

THE DOOM OF ARNULF

BY DEAN PAOLILLO

The Doom of Arnulf is a Lord of the Rings Adventure that takes place in the late Third Age sometime between Bilbo's finding of the Ring of Power and the War of the Ring. It is designed for 4 characters each with 2-4 advancements.

Narrators should keep in the mind the subtle magic of Middle-Earth while narrating this adventure. In the Doom of Arnulf, the gloomy weather is an essential thematic element embodying this tale. The safety, comfort and essential goodness of Alatópel, despite its current plight, should be emphasized and contrasted with the dark, hostile woods and hills of the surrounding countryside.

BACKGROUND

When Angmar was brought low and the realm of Rhudaur fell into ruin, there were some men of Rhudaur who retained their noble heritage and did not succumb to the malice and evil fostered by the Witch-King of Angmar. Arnulf's ancestors were a high-minded people, of noble heart and mien. They stood loyal to the kingdom of Arnor and opposed those of their kin who swore fealty to Angmar's dread lord. In the darkest years under Angmar's shadow, Arnulf's folk were slain or forced westward into exile, swearing oaths that they would someday return and rebuild their homes.

When Angmar and its allies in Rhudaur were finally defeated, Arnulf's people returned to their land, driving away the Hill People who had usurped it from them long years ago. What little remained of Rhudaur had fallen into barbarism. Few men dared to count it their home for the Shadow still lingered over the land and most men shunned Rhudaur. Arnulf's ancestors were resolute and hoped to restore their people and their realm. But the toll of long years of evil sapped the dreams of glory and the Dunedain blood had worn thin. The glory of Rhudaur and Arnulf's folk has passed and the people are now simple farmers and woodsmen of a land still burdened by its wicked past. The shadow of evil descends over the land once more.

PLOT SUMMARY

Arnulf the Old is the aging chieftain of a wooden stronghold, little more than a great hall and village upon a high hill, named in the Sindarin tongue, "Alatópel." The hold of Alatópel is beset by evil. Strange wolves have begun nightly attacks and woodsmen have gone missing. The pall of terror hangs over the simple but decent people. Arnulf's nephew Cardoc is a malicious and ambitious man who has fallen into the service of a magician named Yrreth. Tutored in the dark arts of sorcery by Yrreth, Cardoc bewitched his uncle. While under the spell, Arnulf banished his only son Malbeth and sent his fair daughter Deoch away with Cardoc. Yrreth is a skillful magician in service to the former master of Angmar, the dreaded Witch-King. Orcs and werewolves are at his service and he plans to gather a larger host to plague Eriador when the time is right. Yrreth is the descen-

dent of the Hill People who were driven away by the ancestors of Arnulf. Motivated by this ancestral legacy of vengeance; he intends to destroy Arnulf and all he loves.

When the player characters arrive in Alatópel, they discover that the old chieftain is very ill. But with the spell broken, he realizes his wicked nephew Cardoc tricked him with sorcery. He begs the characters to find his son and rescue his daughter so he can make amends with his children before he passes to the Hall of Mandos. He sent a band of men to rescue his daughter but they never returned. Now, with the strange wolves plaguing his people, he cannot spare any more warriors in an attempt to rescue Deoch. The characters are his only hope.

If the characters inquire in the village, they learn that the lord's son has become a leader of a small band of bandits and some believe he's responsible for the missing woodsman as vengeance for his banishment. During their first night at Alatópel, the werewolves in service to the magician attack them in the night. After overcoming the werewolves, the characters set out upon the road and after overcoming several natural hazards; the characters discover the remains of the war band sent to rescue Deoch. The characters find evidence that Orcs and not bandits slew the men. As they continue on their journey, they encounter Malbeth's band beset by an Orc ambush. Upon defeating the Orcs, characters can parley with Malbeth and convince him to aid them to find Deoch or return to his father to protect the villagers. They learn that Malbeth's band has secretly been defending the safehold against the Orcs and that several of the missing woodsmen have joined his band while others have been taken captive or slain by Orcs.

After the encounter with Malbeth, the characters gain entrance to the keep of Cardoc and Yrreth through a secret cavern with the assistance of a Dwarven warrior seeking vengeance against Yrreth for reasons of his own. Together, they affect the rescue of Deoch but are pursued by a large force of Orcs and evil men led by Cardoc all the way back to Alatópel. A final pitched battle is fought and should the characters prevail, they preserve a warm hearth amidst the dark north.

HOOKS FOR INVOLVING CHARACTERS

A Debt to be Paid

A noble, warrior, or other character of Dunedain descent (especially one who hopes to advance as a Ranger in the future) may owe Arnulf's family a debt from the past, perhaps from aid or succor given long ago in the wars against Angmar or more recently. The message of Arnulf is directed to this character specifically, begging him to come to Rhudaur to aid the old chieftain in his time of need.

The Grey Pilgrim's Request

Gandalf requests a boon of the character or characters. He has heard of ill tidings from lands once under the dominion the Witch-King. Arnulf the Old's recent behavior is worrisome and he suspects that some old evil of the land may plague the chieftain's house. He bids

the characters to seek out Arnulf and learn the truth of the matter on behalf of the Wise.

LOVE AND DUTY

A character may hail from Rhudaur or more specifically from Alatopol and is sought by the lord of his land. The Narrator with the cooperation of the player could also make the player's character the true love of Deoch, the lord's daughter and thus the rival of Cardoc.

