

5.0 Chapter 4 – Seeking aid

5.1 What's going on?

At the end of Chapter 3, 'Into Darkness', the characters had discovered that Gailhen had opened a door leading to a secret complex in a cave in the Trollshaws and removed an item from the depths. Since then Gailhen is nowhere to be found. An inscription on the block that held the item might reveal some clues as to its nature but not only is it written in Feanorian letters (which the characters might be able to interpret) but it is rather ambiguous. Leaving the caves they rendezvous with Belegilf the ranger and discuss their findings.

Meanwhile, back in Gailhens' homeland of Southern Gondor, the forces of the Shadow are moving. Gwilbil, the disguised vampire that originally corrupted Gailhen, has reported his success to his superiors at Minas Morgul, informing them that Gailhen left with a party of men to seek the Rod of Annatar, and that he holds the key to unseal Taglos Gwathren. The powers of Minas Morgul understand that Gailhen, in possession of the Rod, could prove a useful asset for darkness in Eriador, and so they have ordered the Ashdurbûk (the Goblin King) of Gundabad to help. Grudgingly, the high Goblin has ordered his fiefdom Mount Gram to despatch a group of Orcs to the Trollshaws to aid Gailhen. The Orcs were requested to travel in stealth and so only a small force has been despatched. However, a larger host is being prepared. Luckily, the Orcs mistimed their departure and so have missed Gailhen, but of course they do not know this. This gives the characters the opportunity to discover how far-reaching is the evil they have uncovered has become.



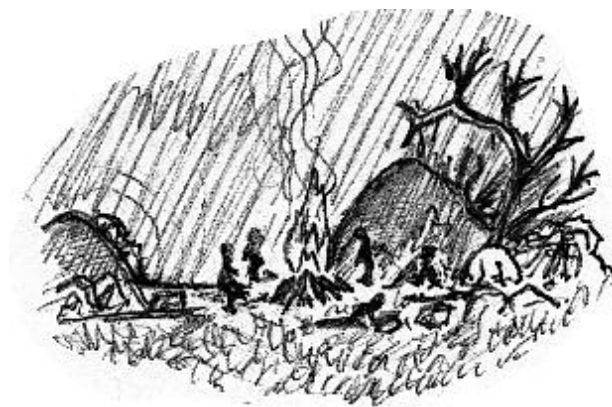
5.2 Scene 1 – Belegilfs Suggestion

The characters should leave the cave system and meet with Belegilf by the west

road as they had agreed. When they arrive at his camp, Belegilf has food cooking enough for all the characters and can help treat any injuries. He will ask them what they discovered in the caves and will be extremely interested in what they have found. This is a good point at which to lead the characters to draw some conclusions about what they discovered in the complex, specifically that Gailhen took something from the stone block in Taglos Gwathren.

Based on their discoveries, Belegilf suggests that it is imperative that they discover what Gailhen took from the complex and that the inscription on the block is the best clue. He suggests that the party rest until the following day and then travel with him to see an elven Loremaster, wise in the ancient history of Eriador who might be able to shed some light on the mystery. The elf's name is Maenist and he dwells to the north of their present location. Assuming the characters agree, the party will set out for the north the next morning.

5.3 Scene 2 – The Journey



For the most part the journey is uneventful. The weather turns for the worse and the snowfalls become heavier and more frequent as winter fully sets in. Belegilf leads the way, telling the characters that Maenist dwells at 'the Hideaway', a place often used by the Rangers. He will say no more about the place, answering questions by smiling and saying that the characters will get to see all for themselves.

The falling snow deadens the land and all is quiet as Belegilf leads the characters off the road and into the wilderness to the north west of the Trollshaws. The group travels through this quiet region for three days as the land slowly flattens and the forests of the Trollshaws are replaced by stands of stunted trees dotted over low hills. When the sky is not darkened by snow, the Misty Mountains can be seen in the distance. On the third day, the weather turns for the worse and a heavy mist descends onto the land, cutting vision down to 20ft and not clearing through the day. Belegilf presses on, saying that he knows where the Hideaway is as he has stayed there many times and could find it in the dark.

5.4 Scene 3 – Voices in the mist

Suddenly as the characters are walking through the mist the most sharp-eared amongst them will pick out the sounds of movement ahead. After a few moments, it becomes clear that a fairly large group of creatures are heading toward the characters. Belegilf retreats into a stand of trees and hides low against a trunk, silently urging the characters to follow.

As the group nears, it becomes plain from the harsh voices, the swearing and the complaining that the creatures are Orcs. Eventually, out of the mist a party of about forty Orcs and several Uruks move into view. It is important to stress to the characters that attempting to take the Orcs on would be extremely reckless. They stop just in front of the stand of trees, throwing their gear onto the ground. Those listening to the Orcs chatter in Westron will learn that they are from Mount Gram in the Ettenmoors and that they are on a special mission for the Ashdurbûk (the Goblin king of Gundabad) searching for something. They often make muttering references to the 'Nag Burdâk', which if anyone knows Black Speech translates as 'The Stalker'. They look particularly dispirited, even for Orcs, and it soon becomes apparent that they are upset about travelling with 'Old Yellowface' – the Sun – in the sky, even if the mist does hide it. One member of

the group is particularly vocal, and is clearly inciting the others (this is Grakak – see NPCs section).

A tall thin shape steps out of the mist. By his height and stature he would appear to be a human boy or young man, tightly wrapped against the cold in a thick cloak with the hood drawn close. At the sight of him the Orcs immediately quiet down. The figure walks into the middle of the group and faces the lead Orc who under this scrutiny no longer seems so sure of himself. In a thin, dry voice the man states that the Orcs have to travel by day to reach 'the caves' quickly – from his tone of voice it is clear he has repeated this many times. He follows with by saying that if the 'Snaga' were not so weak this would not be a problem, and that if they do not wish to travel this day, then they will die this day. This completely silences all of the Orcs and the leader cowers away, although the sneer on his face indicates that he considers the matter far from closed. The Orcs gather up their things and set off into the mist at a loping pace, the black clad figure following with long strides. After a few moments the voices of the Orcs fade away.

The characters are then free to move, and will no doubt leave the trees to either follow the Orcs or get away from the area. However, as soon as they rise, more figures step silently from the mist. These are five men, dressed in brown and grey garb, carrying drawn bows that they aim at the characters. The leader of the group stands slightly forward of the rest and raises a finger to his lips to indicate silence. However, as soon as Belegilf comes into view the men visibly relax and the leader comes forward to embrace him. He then points to two of his men and signals them to follow the Orcs, signalling the characters to follow him, and strides away with the remaining two men who store away their bows.

The Hideaway



1. Hidden entrance
2. The Stone King 'Elendil'
3. Stables
4. Lore chamber
5. Store
6. Rangers chamber
7. Grotto of Yavanna

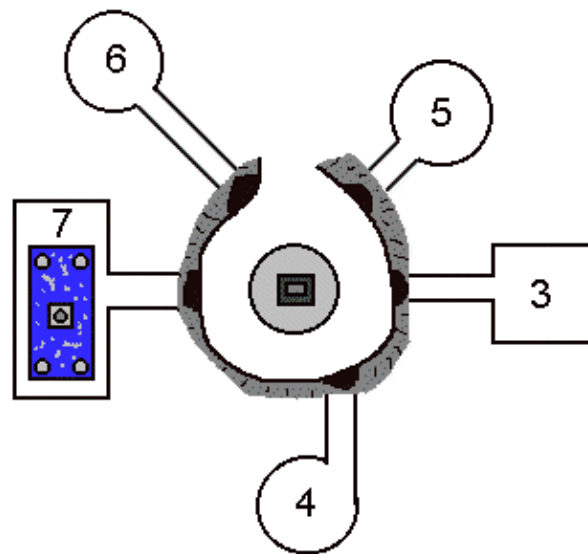


Figure 6. The Hideaway.

5.5 Scene 4 – the Hideaway



The men are Rangers, part of a group that are currently staying with Maenist. During their stay in the north of the Trollshaws they stumbled across a large group of Orcs. Strangely, the Orcs were travelling by day and by night and was clearly not a hunting band appearing to have a clear destination in mind. Even more strangely, a dark-cloaked man, no larger than a tall boy, who seemed as at ease in the wild as the Rangers themselves, was leading the Orcs. Gravely alarmed by this development the Rangers have spent the last week shadowing the Orcs trying to discover their purpose. There are ten Rangers in the group. Four and the leader of the group, Sadron, are tracking the Orcs. The remaining five men remain at the Hideaway with Maenist.

The Rangers escorting the characters will lead them to the Hideaway which is shown in figure 6. During the journey (which takes twenty minutes) the Rangers will not speak and will urge the characters to remain silent. If pressed they will state that noise carries easily in the cold air.

The Hideaway is described below. An old hunting lodge constructed in the early days of the kingdom of Arnor, the site is well hidden but was chosen not for concealment but because it is also the site of an ancient grotto dedicated to the Valar Yavanna.

1. Outside – the Hideaway is a natural depression in the bottom of a small limestone valley formed by the passage of a now long dry river

through the soft rock. A stand of trees surrounds the site obscuring the view from the outside, the valley bottom is also scattered with loose stone carried by ice in the distant past. A narrow defile leads between the trees into the Hideaway – the entrance is well hidden and Maenist and the Rangers ensure that no trace of their passing can be seen on the ground at the entrance.

2. The Stone King 'Elendil' – The defile leads between two sheer rock faces and opens out into a wide clearing open to the sky. Rocky cliffs on average 30ft tall form a ring around the clearing with several tunnel mouths leading into the cliffs. In the centre of the clearing a low circular balustrade encircles an area of chipped white gravel. In the centre of the circle is a statue of a crowned man with his hand raised. His bearded and crowned head has been heavily weathered but it is still recognisable as a statue of Elendil, first king of the kingdom in exile founded by the faithful of Numenor. The statue is carved from black stone and is raised on a granite plinth facing the entrance. The Stone King has magical properties and serves to provide a warning of danger to those within the Hideaway - if sentient beings draw within 1000ft of the site those within the Hideaway will feel a strange sense of 'alertness' as if they were being watched. The intensity of this feeling is roughly related to the numbers of beings nearing the Hideaway and how far away they are, and this allows the Rangers to talk normally within the clearing without fear of being spied upon.

Several cave mouths lead off from the clearing, each approximately 15ft high and ten feet wide. Those leading to locations 5, 6 and 7 are natural caves originally cut into the limestone by the passage of running water, whilst tunnels 3 and 4 are

man-made. The passages slope downwards.

