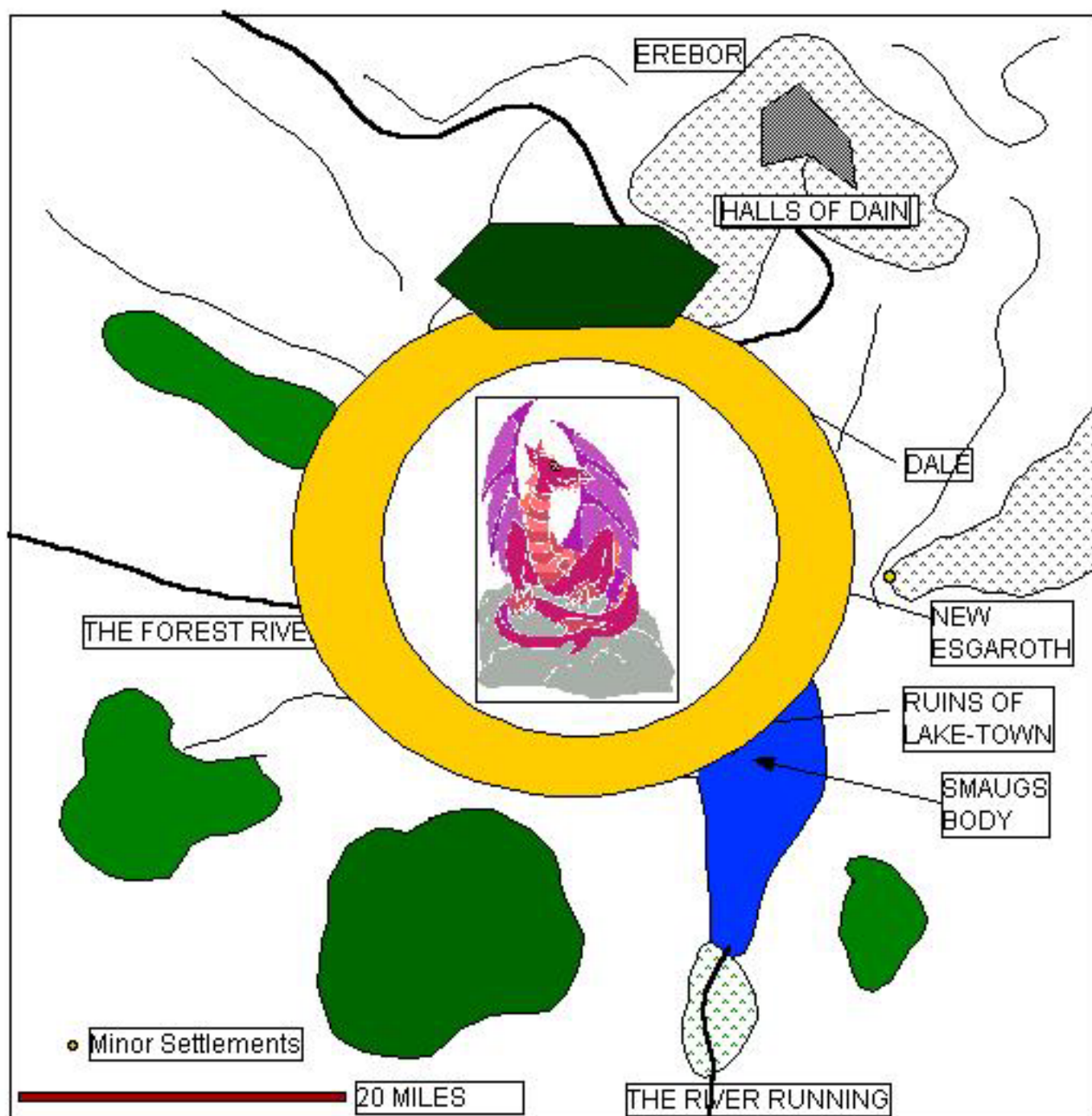
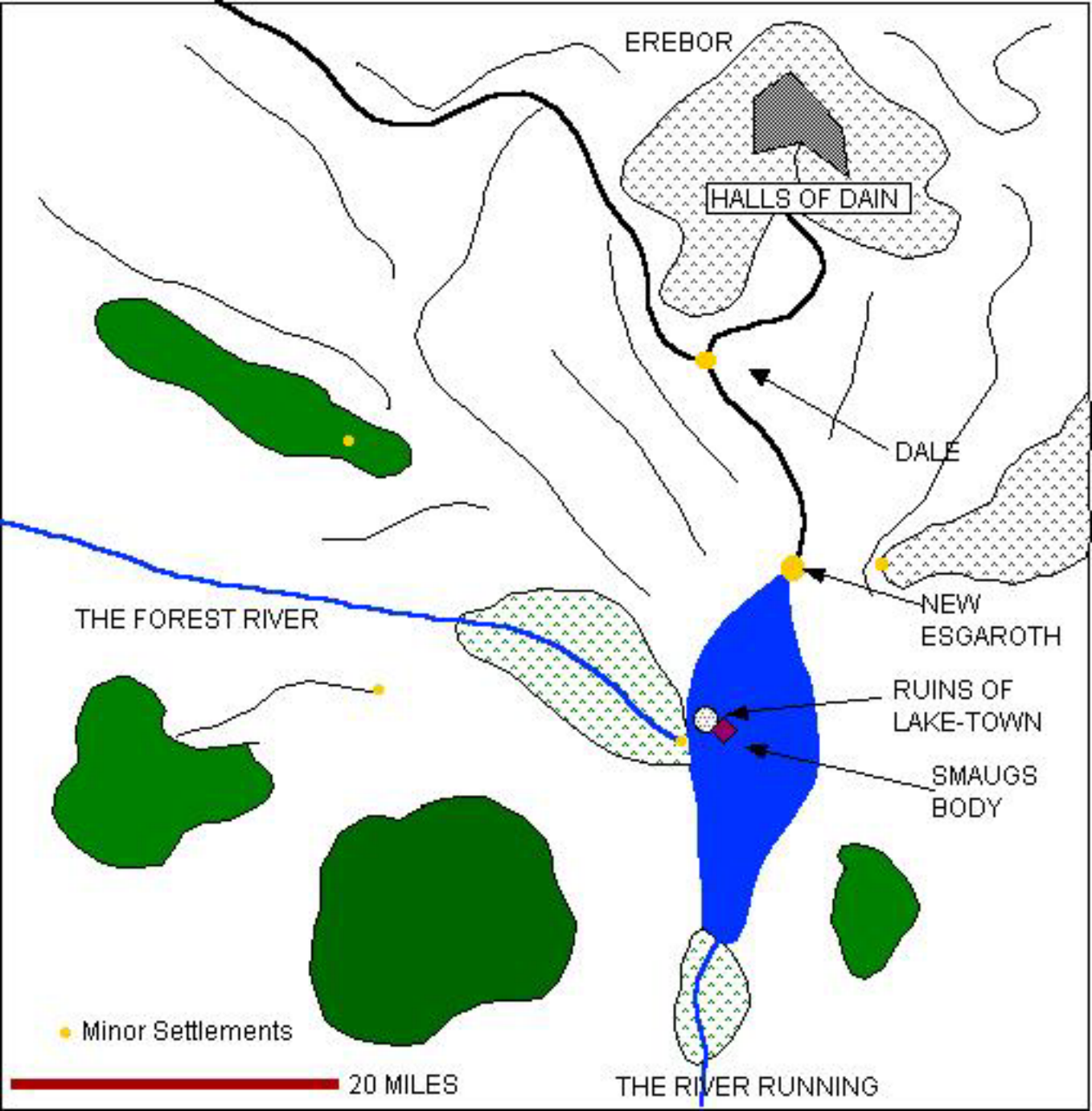


# THE DRAGONS RING

## An Introductory Adventure for Deciphers 'Lord of The Rings' Roleplaying Game Adventure 1





## Foreword

Thank you for looking at my first attempt to make a chronicle for the new 'Lord of the Rings' Role-playing game by Decipher.

I am by no means a Tolkien expert. I do very much enjoy his creations and am a great fan and participant in rpg's. In attempting to make 'chronicles' I have sourced only 'The Lord of the Rings' and 'The Hobbit' novels. This gives an author like myself some leeway to make something up about an area, person or item not covered in these two books. My aim is to attempt to make something that 'feels fair', and integrates well with the Middle-Earth world. Unfortunately it may 'look foul' as I am no graphics or web designer. As much of the great man's works are left incomplete differing peoples with have differing views, so I hope I do not cause too much of a clash, if my interpretation differs greatly from others.

The setting for this chronicle is the area of Rhovanion around Long-Lake, Dale etc. I have assumed much re-building there and about as much 'racial integration' as will be seen in Middle-Earth, maybe ever again. I have set it around 2944, 3 years after 'The Hobbit'.

Future chronicles by myself will be set around the Eastern edges of Mirkwood, up to Erebor and South down as far as The Gates of Mordor itself. These are areas of significance in my time frame of 2941 to 2951, and perhaps stretching to later times. After this time Barad-dur is well along in its re-building, and a shadow dwells once more in Dol Goldur, and I perceive that a decade of relative freedom of movement and lessening of 'risk' will have passed.

I apologise for any errors in my Elvish and hope names of characters and places used fit well the setting of Eastern Rhovanion.

## Acknowledgements

I like to thank especially noted individuals on the Decipher LOTR discussion board, which was especially useful in this Chronicle with regards to the fate of The 'Dwarven Rings'.

<http://calder.decipher.com/cgi-bin/msgbd?lotr-rpg>

Erestor, Turambar, Githolas David Crowell.