SCENE ONE: THE GATE

It is a chilly autumn evening and you are weary from your journey. The day was gray and overcast and drizzle accompanied your march, dampening your cloaks and caking your boots with mud. As the sun sets unseen behind the clouds, the last light of day gives way to the darker blue hues of the coming night. Alatopol is a welcomed sight and you can smell the smoke of the cooking fires as its inhabitants prepare for their suppers. As you near Alatopol the gate is closed and a bearded watchman, a spear in his right hand, eyes you warily from behind the wooden palisade.

"Well met strangers, what purpose do you have here?" He challenges as he rests his left hand on his horn.

The watchman is named Iwar and he is suspicious and unfriendly to all strangers because of the evils plaguing Alatopol. Iwar will expect the characters to announce who they are and what business they have in the village. After the characters introduce themselves to the watchman, the Narrator should make Recognition Tests for each character. If successful, the watchman's attitude will shift from unfriendly to indifferent. The Narrator should apply the applicable Test Modifier found in the Core Rulebook to social tests in dealing with Iwar. Characters can either attempt to use their Persuade skill to convince Iwar of their good intentions or make Bearing tests to impress the guard and gain entrance. The base TN is 10.

The Narrator should also ask for Observe skill tests against a TN of 15. If successful, even in the gloom of the coming night, the character that succeeds at the test notices strange tracks in the mud around the walls of the palisade and near the gate. Allow a Survival test with a TN of 15 to determine that very large wolves made the tracks.

Once inside, Iwar calls to a younger man working within a nearby smithy and tells the lad to escort the characters to the chieftain's hall. The boy's name is Loegir and he's Iwar's eldest son. He has only seen fourteen summers and has not yet grown his first beard. As the characters follow Loegir, they notice that some people are finishing boarding up their windows and their pale faces are wrought with worry. Animals are ushered into pens and stables and as the sky continues to darken, they notice urgency among the folk who are still outside. Loegir, like his father and most of the people of Alatopol is distrustful of strangers. Characters may attempt a Persuade skill test at TN 15 to convince Loegir to talk to them about the dangers plaguing the village. If successful, Loegir will reveal that horrible wolves have attacked in the night. Several men have been killed defending the walls and he is worried about his father and wishes he could stand with him and help defend against the depredations of the wolves. If a character inquires, he explains that his father feels he has "too few seasons" for standing guard.

NPC STATISTICS

Iwar, Wall Guard

Race: Man (Middle) Racial Abilities: Adaptable (+2 Stamina), Dominion of Man, Skilled
Attributes: Bearing 5 (+0), Nimbleness 6(+0), Perception 10(+2), Strength 8(+1), Vitality 8(+1), Wits 6 (+0)
Reactions: Stamina +1, Swiftswiftness+2, Willpower +0, Wisdom +2
Defense: 10
Order: Warrior
Order Ability: Evasion
Advancements: 1
Skills: Armed Combat: Polearm (Spear) +5, Climb +1, Intimidate +3, Observe +4, Ranged Combat +5, Ride +2, Run +2, Siegecraft +4, Survival (Hills)+2, Track+2
Edges: Wakefulness
Flaws: none
Health: 9
Courage: 4
Renown: 0
Gear: Spear, long knife, horn, short bow and a quiver of 20 arrows.

Loegir

Race: Man (Middle) Racial Abilities: Adaptable (+2 Stamina), Dominion of Man, Skilled
**Attributes: Bearing 6 (+0), Nimbleness 7(+0), Perception 6(+0), Strength 6(+0), Vitality 8(+1), Wits 6 (+0)
Reactions: Stamina +1, Swiftswiftness+0, Willpower +0, Wisdom +0
Defense: 10
Order: none (Loegir is too young and may eventually become a warrior and a craftsman)
Order Ability: none
Advancements: 0
Skills: Armed Combat +2, Climb +1, Observe +1, Ranged Combat +1, Ride +1, Run +2, Survival (Hills)+1, Track+1
Edges: none
Flaws: none
Health: 8
Courage: 4
Renown: 0
Gear: knife, short bow and a quiver of 20 arrows
**Loegir has -1 to all attributes because he is only 14 years old.

SCENE TWO: THE GREAT HALL

Two burly, dark haired guardsmen in leather armor and helmets upon their heads stand guard at the entrance of the great hall. They have spears in hand and shields on their backs. Their bearded faces are grim and they challenge your approach. Loegir explains you have come to see Arnulf the Old. The guards allow you past their post. Inside the hall, a large table is set and nearly a score of men, the chieftain's host, are sitting preparing for supper. Their weapons are at the table with them. The aroma of roasted meat greets you. Ale, thick loaves of bread, cheese and roasted chickens adorn the table and several servants busily carve a roasted boar. The lord's seat at the head of the

table is empty.

The men turn their gaze upon you as Loegir begins to announce you to the assembly. A large warrior with a thick black beard and a tangle of hair cuts him short. "Let the strangers speak for themselves boy. We would hear the purpose of their arrival from their own hearts so we can judge whether they are true or bring more ill tidings to this hall."

All eyes turn towards you.

The speaker who interrupted Loegir is named Torrgund. Torrgund is the captain of the remaining warriors in service to Arnulf the Old.

The Narrator should make Recognition Tests for each character. A successful recognition test changes the attitude of the NPCs from unfriendly to indifferent with appropriate social adjustments for any social skill or attribute tests. This is a good time for characters to exert their Bearing and impress the gathered host. Characters should make a Bearing test against a base TN of 15. A successful test gains the respect of the host, especially of Torrgund, dispelling suspicion regarding the motives of the characters. A failure will require characters to make a Persuade skill test against a base TN of 10 to dispel suspicion of malicious intent. If the characters succeed in either impressing the host or persuading the host of their good intentions, they will be invited to sit at the table and join in supper.