3. Stables – Within this chamber (once a feast hall) the Rangers keep their horses. Holes fashioned into the roof of the chamber, hidden from above in a rough area of loose stone, providing some natural light and fresh air. The stalls are cleaned regularly and well maintained so the horses are quite comfortable. Currently, there are 12 horses stabled here.
4. Lore chamber – This is where Maenist spends most of his time when not in the Grotto or travelling in the wild. This room feels fresh and airy and filled with the smell of herbs. The walls are white and the whole chamber well lit by smokeless lanterns. Rich rugs cover the stone floor. Maenist keeps a well-stocked library here detailing his knowledge of the fauna and flora of the wild and of the history of Eriador. Those wishing to learn these things would do well to study here.
5. Store – This chamber, once a guest room, contains the stores and supplies of Maenist and the Rangers. Kept here are sufficient supplies to keep ten men well fed for three months. Maenist also stores dried herbs here which he uses to make healing unguents and salves. This room is not lit.
6. Rangers chamber – Within this chamber live the Rangers currently staying with Maenist. The room is sparsely furnished with just a table and several chairs; the Ranger's equipment is spread out on the floor (including their bedrolls). Currently, there are ten Rangers staying here. This chamber is lit by four smokeless lanterns.
7. Grotto of Yavanna – This ancient natural site was the main reason why the kings of Arnor developed

the Hideaway, to escape the stresses of the Royal court and to find peace in meditation. The cave entrance in the clearing slopes steeply downwards for nearly a hundred feet before exiting into a natural cavern. A wide and high-roofed chamber, stalagmites and stalagmites link the floor to the ceiling and large crystalline deposits of green stone are dotted about the walls (extremely unusual for a limestone cavern). Filling the chamber is a still pool formed from a natural spring. There are four pillars of black stone at the corners of the pool which were not natural to the cavern, carved into representations of four of the Valar; Oromë the hunter (a man drawing a mighty bow), Ulmo of the sea (a figure rising from the waves), Aulë the smith (a man with a mighty hammer and anvil) and Námo the keeper of the dead (a robed figure). In the centre of the pool is a large block of white stone carved into the likeness of a beautiful young maiden bearing a basket of flowers. This is a depiction of the spirit of Yavanna, the mistress of the Earth. The pool surrounding her is full of water creatures and plants that are strangely still green despite the season. Wall climbers escape from the water and wind up the sides of the grotto. The green crystalline deposits provide illumination as the small amount of light entering the cavern from the surface is captured and magnified many times, lighting the whole chamber a subtle and restful green hue upon which the plants thrive. The waters of the pool have healing properties – a draught will relive any weariness levels immediately. Several stone chairs occupy the area facing the statues and provide the seating in the chamber.

When at the Hideaway Maenist spends his time either amongst his works in the Lore chamber or in the Grotto

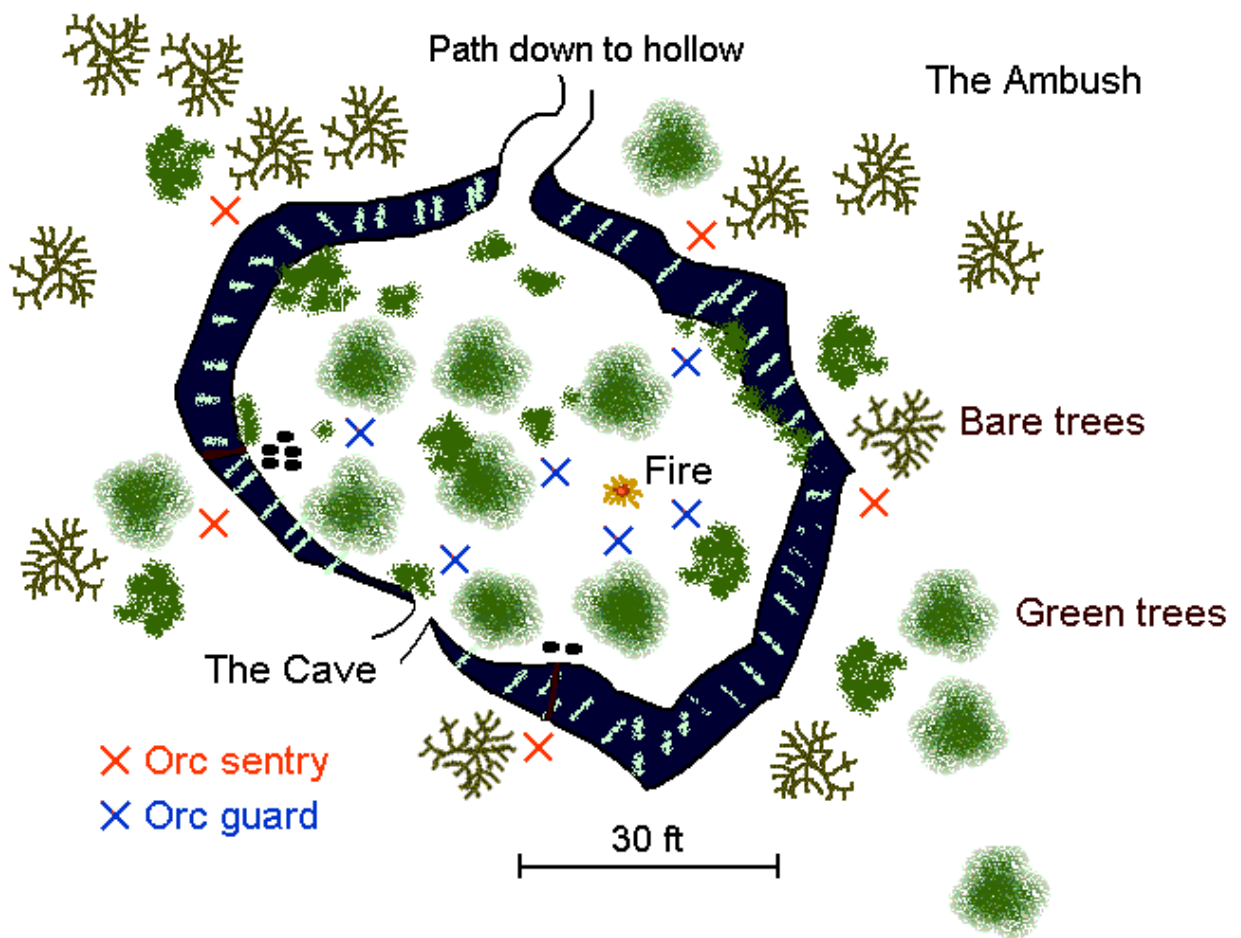


Figure 7. The ambush site.

meditating. Regardless of where the characters meet him when they arrive he will ask them to accompany him to the Grotto to talk, commenting that not all caves are places of shadow. When they arrive he will ask each character in turn to introduce him/herself and then to drink of the waters using a silver ladle stored by the pool.

5.6 Scene 5 – Maenist’s Council

Maenist will tell the characters what he knows of the Orcs that the Rangers have been following for the last four days. The characters should have guessed that the Orcs may be heading for the caves in the Trollshaws – if they do not then Belegilf will suggest this. The characters can then discuss with Maenist what they discovered in the caves of the Trollshaws. Maenist can offer the following information depending on what the characters tell him:

- If they mention the smithy complex, Maenist will say it is probably a site occupied by the Witch-king in the early third age. If they mention the figure outlined in red on the wall of the Smithy chamber of the complex (chamber 2), Maenist will stiffen and say that the image could be that of Annatar.
- If they tell him of the inscription they found and the nature of the block it was carved upon, Maenist will translate it if necessary and will tell them that they entered Taglos Gwathren, the fabled Smithy of Shadows that was thought lost since the fall of Eregion.

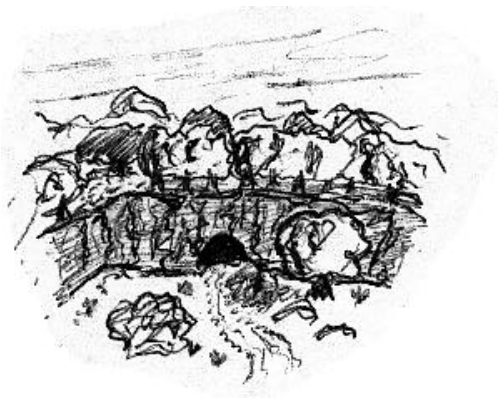
Maenist will tell the characters firstly of the history of the Elves in Eregion and of their fateful association with Annatar (see the introduction to this chronicle). He will then talk of the Rod of Annatar telling them that the Rod was a powerful tool constructed by Annatar to mould the minds of the weak,

and is an extremely dangerous force of evil. He will conclude that it seems likely that Gailhen took the Rod from Taglos Gwathren for his own use. Presumably the Orcs are connected with Gailhen’s recovery of the Rod but Maenist does not know why they are so far from their home – perhaps their master knows the Smithy has been disturbed and they have been despatched to recover the Rod. Maenist will say that it is imperative that firstly the Orcs are stopped, as they must not be allowed to meet with Gailhen – they could capture the Rod and return with it to Mount Gram, or Gailhen with the power of the Rod could dominate them and turn them to his ends – both outcomes would be disastrous. It is also vital that the rest of the Rangers are warned of the danger posed by Gailhen.

Belegilf says then that it is best that the characters join with the Rangers to eliminate the Orcs and that after this they could travel to Bree to meet with the rest of the Rangers. Maenist agrees to this and suggests that he also comes to help press upon the Rangers the danger that Gailhen and the Rod pose.

Maenist brings the characters to meet with the rest of the Rangers at the Hideaway. Sadron will listen to what the characters have to say regarding Gailhen and the Orcs. Maenist suggests that the Orcs’ destination is Taglos Gwathren but that if the Rod has already been removed then the Orcs will recover nothing from the site. However, the caves provide an excellent ambush site. Sadron suggests that the Rangers, characters and Maenist take the horses and travel to the Trollshaws to ambush the Orcs.

5.7 Scene 6 – Ambush!



Assuming they agree, the characters join with the Rangers, Belegilf and Maenist, collect their gear for travel and the horses and leave for the caves. Sadron will bring all of the Rangers from the Hideaway ensuring that no trace is left of the group's exit from the defile as they leave. The Rangers who continued to track the Orcs have left signs of the route that the Rangers can follow.

The group can take the journey relatively easily. Even at their full speed, the Orcs are still one day away from the site even assuming they travel during the day. So the party can afford to rest properly in the evening.

When the group near the caves the two Rangers that Sadron despatched to track the Orcs will meet them in woods three miles from the site. They will explain that the Orcs have travelled by day and night to reach the caves and have set up a camp in the depression. They have placed sentries around the top of the cliffs. The site of the Orc camp outside the caves and is shown in figure 7.