Decipher themselves, [www.Decipher.com](http://www.Decipher.com) and all the past effort by Iron Crown Enterprises.

Also my Role-Playing group and fine friends.

Gary, Pete, Richard, Simon, Susie, Wendy.

NOTE: This version contains 'stats'.

# THE CHRONICLE OF THE DRAGONS RING

A Chronicle in 3 chapters

## 1 BACKGROUND TO THE CHRONICLE

It is 3 years after the attack by Smaug on the Lake Town 'Esgaroth'. A ceremony of remembrance, and celebration of the new re-building, and racial unity, will take place on the evening of the first day of the adventure proper. Just as the 'players' get into the spirit of the occasion, they or maybe some other will spot movement near the lake, to the south of the ceremony and thus will begin the adventure.

After the battle of five armies in autumn of 2941 scattered bands of goblin troopers, bodyguards and wolves were seen fleeing the battle. Most would have headed West and North, but some fled anywhere in blind panic. The eagles especially would have driven the wits out of anyone. One goblin group fled blindly South toward the lake and was for the most part cut down. One rather lucky goblin floundered in the waters of the lake and grasped onto a ring, a gold ring with a dull green gem. He felt compelled by the ring and put it on. Unknown to him it was a dwarven ring that had been thought devoured, by Smaug. It had in fact been worn into his scales. Wearing the ring increased the goblins stealth e and he was able to escape and finally stopped his retreat and hid in marshes and woods to the East of Mirkwood, north-east of the Great Forest Road. Over a few brief years the ring gave him power and he was able to collect a group of stragglers to his cause, including goblins from Gundabad who had also fled, wolves and orcs fleeing from Dol Guldor when the Necromancer was driven out by the White Council. He has even evaded spiders with it and has been trying to persuade them to help him. He has recently heard of a troll group near the mountains in Mirkwood. He has been able to make nice items in very short time frames and uses these things as bribes and payment. In the 3 years of hiding they have had one run in with elves. Eight orcs and two wolves were killed, but the goblin was able to escape. The elves named him the *Faron-i-Fuin*, the hunter of the night.

This ring, the Ring of Clay, played upon the goblins mind and his thirst for greed and gain increased. It has reached a point where he has persuaded those around him to go on a daring raid to gain the gems and jewels from the dragons' hide. Its carcass slowly lays decomposing in the Lake. It just happens this raid takes place just after the ceremony...

Having being driven out by the White Council, Sauron now dwells in Barad-dur busy re-building. As the ring is put on, he senses its use and decides at some point to dispatch a lieutenant of Mordor to investigate and retrieve this ring.

### 1.1 Overall Story Arc

After a brief prelude scenario involving another 'ring', this one an extortion ring playing on racial unease, the 2 main adventures will be a race / chase between party and these agents, and a show-down in the area close to the relatively empty Dol Goldur. It will also serve to introduce them to areas beyond their homes, perhaps lead to other adventures in some areas East of Mirkwood, down to the Sea of Rhun and the Brown Lands.

## 1.2 The Ring of Clay

At the end of the First Age, many of the Dwarves of Belegost left their Kingdom, which had been ruined, in the Great Battle. They travelled Eastwards to Khazad-Dum and there mingled with Durin's folk. The Dwarves of Belegost were the Broadbeam clan, of whom Bifur, Bofur and Bombur were descendants. The Dwarves of Nogrod were the Firebeards, whose rash actions led to the conflict with Thingol's people. The remnants of the Firebeard clan remained in the Blue Mountains for many ages.

In the Second Age, when Celebrimbor was forging, Durin III received the chief of the Seven Rings. Also present in Moria were the lords of the Broadbeams, whose royal family had died out. Indeed due to the power of the ring of clay was the great hall carved? Although they had mingled to some extent with Durin's people, they still had their own Lord, who swore fealty to the heirs of Durin, but was a great Dwarf Lord in his own right. He too received a lesser ring from Celebrimbor (or possibly Sauron).

When the Balrog arose in Moria, the majority of the Broadbeam clan travelled with Thrain I to found the Kingdom under the Mountain. In 2770, Smaug descends on Erebor and the Lord of the Broadbeams gives his life in a desperate battle with Smaug, believing (naively) that he can use the power of his ring to defeat the Worm, and / or buy time for his liege lord Thrór to escape (which he does, carrying his own ring). After routing the Dwarves and settling onto his golden bed, Smaug is drawn to the power of the ring and first thinks of swallowing it but instead places it at the top of his hoard and in time forgets it, though it time it does have great influence on him. One wonders if it wasn't the lure of the Rings that drew Smaug to the Mountain initially. Especially as they were enchanted to increase covetousness after gold.

## 1.2 Description of the Dwarven Ring

See Core Book, Chapter 7, page 198-201, *of rings of power*.

The Ring Of Clay, *Kemenáno*, the 'earth commander'. Gemstone is Jade (Jadeite) a dark, green stone with little lustre.

Gives the wielder the power to 'listen' to stone and earth, hide, not quite *meld*, with the earth and stone and to craft with pot and clay (?). Makes one greed after crafted items, not so much rich ore, and veins of mithril and uncut gems, but vases, cups, statues, tapestries, furniture, and jewellery. Hence the power of the ring in general, and this specific one, makes Smaug furious over the theft of "single finely worked two handled cup" that Bilbo stole, and the dragon mused over for a few days after its loss and then he went on a rampage.

It may look this 'unpolished' to reflect the wearer goes from lower state to higher state when he wears it, and indeed upon placing upon the finger, to the wearer is has a fine, metallic sheen to it and the gems glisten, especially when the wearer works. The *Kemenáno*, is very much a tool as much as it is a thing to be admired. Toil and task, and eventually greed and gain, are the facets ruling this ring, and its wearer.

### 1.3 Abilities of the Ring Of Clay

It gives the wearer some presence, and this one will play on the greed level of the wearer. They do have benefit otherwise why give them in the first place?

See page 200 for general dwarven ring properties.

- Extended Life-Span for non-dwarves
- Ring is innately TN 25 to be *observed*\*
- Gain *Grasping* flaw
- Gain *Hoard* Edge
- This one gives the wearer great skill in terms of crafting, especially with earth and clay and stone, but on a small scale. It also makes the wearer crave such things, fine art, sculpture, statues, jewellery and such. +5 bonus to such craft, stone-smith etc.
- The wearer gains an inner strength, passion, cause and determination, such things as burn in dwarves hearts, but ever-kindled and brighter. +4 Will-power to resist *command* (p.200).
- Aids the wearer to hide, camouflage and 'near' meld into his environment. Free use of *Change Hue* as an innate ability\*
- *Veil* spell acts innately upon the wearer\*

\* These are ineffective against other ring bearers.

The effect 'Rings of Power' have, in my opinion and understanding, on an individual, though 'general', affect the individual at different rates, and different degrees. For example it may take sometime for the edges, flaws and bonuses to 'kick in.'

## 2 INTRODUCTION TO THE AREA AROUND LAKE-TOWN

It is late autumn, in the year TA 2944. Three years since the dragon came down from the mountain and laid great fire upon the Lake, Three years since the great battle of five armies, and three years of re-building. Esgaorth itself, with wood and crafters from the realm of the elven King is being built anew. Tall elegant watchtowers line its outer edge, and there is a well-integrated mix of cultures of the lake-folk, elves and woodmen. Twenty miles to the North Dale, and some smaller surrounding hamlet are too being (re-)built. Here more stone is used and there is a slightly more dwarven influence. There is peace in the land as the goblins are scattered, the wolves cower away and even the Necromancer is supposedly driven from his lair in the South of the forest. The number of dwarves and elves in these men-towns grow less each year, as the towns get nearer to completion. Memories, especially the memories of men, fade fast and it may be as the decades past, the time of the 'alliance', of a sort, that fought the goblins and wolves, will fade complete and dwarves and elves will be seen as intruders and interlopers.

But not for now...For soon is the third anniversary of the death of the great dragon. There will be a sombre ceremony and a celebratory feast to celebrate the victory and alliance.

### 3 CHAPTER 1 A Ring of Ruffians

**3.1 Synopsis:** The party breaks up a petty extortion gang and meets a mysterious elf who has a part to play later in the chronicle.

This part of the chronicle is just a small incident to allow characters to gain a measure of their abilities, set a couple of days before the ceremony. Should allow the characters to be in with the local town yeomanry. Hopefully they will have conducted themselves with decorum and efficiency so they can smoothly interact to gain 'entry' into the main adventure.

**3.2 Introduction.** The characters are walking through new Esgaroth, near the waterside when they hear a commotion. Turning a corner into a small cul-de-sac / square they come across a conflict, or rather the end of one. A tall golden haired elf stands at arms with a staff. Marketers look on in distress, and maybe relief. You just catch, scrambling away down a narrow alleyway four, what can only be described as ruffians, some of them the worse for wear for their tangle....

#### **3.2.1 Scene 1 The Market Square**

[The ruffians are part of a small extortion ring trying to profit from the large amount of trade and commerce brought about by re-building, and the up-coming festival. Unfortunately, as they were leaving one stall they bumped into the elf, who had taken a wrong turning. The four looked at him rather menacingly, and with eyes bearing racial malice. Himself, not a great 'lover' of men drew his staff. A small conflict took place and he set about disarming and roughing them up, in a non-lethal way. His cares not for their fate and will go on his way. If questioned and he feels inclined to answer he will say he has a meeting with a town dignitary and must have taken a wrong turn. (As narrator you can assume the party know where the business is and can direct the elf, who doesn't give his name). His given name is Valsir ('StrongFlow'), for he is fleet of foot, and steady in motion. Note his re-known is 6]

Looking around you can see that one fruit stall has been ruined, probably by the ruffians. Other stalls in this small square include a fishmonger, scrap iron collector, apothecary, sweet-shop stall and about 7 others. On a normal day 15-20 stall workers and the same amount of customers will be here. A lore skill (TN 5) will note they all look like folk of Esgaroth, and the locale.