While characters are dealing with Torrgund, an Observe skill check at TN 10 will reveal that they are being watched from a doorway on the west wall. The figure is that of the minstrel Bardwyn. Should the characters fail to win Torrgund's approval, he will step forward introduce himself and allay the suspicions of Torrgund and the other warriors in the hall. He will sit down to eat with the characters and the other assembled warriors, ensuring them that the player characters are worthy. The Narrator should make a Recognition test for the character with the highest renown, if successful; Bardwyn tells a tale of the character—endearing the characters to their hosts.

Once the characters explain they have come to help Arnulf, Bardwyn will say:

"Alas, Arnulf is not well. Even after the spell of Cardoc no longer clouded my lord's sight and poisoned his ears, he fell gravely ill. He is old and his heart is filled with misery and withers from it. But that is not the worse of our fortunes. Two score men were sent to find my lord's daughter Deoch, and free her from Cardoc and find his son Malbeth but none have returned! Over the course of a fortnight, several woodsmen and hunters have disappeared as well. We can spare no more less we leave our homes poorly defended from the great wolves that attack us in the night."

Torrgund will add: *"The wolves are horrid and powerful and of their number none can say. They have snatched animals and our folk. Only last night, old Orin was slain."*

Torrgund and Bardwyn will answer other questions and provide any information that the Narrator feels is appropriate. Bardwyn will definitely share that he believes Cardoc may have taken residence in an old ruined keep that is far to the north. If a character makes a successful Inquire skill test with a TN of 15 then Torrgund will whisper that he thinks, *"...the wolves are not earthly creatures."* If the characters ask to speak with Arnulf, Bardwyn will be reluctant but a successful

Persuade skill test at TN 10 will convince him to arrange the audience with the ailing lord.

Some characters might be interested in speaking with the servants or other warriors. If they do, a successful Inquire skill check at TN 15 will reveal that Bardwyn is in love with the lord's daughter Deoch and wanted to search for her alone but Arnulf refused his request.

NPCs:

Bardwyn

Race: Man (Middle) Racial Abilities: Adaptable (+2 Swiftess), Dominion of Man, Skilled
Attributes: Bearing 10 (+2), Nimbleness 8(+1), Perception 10(+2), Strength 7(+0), Vitality 8(+1), Wits 10 (+2)
Reactions: Stamina +1, Swiftess+2, Willpower +2, Wisdom +2
Defense: 11
Order: Minstrel
Order Ability: Gladden
Advancements: 1
Skills: Armed Combat +1, Craft (instruments) +5, Debate +4, Games+2, Climb +1, Inspire +1, Intimidate +2, Language: Westron (Common)+8, Sindarin+7, Lore: Realm (Rhudaur) +6, Lore: Realm (Arnor) +5, Lore: History (Rhudaur)+5, Lore: History (Angmar)+3, Mimicry+1, Perform +4, Persuade +4, Ranged Combat +1, Ride +1, Run +1, Stealth +1
Edges: Favour of Fortune
Flaws: none
Health: 8
Courage: 4
Renown: 2
Gear: Longsword, dagger, instrument

Torrgund

Race: Man (Middle) Racial Abilities: Adaptable (+2 Swiftess), Dominion of Man, Skilled
Attributes: Bearing 9 (+1), Nimbleness 8(+1), Perception 7 (+0), Strength 10(+2), Vitality 9(+1), Wits 7 (+0)
Reactions: Stamina +2, Swiftess+1, Willpower +1, Wisdom +1
Defense: 11
Order: Warrior
Order Ability: Evasion
Advancements: 2
Skills: Armed Combat: Blades (Longsword) +6, Climb +2, Inspire +2, Intimidate +2, Healing +1, Observe +2, Language: Westron (Common)+7, Language: Sindarin +3, Lore: Realm (Rhudaur)+5, Lore: History (Rhudaur)+4, Lore: History (Angmar)+2, Ranged Combat +5, Ride +4, Run +3, Siegecraft +4, Survival (Hills)+2, Track+2
Edges: Bold, Warrior's Heart
Flaws: Stiff Necked
Health: 11
Courage: 4
Renown: 2
Gear: Leather armor, large shield, spear, longsword, horn, short bow and a quiver of 20 arrows.

SCENE THREE: ARNULF THE OLD

After supper, Bardwyn leads you from the main hall down a corridor to the west, past several doors until he stops at a door at the end of the hall. He knocks upon the door and an older matron opens the door and gazes at Bardwyn and gives a disapproving look. Bardwyn hastily explains the matter to her and she steps aside, allowing you into the bedchamber of Arnulf. The room smells musty and the fire burns steady sending shadows dancing about like mocking phantoms. Arnulf lies under covers on his bed. His hair and long beard are all gray and white. His face is gaunt, wrinkled and pale. His breath is raspy. His armor and shield are displayed nearby. His mail is well kept and his longsword rests against the side of his bed, hanging from a post at the foot of his bed. Bardwyn approaches and the old chieftain turns his head and opens his eyes.

“Visitors my lord, friends in our time of need.” Bardwyn whispers. Arnulf turns his head to gaze at you.

“Step closer, friends, my eyes are not what they once were and tell me your names.” Arnulf gives a weak grin.

The Narrator should make recognition checks for the characters. The Narrator should adjust Arnulf’s response depending on the background of the characters, the hook used to begin the adventure, or any past connection to the NPCs in this adventure the Narrator and player may have agreed upon. After the introductions Arnulf says:

“You have come in our darkest hour, for that you have my eternal gratitude. I pray to the Lords of the West that you can end this scourge upon us. But will you honor an old man’s request? I speak to you not as a lord of my people, or with the authority of my lineage but simply as a father. Seek out my children Deoch and Malbeth and bring them to me before I draw my last breath. I was ensorcelled by my wicked nephew, Cardoc, the son of my sister Orva, who died in childbirth. Alas, one must wonder whether the infant took the life of his mother out of malice! I would beg their forgiveness for what has come to pass.”