During the day the camp contains only a handful of guards who have been forced outside by the Orc leader Grakak (see NPCs section). They spend their time seeking shelter from the light under the boughs of some of the trees and are very unhappy and irritable, as are the sentries. The remainder of the Orcs are sheltering in the upper level of the caves as the Nag Burdâk will not allow them to enter the

lower regions - two dead Orcs can testify to his insistence upon this.

The characters can discuss with Sadron, Maenist, Belegilf and the Rangers how they plan to eliminate the Orcs. An attack by day would prove the easiest fight as the Orcs do not perform well in sunlight, however Sadron will point out that by day the Orcs are unlikely to leave the caves and fighting so many Orcs in the dark passages could prove very hazardous. Unless the characters come up with anything better, Belegilf has a suggestion.

He suggests that they take advantage of the vicious natures of the Orcs. If they could be lured from the cave they could be more easily dealt with, so perhaps an attack by the night when they are not afraid of the sun is the best option. Luring them out should be easy – it just requires some 'prey'. The group wait until the middle of the night and then the Rangers could silently eliminate the sentries. The characters could then make their way to the top of the path and charge down into the clearing to dispose of the Orcs on guard duty outside, being sure to make as much noise as possible. Once the guards are dealt with, the characters could retreat to the narrow path leading to the tops of the cliffs. Hopefully, the noise will alert the main force of Orcs within the cave and they will not be able to resist rushing out to the attack. When they have all left the cave the Rangers can seal the cave entrance from the cliff top and pick off the Orcs with their bows. The characters just have to ensure that they can defend themselves in the melee.

5.8 Scene 7 – The fight.

Unless the characters over-ride Belegilf's suggestion, this is the plan that will be implemented. The ten Rangers will silently travel around the cliff tops and dispose of the sentries. The characters can then charge into the clearing and engage the guards. It will take sometime for the Orcs in the cave to react so they should have time to kill the guards and retreat before the main force pour forth. The Rangers will

then drop a cask of oil in front of the cave entrance and set it on fire. In the light of the flames they will begin to shoot the Orcs as they mill about the hollow in confusion. Eventually the Orcs will come to the conclusion that the only way out is through the characters and will charge toward the path and the characters should expect a stiff fight. Belegilf will wait at the top of the sloping path to despatch any Orcs that make it passed the characters.

5.9 Aftermath

Once the Orcs have been despatched, the Rangers will enter the caves. However, they will find no Orcs – all rushed out to the attack. Grakak the Orc captain has been captured alive by the Rangers. However, of the mysterious 'Nag Burdâk' there is no trace.

Grakak, sorely wounded, will gabble under pressure from the Rangers that his troop has come from Mount Gram 'searching for something'. He does not know what the 'something' is; only the Nag Burdâk knows that. Apparently it was in the caves. As to the Nag Burdâk, Grakak knows nothing about him except that he 'came from East'. It is obvious that Grakak fears him. However, the most interesting information that Grakak knows is that more Orcs are coming. This group seems to be an advanced party.

The dead Orcs are piled in the clearing and left for the crows. The Rangers release Grakak with dire warnings to the rest of the Orcs from Mount Gram of the consequences should they enter Eriador. Belegilf says that the rest of the Rangers must be warned – this is best done by travelling to Bree. Many of the Rangers keep a watch on the town and so this is the best place to meet them. Belegilf says he will accompany the characters with Maenist. Sadron and the rest of the Rangers will retreat to the Hideaway to see if any more Orcs come down from the mountains. Sadron gives the horses to the characters to speed them on their way.

With the characters on their way to Bree, the adventure continues in **Chapter 5 – 'Honeyed Words'**.

5.10 Enemies and NPCs.

Use the following descriptions for the enemies and NPC's encountered in this chapter. Stats should be tailored by the narrator to the strengths of the party.

5.10.1 Maenist (S. 'Wise, skilled')



Attributes: Bearing 12 (+3), Nimbleness 8 (+1), Perception 10 (+2), Strength 8 (+1), Vitality 7 (+0), Wits 11 (+2).

Reactions: Stamina +1, Swiftiness +2, Willpower +3, Wisdom +3, Defence 11, Health 8.

Order: Lore Master.

Skills (selected): Armed combat (longsword) +4, Ranged combat (short bow) +6, Inspire (Wisdom) +4, Lore (Eriador) +8, Survival (forest) +5, Teamster +5, Track (forest) +6, Weather-sense +4.

Equipment: Maenist is dressed in dark green clothing which provides excellent camouflage. He carries a small pack containing waybread, herbs etc. He has a knife at his belt. He also carries the First Age longsword named Gwindnaur (S. 'Pale blue flame') which is described below.

A Sindarin Elf, Maenist is very wise in the lore of Eregion. Originally a warrior, he fought in many wars in Beleriand and Middel earth with the sword Gwindnaur, however he soon tired of war. Now he delights in the study of the natural world

around him and in contemplation of the works of Yavanna. He has lived at the Hideaway since the demise of the kingdom of Arethdain, sharing his home with the many groups of Rangers that help defend the free peoples. Friendly, straightforward and relaxed, Maenist is not typical of his kind. Since his discovery of the wonders of the natural world he has developed a newfound respect for the works of Eru, and considers Men, Dwarves and Hobbits his equal.

5.10.2 Sadron (S. 'Faithful')



Attributes: Bearing 7 (+0), Nimbleness 6 (+0), Perception 9 (+1), Strength 9 (+1), Vitality 9 (+1), Wits 7 (+0).

Reactions: Stamina +1, Swiftiness +1, Willpower +0, Wisdom +1, Defence 10, Health 10.

Order: Warrior.

Skills (selected): Armed combat (longsword) +5, Ranged combat (short bow) +3, Inspire (Leadership) +3, Survival (forest) +4, Teamster +3, Track (forest) +3, Weather-sense +2.

Equipment: Sadron wears typical Rangers garb of greys and greens with a thick and heavy winter's cloak. He carries a pack with his camping essentials and a longsword strapped across his back.

Sadron is a typical Ranger – stout, dependable and committed. He is the natural leader of the small group of Rangers currently staying with Maenist, and his men trust him implicitly. He is a firm friend of Belegilf and the two have

known each other for many years. Pragmatic to the end, Sadron realises his limitations and will happily concede leadership to a more able individual.

5.10.3 Grakäk



Attributes: Bearing 8 (+1), Nimbleness 8 (+1), Perception 8 (+1), Strength 9 (+1), Vitality 10 (+2), Wits 7 (+0).

Reactions: Stamina +3, Swiftiness +2, Willpower +1, Wisdom +1, Defence 11, Health 11.

Order: Warrior.

Skills (selected): Armed combat (scimitar) +7, Ranged combat (short bow) +3, Intimidate (fear) +3, Observe (spot) +4, Track (forest) +3, Weather-sense +2.

Equipment: Grakäk wears a long shirt of black chain mail over stinking animal leathers. A scimitar hangs at his waist and a whip on his belt.

Grakak is a typical Orc of the northlands, with a thin rangy body, crooked limbs and a foul mind. His face is sharp and angular and his skin is dark grey and dotted with tufts of wiry black hair, giving him a fearsome appearance. An accomplished warrior, Grakak has served the forces of Mount Gram well for many years. This is mainly due to the fact that he couples his racial disposition toward aggression with an innate ability to assess odds – he understands it is better to lose than to die. He has been sent as a high-ranking Orc to lead in the hunt for the Rod, though he truly does not know what it is that the Orcs seek. He is a wise leader in an Orkish

sense, never to slow to deal out encouragement to his men by whip or club. However, his leadership has seriously been undermined on this expedition by the presence of the Nag Burdak – clearly the superior, this man has usurped Grakak's role and the Orc does not like it. Tensions are running high and Grakak is waiting for a moment to seize control. This will occur as soon as Grakak thinks a favourable outcome is a realistic possibility.

5.10.4 Nag Burdak (BS 'The Stalker')



Attributes: Bearing 12 (+3), Nimbleness 10 (+2), Perception 8 (+1), Strength 10 (+2), Vitality 10 (+2), Wits 9 (+1).

Reactions: Stamina +2, Swiftiness +2, Willpower +3, Wisdom +3, Defence 12, Health 12.

Order: Warrior.

Skills (selected): Armed combat (scimitar) +9, Ranged combat (short bow) +7, Intimidate (fear) +4, Observe (spot) +4, Track (forest) +6, Teamster (horse) +5, Weather-sense +5.

Equipment: The Nag Burdak wears a suit of light scale armour under his cloak, and in his pack is a fearsome helmet with a snarling mask face. He carries a wickedly serrated longsword across his back.

The Nag Durdak has no other name, at least none that he cares to mention. Originating from a desert tribe far to the south of Mordor, he is small and wiry, coupling his tribe's boy-like stature with a surprising strength. With skin burnt dark

brown by the southern sun and mysterious dark tattoos crowning his hairless head he is an imposing sight despite his lack of height. However, it is his jet black eyes that are the most unnerving. A servant of Mordor, he has lived in the North of Endor for more years than he can remember. He is a skilled outdoorsman and, as his nickname amongst the Orcs suggests, is primarily used as an assassin by his dark masters. However, due to the importance of the Rod to the Shadow he has been charged with leading the Orcs who cannot be trusted alone with such a task.

5.10.4 The Rangers



Use stats for 'Dunlendings' from the Core Rules but with Armed combat (longsword) +6.

The Rangers are a sturdy lot, resolute, committed and determined. They are not afraid at hunting down the Orcs – they consider this their calling, to protect the free peoples of Eriador and those not able to defend themselves.

5.10.5 The Orcs



Use stats for 'Orcs' and 'Uruk Hai' from the Core Rules.

Surely, crude and malicious, these Orcs are typical of the race. Hailing from Mount Gram, they are members of the Thrakburzum tribe. They are very unhappy about travelling by day, but the thick mist hides the yellow face and so their penalty to combat roles is only -2. The sheer numbers of Orcs in the party should dissuade the characters into launching into a direct assault against them.

5.11 Items

This section outlines some of the special items encountered in this chapter.

5.11.1 The longsword *Gwindaur* (S. 'Pale blue flame')



A sword of Gondolin, Gwindlaur was given to Maenist by the Elf lord Voronwë before he sailed into the West. A weapon of great craftsmanship and beauty, Gwandlaur is so named due to the pale blue flame of intense cold that licks along its length when in the presence of the agents of the Shadow, be they Orcs or men. Against these foes a successful hit with the weapon inflicts a further 1D6 of damage due to cold burns. The weapon has a long and gloried history, fighting in the wars of Beleriand and of Middle earth including the War of the Last Alliance, and is a great heirloom.