If the stall-holders are questioned they will say very little and will need some degree of persuasion by one means or another (TN: 15). If information can be gleaned they say for about three months this square has been visited by the 'ruffians'. Say they are collecting money to protect us from all the outsiders who will come in and ruined are trades and businesses. That dwarves and other races are very greedy and will run us out (this talk will hold some sway in the town as the dwarves did bring Smaug upon old Esgaroth, and more dwarves are about lately than ever before. Some have settled in the town and produce excellent goods). These protectors have been demanding more of late and one



shop-owner who didn't pay had his shop wrecked. They say a dwarven belt was found in the shop afterwards, so maybe there are wicked greedy dwarves about !!

This extortion is obviously 'illegal' and would be frowned upon by town authorities.

*Observant (TN 15)*, party members may spot small spots of white powder around the place. It is in fact flour. The protectors are operating out of a mill nearby on a small tributary into the lake. If the villains still had powder marks on them it can be deduced this mill is very close. If the powder is not spotted the party may try and track where the villains fled. Assume they were spotted before carefully sneaking back into the mill-house. Perhaps there is a bloodied hand print on a wall, an abandoned bandage from a wound, a street urchin may be found who can tell of the numbers of armed men going into the mill, or find some other way for the party to find them. A Stakeout (Stealth: Surveillance for example) in the square or a similar area, maybe a ruffian is spotted later in the day, etc. Whatever skill is used it should be *Challenging* to track the ruffians to their lair.

### ***Awards***

Experience. Scene award of 50-100, Test award for a TN 5 and TN 15 at least.

### **3.2.2 Scene 2 The Water Mill**

Up until 6 weeks ago this was very much a working mill. Then the owner, Mallen Waterson, took up with these 'protectors'. Their original ploy had been a brief play on people's hearts and minds, to fill them with a dread and a racial hate. It had gone so well in some of the more disparate parts of the town, that they had continued. They have so far made nice profit, and thus the mill has fallen silent. Mallen if asked says he has lost business, outsiders he fears, which adds to the ruse.

It is situated on the banks of the lake and is fed by a tributary with a sluice to protect it in times of flood and storm. Aside from Mallen, six men are in the 'protectors'.

Externally it is in fair repair. All the doors are 'average' The hoist is actually not working as the bearings and locking mechanism in it have been sold. The Mill actually existed prior to destruction of Esgaroth and is about 80 years old (Lore et al of TN 15 can confirm this). It was the only water mill prior to the dragons' attack. Access is via the Outer Gate, though due to the outer stairs, entry into the building itself can be made at both upper and ground floor.

There are a number of windmills in the area. The richer soils to the West and North-East of the lake are the main grain supplies.

***The yard*** has one small cart in it that requires one animal to pull. This was sold some weeks ago, all part of the ploy that business is bad due to outsiders. ***The Store*** area is not locked but held secure by a simple bolt. In it are 2 dozen flour sacks, and 5 grain sacks, 2 of which are full but infested with a rot. Also a set of decent wood working tools and other items to keep the mechanics of the water mill working.

### **3.2.3 Internal of the Mill.**



At any time in the day 1d6 of the ruffians will not be at home. If things take a turn for the worse for them they may all be hiding here though, keeping low for a few days. At evening they will be out spending their ill-gotten gains at an end of town where they do not operate. After hours they will all be sleeping here.

The general internal of the mill is untidy, and in time the outer mill will to begin to fall into a decrepit state. Areas have become a little rat infested and after an attempt to kill them off a few days ago, there are bits of flour in most areas, hence the marks that may have been spotted in the square. Each day a different one looks after the strong box key.

If watched for any time it is noted that their everyday business is usually not remarkable, except when a group of them pay a 'client' a visit. This may be an ideal time to approach, attempt to apprehend them, while committing a crime.

### **3.2.4 Ground Floor**

***Kitchen and Hall.*** The size of these shows that this building could comfortably cope with ten inhabitants. Pots, cutlery and other crockery are stacked in both rooms, some dirty and some clean but not put away. There are food supplies enough for about 18 man days, with a lot of fish and a 'mash' made out of flour and potato. Also honeys, sugar, and root vegetables and spices for fish. The ruffians tend to eat here for a late breakfast and then a second meal of dinner / early supper.

***Mill-Stone*** This work area is still functional. At any time 3d6 rats will be lurking in here and the place did smell quite bad until the clean up attempt some days ago. The rats have recently returned. There is little else remarkable in the area.

### **3.2.5 Upper Floor**

***Bedroom, North*** is a bunk-house for 4 of the ruffians. There are 7 bunks in total in this room. One large chest of drawers each has one drawer off and each has a small kit bag or two under the bed. They will have between 1 and 3 pairs of boots each, a complete change of clothes. There are 3 heavy storm cloaks hanging on one wall and two thick woollen jackets, which are communally shared. They will have a small amount of personal items in the draws or bags including deck of cards, small carvings, stone pendant on a leather thong, bronze candle-holder, pipe-weed, small amounts of coins, well sharpened daggers (the mill-stone still has a use there), hip-flask and other periphery the *Narrator* desires.

***Bedroom, South*** This area looks less communal and has drapes separating three large wooden beds. Mallen, Meff and Cairn sleep here. They has a small footlocker each, may have one or two more items of clothing and may even have the odd semi-precious gemstone or jewellery as well as similar affects held by the other 4. Cairn has 24 arrows as well as his bow. Meff has a matching pair of Eastern looking blades hanging above his bed. Mallen has a silver bracelet he once won in a game of chance, but the lady he

intended to give it too died in the dragons' attack. Gives him another reason to hate dwarves. Worth around 20sp.

In the chimney area is their strongbox (lock has a TN of 15) of gains. They have been doing quite well. It contains 67 copper pieces, and 22 silver pieces.

***The Hopper*** is very clean as it was scrubbed down well after its last use. Mallen has been considering selling this as well. Room itself is very tidy with a neat pile of sacks and a couple of large clean grain shovels. Room door is locked and Mallen has the key in his footlocker.

### ***Awards***

Experience. Scene award of 100-150, variable number of test awards for stealth, lock-picking, maybe even persuasions and similar. 1000 exp for combined primary and secondary objectives. +1 to Reknown for assisting the towns-folk.

It is hoped that the extortionists are dealt with in a quick manner, hopefully with as little bloodshed as possible. Further, the opportunity should have arisen for the party to get on the good side of the authorities. Perhaps as a reward they are invited to a position of prominence at the ceremony in a few days time. Also maybe the party can have any personal affects of the extortionists as payment for their endeavours.

## **3.3 The Supporting Cast**

**General.** Occupants of the town of Esgaroth will be a busy hard working folk. Realise trade is their lifeline, but they still often have an insular outlook. Common folk local to the area will have names such as:

Brin, Bard, Brock, Alan, Richwell, Boaterson, Bain, Brinner, Swan, Geldan, Meer, Shipsman and Wyn, Bradle, Mila, Bren, Brena, for females.

**Valsir.** Elf on a diplomatic mission, of sorts in the town. His purpose does not come into this chronicle so is best discussed elsewhere. He was not at the Battle of FA as he was in the South of Mirkwood at the time, investigating near to Dol Goldur. He has little affinity for men, and even less for dwarves. He may even be a little confused why ruffians would set upon an elf-lord like himself. He is well able to look after himself in conflict and it would be most foolish for the party to cross him. He has little interest in humans, and their ways and is here for one specific purpose. He is tall even for his race and has silver-green eyes. Dressed in heavy looking, though quite light, travelling gear and has a simple nap-sack on his back. He carries a staff, and has a short blade beneath his coat.

His full stats are not provided as they shouldn't be needed. He has though a re-known of 6, some minor spell ability and has had 8 advancements.

**The Ruffians of Mallens Mill.** They are not a particularly strong or able group, but have proved most cunning and observant. In a straight-up fight against all six at once an adventuring group with its diverse skills and abilities, would triumph with little loss. The

strength of this extortion group lies in wits and disquiet they can spread. 5 men are local to Esgaroth (Includes **Mallen** the Miller, **Grip**, **Swan**, **Lane** and **Brinner**). Their colouring and clothing are as un-remarkable as any other in the area is. Lane has a nasty burn mark for the dragons attack and can be easily panicked by fire. Aged between 21 and 47 (Mallen), but most are under 30.

At best they will have +3 armed combat, have 1 or 2 fast-play hits, and +1 to +3 in various seedier social and physical skills (intimidate, observe, etc). They basically have no order.
--

One is a slighter shorter man from lands more to the South and East of Rhovanian. Has a darker complexion, but not greatly so, he calls himself **Meff**, though that isn't his real name. He has a certain charm and first suggested these crimes to Mallen.