The Narrator should give the characters a chance to respond. True Heroes will take up the cause without thought of reward. Should the characters be of a heroic mold and do just that it should earn them each a point of Courage and is a trigger for a point of Renown. If the characters take up the cause without mention of the reward, Arnulf will say:

“You are brave and true, with no thought for profit from our misery. Noble indeed and though you do not ask for it, I willingly give it. To each of you, a horse from my stables, 30 pieces of silver and mail made by Garberend the Smith that I will commission. Lastly, my eternal gratitude, which I shall tell to Mandos, when I see him within his hall.”

If the characters request compensation, Arnulf inquires about their price. Characters who request a monetary reward will be offered 30 silver pennies if they undertake the quest. Because the characters have proven to have a mercenary nature, Arnulf will refuse to give them the money until they return with Deoch and Malbeth. The characters may wish to make Persuade Tests against a TN of 15. If successful, Arnulf will agree to give them money in advance.

It is possible that the characters ask for other goods or services. The

Narrator should decide whether the request is one Arnulf could reasonably grant. It is possible that a character may make an unusual request. For example, a character might ask for Deoch’s hand in marriage if the Narrator is using the “Love and Duty” hook for the story. The Narrator may decide to grant the character a point of Courage, trigger a point of Renown or have some other effect that may influence social tests with the inhabitants of Alatopol.

Arnulf will answer a few questions about his daughter, son, and nephew before he grows too weak and the old matron ushers everybody out of his room. The characters now must decide whether to start their journey in the night or wait until the morning. The Narrator should have the characters make Stamina Checks to see if the characters lost any Weariness levels for their journey to the settlement. A second check should be made if the characters decide to press on into the night. After a full day’s travel, the Narrator should see the rules in the Core Rulebook regarding remaining awake. The best course of action is sleep and set out by day on the horses given to them by Arnulf. Of course, the night will not pass uneventfully and a few hours after midnight, the strange wolves make their attack on the settlement. If the characters decide to head out on the road then the werewolves attack them. Unfortunately, they will face the werewolves alone and may already be weary from their exertion. Should they survive, the settlement is spared the assault for at least one evening.

SCENE FOUR: HOWLS IN THE NIGHT

In the night, the weather turns foul and a steady, cold, rain falls masking sound and further obscuring vision into the dark hills and forests that surround you. Suddenly, as the wind whistles, a horrid howl can be heard, followed by another and without a doubt, the howls are growing more audible as the beasts draw nearer.

If the characters wisely remained as guests of Arnulf’s, they are likely sleeping in the great hall’s common area and guards will raise the alarm. The Narrator should feel free to have the guards provide assistance. The statistics for Iwar or Torrgund can be used for the remaining guardsmen. The Narrator should determine which statistics are best with consideration given to the abilities and advancement of the characters. The key is to provide a challenging and frightening encounter but still ensure that the characters are healthy enough (and alive) to continue on the adventure. The Narrator might want to consider the tragic death of one of the NPCs—Iwar on the guard tower mauled by a werewolf or Loegir, running to join his father in battle both make good candidates for a dramatic and tragic death. Alternatively, the Narrator might want to give the characters the opportunity to save the NPCs from such a fate.

Of course, if the characters chose to venture into the night, they stand alone against the werewolves. There is a pack of six werewolves plaguing Arnulf’s folk. See page 297 of the Core Rulebook for statistics on werewolves.

SCENE FIVE: THE ROAD NORTH

The rest of the night passes, but the rain has not abated. After you wash the sleep from your faces, you once again join Arnulf’s people for a breakfast of eggs, bacon and bread. Refreshed and ready for

travel, you exit the hall into the rain ready to search for the children of Arnulf.

If Arnulf awarded horses to the characters; they are brought to the chieftain's stables by Bardwyn and allowed to choose their steed. The Narrator should allow characters to make an Appraise skill test if they have skill ranks in the Ride skill. The TN is 10. If the character succeeds at the skill test, he picks a fine steed. If the character scores a superior test, the horse he selects receives a +1 bonus to the horses strength and vitality. In that event, Bardwyn is impressed with the character's acumen and offers praise "Ah, you have chosen "Swiftshadow" he's one of my lord's finest. He would approve of your choice."

The Narrator should create other appropriate responses to characters that might score a superior test.

If the characters were awarded mail by Arnulf, then once the characters set out, as they approach the gate, they see the smithy Garberend step out from his shop, tools still in hand. He greets the characters and wishes them well on their quest. He tells them he shall make them the finest suits of mail and claims he knows a few secrets of the Dwarven masters. At last, they proceed on the open road leaving the safety and modest comfort of Arnulf's hall for the northern wilds.

The tower the characters were told about lies about 17 leagues (51 miles) to the north through forest-covered hills with old paths once used but now overgrown and reclaimed by nature. Assuming characters are riding at a walk for 8 hours, it will take them 5 days of travel. The rain, however, reduces the travel rate slightly. Though, thanks to the horses, the characters are lightly burdened and actually will gain .1 miles per hour traveled. The Narrator should see pages 250-253 in the Core Rulebook for more information regarding traveling in Middle-Earth.

The Narrator may wish to have a few natural hazards of traveling. For example, the Narrator may decide the storm grows worse with cold, powerful winds blowing down from the mountains. An old, rotted tree comes crashing down unexpectedly on the characters. The Narrator should have the characters make Ride skill test at a TN 10 to avoid being tossed from the saddle. A Swiftess Reaction test at TN 10 is needed to avoid being hit by the falling tree and its large branches. If the character failed the ride check he suffers a -2 penalty to his Swiftess Reaction roll.