6.0 Chapter 5 – Honeyed Words

6.1 Introduction

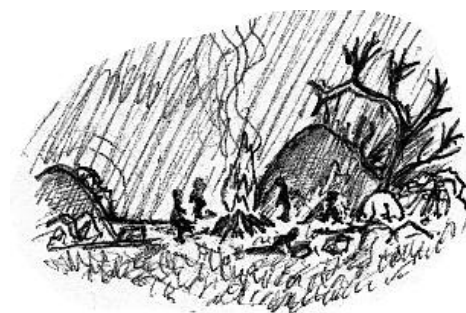
This chapter follows directly from **Chapter 4 – Seeking Aid**, and that chapter should be completed before this the events in this chapter take place.

6.2 What's going on?

While the characters have been discussing their findings with Maenist, Gailhen has been busy. Once he had retrieved the Rod of Annatar from the depths of Taglos Gwathren, he made directly for Bree wishing to try the fabled powers of the Rod for himself. Once in the town he began to subvert the people to his will. Meanwhile, Gwanthilf has resurfaced in Bree and joined with Gailhen. Together, they effectively rule the town. When the characters return they will find the people of Bree even less friendly toward Rangers and adventurers than in the past. All is revealed to the characters regarding the Rod of Annatar in a dangerous encounter with Gailhen, an encounter that not all of the characters group will survive...



6.3 Scene 1 – The return journey



The return journey takes just over a week. Winter has truly set in – snowdrifts block much of the road and a biting wind blows down from the north. Belegilf leads the way, his face turned down against the wind and his cloak pulled tightly about him. Maenist, in common with his race, seems oblivious to the weather. Few encounters occur during the journey, giving the characters to reflect on the ominous events of the previous chapters. Although Belegilf is happy to talk during the journey and Maenist is willing to discuss the history and lore of the region to those who are interested, this cannot lift the feeling of foreboding that builds as the weather worsens.

6.4 Scene 2 – Chance meeting

When the characters are about three days outside Bree, they will come across a merchant's wagon winding down the road through the snow. The wagon belongs to Burlas, the merchant the characters helped in chapter 2. Assuming they rescued her, Rosallow his daughter is also with him. This should be a cheery meeting, when they helped him the characters became friends for life with the old merchant who is still strapped up from his encounter with the robbers.

It is rare for a merchant to travel in such bad weather, and the characters may inquire why Burlas is moving on from Bree. He tells them that he has been forced out of town and that the characters may find Bree is not the friendly place it used to be, especially for strangers. The Rangers who were once treated with suspicion are now openly talked against. Many of the town's people had heard the story of how Burlas was rescued in part by Belegilf and seeing his close association with the Rangers he became a target for abuse, such that he felt he was no longer welcome. He concludes that strange sentiments are stirring in the town of Bree.

He will happily feed the characters from the food in his wagon and give them some warmth from the cold, but he is keen to press on and the characters should not tarry. Leaving Burlas they move onwards towards Bree and their meeting with the Rangers.

6.5 Scene 3 - The Gate to Bree-land

When the group finally arrive at the town they draw up to the large wooden gates of Bree-land. The gates are closed, which is very unusual in daylight. There is no sign of life as the characters draw close and it takes several study knocks at the gate to rouse any action from within. Eventually a small window in the gate opens and peering out is the gatekeeper of Bree, the owner of a very old, wrinkled and surly face. He tells the group to go away and that Bree is no longer open to strangers.

No matter what the characters say, the gatekeeper will not let them in to the town. If any of the group tries to persuade him by reasoning, he quickly becomes confused and agitated and will slam the window closed. Perceptive characters will have noted real fear in his face underlying the confusion.

This along with Burlas's tale should be enough to persuade the characters that something is seriously wrong in Bree, but to find out more they must decide how to get into the town. Belegilf and Maenist will try to dissuade the characters from any rash action such as breaking down the gates – the people of Bree are good people no matter how strangely they are behaving. The easiest option is to move around the wooden wall of the town and to climb over it, there are no guards so the task is relatively easy.

6.6 Scene 4 – Meeting at the Square

Within the town, the streets are empty of people and the normal hustle of town life has evaporated. All the doors are closed and the shutters pulled tight. No matter how much banging the characters do no one will open his or her door; it is as if Bree is a ghost town. Maenist again will dissuade the characters from acting too rashly such as kicking down the doors.

As they travel through the town, the sharp eared among the group will hear the sounds of voices coming from the market square in the centre of the town. It seems that a large crowd of people have gathered there and are talking quietly amongst themselves.

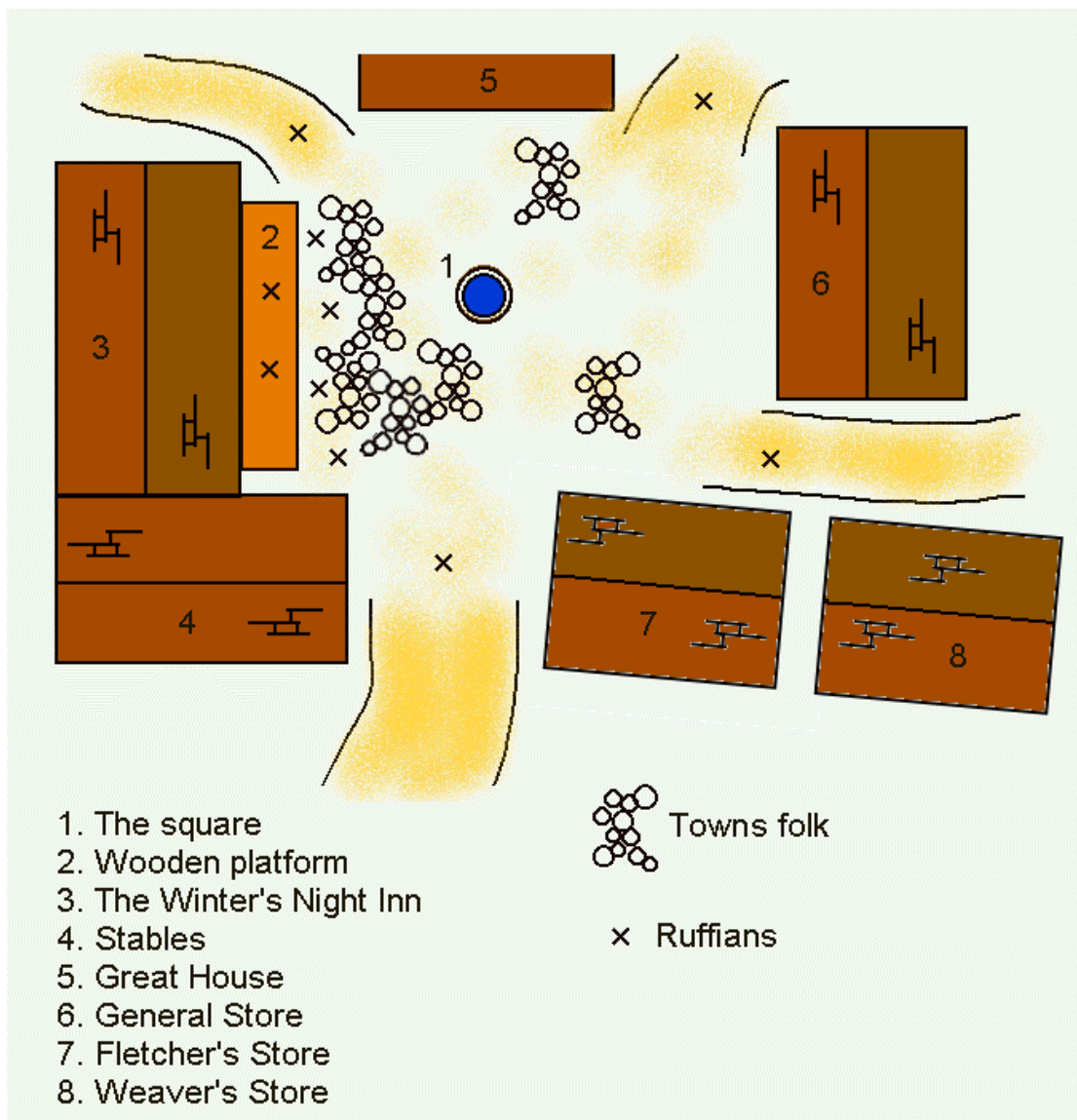


Figure 8. The square in Bree.

No doubt the characters will want to approach the square to discover the source of the commotion.

The square is shown in figure 8. and the scene is described below. Prudent characters will try to find a way to creep toward the square without being seen - this is a relatively easy task and the streets surrounding the square are deserted. However if they decide to just stroll into the square then events will occur slightly differently (see below).

1. The square – This open area used for markets once a week and everyday is usually filled with people, it is the natural focal point of the town. In the centre of the square is a well cut deeply into the ground supplying water for the surrounding traders and stallholders. At the moment the square is packed with people, perhaps a hundred, all facing the wooden platform at the front of the Winter's Night inn. The people are women and men of all ages and their dress reveals them to be some of the towns' folk of Bree. They are talking amongst themselves and are apparently not happy about something.
2. Wooden platform – This raised wooden veranda runs alongside the front of the Winter's night Inn. Currently it is occupied by two rough looking men carrying clubs who are lounging against the railings that run along the front of the veranda.

The Winter's Night Inn – A popular destination with traders and merchants, this

Inn is often filled to capacity, especially so on market day. The Inn is well maintained and usually houses a slightly better class of tenant than the Prancing Pony.

3. Stables – This building provides stables for guests of the adjacent Inn. At the moment the stalls are all full.
4. Great House – This building houses the offices of the major of Bree and is considered one of the grandest buildings in the town. However, it does not look it's best at the moment – someone has smashed the downstairs windows and attempted to kick the front door down.
5. General Store – One of the most important buildings in Bree, the store has been broken into and looted. Dropped items of food litter the floor by the entrance.
6. Fletcher's Store – This building has been boarded up but again someone has forced there way in to loot the place.
7. Weaver's Store – This building appears untouched – whatever the looters have been after cannot be found in the weaver's store.

Gailhen has been using the power of the Rod of Annatar (see the Items section below) to dominate

the people of Bree. Gathering to him a large number of the undesirables of the town, he has sent them looting amongst the shops collecting equipment for his next expedition, wherever that may be. So far Gailen has used the Rod to keep the towns folk hidden indoors, but the looting has reached such a degree that the people have gathered outside the Winter's Night Inn to confront Gailhen. However, it is a testimony of the power of Rod and the fear of the people that they have not tried to bring Gailhen to justice but remain relatively quietly awaiting Gailhen's appearance.