He almost has an order, and would be a rogue in a few years time. He does have a high nimbleness of 10, +5 to armed combat (scimitar) and several rogue-like abilities at +2 to +3. He has 9 health. He isn't stupid and after being struck once will plead for his life or escape. He has the edge Dodge for +5 <i>swiftness</i> , and the <i>Stiff-Necked</i> flaw
--

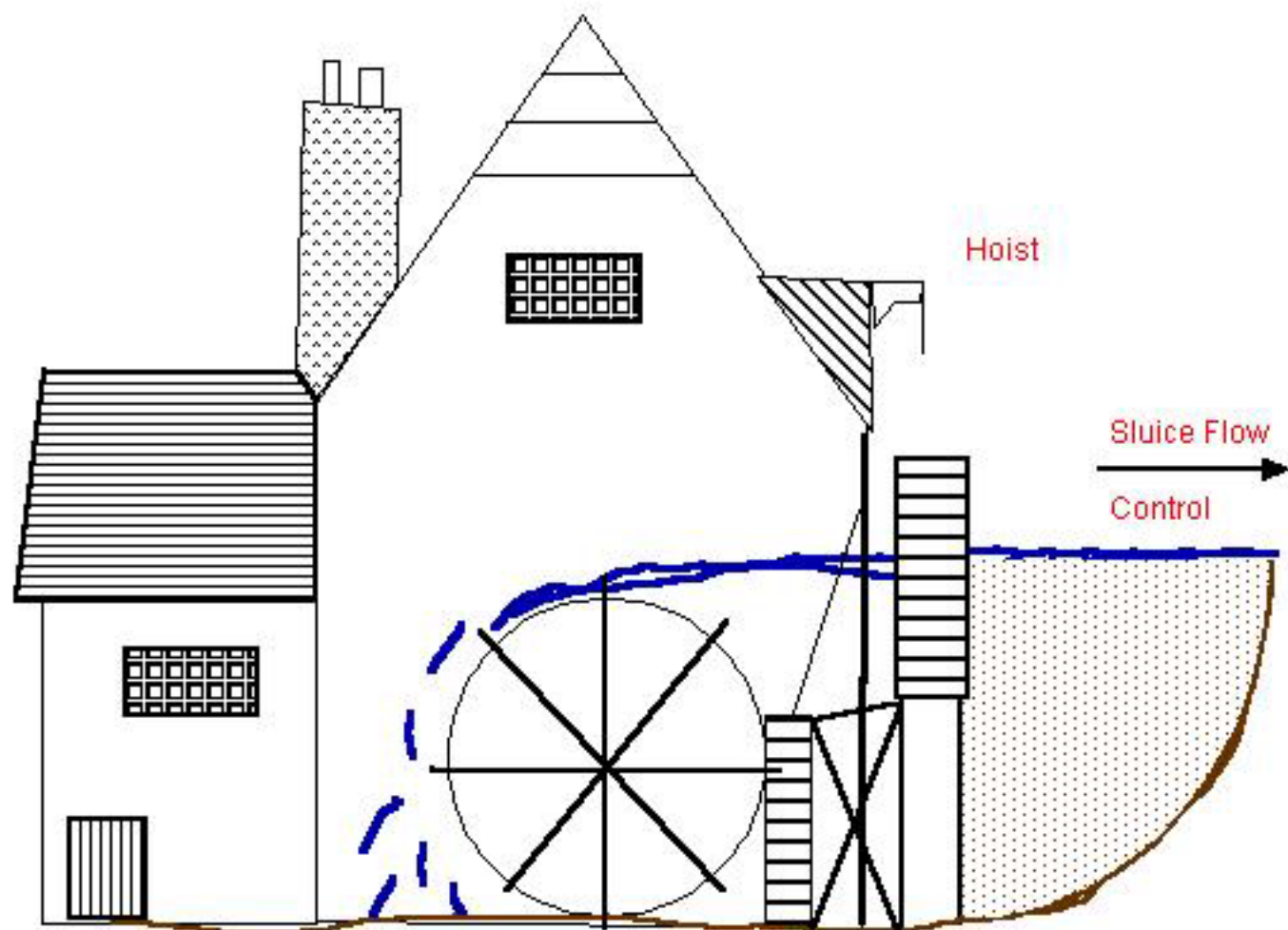
The 7th member is a woodman fallen on hard times, and has a real chip on his shoulder with dwarves. He came here an outcast from his village on the edge of Mirkwood, and has had a number of failed business ventures. His name is **Cairn**. He is a moderately able bowman.

He is somewhat more capable. +7 with ranged combat (longbows a speciality). Fair range of outdoor and subterfuge skills (+2 to +3). He has 11 health and a nimbleness of 10. He also has some skill with an axe, and the edge *accuracy*. He has a suit of leather armour as well. He is almost equivalent to a starting player character.

Meff can wield a sword with some skill. The rest will have a small club and a knife each. Unless noted none has any armour of note. It is likely that simply wounding one or two of their number may be enough to make the others think and a severe wounding or death would make the 'locals' at least, flee or surrender.

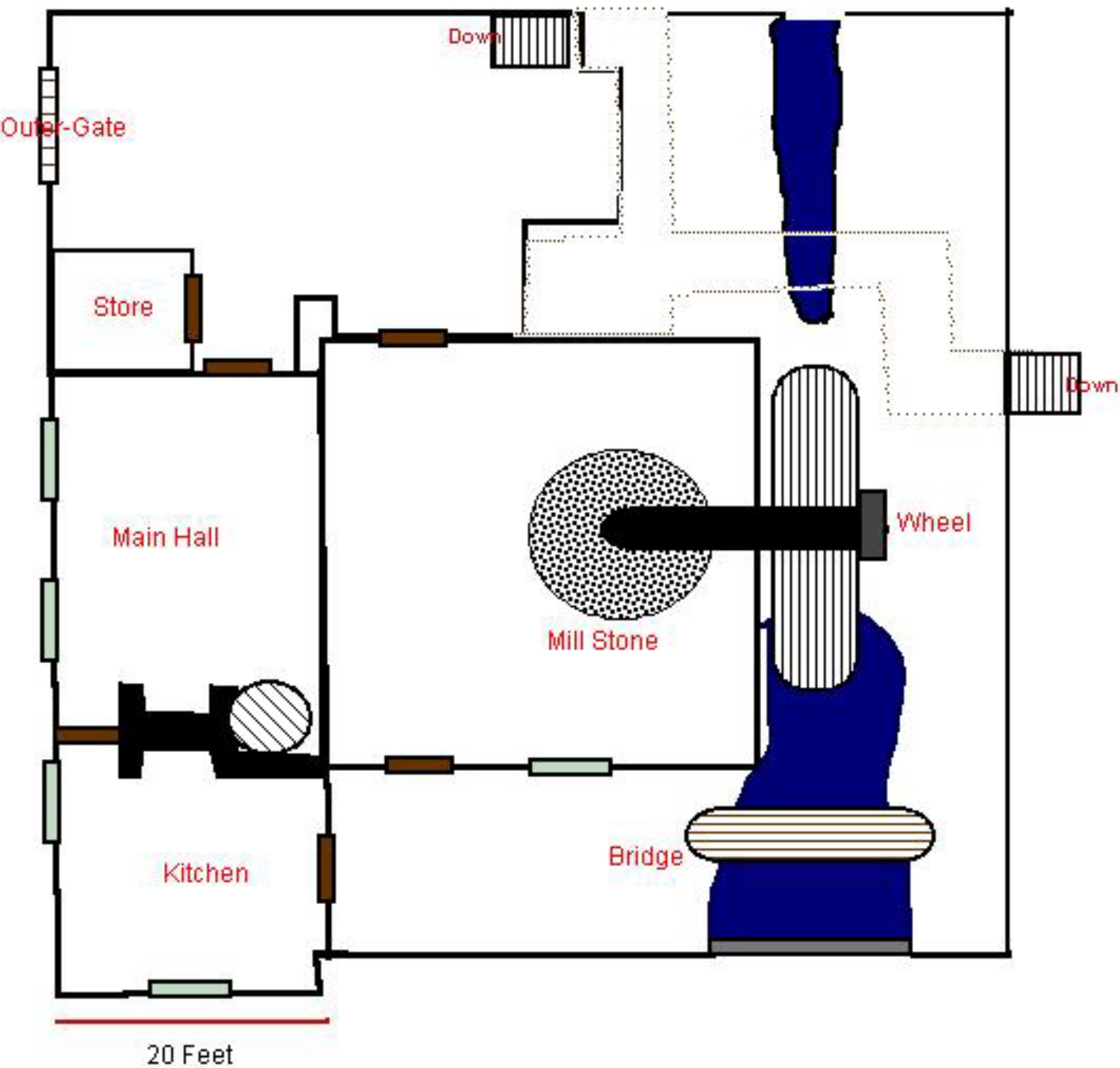
If they are found out they will all try to take the contents of their strong box and flee. The locals will not flee far and stay in the lake region. Being a bit more worldly-wise the other two may go to more distant lands with their 'wealth'. This may bring them into conflict with each other.