Because of the muddy conditions, tracking is much easier (the TN is only 5). A character with tracking that succeeds at an Observe skill test at TN 10 will discover a large group of old tracks made by men on foot. The tracks lead north in the direction the characters are heading. The characters will discover the source of the tracks the next day.

SCENE SIX: COPSE OF THE DEAD

The characters discover a copse in the woods with an old encampment. Forty men, in various states of decay, lie dead; their bodies stripped of valuables. Their terrible wounds betray deaths by black-fletched arrows, sword slashes and axe strokes.

These were the men sent by Arnulf to rescue Deoch. They were attacked in the evening and decimated against the night-eyed Orcs. Orc

tracks are everywhere. If inspected, the tracks of the Orc raiders lead north through woods and thickets.

SCENE SEVEN: MALBETH'S STAND

If the characters continue to follow the Orc trail, they'll discover it leads to a recent Orc camp. The characters can discern that the Orcs remained in the location for at least a week. If they continue to follow the tracks, they come upon the sounds of battle. Approaching, they spy Orcs on the knoll of a hill that overlooks a narrow path. Several Orcs are firing arrows while other Orcs are storming down the slope to attack Malbeth and his fellows. The Narrator should say something similar to the following:

As you cautiously follow the Orc tracks through the woods. Orcish cries can be heard up ahead. As you draw closer, Orcish warriors rush over a slope while another score of Orcs rain black fletched arrows down on an unknown opponent. The Orcs are unaware of you, for the moment.

The targets of the Orc ambush are the wrongly exiled Malbeth and his expatriate band of Wolves' Heads. A group of 10 outlaws and eight woodsmen who left Alatopel to aid Malbeth are the targets of the Orcs. A band of 40 Orcs are attacking Malbeth and his followers, all of them are on foot. The Orcs, however, are unaware of the characters and are taken by surprise. The characters have the opportunity to turn the tide of battle and save the day. There are currently 15 Orcs along the ledge firing bows and the rest are entering battle on foot with battle-axes and scimitars.

Use the statistics for Orcs in the Core Rulebook; however, these Orcs wear piece-meal armor that absorbs only 4 points of damage.

If the characters should prevail, they gain Malbeth's gratitude for their timely aid. Once the characters explain their purpose, they will easily be able to convince Malbeth to return from exile. He will not, however, return until he saves his sister Deoch. He explains how he has been defending Alatopel against the Orcs since he was banished, claiming from the Orcs any spoils to distribute to the outlaws who he now commands. He has scouted a large Orc band to the north. The Orcs inhabit an old tower that was once under the auspice of the men allied with Angmar. It is set on a steep, high hill named Amon Garzak.

Amon Garzak is the highest point in the area and more like a small mountain. The west slope is easily approachable, however, that leads directly to the old fort's gate. The other approaches are less sure and the eastern side is so steep that it requires a long, laborious climb. The characters should realize that the hold of the Orcs and the home of Cardoc are one and the same. It is up to the characters to decide whether they will accept Malbeth's aid or whether they'll insist that he and his band return to Alatopel. A Persuade roll at TN 15 convinces Malbeth to return to his home. The character, however, has a +5 bonus because of Malbeth's friendly attitude. Malbeth, however, if given the choice, would choose to accompany the characters to rescue his sister.

NPCs

Malbeth, son of Arnulf

Race: Man (Middle) Racial Abilities: Adaptable (+2 Swiftiness), Dominion of Man, Skilled
Attributes: Bearing 10(+2), Nimbleness 8(+1), Perception 8 (+1), Strength 10(+2), Vitality 9(+1), Wits 7 (+0)
Reactions: Stamina +2, Swiftiness+1, Willpower +2, Wisdom +2
Defense: 11
Order: Noble, Warrior
Order Ability: Noble Mien
Advancements: 4
Skills: Armed Combat: Blades (Longsword) +6, Climb +2, Inspire +3, Intimidate +2, Observe +3, Language: Westron (Common)+7, Lore: Realm (Rhudaur)+6, Lore: History (Rhudaur)+5, Lore: History (Angmar)+3, Persuade +2, Ranged Combat +4, Ride +5, Run +1, Siegecraft +2, Survival (Hills)+2, Track+3
Edges: Command
Flaws: none
Health: 11
Courage: 4
Renown: 2
Gear: chainmail, large shield, spear, longsword, horn, short bow and a quiver of 20 arrows.

SCENE EIGHT: THE DEBT OF KHALIN

The rain has stopped and the air is rich with a fecund odor. Hills rise up before you and the Tower of Amon Garzak, a small keep squatting atop the highest hill, overlooking its lesser brothers. In the distance, you can see the Ettenmoors, the peaks of the mountains hidden in thick clouds.

The characters spy the old tower on Amon Garzak shrouded in heavy mists as the rain abates and the air warms slightly. A Keen-Eyed character will be able to discern Orcs along the tower's battlements and Orcs moving along the western path to disappear into the woods or into the ruined keep. A stealthy frontal assault is impossible. As the characters debate what to do, the Narrator should ask for Observe skill tests with a TN 10. If successful, the characters spy a small, stout figure in the woods ahead of them, making his way towards the fortress and heading in an easterly direction. An elf or other Keen Eyed character realizes the figure is that of Dwarf. Alternately, a character that succeeds at an Observe check of TN 15 arrives at the same conclusion.