The people filling the square are many of the prominent towns folk of Bree, men and women alike. Dotted amongst them are several rough looking types, mainly distinguishable by the clubs they carry. As the characters draw close the people are talking amongst themselves as if waiting for something. Evidently the action is to take place on the wooden platform in front of the Winter's Night Inn. The rest of this scene assumes that the characters are keeping a low profile in one of the side streets leading onto the square. If they march straight into the square, things will progress somewhat differently.

After about ten minutes, the figure of a woman walks out onto the platform from the Inn. The characters should be able to recognise her as Gwanthilf who they first encountered in the caves of the Trollshaws. As she steps lightly onto the platform, smiling amiably at the people below her, a silence descends upon the crowd. She walks over to talk to one of the

rough looking men at the side of the platform, and he nods and calls two other over to him. She returns to the centre of the platform and looks out over the crowd.

A few moments later, Gailhen strolls from the Inn. He looks much the same as when the characters last saw him, except in his right hand he carries a short wooden staff with a large pale stone on the top. In case the characters haven't guessed Maenist whispers that this is the Rod of Annatar. Gailhen strides forward to address the crowd, holding the Rod up to call for silence. The characters are too far away to hear what Gailhen is saying, but it has a peculiar effect on the crowd. As he speaks they visibly settle down, frowns become smiles and they even laugh occasionally as he talks. After about five minutes Gailhen lowers the Rod, smiling to the crowd. During this time, the characters will find themselves lulled, such that even the most alert among them will lose their alertness.

When Gailhen stops speaking, the characters will suddenly hear voices around them (regardless of where they are), and suddenly find themselves in the midst of a group of townsfolk, who push and shove them toward the square. Maenist will sharply warn any of the group that try and fight back that these people are innocents. Suddenly, the characters will find themselves in the middle of the square surrounded by angry people. It is important for the following scenes that the characters cannot act – spellcasters should be discouraged from displaying their power, if they insist on casting spells have Gwanthilf counter them.

6.7 Scene 5 – The Power of the Rod

Gailhen holds the Rod aloft to calm the town's people. However, the characters will find themselves surrounded by a press of people and unable to move. Once the noise dies down Gailhen speaks.

Holding the Rod aloft, Gailhen begins to speak of the evil of the Rangers, wicked men of the wild who come to prey on the town of Bree. He speaks of robbers and thieves, of men of darkness, and the people jeer at the characters as he speaks, and characters with magical sense will be able to feel the subtle emanations of the Rod. As Gailhen talks the characters may notice Gwanthilf staring at Maenist.

Gailhen stops speaking and raising the Rod higher, he tells the towns people it is time to remove these evil men from Bree. But before he finishes, Gwanthilf stops him, and tells the towns folk to push Maenist forward. There are too many people present for the characters to stop this happening. Gwanthilf tells Gailhen that perhaps the Elf knows something of the Rod. Gailhen looks toward Maenist but he bows his head. But then Gailhen points the Rod at Maenist and commands him to speak and tell what he knows of the 'Voice'.

The characters can feel the power moving between the two and Gailhen's head springs with sweat and Maenist clenches his teeth. But however he resists, in the end Maenist speaks.

He says that the 'Voice' was moved many years ago by the men of Arnor. Threw twisted lips he says

that the Voice now rests at Mindon Lamath on the shores of lake Nemial.

Gailhen draws Maenist toward him, revelling in his control. Gwanthilf steps forward and leans down to kiss the Elf. Maenist stiffens and Gailhen lowers the Rod to release him and the Elf staggers backward, a knife in his breast.

6.8 Scene 6 – Maenist's passing

As Maenist falls pandemonium breaks over the people. They run screaming and shouting around the square, shoving and kicking all in their way in confusion. Gailhen and Gwanthilf disappear back into the Inn, and the Ruffian move in to guard their exit, kicking and shoving people out of the way. The confusion will give the characters time to get to Maenist. He lies mortally wounded on the ground. He will tell the characters that he could not withhold the secret of the Voice. He says that the Voice is a devise that amplifies the power of the Rod, and that the two items must not be united. He says that the tower Mindon Lameth lies on the shore of lake Nemial near the ruins of Annuminas. He says that the characters must reach the Voice before Gailhen. Finally, he offers the longsword Gwindnaur to one of the characters to bear – this could be an Elf or one of the warriors of the group that Maenist thinks is most worthy. After this final act, Maenist dies.

6.9 Scene 7 – Escape from Bree

By the time Maenist has delivered his final words, the people of Bree have gathered again ready to chase the characters from the

town. The folk are not foolish enough to attack the characters outright, but they will Harry them by shouting taunts and throwing stones. The characters have no choice but to leave. Gailhen and Gwanthilf are nowhere to be seen, and nor are their Ruffians.

During the whole visit to Bree, the Rangers are nowhere to be seen.

The chronicle continues in the final **Chapter 6 – Voice from the Past.**

6.10 Non-player Characters (NPCs)

Use the following descriptions for the enemies and NPC's encountered in this chapter. Stats should be tailored by the narrator to the strengths of the party.

6.10.1 Gailhen (S. 'True-eyed')

See description and statistics in **Chapter 1 – The Robbers Cave.**

6.10.2 Gwanthilf (S. 'Beautiful heart')

See description and statistics in **Chapter 1 – The Robbers Cave.**

6.10.3 Ruffians



Use statistics for 'Dunlanders' from the Core rules but with reduced combat skills and Wits.

Every town has them. These dregs of society are particularly susceptible to Gailhen's suggestion and they have flocked to his 'cause'. A motley bunch of young and old, down-and-outs and drunks, these Ruffians would pose little opposition to the characters if there were not so many of them.

6.10.4 Towns folk



Use statistics for 'Dunlanders' from the Core rules but with much reduced combat skills.

The good people of Bree are held by Gailhen and the power of the Rod. Many feel deep within themselves that what he says is wrong but they cannot fight the Rod's power. They will obey Gailhen's orders seemingly without question but perceptive characters should be able to see the conflict raging within. These are basically good people and innocents so the characters should be strongly discouraged from slaughtering them to get at Gailhen.

6.11 Items

This section outlines some of the special items encountered in this chapter.

6.11.1 The Rod of Annatar



The Rod of Annatar, the focus of this chronicle, is an exceptionally powerful magical item. Annatar, the name chosen by Sauron in his attempts to bring the Elven-Smiths of Eriador under his sway, constructed the Rod as a tool for extending his influence and control. The Rod represents that most abhorrent trait of the Shadow, the control of others and the loss of free will. Powerful and strongly manifesting magical weapons are not a part of Middle-earth and the Rod is not a weapon of brute strength but a subtle and mysterious tool of evil, and must always be presented in this way.

At the time of the Rod's construction, Sauron was using a pleasing guise to entreat the elves, and so the Rod itself is pleasing to the eye. A shaft of dark wood approximately 3 feet long and topped with a disk of silver metal upon which is mounted a globe of milky glass-like material, similar to a large pearl roughly 4" in diameter.

There are no markings on the wood, the disk or the globe, and the whole piece seems unremarkable. However, the workmanship can be seen to be of the highest quality (Sauron was once one of the greatest Maiar of Aule, the smith of the Valar).

The powers of the rod are many. The principle function was to increase Sauron's power to overcome the Elves with words, even as his true bearing was held back by his guise. The Rod grants all those who hold it a bearing (wise) +3 bonus and a wisdom +2 bonus, the demeanour of wisdom projected by the Rod will over-ride the bearer's own natural bearing. Secondly, the Rod grants the trait 'Honeyed tongue' to the bearer, allowing the holder to win over others to do his bidding. The Rod also gives +3 rolls to intimidate and inspire tests. Finally, the Rod will allow the bearer to cast the sorcery spell 'Command' as if the bearer were a magician (with the accompanying weariness test). The rod can also be used as a staff focus for other sorcery and magicians' spells.

Actively using any of these abilities against another, even the Bearing bonus, costs the holder a corruption point. The shadow cast by the lies and eventual betrayal of Annatar, the 'bringer of gifts', is so ingrained into the rod that its evil can overcome even the strongest minds. It should be noted that due to the nature of the tasks for which the rod was invested – to overcome and coerce free minds with sweet words - the powers of the Rod always manifest subtly. The real powers of the Rod are actually far more than those listed here, but to

utilise all the full range of the Rod's abilities requires a powerful mind such as Sauron's. Compared to this, Gailhen use of the Rod has the all the finesse of a surgeon carrying out a delicate operation with a two-handed sword.

7.0 Chapter 6 - Voice from the Past

The events in this chapter directly follow from **Chapter 5 – Honeyed Words**, and that chapter should be completed before this one is attempted.

7.1 What's going on?

The characters have discovered that Gailhen and Gwanthilf, in possession of the Rod of Annatar, have bent the people of Bree to their will and gathered a large band of ruffians in the process. However, the characters have been powerless to act against them with so many innocent Bree-landers under the influence of the Rod. With the characters helpless, Gailhen has used the Rod to force Maenist, the Elven Lore Master, to reveal all he knows of the Rod of Annatar, and learnt that the Rod is just part of an ancient device called the Voice of Annatar the second part of which is at Annuminas in a place called Mindon Lamath (S. 'The tower of echoing voices'). Gailhen has struck Maenist a mortal blow and escaped with his men to seek the tower, leaving the characters to escape from the enraged Bree folk.

In this chapter, the characters race to Annuminas to reach the Voice of Annatar before Gailhen arrives. At the site of the tower they gain new allies and confront their enemies in the final battle with Gailhen.



7.2 Scene 1 – Flight from Bree

Escaping the misguided townsfolk, Belegilf leads the characters back to the horses waiting outside Bree together they set off for Annuminas. Before they set off Belegilf leaves a message for the Rangers should any return to Bree. Belegilf says that it is vital that they reach Mindon Lamath before Gailhen – they dare not stop to confront him in case they lose valuable time which could be used in trying to destroy the Voice whatever it may be. It would seem that Gailhen has set out on foot from the

ancient city and therefore on horseback the characters should have a clear advantage.

Belegilf leads the characters from Bree through the wilds toward the ruins of the ancient capital of the lost Dunedain realm of Arnor. Should the group approach the road as they leave Bree, they will see a large group of people marching down the great road toward the Shire – this is Gailhen and his 'servants'. By the time the characters see them the ranks have swollen to over one hundred, including both Ruffians and ordinary townsfolk – men and women, humans and hobbits. This is far too large a group for the characters to attack and even so they are mostly innocent people ensnared by the effects of the Rod – combat is not an option. As Gailhen's party march onward, the weaker ones fall by the wayside, waking hours later far from home, but others come from the wild to answer the call of the Rod, including Hillmen, outlaws and worse, and the ranks of the makeshift army swell. It will take this group less than two weeks to reach Annuminas, but this should give the characters ample time to skirt through the wilds toward the city.