THE MILL HOUSE  
-EXTERNAL VIEW

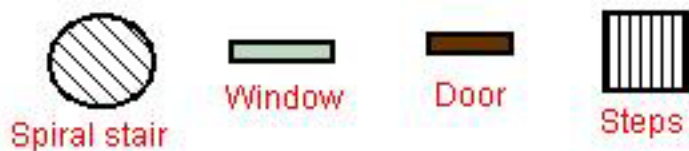
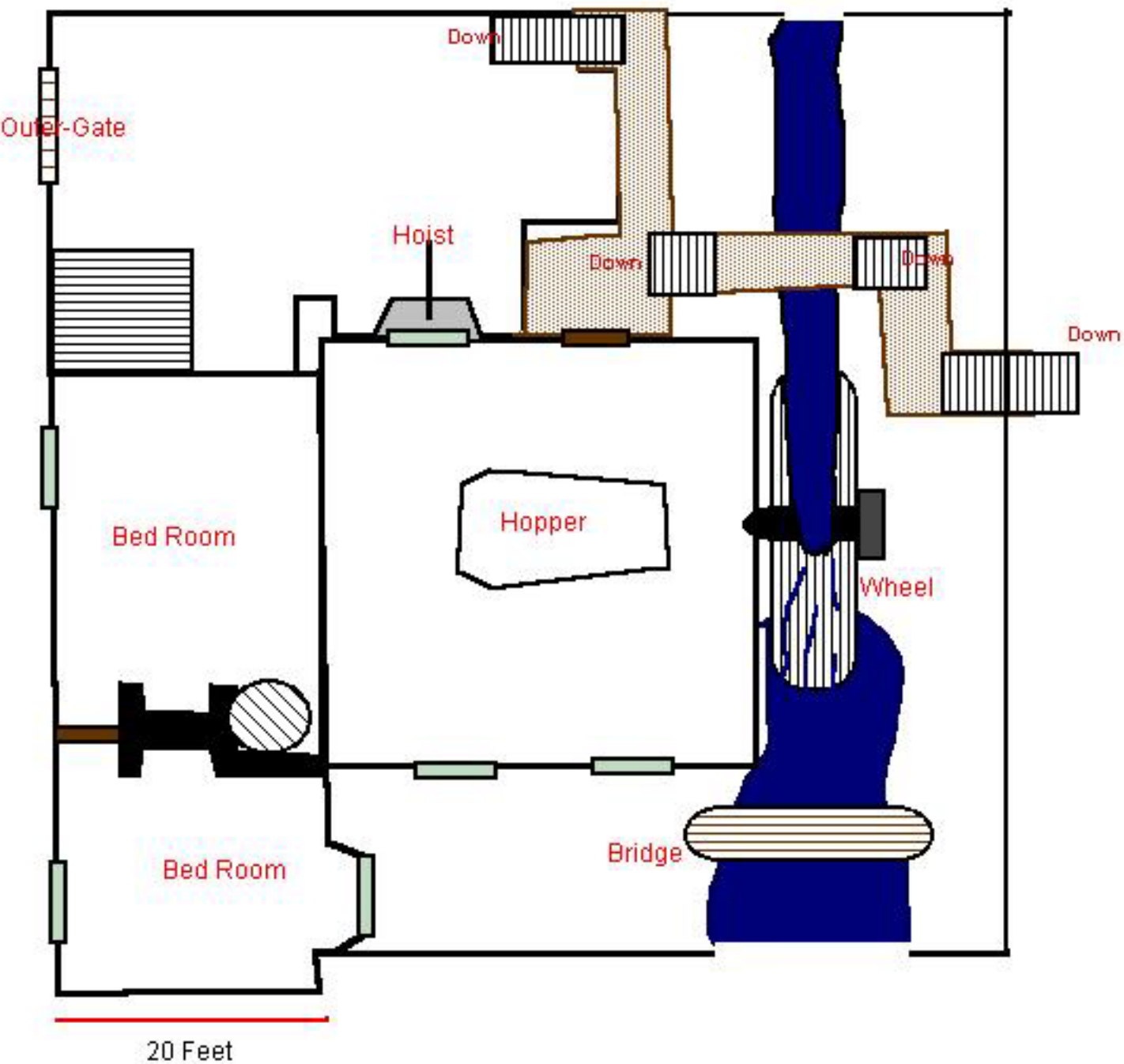


20 Feet

# MILL HOUSE - GROUND FLOOR



# MILL-HOUSE UPPER



# THE DRAGONS RING TRILOGY

A Prelude and 2 Introductory Adventure for Deciphers RPG, The Lord of the Rings (www.decipher.com).

## 4 CHAPTER 2

### The Ring of Fire

**4.1 Synopsis:** After a ceremony to mark 3 years after Smaugs attack, the party track the 'ring of clay' bearing goblin back to his lair.

**4.2 Introduction** Tonight, as in the passed two years, a procession of torches will pass around the Lake and a small contingent step out onto the one of the few remaining wooden keys. Then as the torches are lowered, and extinguished there dying embers will illuminate a single bowman\*. He will fire a single flaming arrow into the air, and as it reaches its zenith, the powders in its head will ignite, a shimmer of sparks will light up the night air, and then spiral down into the cold depths of the lake and be extinguished forever. Much feasting, merriment and tales of dragons, and goblins, and bear-men and great eagles will be told late into the night, until the dawn breaks and the weary and the affected will sleep of their endeavours on a day of rest.....

\* The bowmen, Brin, will be a newly recruited member of 'bards brigade', a small group of archers chosen and trained for the strong eyes and steady hands, and defenders of Esgaroth.

#### 4.2.1 Scene 1 Conflict at the Lake

Just as the 'players' get into the spirit of the occasion, they or maybe some other will spot (TN 10) movement near the lake, to the south of the ceremony....

If anybody moves, and stealthily enough, they will observe about a half dozen or so creatures at the waters edge near the place where Smaug fell.

- 4 goblins from Gundabad,
- 2 Orcs of Dol Guldor, and
- a Wolf,
- as well as the ring-bearing goblin.

If the party is large you could increase this number and if small have town yeomanry and other armed individuals on hand to assist. A hue and cry will make them act defensively, which may seem odd and overly brave. The nerve of the ring bearing goblin will break if his fellows are killed are when his flee and the rings presence is no longer upon them, the rest will panic and scatter. A general hue and cry will no doubt arise and many men of Esgaroth will arrive at the scene with staff and bows.

If they search (TN 20) the area they will find a fair number of gems they have retrieved from the dragons carcass. *The amount is up to the Narrator but if it is large tensions may arise about who should claim them, whether they should be thrown back into the lake etc.*



*This may be a good scene for character development and players to get a feel for the system and world, especially if previous role-playing games have been about attaining wealth and power. Gems worth several gold per item at least.*

#### **Awards**

Experience. Scene award of 50, Test awards for a few spots, observes, listens etc., and combat. Role-play awards over fate of treasure.

#### **4.2.2 Scene 2**

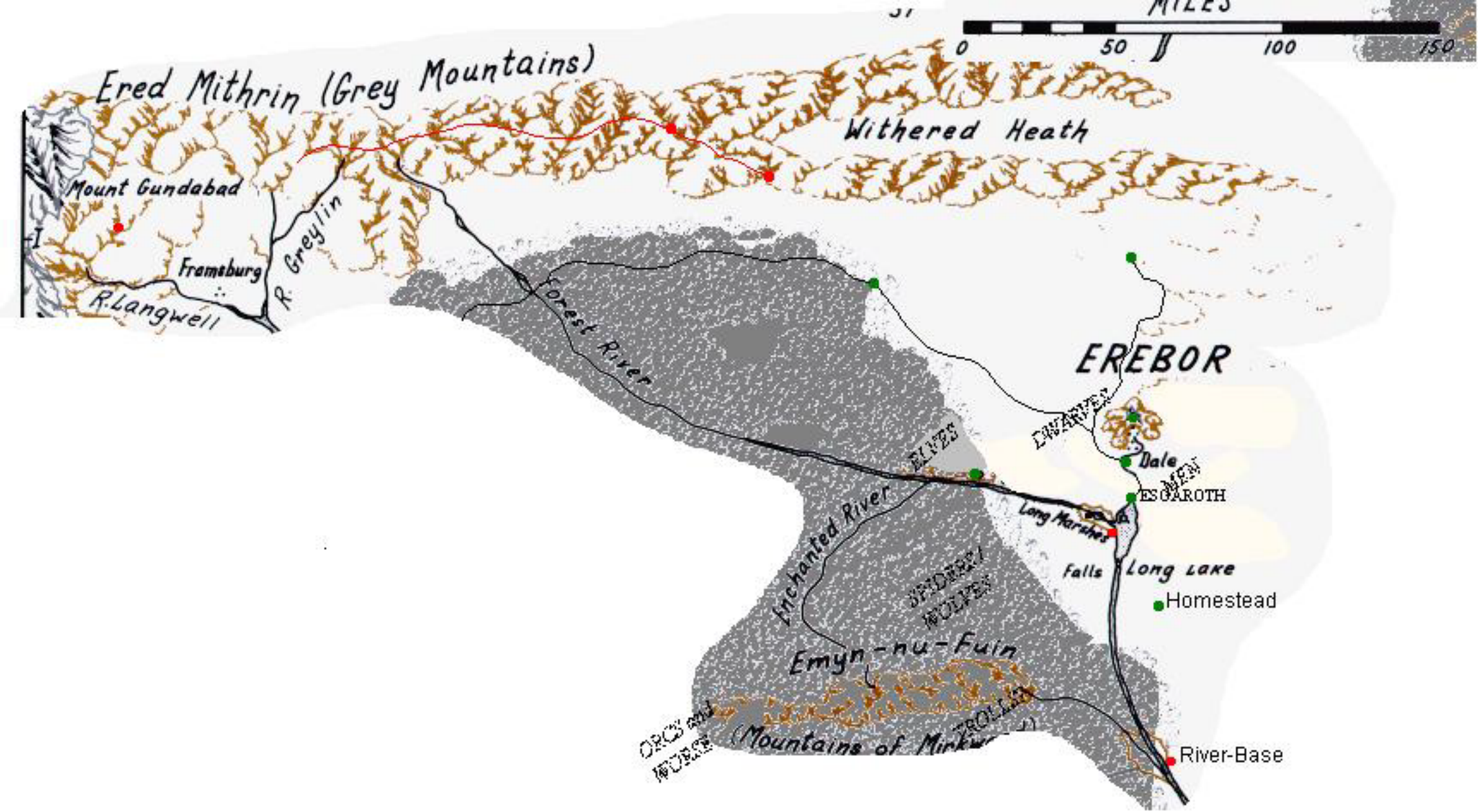
#### **Flight into the wilds**

No tracks of the fleeing goblin will be found but the tracks (*TN 10*) the band made on approaching Long Lake will be visible. They can be tracked back about 12 miles to an abandoned homestead SW of the lake. The homestead is quite large and consists of a single storey six-room building. An orchard is attached which has become over-grown and wild but is still productive (*TN 10*, Lore: Region may add details of agriculture and industry of such an area, flora and fauna as well). Boars have recently moved into it. There is a small sunken borehole that supplies water, if the pump can be fixed. The Home-Stead was abandoned when Dale was being re-established as it was the traditional home of the Gringnion family who dwelt here (*TN 25* for the region to know this name). The Outer shell of the homestead is intact, but the inner has been stripped and transported away.