The characters can try to make contact with the Dwarf or they can try to follow him without being seen. If the characters chose to follow him, it requires an opposed Stealth and Observe skill test. If the characters are successful, they follow the Dwarf to the steep, eastern slope. The Dwarf carefully maneuvers around the base of the hill and ducks behind some large boulders and into heavy underbrush and into a cave. The characters should realize the Dwarf has found or is aware of another way in. The characters could continue to follow the Dwarf but another opposed Stealth versus Observe check is necessary. The characters should realize they might be better off seeking the aid of the Dwarf or may fail the stealth check at some point. The Dwarf will

immediately raise his battle-axe in defense but will not strike unless provoked. The characters have an opportunity to gain an ally if they make peaceful overtures to the Dwarf.

The Dwarf will reveal his name as Khalin Ironbeard. Khalin will explain that long ago, some of his clan were enslaved by the forces of Angmar and forced to build the tower that overlooks the hills of Rhudaur. His people, however, discovered a natural cavern in the hillside and while they lay the foundation to the keep, they exploited the natural cavern by building a secret tunnel to the outside. Khalin explains that he has a score to settle with "a black-hearted villain named Yrreth." He will tell the characters that Yrreth slew his older brother Gorin twenty years ago and took from him old tomes, for his brother Gorin was a scholar and student of ancient lore. Khalin has come back to the Tower of Amon Garzak to take his vengeance. Yrreth slew Gorin because the Dwarf refused to sell him or otherwise share the magical lore he possessed. Gorin preferred that such tomes remained in the safe and sturdy hands of the Dwarves. Too often have the Dwarves seen the power of sorcery corrupt the wills of men and Gorin believed the knowledge he kept would cause immense evil if he shared it with Yrreth. Unknown to Khalin, his brother was right. The spell contained in the tome was the spell taught to Cardoc who used the spell to bewitch Arnulf and set the present events in motion.

Khalin will lead the characters through the caves. He is aware of the passages into the lower chambers thanks to the records stored by his brother, Gorin, who preserved the histories and tales of his ancestors who escaped the tower's lower dungeon.

NPCs

Khalin

Race: Dwarf Racial Abilities: Animal Aversion, Craftsmanship, Fire-starting, Hardness of Body, Hardness of Mind, Healthy
Attributes: Bearing 10(+2), Nimbleness 5(+0), Perception 6 (+0), Strength 13(+3), Vitality 9(+1), Wits 7 (+0)
Reactions: Stamina +3, Swiftiness+0, Willpower +0, Wisdom +0
Defense: 10
Order: Warrior
Order Ability: Evasion
Advancements: 4
Skills: Armed Combat: Axes (Battle Axe) +10, Climb +6, Intimidate +3, Observe +5, Language: Khuzdul (Common)+7, Language: Westron (Common)+4, Lore: Realm (Rhudaur)+2, Lore: History (Rhudaur)+2, Lore: History (Angmar)+2, Lore History (Blue Mountains)+4, Ranged Combat +2, Ride +2, Run +1, Siegecraft +6, Survival (Hills, Mountains)+5, Track (Orcs)+5
Edges: Warrior's Heart, Bold
Flaws: Stiff Necked
Health: 12
Courage: 3
Renown: 1
Gear: chainmail, Battle-Axe short bow and a quiver of 20 arrows.

SCENE NINE: THE CAVES

The path is treacherous to negotiate, loose pebbles, still slick from the heavy rains of the past few days, making for uncertain footing. As you ascend, you see a narrow crack in the hillside, partially obscured by boulders and thick vegetation.

The caves below the tower are Dwarven made and crafted for expediency and efficiency. The quickly fashioned corridors, while still a fine display of Dwarven masonry, are narrow barely five feet in height. Taller races are required to crouch down making traveling uncomfortable and tiresome. Stamina Test to resist Weariness should be made with a reaction test TN of 10.

Eventually the narrow passage opens up into a larger, natural cavern. Another presumably natural cavern that slopes downwards connects to this area, though Khalin cannot recall any lore from his ancestors that suggested another tunnel passage. The Narrator can use the side passage that leads deeper underground for an adventure of his or her own devising. The passage leads to encounters with all sorts of wicked and fell beasts that dwell in the dark places of the earth. In fact, one such creature has crawled from the depths and made its home here. A Small Giant Spider (see the Core Rulebook page 295 for a description and statistics) has taken residence in this chamber. At first, it preyed upon Orcs that discovered the caverns. Rather than attempt to kill it or drive it away, the Orcs decided it made an excellent guardian for any trespassers who may discover the tunnel. The Orcs now feed it captives whom they chain to a wall facing the opening into the deep earth. Bones of the creature's victims litter the cavern floor and sticky strands of web cling from the cavern ceiling to the floor.

The webs and bones should easily alert the characters of the danger in the chamber; nevertheless, the spider lunges quickly at any potential prey. Should the characters defeat the spider, there is a staircase carved into the rock that leads to a stout door. The door, however, has worn through the decades and its lock can be picked with a successful Nimbleness test at TN 10 or smashed open. It is now a weak wooden door with only 1 protection and 1 structure point. Smashing the door, however, could alert Orc guards nearby. The Narrator should secretly make an Observe test for the Orc guards at TN 10. If successful, 4 Orcs hurry to investigate the ruckus. If the characters successfully vanquish the Orcs they are able to ascend another set of stairs into the main hall of the keep.