The journey should be tense as clearly there is much at stake. The characters will be turned away from any dwellings they approach; even the folk of the wilds seem nervous and worried by something they cannot name. Belegilf says that the land does not feel 'right', as if something has tipped the balance of things – this is dark mind of Sauron as manifested through the Rod. People that the characters pass seem surly and unhelpful, and as the journey continues travellers become downright aggressive to strangers as the Rod's influence grows.

The narrator can play any encounters he wishes during the journey, but it should be borne in mind that the shadow of the Rod lies over the land and a dark and foreboding feeling should permeate any scenes.

7.3 Scene 2 – The Wight at Deadman's Dike



Approximately one week into the journey, the group will draw close to the ruined hilltop fortress of Fornost Erain, or Deadman's Dike as it has been known since being sacked by the armies of Angmar. The crumbling towers and walls can be spotted for miles around, and the blood red light of the setting sun casts long silhouettes which reach across the intervening distance like black fingers. The surrounding countryside is silent, and the characters should be only too aware of the noise made by their horses as they pass.

As they draw close to the city Belegilf leads them along a path which moves through an area of woodland Belegilf tells the party that they will stay here for the night – the ruins of Fornost are not a place to approach during the hours of darkness. The characters should organise their camp and settle down for the night.

Unknown to them, they have chosen a bad place to stop. Nearby is the tomb of an ancient king of men. Empty except for bones for many ages, the tomb after the sacking of Fornost has become the habitation of an evil Wight from Angmar. Asleep for many years since the end of the darkness in the north, the Wight has been awoken by the evil shadow the Rod is casting over the land.

During the night, the Wight will watch the camp, waiting for what he perceives to be the best time to make his move. Assuming the characters post a watch, he will wait

until the 'weakest' character is guarding the camp and then use his 'Holding spell' to immobilise the guard. This will be felt by the guard as a freezing grip on the his heart and the fire will stutter and die. The Wight will then move forward to slay the guard, however, as he moves into the camp the building cold will wake one of the sleeping characters so the Wight will lose the element of surprise.

The Wight should not be used to seriously harm the characters; he should serve only to build the tension felt since the characters left Bree. The Wight will fight to defend itself but once the characters have awoken if they appear too strong he will retreat to his tomb.

If the characters wish to destroy the creature they will have to wait until daylight and then tear open the tomb, which lies in the woods 30ft to the west of the campsite. It will take at least three hours to open the tomb but when the sunlight hits the central chamber, the Wight will expire with a deathly wail. Within the tomb there is the moulding equipment of the ancient king. Amongst the rot is a thin band of untarnished gold to be worn about the head – the ancient king's crown (see items description). It should be suggested to the characters that perhaps the power of the Rod is stirring the evil in the land and has drawn the Wight out from his tomb.

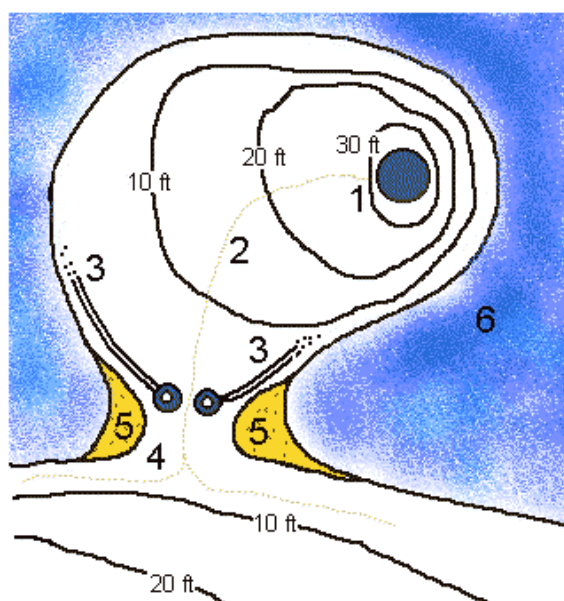
The party can then travel passed the ruins of Fornost, the broken towers acting as a stark reminder of the folly of men.

7.4 Scene 3 - Mindon Lamath



1. Mindon Lameth
2. Path
3. Broken walls
4. Gate towers
5. Beach
6. Deep water (Evendim)

50 ft



Mindon Lameth

7. Lower chamber
8. First level
9. Second level
10. Roof

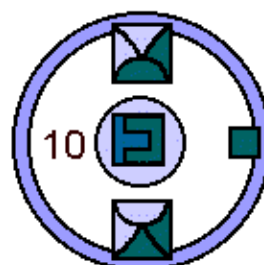
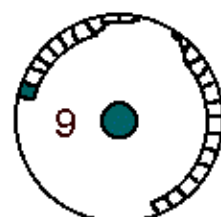
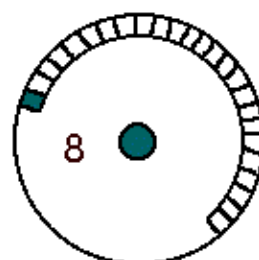
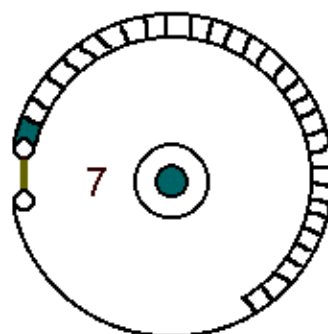


Figure 9. Mindon Lameth and the local environment.

Eventually, the party will approach the site of the ruined city of Annuminas on the shores of the beautiful lake Evendim. Unlike the chilling ruins of Fornost, the broken avenues and shattered halls of Annuminas evoke sorrow rather than fear. Belegilf says that if he remembers correctly the tower called Mindon Lameth (S. 'The tower of echoing voices') lies along the shore of the lake on a small promontory. Belegilf leads the party onward.

Figure 9 shows Mindon Lameth and the land surrounding the tower, individual locations are described below. The tower itself is constructed in the typical Numenorean style of fused blocks of dark stone and is nearly 200 feet in height. However, the Arnorean architects had not the skill of the forefathers and the tower shows some signs of decay. There are windows running around the tower (on levels one and two, see below), although these show some signs of age with crumbling stone work they are stoutly blocked by intricately worked steel bars.

1. Mindon Lameth – The ruins of the tower sit on a small promontory which projects into Lake Evendim. The tower occupies the top of a small hill, 30 feet high. A few broken and gnarled trees are dotted about the island.
2. Path – A small and now long disused path winds from the tower through the gates. Under the turf paving slabs of marble can be seen.
3. Broken walls – 12 feet high near the gate towers, these crumbling walls fall away to nothing as they move to circle the island. They are wide enough near the towers for a man to stand upon.
4. Gate towers – these two small ruined towers once supported the gate that barred entry to the island. They are 15 feet high and crenulated. A man could stand on top of the towers and receive some protection from the battlements, but

the towers are now hollow so a platform would need to be constructed. The gate has long since gone.

5. Beaches – Two small sandy beaches cover either side of the neck of the promontory.
6. Deep water – Evendim is a deep lake, typically the lake floor drops to 20 feet within 30 feet of the shore but the water behind the tower is especially deep, dropping to 50 feet within just a few yards of the rocky shore.
7. Lower chamber – The door to Mindon Lameth is constructed of steel and is still very strong, too strong to be broken down even by siege equipment. On the door is an inscription in Sindarin, reading:

'You cannot hear me, you cannot see me, you cannot touch me but you cannot escape me, for when you pass into darkness I will be with you in your grave. If you know the secret of Mindon Lameth you can speak my name and enter'

The answer to the riddle is 'silence' or 'dîn' in Sindarin. If this word is spoken clearly in front of the door it will swing silently inwards. The inner chamber is a wide, cool space of white marble, with a ceiling over 60 feet high. A central pillar supports the roof and a winding staircase curves around the wall to the chamber above (there is no rail). In recesses in the walls are four small marble statues of the kings of Arthedain, each sitting on a throne in silent contemplation.

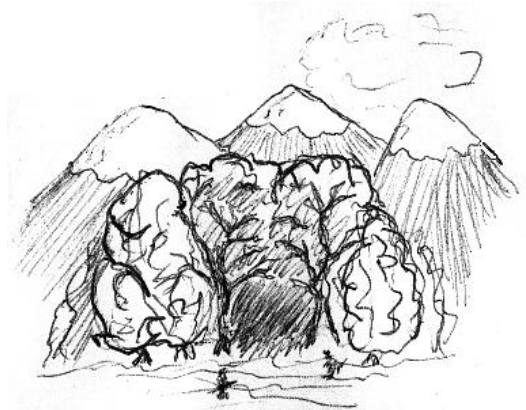
8. First level – The winding stair leads to a second wide chamber of white marble. Light is provided by the narrow, high barred windows. The central pillar continues from floor to ceiling in this chamber and again the ceiling is over 60 feet high.

Around the wall is a mural which is split into three separate images. The first shows the men of Arnor defeating an army of Orcs and wild men in a vicious battle. The second scene shows the Arnoreans removing what looks to be a large throne from a broken tower of dark stone. The final mural image shows a king seated on the throne atop a tower which bears a strong resemblance to Mindon Lameth. The winding stair begins again, winding upwards (again with no rail).

9. Second level – The second level is considerably different to those below and a pair of steel shutters blocks the top of the stair from location 8. There are no windows and the chamber is very dark. The walls are nearly 80 feet high. Near the top holes have been cut through the rock walls allowing the sunlight to stream in striking the central pillar which is constructed on shiny obsidian. The holes have been cut into the arrangement of the stars in the night sky, such that an image of the heavens is cast onto the pillar. Around the room stone chairs have been set against the walls to allow the occupants a place to contemplate the image of the stars in the middle of the day. The stone stair winds around the wall of the chamber again giving access to the roof but half way up 40 feet above the floor of the chamber the stairs have fallen away. The gap left is 10 feet across and will require some ingenuity to safely navigate (climb test at TN 15). Again there is no guardrail.
10. Roof – the stair opens out onto the roof of the tower. A pair of unlocked steel shutters prevents light from above spoiling the star-effect in the chamber below. The roof itself is wide and smooth surfaced. The trap door opens onto a narrow lip of stone which circles the top of the

tower. The rusted remains of a balustrade can be seen running around the tower's edge. From the stone lip the floor slopes upward toward a large stone throne which occupies the top of the tower, facing south. The throne is in fact the Voice of Annatar, a hole bored into the stone near where the right hand of a seated person would rest is the slot for the Rod. For a description of the Voice see the 'Items' section of this chapter. The throne is set into the fused stone of the rooftop and there is no way to prise it from the tower. On either side of the throne are two huge stone 'pincers', the tops of which are separated by 5 feet above the top of the throne.