Dependent on the speed of the party they may, or may not over-take the fleeing goblin. This makes portions of the Chronicle difficult to predict. In game terms a way needs to be 'contrived' to assist the party find the goblins lair near the River and Mirkwood. My thoughts are that the abandoned homestead has a few allies of the goblin in. These could be other goblins that didn't take part in the raid, but have been investigating here. These could be captured or interrogated, perhaps. Equally there may be a few evil men here, who have been swayed by the goblins word and presence, for their lives they will betray where the goblin has come from. Perhaps this group is from a land near the Sea of Rhun, and while exploring the wilds most of their number were killed by a troll. They too could be seeing what could be gained from using this homestead. It maybe that these allies are wounded from a run in with the boar. One other option maybe the fleeing goblin is ahead of the party still, has picked up his allies from here, and as a whole they can be tracked back to the river-base.

At some point the party may note they are being followed, but will not be able to find their pursuer (maybe a *TN 25* could spot / listen their pursuer). (it is Valsir the elf, from Chapter 1).

Rest of journey is in easy ground with occasional rough. (travel p.252) Distance of 38 miles. Simple observation during travel and average region lore skills: The Wilds East of Mirkwood are a sparse plain. Occasional rolling hills and roaming flocks of deer and wild goat. Some more fertile areas yield small copses and woods. Generally the further South the bleaker it gets, until the vegetation drops to semi-arid, very few trees and animals. To far east and many insects swarm in large numbers. In very dry areas are



small fissures and rocky crags. They make ideal places for sun-hating orcs and goblins to hide in, but may also be home to large fiercer insects, lone trolls and serpents. Conflict may occur if the party investigates too much, or wanders off to much.

#### **4.2.3 *Scene 3*      **Showdown at the river-base.****

As the greenery of woods, marsh and river approaches a large flock of great black birds is seen (TN 25 at extreme distance, if not spotted with a TN 20 sometime later the birds likely see the party) approaching from the South. Before they close on the party's position, as one they veer West and fly toward Mirkwood. This feels like ill omen and poor portent (The flock generates and intimidate of +5 and an opposed willpower roll is needed to resist fear).

If it assumed near dusk, they party may stumble upon a collection of orcs or goblins allied to the 'ring-bearer', who have been sheltering from the relentless sun. To keep the story flowing some may engage the party while others flee toward the woods, as the dark of night approaches. Specific numbers are at the discretion of the narrator.

The fleeing enemy will leave visible (TN 5) trails into the wood. They lead to an area beneath an abandoned small elven tree-post, about 30 yards from the river edge. The roots of a large tree provide a hole for the orcs too dwell in. On the first tier up the goblins lair and above that a lone spider the ring-bearer has been trying to ally himself with. About 30 years ago, when the spider was but small a great wind swept it over the river to this small wood, and here she has dwelt since, preying on unsuspecting birds.

It may be that very few of the goblins allies remain. Perhaps an orc and a wolf in the base of the tree and 2 or 3 goblins, up on high. The spider will not threaten unless it can get a solitary target.

A Great tree forms the centre of a lookout post, perhaps from elves many years ago. You can make out a large circular first tier around the tree, that looks somewhat overgrown. If there are any higher platforms then they are well hidden in a rich leafy canopy.

The ring bearing goblin will fight this time, because even though scared his has his treasures to protect, which he hides just above the first tier and below the second

#### **4.2.1 *Base of the Tree-Post***

Area looks a very picturesque part of this small wood. A small canoe is hidden under some thickets. The earth has been moved to form a small defensive redoubt, but it all seems to fit the area nicely as though done with some care and skill. The earth for the redoubt has come from digging around the base of a large tree as some kind of dwelling can be seen in its roots.

There is a stinking den here, a home for both wolves and orcs (easier to smell its presences than observe or hear from within it). Within are some very skilfully crafted

stone work and wood-work. Well made wooden and stone weapons and tools. Also a number of fancy items, which are well made, have a dwarven feel to them ,and may be sold for several gold pennies.

A number of twines act as a sort of rope ladder up (these are TN of 10 for a tree, with a +1 bonus to the roll due to the good hand-holds). There are three of these from the ground to the Lower Tier some 80 feet up

#### **4.2.2 Lower Tier.**

Simple wooden platform of both living and dead / preserved wood. Forms a ring around the tree-trunk of 15ft of platform. Here can be found good observation of the course of the river. A single twine / rope climbs another 80 feet.

#### **4.2.3 Upper-Tier.**

Here is a single post some 10ft square. It is home now to a great spider. From here the lands South and East could have been observed, but the foliage has been untended and grown somewhat wild.

#### **4.2.4 Aftermath**

The small enemy band has been killed and if found the party have the quandary about what to do with a magic ring. This again proffers good chance for interaction. Do you have a character wear the ring and struggle against it? Do you have the dark-lieutenant sweep in, dazing and confusing the party with a mighty spell, and take it and flee to Barad-dur, or do you have Valsir the elf-lord arrive, and calm all those aroused and tense and try to claim it?

### **4.3 The Supporting Cast**

***Faron-i-Fuin***, the hunter of the night. The goblin wearing the 'ring of clay'. Like many he had live a harsh, fast life being breed in the dark for war against the hated dwarves. When news of the death of Smaug reached Gundabad like many of his kind a frenzy rippled throughout his community, with a chance for claiming a dragons horde and to kill the few dwarves who where there. In the battle he, like all his kind felt victory at hand until the eagles came and ripped up the goblin ranks. He fled South with about 100 or so other confused goblins. His groups where being picked off by bowman from the town, when he floundered, grabbed at the ring, and found he could hide well and fled. He developed an art for making gifts and crafts and used these to bribe and pay, and develop a small band. In time the ring played on his greed and his slowly started to take things back from his 'allies'. Just recently the call of the gems associated with Samug's carcass has been too great and he has persuaded, via the powers of the ring, his group to accompany him on a mission of retrieval.

Stats: Standard Orc attributes as in p.290 except he has achieved 2 advancements in rogue. 12 points spent on :

- 6 Order skills (+2 armed combat: has +8 in total with his speciality in scimitar), +1 conceal, +1 climb, +1 guise, +1 observe
- 1 Edges ( Honey-Tongued)
- 1 Order Ability (fleet footed),
- 1 Racial Specialism (Observe, Smell).

***Goblin allies from Gundabad*** Lost and bewildered survivors of the battle of the FA, they would have perished alone and miserable had the ring-bearing goblin not shown such leadership.

See p.290, mostly be 1 hit fast combat opponents.

***Orc allies from Dol Guldur*** Terrified and driven out of Dol Guldur by the white council, and abandoned by their lord. They would have perished in Mirkwood had they not stumbled upon the goblin and his band.

See p.291. Could have 1or 2 Uruks amongst them.

***Evil Men at the Homestead*** This group is from a land near the Sea of Rhun, and while exploring the wilds most have there number where killed by a troll. Unsure of how to react to the goblins or orcs, one of them was able to communicate and tales were told of past victories when their races were joined. They are still uneasy, but unsure too what to do. If the Lieutenant of Mordor where to find them, they would immediately follow him

For ease of use they can be as Dunlendings on p.290.

***Valsir*** (plus see description on adventure 1). A 'wood-elf' from the fortress of the Elven-King. He was deep in Mirkwood when the call came to depart to the Lake so he missed the battle of FA. This means he doesn't have any of the little camaraderie and companionship for other races some of his kin now has. He has been observing and killing lost and dazed orcs, leaderless in the forest. He recently journeyed to New Esgaroth, on a mission for his lord. He was present, though not obviously, for the ceremony and has been tracking the party. He can sense the nearness of the *Dark Lieutenant* and is fated to meet him, and do battle. He is a mighty warrior with his staff, has great lore and hopes some to gain some spells. He carries with him a powerful heirloom of his family with may protect him somewhat from sorcery.

His is a Warrior, Scout with some Loremaster added of late.