SCENE TEN: STRONGHOLD OF EVIL

The Tower of Amon Garzak is actually a small stone keep. The characters will find themselves in the main hall and that hall is currently filled with Orcs and evil men. Cardoc is here at a long table with his companions, all together, there are 8 men and 12 Orcs feasting and drinking to excess. It is a filthy, loutish display. Deoch is not present. The characters can attempt to sneak quickly across to a spiraling staircase or attack the enemy, hoping the surprise is enough to dispatch the foes in the hall. If the characters choose to sneak across the hall to the stairs, they must succeed at an Oppose Stealth versus Observe test. If the characters are successful, they managed to sneak by unnoticed, if not, the alarm is raised and the characters must hold off the enemy, while somebody finds Deoch and then escapes back through the tunnels. A daunting task!

Deoch is held in a room guarded by a single Orc. The Orc has fallen asleep giving the characters a chance to free Deoch and escape back down the stairs without drawing attention. The character will easily persuade Deoch to flee with them. Anything is better than being a captive of Cardoc and his wicked allies. Characters, including Deoch will have to sneak back to the passage that leads to the dungeon. This is an excellent juncture to have the characters spotted by Cardoc who shouts at them to stop.

SCENE ELEVEN: THE FLIGHT BACK

The characters will be harried as they flee through the tunnels and out into the countryside. If Malbeth and his Wolves' Heads await the characters in the woods, they'll fire arrows at any Orcs that sally forth from the tower. The Narrator should have Orcs in small numbers spring up along the path of the characters, but not in sufficient numbers to actually slow the pace of the characters. The narrator should allow the characters to make a hasty return over a few hectic days back to the hold of Arnulf. The characters should feel that any delay or protracted rest would allow the Orcs to overtake them. The characters and their allies should reach Alatopel with scant time to prepare for Cardoc and the Orcs' attack.

SCENE TWELVE: THE SIEGE OF ALATOPEL

The wooden palisade of Alatopel looms before you. Weary and harried from the pursuit of the enemy, you find a sudden burst of energy when you spy the walls. As you approach, a horn blows from inside the holding and the gate is opened to allow you and your companions entrance.

A cheer rises from the people if Deoch and Malbeth are present. If any of the woodsmen survived, family members in the assembling crowd rush forward to greet them with tears in their eyes. Bardwyn steps forward, shouting praises to the characters and when he spies Deoch, his face is a mixture of relief and guilt. Bardwyn quickly turns to Malbeth to welcome him back. If the characters fail to warn Bardwyn and the villagers of the coming Orc attack, Malbeth will take the lead and begin giving some hasty orders and then ask to be taken to his father. He invites the characters to accompany him and his sister.

The Narrator should allow the characters to witness a tender scene when Malbeth and Deoch appear before their father. He weeps and asks for their forgiveness and both tell him that there's nothing to forgive. The face of the old man brightens and for a moment he seems stronger and able-bodied. Arnulf addresses the characters pledging his family's eternal gratitude and his own, personal heart-felt thanks.

Malbeth interjects and informs his father of the danger of Cardoc and the Orcs. Arnulf tries to rise but fails and his children implore him to rest. Arnulf tells the characters that he asks no more of them and bids to make haste from the hold. Naturally, true heroes will decline to leave. Arnulf is heartened and rises despite any protest and prepares for battle, ordering his servants to bring him his mail and taking up his sword. He exits the hall with the characters, ready to lead his people.

Characters with Siegecraft can help the villagers prepare the defenses

and should test his Siegemcraft against Cardoc's Siegemcraft. The Narrator may wish to allow a character to make an Inspire test at a suitably dramatic moment. By twilight, the Orc host led by Cardoc and his evil men attacks the hold. Several well-armored Orcs are with Yrreth. His Orcs refrain from the attack. Yrreth is unhappy with his ally's folly and foolishness.

The Narrator may wish to use the basic rules for Battles found on page 238 of the Core Rulebook, starting the battle at "even" on the Battle Resolution Table, or the Narrator may elect to use Unit Combat as described on page 239 of the Core Rulebook to resolve the battle. Whichever method is chosen, the Narrator should ensure each character has an opportunity for some personal combat. If the Narrator decides to roll on table 9.25 to determine a character's activity in the battle then a character who scores an opportunity for a Valorous Deed should be allowed to face Cardoc in personal battle, face the Captain of his men, Waelgauth or battle the Orc Captain Gugol. The Narrator may wish to give a character an opportunity to attack the magician Yrreth. The Narrator may also elect to have Yrreth flee with his Orc guards covering his retreat; thus sowing the seed for continued adventure.

THE UNITS HAVE THE FOLLOWING STATISTICS:

Orcs

Size: 6 Strength: 5 (can attack at range) Toughness: 5 Mobility: 7 Morale 18

The Warriors of the Hold

Size: 3 Strength: 5 (can attack at range) Toughness: 6 Mobility: 7 Morale 18

The Wolves Heads of Malbeth

Size: 1 Strength 6 (can attack at range) Toughness: 6 Mobility: 7 Morale 14

NPCs:

Cardoc, The Black Apprentice of Yrreth

Race: Man (Middle) Racial Abilities: Adaptable (+2 Willpower), Dominion of Man, Skilled
Attributes: Bearing 8(+1), Nimbleness 7(+0), Perception 9 (+1), Strength 8(+1), Vitality 8(+1), Wits 10 (+2)
Reactions: Stamina +1, Swiftiness+2, Willpower +2, Wisdom +2
Defense: 10
Order: Rogue (Outlaw), Loremaster
Order Ability: Dodge, Spell-Casting, Ancient Scripts, Secretive
Advancements: 6
Skills: Armed Combat +6, Debate +1, Climb +3, Conceal +3, Observe +5, Healing+1, Insight +1, Language: Westron (Common)+7, Language: Black Speech, Lore: Realm (Arnor)+4, Lore: History (Arnor)+4, Lore: Realm (Rhudaur)+5, Lore: History (Rhudaur)+5, Lore: History (Angmar)+4, Lore: Magic (Sorcery)+5, Lore: History (Angband)+1, Perform+1, Persuade+3, Ranged Combat +3, Ride +1, Run +1, Survival (Hills)+3, Track+1

Edges: Ally (Yrreth)

Flaws: Arrogant

Health: 9

Courage: 2

Renown: 3

Spells: Voice of Command, Command (Sorcery)

Gear: chainmail, large shield, spear, longsword, horn, short bow and a quiver of 20 arrows.