7.5 Scene 4 – The Green Elves



Once the party arrive at Mindon Lameth, they have several problems to overcome. Firstly, they must answer the riddle to enter the tower. Climbing the smooth stone tower is simply not practical, nor is breaking the door down. Secondly, once they are in the tower, they must determine what is exactly the Voice of Annatar. This shouldn't prove too taxing to intelligent players.

As the characters ponder the tower, the feeling that they are being watched will slowly build. Only 100 feet from the water's edge is one of the many stands of trees that dot the landscape. A mixture of coniferous and deciduous tree the woods

provide good cover to those hidden within. As the day wears on the characters will get a growing impression that something is watching them from the trees. However, nothing will occur until they manage to open the door and enter the tower.

Watching the party is a group of twenty Nandor or Green Elves. They have dwelt in the wilds around Lake Evendim for many ages. Since the fall of Arnor they have taken it upon themselves to guard the Voice of Annatar which the kings of old decided to mount on the top of Mindon Lameth. As long as the characters fail to breach the tower the Elves will content themselves just to watch. However, when the party opens the door the Elves will move against them.

The Elves will not attack the party outright, but will come forward in force with their curved bows to call the characters down from the tower. To the characters it should be clear that these are Elves, and it is important that no blood is shed (Belegilf will argue vehemently against attacking the Elves). The leader of the Elves, Tintestel, will then request that the characters are bound and blindfolded. He will not answer any questions, but will say that all will become clear if the characters follow his orders. Assuming the characters can be persuaded he will lead them away from the tower, any characters who refuse to be led in this way may remain but will be accompanied several Elven guards.

Tintestel will lead the characters into the woods, winding down ancient Elven paths that even a skilled Ranger could not discern. After an hour, the group reach the Green Elves encampment and the blindfolds on the characters will be removed.

Tintestel will question the characters on what they are doing at Mindon Lameth. He will listen impassively as they talk. Assuming the characters tell Tintestel all that has happened so far, he will say that dark days are ahead. Providing they can convince Tintestel of their sincerity, he will then tell the characters what he knows of

the history of the Voice of Annatar. He says that when Sauron was defeated by the last alliance of Elves and Men in the third age, his dwelling place amongst the Elves of Eregion was pulled down. In the topmost chamber of his tower in the city of Ost-In-Edhil (S. 'City of the Elves') was found a great throne of stone, carved from the blackest obsidian. The remaining Elves of Eregion wished the throne destroyed, but the men of Arnor claimed the throne as their own and took it to their capital Annuminas. There the throne rested, until one of the kings of the daughter kingdom of Arthedain, Argeleb I, built the tower called Mindon Lameth. He found the sight granted by the throne to be useful in conducting his petty wars with the kingdoms of Cardolan and Rhudaur.

When Annuminas was finally deserted after TA 250, Mindon Lameth and the throne were forgotten. But the Naldor did not forget the Voice for the memories of the Elves are long, and they set watch upon Mindon Lameth against those who would stir the ancient power of the Voice of Annatar. The skill of the ancient Anoreans is such that the Voice cannot be removed from Mindon Lameth. What is paramount is that Gailhen and his band are not allowed to gain access to the Voice. Tintestel immediately orders some of his finest woodsmen locate Gailhen's war band and report back their whereabouts. He also sends men to contact the Rangers. Then he says in case Gailhen's war band arrives they must prepare the Mindon Lameth to withstand a siege.

7.6 Scene 5 – Preparing for Siege

Mindon Lameth is fairly well prepared for a siege. The following table describes the structure and protection factors for the structures on the promontory (see the map in figure 9 above).

<i>Location</i>	<i>Protection</i>	<i>Structure</i>
3, walls	3	6
4, towers	4	60
1, door	5	8
1, tower	7	100

The door to the tower cannot be picked but can be opened with the password. There is no gate to the compound, to block the entrance one must be constructed from wood from the nearby forest. This task requires a challenging Siegecraft skill test with the degree of success indicating the quality of the gate. The walls can also be improved with the crumbling stones that litter the promontory with an appropriate Routine Stonecraft test. Unfortunately, there is insufficient stone to fortify the perimeter of the island and anyone willing to swim the cold lake waters could get around the walls. The Elves will provide fifty men to aid in these constructions, and anything else the characters wish to perform.

Two days after the characters have talked with Tintestel news comes that Gailhen's force is two days away from the tower. The Bree folk have all left the band; instead the ranks have been swelled with wild Hillmen and Orcs apparently from the Misty Mountains, and the band numbers five hundred or more and is growing daily. Of the Rangers no news has come. Tintestel leads a force of 150 fighting men with which to defend the tower.

The characters must decide how they wish to defend Mindon Lameth from Gailhen, and how they intend to improve the defenses of the tower in the restricted time they have. Presumably they will command a force of the Green Elves within the tower and on the promontory during the attack, but Tintestel will suggest that a small force of the Elves is hidden in the trees to outflank Gailhen's troops.

7.7 Scene 6 – The attack

As Gailhen and Gwanthilf have travelled across Eriador, the power of the Rod has drawn much evil to his cause. The Bree-folk have all fallen by the wayside, to be replaced with Hillmen and Orcs. The Hillmen are led by Caras, a warlike chieftain from Rhudaur. These Hillmen were encountered by Gailhen as he moved across the land and he used the Rod to win Caras to his cause.

The Orcs in Gailhen's force are the second group from the Ettenmoors, again led by Grakak who met the Orcs as they travelled down from the hills. Orcs are used to being dominated and coerced by a strong will and have easily come under Gailhen's sway. Some wolf packs led by Wargs have been influenced by Gailhen (and his amulet which gives him affinity with Wolves) have also joined the group. It is now truly a war band.

Gailhen will lead his band to assault Mindon Lameth two days after news of his band reaches the characters. He will attack by night so that his Orcs are at their strongest – a clear night, with the moon riding high. He will use the Orcs and Hillmen to storm the gate and gain the island so that he can reach the tower. Before the attack, the Hillmen will also construct rafts from nearby trees to attempt to circumvent the walls.

The actual attack can be played using the Battle Rules in the Core Rules book. The battle should be started with the Elves and characters at 'Losing (-1)' on table 9.23 – Battle Resolution. The hero Combat rules can also be used to enliven the battle, with Caras or Grakak representing powerful enemy leaders should single combat ensue. If desired, a full 'Units' style battle could be played.

However, the main point of the assault is to provide a backdrop to the drama of Gailhen's fight to gain the voice of Annatar, and therefore several events must occur during the battle regardless of any dice rolls. Firstly, the battle should generally go badly for the characters – if they appear to be defeating Gailhen's forces, fresh reinforcements could arrive to bolster his hand. Secondly, at some point in the battle, whatever makeshift gate the characters have erected will be breached and the Hillmen and Orcs will gain the promontory. The Elves will be able to battle with the small number of enemies rushing over the narrow land bridge, but Gailhen and Gwanthilf should make it across to the tower. At least some of the characters will

probably be in the tower when Gailhen arrives, if not then the narrator should be sure that some of the characters spot him.

7.8 Scene 7 – The Voice of Annatar

Gailhen, Gwanthilf and a small number of his 'personal guard' of powerful Orcs (use Uruk statistics) gain the foot of the tower. Gailhen knows the password to open the door, and no matter how the characters have tried to stop the door opening it will still swing wide. The number of guards that enter with Gailhen must be carefully balanced by the Narrator. Sufficient must be there to 'tie up' the characters and allow Gailhen and Gwanthilf to make it to the stairs and climb towards the roof. When the characters have despatched the Orcs, Gailhen will be on the roof. If there are any characters on the roof, then some of the guards will make it that far to engage them.

Once on the roof, Gailhen will make toward the throne. However, before he has time to place the Rod in the holder carved into the Voice, Gwanthilf, standing behind him, will stab him in the back and tear the Rod from his grasp. Any characters fighting on the roof will see this, otherwise when the characters reach the roof they will find that Gailhen is laying slumped before the throne and Gwanthilf is holding the Rod aloft.

Gwanthilf will then attack the characters. Her first move will be to try to control the biggest and toughest looking character with the 'Command' spell granted by the Rod. She will be aided in her venture by the sudden appearance of another figure on the tower top – the mysterious Nag Burdak will step from around the throne and leap to her defence. When Gwanthilf has the characters tied up with fighting, she will place the Rod in the holder and sit upon the throne, activating the Voice of Annatar.

Immediately, all noises of combat will cease. The characters will feel a soothing wave of pleasant feelings wash over them, one they are powerless to resist. It appears to them that Gwanthilf has become the

most regal being they have ever seen, seated on a mighty golden throne and smiling beneficently toward them. Unable to resist, they will drop to one knee in supplication.

But then, just as suddenly, the feeling will pass and the noises of the night return. Looking up, they will see that Gwanthilf is not longer on the throne. She has been torn from the seat by Gailhen, who is grappling with her by the stone seat, fighting to tear the Rod from her grasp. As the characters watch Gailhen throws Gwanthilf down behind the throne and advances toward her. Simultaneously, several Orcs attempt to barge their way onto the roof (summoned by Gwanthilf using the Rod). Below, the tower the sounds of combat begin afresh.

When the characters get around the edge of the tower where Gailhen and Gwanthilf rolled, they will find Gailhen standing at the edge of the stone lip. 'Give me the Rod and I will pull you up!' He will shout over the edge. A shrill woman's voice will reply 'Never!' Gailhen screams 'No!' as he stares over the edge. He then turns to face the characters, draws his sword and, rushes to attack.

At this point the sounds of the battle will suddenly falter, as if half of the combatants had suddenly paused in their attack. Just then, the sounds of men shouting the name 'Elbereth!' will sound, along with noises of combat renewed.

Gailhen will fight with a passion, completely disregarding his personal safety. When he is struck down by the characters he will raise his fist and scream the name 'Gwilbil!', before staggering and falling from the tower.

7.9 Scene 8 – Aftermath

Just as the characters fought with Gailhen, a party of Rangers under the command of Sadron joined the battle, charging the rear of the Orc and Hillmen ranks. However, as soon as Gwanthilf fell from the edge of the tower the power of the Rod disappeared

and the Orcs and Hillmen lost their driving force. Soon after the Rangers joined the fray the ranks of Gailhen's force will scatter and break for the hills and woods surrounding the tower. The Rangers will follow them into the night to eliminate the stragglers.