STAT BLOCK	ELF, SINDA	Valsir	warrior, scout / loremaster	
Race:	ELF, SINDA	Bearing		1
background	Mirkwood	Nimbleness		3
Gender:	Male	Perception		3
Height:	6ft 4"	Strength		2
Weight:	112 lbs	Vitality		1
Age:	TA, 2000+	Wits		1
Hair:	brown	Stamina	2 (4 for magic)	
Eyes:	green	Swiftness	3 (6 and 3d6 for dodge)	
Orders:	warrior, scout / loremaster	Willpower	5 (6 for hiding secrets)	
Elite Orders:	0	Wisdom		4
Advancements:	11	Health		10
Initiative	6	Corruption		0
Defence:	13	Courage		8
* 'mod' included in 'stats'		Renown		6
RACIAL ABILITIES	the art*	SKILL	SPEC	TOTAL
	beast skill*	Acrobat	balance	1 / 5
	comfort	Appraise	weapons	2
	elf form	Axes	great	1
	elf sense	Blades	longsword	3
	elven sleep	Clubs	mattock	1
	farsightedness	Polearms	pikestaff	11
	ghost-scorn	Nat Weap	fist	1
	lightfootedness*	Climb	NONE	3
	swift healing	Debate	parley	2
	musical gift*	Games	wrestle	1
	Armour of Heroes	Healing	treat wounds	9
	Bold	Inquire	interrogate	2
	Dodge*	Insight	NONE	4
	Healing Hands*	Jump	NONE	0
	Strong Willed*	Language-westron	NONE	4
	Wary*	Language-Silvan	NONE	5
FLAWS / -1	Arrogant	Language-Sindarin	NONE	5
		Lore-Group	last alliance	6
		Lore-History	war with sauron	5
ORDER ABILITIES 4 & 3	Evasion	Lore-Race	elves	5
	Swift-Strike	Lore-Realm	mirkwood / Dol Guldur	7
	Swift-Strike 2	Observe	hear / sense power	7
	Warrior Born	Perform	sing	4
	Vala Virtue:	Persuade	charm	2

<b>EQUIPMENT</b>	Elbereth			
	Ancient Scripts	Bows	longbow	11
	Secretive	Spears	spear	1
		Thrown	dagger	1
		Ride	horse	8
	Staff Of Spell-Breaking, Heroic, +2 versus sorcerors	Run	NONE	4
	Elven Cloak, of hiding, +3	Search	NONE	1
	Fine felt boots	Stealth	shadow (hide+3)	12
	Longbow	Survival	forests	4
	18 arrows	Swim	NONE	0
	herbs, add +1 to treating wounds	Teamster	wains	0
		Track	orcs	4
		Brawling	NONE	1
		Wrestling	NONE	1



***The Dark Lieutenant.*** Cold hearted man from near the sea of Rhun. 33 years ago his family was enslaved, and he has been brought up and taught some sorcery, but his real gift lies in cohesion and observation. 'Little-Eyes' he is called by his orc subordinates, for they seem small, a size they deceives there precision. He has been a leader in the armies of the eye since the dark-lords return to Barad-dur three years ago. He enjoys his role, admires the Mouth of Sauron, and despises, out of great fear, the ring-wraiths. His good-vision is enhanced by a near empathy with certain 'Crows of Mordor'. When he works a flock of these birds is often at hand, aiding him, guiding him. His dislikes trolls and wolves and rarely works with them. He makes good use of his orcs toughness, resilience and loyalty.

STAT BLOCK		Man	Magician	
			Advancements: 8	
Race:	Man	Bearing	3	
background	Easterling, Man of darkness	Nimbleness	0	
Gender:	Male	Perception	1	
Height:	5ft 10"	Strength	-1	
Weight:	120 lbs	Vitality	2	
Age:	53	Wits	2	
Hair:	black	Stamina	7 (9 for spells weariness)	
Eyes:	dark blue	Swiftiness	3 (6 for dodge)	
Orders:	Magician	Willpower	1	
Elite Orders:	0	Wisdom	3	
Advancements:	8	Health	9	
Initiative	1	Corruption	16	
Defence:	10	Courage	0	
		Renown	4	
* 'mod' included in 'stats'		<b>SKILL</b>	<b>SPEC</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>RACIAL ABILITIES</b>		Appraise	gems	5
adaptable*		Blades	dagger	4
dominion of man*		Conceal	hide treasure	0
skilled*		Debate	negotiate	8
		Healing	herbal remedies	6
<b>EDGES / 3</b>		Inquire	converse	1
Dodge*		Inspire	NONE	5
Eloquent*		Intimidate	power	7
Keen Eyes*		Language-westron	NONE	5
<b>FLAWS / 1</b>		Language-Black Sp	NONE	7
weak willed*		Language-Orc	mordor	6
<b>ORDER ABILITIES / 5</b>		Language-Sindarin	NONE	5
Spell Casting 1 Spell Specialist (Sorcery) Sanctum Wizards Heart* <i>Dwimmer Craft.</i> **	<b>Spells</b>	Language-Southron	NONE	6
	Blade Shatter**	Language-Variag	NONE	6
	Dumbness	Lore-Group	ring-wraiths	8
	Evoke Fear	Lore-History	elven items	5
	Beast Speech	Lore-Race	easterlings	5
	Sense Power	Lore-Realm	mordor	7

<b>EQUIPMENT</b>	Observe	sense power / spot	4 / 6
short-bow	Perform	tell tales	1
dagger, masterwork*	Persuade	charm	9
black robes and travelling gear	Bows	short bows	2
Dark hide boots	Ride	horse	6
Bone skull-mask	Search	NONE	7
	Survival	mountains	2
	Weather-sense	NONE	2

***The Spider of the Glade*** No name she uses, the goblins band have named her 'lurker' for she watches much and acts little. Thirty years she has dwelt on this side of the river. There is something about the goblin leader she cannot resist, a power about him she feels near compelled to serve, a great-ness like in stories of old her brood mothers told. As she is mostly self taught, as well as instincts, perhaps she is not as sharp or cruel as others of her kind are. She has a small collection of bones, husks and incidental treasures from these. Her favourite pieces are six silver horses, made by Smiths of Rohan.

See p.295, she is somewhat in between the large and small spider template given. Assume she has the *poison* and *webs* of a small spider and the same stats, except for the following compared to a small spider.

- Bearing 8, Strength 8, Vitality 7,
- +5 armed combat for d6 damage.
- Health of 8.

#### 4.4 Awards

Used a variety of skills, maybe 2 or 3 combats. Primary objective is too break up the band, secondary to decide what to do with the ring. Three full scene awards, plus role-playing for a good discussion of the rings fate, if found. May have had a run in with a lieutenant of Mordor.

## 5      ADVENTURE 3      The Ring of Ruin

**Synopsis:** The party teams up with an elf-lord to drive off a lieutenant of Mordor close to the fortress of Dol Goldur.

Following on from the previous adventure, which may have ended in one of a few ways, its difficult to give an introduction to this part. Instead I will lay out the motivations and possible actions of those involved and then describe an areas of interest.

**The Party** Have tracked a goblin gang to an abandoned elven scout post, on the east of the river running as it passes through Mirkwood. They may have on them one of the 7 dwarven rings. It is likely they have been assailed by a *The Dark Lieutenant*, an agent of Mordor sent to retrieve the ring by Sauron. They also may have been assisted by an elf-lord called *Valsir*. It is hoped out of sense and sensibility that they aren't tempted to try the ring on, or not for very long, and intend to track this enemy agent and see what his intentions are.

**The Dark Lieutenant** Intends to retrieve the ring for his master, and also take prisoner any who have been near it. If all goes well he will flee into the deeps of Southern Mirkwood and plan to return to Mordor when it is safe to do so, and any recent stirrings or elf activity has died down. It may be that a long delay, or him being held up, will cause further agents, or even a ring-wraith, be sent out to retrieve the ring, him, prisoners, information, etc. It is possible, after-all, that even a devote servant of Sauron may fall to a rings temptation. If he can he will seek to hide in a small, hidden lair in Southern Mirkwood, assuming it has not been cleansed by elves, or others. There he will gather up scattered orcs and others from Dol Guldur, and along with his other minions plot escape or retrieval as the situation dictates. If he is killed or defeated early on in the adventure, he will have a map upon him showing this hide-outs location, as he has never been there himself. If a ring-wraith does try to find him and fail, it may well turn its effort to slowly re-populate this bastion of evil, which is in great earnest by 2951.

**Forces of Mordor** with the *Dark Lieutenant*, will be his minions, The Spear-Head. It will consist of scout 'sniffer' orcs, for tracking and reconnaissance. A number of fairly skilled warriors, including archers. The warriors are carry spears mark with a great red eye, and etched in a silvery dust a smaller pair of eyes, to signify their loyalty to the *Lieutenant*. Numbers will vary dependent on situation, and how much combat you wish to use.

Use orc p.290 with perhaps +2 to +3 bonuses to more physical tests.

**The Lost of Dol Goldur** When the dark-lord was driven from here, scores of orcs and others were driven out also, and spells put upon the place to prevent re-entry. This has meant scattered bands of orcs, some leaderless, some not, wandering southern mirkwood. Many have fallen victim to elven arrows, some have found solace in hidden and secret places, and some others will meet either the party or the *Lieutenant*. Numbers again are

down to the Narrator, but few will be heavily armed for war, as they departed in such a hurry. A very few will have found their way back to Mordor.

**Valsir** As described previously. He will take the ring if possible to ensure its safety, he will seek to battle the *Lieutenant*, and will also ask the party for aid to aid him in this endeavour. If the enemy turn out to be large in number, and the party not to capable he will seek out an elven patrol in the area.

**Elven Patrol** After nearly 2000 years of the necromancers influence, the elves here are keen to learn what damage has been done to the 'Greenwood' and to drive out any remaining forces of the enemy. If the enemy is gone they are keen to see him, and his influences, gone for good. If contacted by *Valsir*, they will gladly join him. Moving about in groups of around 8, and all will be capable warriors, some would have fought around Erebor, and may have sympathies with men and dwarves. With the assistance of the elves ant straight battle between the forces of shadow and light would result in an overwhelming victory for the elves and the party.

