites. We have found they supply useful *Lord of the Rings* game information.

DECIPHER'S LORD OF THE RINGS RPG HOME http://lotrrpg.fanhq.com DECIPHER'S LOTR RPG BOARD http://forums.fanhq.com/viewforum.php?f=164 THE HALL OF FIRE WEBZINE SITE http://halloffire.org ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ARDA http://www.glyphweb.com/arda/default.htm FAN MODULES FOR MIDDLE-EARTH http://groups.yahoo.com/group/fan-modules SCOTT'S RPG CENTRAL http://www.geocities.com/scott_metz/ CHRONICLES OF THE NORTH http://roleplay.avioc.org/index.htm MERPCOM http://www.merp.com OTHER MINDS MAGAZINE http://www.othermindsmagazine.com	THE MAD IRISHMAN http://www.mad-irishman.net THE LAST ALLIANCE http://thelastalliance.com RPG TOOLS FOR DECIPHER'S CODA GAMES http://groups.yahoo.com/group/rpgtools/ THE STEWARD AND THE KING http://www.stewardandking.net THE TOWER HILLS http://homepage.mac.com/jeremybaker/towerhills TREK-RPG.NET http://forum.trek-rpg.net/index.php CODA WEBZINE REPOSITORY http://groups.yahoo.com/group/coda_webzine THE ONE RING.COM http://www.theonering.com/ THE ONE RING.NET http://www.theonering.net/
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