After the battle, no trace of Gwanthilf or the Rod will be found. Presumably when she and the Rod fell from the tower they rolled into the deep waters of lake Evendim. Gailhen's broken body will be found at the foot of the tower.

Tintestel will thank the characters for the aid in defending the Voice of Annatar. He will say that with the Rod not destroyed his people will now resume their vigil, should case the power of the Rod rises again, but that for now darkness has been averted. Sadron, reunited with Belegilf, will explain how the Rangers had to meet and destroy a third force of Orcs which had been sent by Mount Gram to plunder Bree. Once this threat was met and dealt with, the Rangers returned to the town. However, finding the destruction left by Gailhen, they tracked his war band, eventually reaching Annuminas in time to join the battle.

With the power of the Rod lost in waters of lake Evendim, the dark shadow of its power is lost and this chronicle draws to a close.

7.10 Non-player Characters (NPCs)

Use the following descriptions for the enemies and NPC's encountered in this chapter. Stats should be tailored by the narrator to the strengths of the party.

7.10.1 Belegilf (S. 'Great heart')

For a description of Belegilf see **Chapter 2 – Deception revealed.**

7.10.2 The Wight



For statistics use the description in the Core Rules page 294.

Equipment: The Wight eerily bright suit of chain mail and wields a wicked long sword and a round shield.

A creature of Angmar, the Wight was sent from that dark land at the same time as those that haunt the Barrow Downs. However, with the sacking of Fornost the Wight moved at the bidding of the Witch-King to haunt that broken city. Finding the tomb of an ancient Edain king, the Wight has dwelt there since adding to the terror of Deadman's Dike.

7.10.3 Tintestel (S. 'Spark of Hope')



Attributes: Bearing 10 (+2), Nimbleness 11 (+2), Perception 10 (+2), Strength 9 (+1), Vitality 8 (+1), Wits 9 (+1).

Reactions: Stamina +1, Swiftiness +2, Willpower +2, Wisdom +2, Defence 12, Health 9.

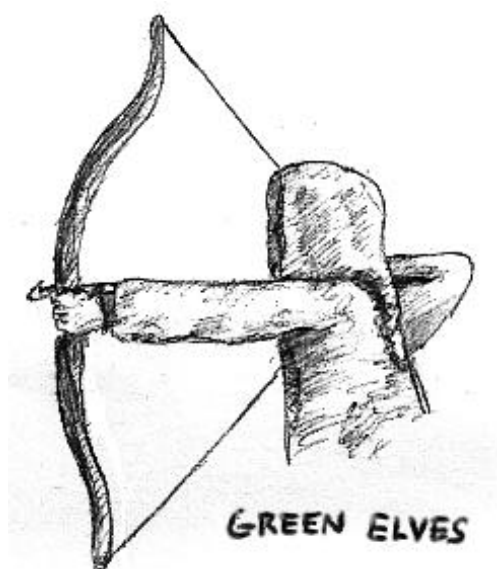
Order: Warrior.

Skills (selected): Armed combat (longsword) +6, Ranged combat (curved bow) +6, Inspire (leadership) +5, Survival (forest) +5, Track (forest) +5, Weather-sense +4.

Equipment: Tintestel wields a longsword and carries a long dagger at his waist. He also carries the curved short bow of his people and is dressed in browns and greens typical of the Green Elves.

A wise and strong leader, Tintestel has led the Green Elves of lake Evendim in their unceasing guardianship of Mindon Lameth for the past two hundred years. A skilled fighter and woodsman, Tintestel serves his people well. Although slow to show his trust, he can be won over by the characters relatively quickly because he can feel the evil blight of the Rod spreading over the land.

7.10.4 The Green Elves



The Green Elves did not travel into Beleriand or cross the sea to Valinor in the first age, but remained in the regions of Lindon and Eriador. A secretive and elusive people, they are so named

because they dress almost exclusively in camouflages of green in summer or dark brown in the winter. They are shorter in stature than the Nordorin or Sindarin cousin, with slender whip-like bodies and dark hair and eyes, but they make extremely good hunters and can travel the wilds leaving virtually no trace. They are fearsome fighters, especially with their small curved bows. Now few, they still inhabit their ancestral home around lake Nenuial (lake Evendim in Weston), unknown to most other inhabitants, and guard the free peoples from the forgotten threat of the Voice of Annatar. The Elves are willing to sacrifice their lives so the power of Annatar cannot be raised again.

7.10.5 Caras and the Hillmen.



Attributes: Bearing 12 (+3), Nimbleness 10 (+2), Perception 6 (+0), Strength 12 (+3), Vitality 12 (+3), Wits 5 (+0).

Reactions: Stamina +3, Swiftiness +2, Willpower +3, Wisdom +3, Defence 12, Health 13.

Order: Warrior.

Skills (selected): Armed combat (long sword) +5, Ranged combat (long bow) +2, Intimidate (rage) +4, Siegecraft (attack) +3.

Equipment: Caras wields a short broad sword. He wears a mail shirt and carries a shield.

For the Hillmen use the statistics in the Core Rules for Dunlendings, page 289.

A chieftain of Rhudaur, Caras is a greedy bully and as such was easily swayed by the influence of the Rod. His Hillmen, long disgruntled by the Dunadain, did not take much persuasion by Gailhen's soft words to march with him. Having made alliances in the past with Orcs, they felt no qualms about fighting with servants of the shadow.

7.10.6 Grakak

For a description of Grakak see **Chapter 4 – Seeking aid.**

Escaping the Rangers, Grakak made back for the Ettenmoors only to encounter the second party of Orcs sweeping down from the hills. Eager for revenge, Grakak joined the larger party hoping to wreck destruction of the Rangers.

7.10.7 The Orcs

For a description of the Orcs see **Chapter 4 – Seeking aid.**

This group represents the second party to travel down from the Ettenmoors at the command of the Goblin king. They were easy prey for Gailhen once they fell within the range of the Rod and flocked to his call.

7.10.8 Gailhen (S. 'True-eyed')

For a description of Gailhen see **Chapter 1 – The Robbers Cave.**

Gailhen's use of the Rod has left his mind twisted and raw, such that the sight of the sun pains him – he has not the power to properly control the Rod. Waking the Voice of Annatar has become his only goal.

7.10.9 Gwanthilf (S. 'Beautiful heart')

For a description of Gwanthilf see **Chapter 1 – The Robbers Cave.**

Gwanthilf has become increasingly disturbed by the erratic behaviour that Gailhen has exhibited since taking command of the Rod. She believes he lacks the Will to operate the device fully. Now she merely awaits the best

opportunity to rest the Rod from his control.

7.10.10 Nag Burdak (BS 'The Stalker')

For a description of the Nag Burdak see **Chapter 4 – Seeking aid.**

As the Nag Burdak led the Orcs toward the caves in the Trollshaws he detected the presence of the Rangers. Once he determined that Taglos Gwathren was sealed he quietly slipped away and hid in the Trollshaws. Following the characters to Bree he watched Gailhen command the Rod and shadowed the war band as they left for Mindon Lameth. He desires to see the Voice of Annatar operated and does not care who wields the power – once it appears that Gwanthilf has disposed of Gailhen and claimed the Rod for herself he will spring to her defence.

7.10.11 Sadron (S. 'Faithful')

For a description of Sadron see **Chapter 4 – Seeking aid.**

Sadron and the Rangers have been tied up fighting a third force of Orcs sent down from the mountains to take advantage of the chaos caused in Bree to plunder and destroy the town. The Rangers had to draw all their usual guards away from Bree to meet the force head on and effectively eliminated them. However, once they returned to the town and discovered what had happened in the meantime, they rushed toward Annuminas to try to intercept and destroy Gailhen's war band.

7.10.12 The Rangers

For a description of the Rangers see **Chapter 4 – Seeking aid.**

Battle-hardened by their conflicts with the Orcs of the Ettenmoors, the Rangers have travelled night and day to reach Annuminas.

7.11 Items

This section outlines some of the special items encountered in this chapter.

7.11.1 *The band of Gold from the King's tomb*



This simple band of gold acted as the ancient Edain king's crown. Some of the authority of the ancient king has become imbued in the band despite the passing of the centuries, such that any who wear it receive a +1 bonus to rolls to resist the effects of fear.

7.11.2 *The Voice of Annatar.*

Seemingly a simple throne carved from black obsidian, the Voice of Annatar is a source of great evil. Once the Rod of Annatar is in place, it allows the sitter to greatly extend the powers of the Rod. These powers are largely unknown and shall not be listed here; needless to say the Voice is a device of great evil. However it is a testament to the subtlety of the dark magic that the Voice was not destroyed when captured but was transported to Mindon Lameth. The main reason for this is that even without the Rod in place, the Voice grants anyone seated upon it the ability to see over seemingly vast distances. Argeleb I and the subsequent kings of Arthedain used the throne to gaze upon the neighbouring kingdoms of Cardolan and Rhudaur. However, the Voice is entirely evil and the sights it chooses to reveal are distorted by Sauron's malice. When seated upon it Argeleb I saw only plotting and treachery and the Voice contributed in no small way to the petty wars between Arthedain, Cardolan and Rhudaur.

8.0 Chapter 8 – End of the Chronicle

8.1 Rewards

Experience should be awarded as each chapter of this chronicle is completed in the normal way (see table 11.2 on page 279 of the Core Rules for recommendations). As a general rule, each chapter of this chronicle should be worth approximately 2,000 experience points to divide amongst the characters.

Renown can also be awarded during the chronicle. Suggestions include the characters gaining the trust and respect of the Rangers (a fairly widespread but relatively small group) and the Green Elves (a very small and secretive group). They have also gained some notoriety with the folk of Bree (who returning to their bwn rebuild the damage and carry on as normal, steadfastly ignoring what is referred to as 'that business'), and are now branded the same as the Rangers – untrustworthy.

8.2 Further Adventures

There are several possibilities for further adventures. Searching Gailhen's body will uncover the amulet which allows communication with wolves has been smashed in the fall and is now useless. However, there is a scroll of parchment with the following written in Aduniac:

'Gailhen, you have done well to secure the whereabouts of the Rod. As I have foretold it will allow you to regain the standing you deserve amongst your people and to remove that usurper Melator. I await you triumphant return, your servant Gwilbil.'

If the narrator wishes, uncovering who Gwilbil is could become the focus of the next chronicle, no doubt requiring a trip to the South lands of Gondor.

The Orcs of Mount Gram have also featured in this chronicle; perhaps a further chronicle could involve reducing the threat of this menace to the free peoples.