## **6 Southern Mirkwood**

Even after but 3 years of the shadow lifting, birds, in small numbers have returned. Radagast himself has been amongst its leafy avenues on one occasion, tending and nurturing. The place still carries an air of disquiet as small pockets of the enemy do exist. It will be nearly a 100 years before the wood sees the beginning of true restoration. It still has an abundance of tall trees, with areas of sparse growth where orcs and others have made use of the wood, dug pits for smelting and forging, or have over-exploited the forests bounty.

## **7 The Last Hold**

Called the *Gwathkirlad*, this is the closest stronghold of the enemy in Southern Mirkwood to the Eastern edge. It would still serve the enemy well if they could keep it garrisoned and functional. At one time 200 orcs served here, and it was used as a centre for messages and liasion between Forces to the South and east and Dol Guldur itself. No breeding of orcs took place here.

Set in a ravine, unlike Dol Guldur, it is well hidden and secretive, not meant to be an imposing structure. A small, but deep and actually trapped stream forms a defensive cordon around the front. The stream is forded by large stepping stones. Caltrops, spikes driven into the stream-bed, and snares protect the stream (observe TN 15 or (swiftness reaction of TN 10 or be hit for 2d6 damage). Though only 8 feet wide it has been deepened in this area to about 5ft maximum. I guess it could almost be called a moat.

The base itself is within the ravines edge in a large limestone outcrop. It has a natural large cave within it and this has been expanded somewhat. Unfortunately the expansion was not done very well and the roof is somewhat fragile and the base wasn't further extended for fear of collapse.

The front door is made of two large sections of wood and iron, and is painted so as to fit in fairly well. The dark lieutenant has a key, but the doors were left unlocked when the place was abandoned some 32 months ago. This has allowed nature to take its course somewhat and the front area between the stream and the door looks natural and wild, and actually aids the 'hiding' of the place.

A description of the internal area follows. Its current garrison depends on whether you wish to party to assail and clear it in one assault, or whether you wish them driven back and forced to get reinforcements. It may be that in-between the initial and second assault, the dark lieutenant arrives with his entourage. In which this door may be locked. Cunning plans may be needed to force the defenders out, the dark lieutenant will give battle and unleash his forces in a rapid counter, if he has good 'intelligence' on enemy numbers and type. The longer any siege goes on the less likely this is to happen if he has the '*ring*', for he will wear it and attempt to use its powers to affect the complex. In time he would even decide, in fact to keep it, and set about building his own mini-Dol Guldur, complete with statues, carvings, treasures, etc.

Dependent on the garrison various of the quarters may be in use.

**Entry Door** is a double door, about 5 inches and with iron reinforcing. It has been coated and treat and will take a long time to burn through.

Access, though not obvious, can be gained via the stream exit from the North of the complex. Here the stream goes underground and after about 50ft emerges within the complex. It means swimming against a moderate to slow current (TN 5) and against the wastes from the complex (Is is heroic to contact a disease, maybe a TN stamina reaction or get a bit under the weather). A very observant person (TN 15) in the water may find the remains of three large statues dedicated to the eye. There are marble and in-laid with amber, jade and a small ruby, have 4d6 gp value but they feel 'bad'. They were hidden in the water here when the place was abandoned so as not to fall into elves and, other interlopers, grasps.

**Main Hold** This is the large natural cave of the outcrop. Here orcs would muster for their instruction and be informed of missions of communication. Here they could repair and upkeep arms and weapons but not make anew. Remember that due to its purpose, orcs and goblins were stationed here for their speed and stamina, not strength.

Vast, dirty and smelly cave. Littered with debris, wood, rocks and fabrics. Looks like both a barrack and work area. A few pieces of light leather armour and small daggers and axes are also present. Many 10's of orcs could once have been billeted here.

**Storage** This small cave holds a few sets of crude, but strong and well maintained tools. Useful for the working of stone and wood, but no precision tools present or tools for forging iron. A pile of 'wooden support timbers' is also here. Canvas bags, twines, torches, nails, caltrops, spikes and such. Also pots of a dried up black paste (*paint*)

**Kitchen.** Hooks for hanging various food-stuffs. One large and one small vat, presumably for making of stews and pulps, and the other for orc-spirit. In a hole, perhaps it could be called a 'well' in the ground water slowly flows, about 4 feet below floor level.

**Cell.** A large stone block bars entry here. Beyond is the skeletal remains of two humans, (woodmen prisoners). Examine bones of one intact are quite brittle, the others bones are scattered, the skull staved in. Water gently trickles in and out in one corner. (In starvation and madness one killed the other and ate him, one or either could arise as a malevolent spirit).

Use the barrow wight stats, but only 10 health, and only an *evoke fear* spell. Attack is unarmed for d6+2+str damage.

**Officers, men.** 4 wooden bunks in here. The roof looks very loose in here, and is shored up somewhat. The whole area appears to have been stripped clean, on searching could find a few silver pennies. Hidden under one bunk, between wood blanks is a masterwork dagger, belonged to a human leader who was killed, and this item was forgotten. It has a fine blue and white streaked gem, could have a value in the gold pennies range.

**Leader, Orcs.** 5 large stone and wood lined slabs, presumably belonging to a chief orc or squad leader.

**Abandoned Tunnels.** This area of excavation has suffered some collapse and has been shored up. The roof looks very poor in here.

**Temple to the Eye** By the terrifying markings and large altar this area was both temple and torture chamber. The stream is very visible in the north end of the room, so much so one could actually climb into it and swim, or bathe, but it doesn't fit the surroundings. At the waters edge, around the black-stone (*painted not natural*) altar are 3 3ft x 3ft platforms, with loose bits of rock and paint 'chippings' on them (*here were the three jewelled statues currently in the water*). If facing defeat the lieutenant will be in here and definitely be wearing the ring if he has it. Perhaps if he dies he falls into the water and the ring is lost, after-all the party maybe totally unaware of its existence?

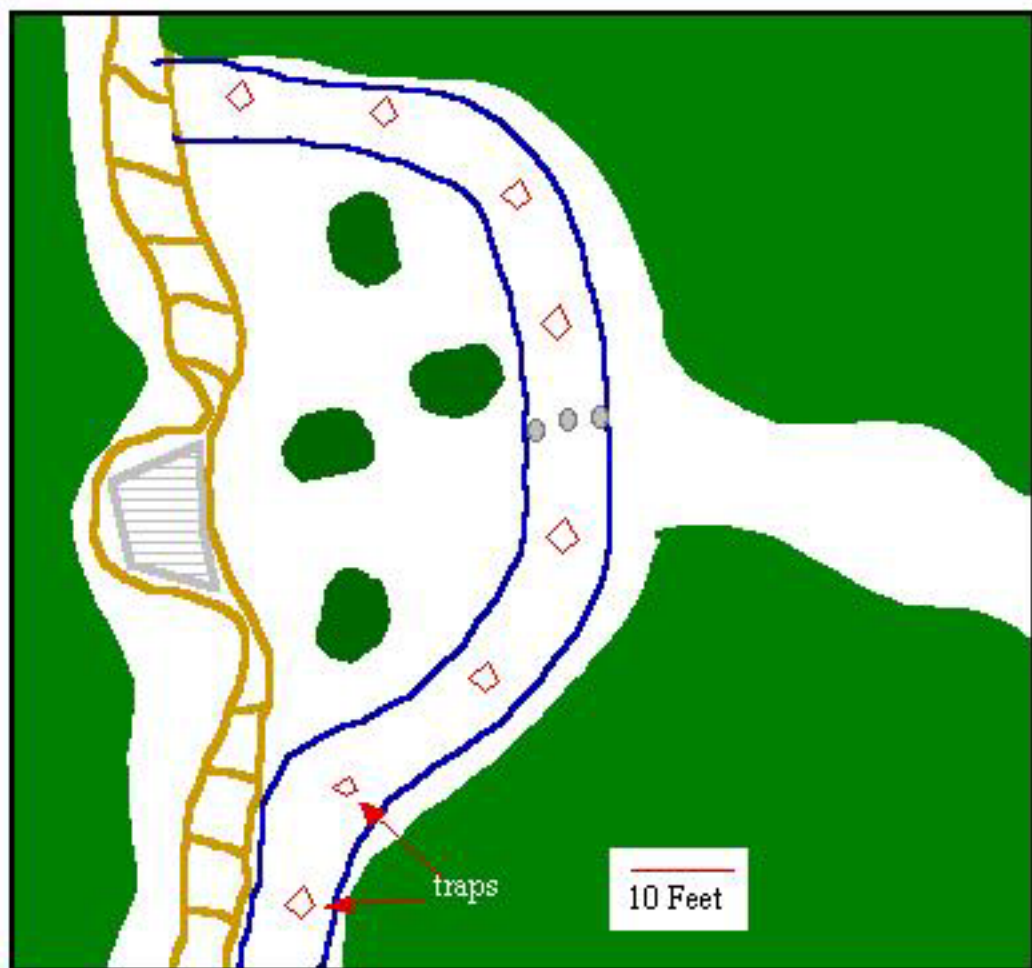
Awards.

## EPILOGUE

Well how did it go? Hopefully at the end of this chronicle the 'party' (fellowship?) are alive and well. Hopefully they are well co-ordinated and have a good feel for their characters and the 'world'. They may have a problem of what to do with the ring, or it may be lost, fallen into the hands of the enemy, or giving over to *Valsir* to care for. A ring-wraith may have returned to Mirkwood, and, conversely a powerful agent of the enemy may be vanquished. Will the party return to Long Lake and vicinity, will they follow *Valsir* back to the elven halls in the North, do they scout of the Southern woods more, or maybe have to pursue an enemy deep to the South.

Comments most welcome to JRD123@hotmail.com

## The Hidden Base Of Gwathkirlad





# The Hidden Base Of Gwathkirlad