Waelguth

Race: Man (Middle) Racial Abilities: Adaptable (+2 Swiftiness), Dominion of Man, Skilled

Attributes: Bearing 5(+0), Nimbleness 6(+0), Perception 6 (+0), Strength 10(+2), Vitality 9(+1), Wits 4 (+0)

Reactions: Stamina +2, Swiftiness+0, Willpower +0, Wisdom +0

Defense: 10

Order: Warrior

Order Ability: Evasion

Advancements: 1

Skills: Armed Combat: Axes (Battleaxe) +6, Climb +2, Intimidate +3, Observe +2, Language: Westron (Common)+6, Language: Orkish (local dialect) +2, Lore: Realm (Rhudaur)+4, Ranged Combat: Bows (Shortbow) +4, Ride +4, Run +1, Siegemcraft +2, Survival (Hills)+3, Swim +2, Weather-Sense +1

Edges: Bold

Flaws: None

Health: 11

Courage: 0

Renown: 1

Gear: Leather armor, large shield, spear, battle-axe, short bow and a quiver of 20 arrows.

Arnulf the Old

Race: Man (Middle) Racial Abilities: Adaptable (+2 Swiftiness), Dominion of Man, Skilled

Attributes: Bearing 12(+3), Nimbleness 5(+0), Perception 8 (+1), Strength 5 (+0), Vitality 4(+0), Wits 12 (+3)

Reactions: Stamina +0, Swiftiness+1, Willpower +3, Wisdom +3

Defense: 10

Order: Noble

Order Ability: Domain, Noble Mein

Advancements: 3

Skills: Armed Combat: Blades (Longsword) +7, Inspire +6, Intimidate +3, Observe +7, Language: Westron (Common)+9, Language: Sindarin +5, Lore: Realm (Rhudaur)+6, Lore: History (Rhudaur)+7, Lore: History (Angmar)+4, Lore: History (Arnor) +6, Observe +4, Persuade +2, Ranged Combat +3, Ride +4,

Edges: Rank 1

Flaws:

Health: 4

Courage: 4

Renown: 4

Gear: chainmail, large shield, spear, longsword, horn, short bow and a quiver of 20 arrows.

Yrreth the Magician

Race: Man (Middle) Racial Abilities: Adaptable (+2 Swiftess), Dominion of Man, Skilled
Attributes: Bearing 11(+2), Nimbleness 7(+0), Perception 8 (+1), Strength 4(+0), Vitality 5(+0), Wits 12 (+3)
Reactions: Stamina +0, Swiftess+1, Willpower +3, Wisdom +2
Defense: 10
Order: Magician
Order Ability: Spellcasting 2, Wizard's Heart
Advancements: 4
Skills: Armed Combat +1, Climb +1, Debate +4, Intimidate +2, Language: Common (Westron) +7, Language: Sindarin+5, Language: Black Speech: +5, Language: Orkish +4, Lore: Realm (Angmar) +5, Lore: History (Angmar) +5, Lore: History (Mordor) +5, Lore: Realm (Mordor)+3, Lore: History (Arnor)+4, Observe+3, Persuade +6, Ranged Combat +1, Ride +2, Run +1, Search +2
Edges: Strong Willed, Tireless
Flaws: none
Health: 5
Courage: 2
Renown: 3
Spells: Beast Speech, Command (Sorcery), Enslave Beast (Sorcery), Evoke Fear (Sorcery), and Voice of Command, Ruin (Sorcery)
Gear: chainmail, large shield, spear, longsword, horn, short bow and a quiver of 20 arrows.

Gugol, Orc Captain

Race: Orc Racial Abilities: Claws, Curse of Daylight, Tough Skin
Attributes: Bearing 6(+0), Nimbleness 8(+1), Perception 8 (+1), Strength 8(+1), Vitality 9(+1), Wits 5 (+0)
Reactions: Stamina +2, Swiftess+1, Willpower +0, Wisdom +0
Defense: 11
Order: Warrior
Order Ability: Favored Weapon (Scimitar)
Advancements: 4
Skills: Armed Combat +6, Intimidate +5, Language: Westron (Common)+5 Language: Orkish+6, Lore: Race (Orcs)+4, Ranged Combat +4, Ride +5, Run +5 Sieecraft +4, Stealth+5, Survival (Hills)+1, Track+3
Edges: Keen-Nosed, Night-eyed 2
Flaws: Hatred (Dwarves, Elves)
Health: 9
Courage: 0
Renown: 1
Gear: Orcish chainmail, large shield, scimitar, long knife, longbow and a quiver of 20 arrows.

SCENE THIRTEEN: THE PASSING OF ARNULF

If the characters and the people of Alatopol successfully defeat the Orcs and men of Cardoc, the survivors of the battle rejoice. Arnulf still stands; several slain Orcs are heaped about him. His sword is slick with his foe's blood. Suddenly, Arnulf staggers and falls to his knees. His son and daughter rush to his side. Bardwyn and several others hastily join them. Arnulf's helm is removed and his son cradles him in his arms. The old lord addresses those around him.

"My time has come. My doom is known. Time takes what no Orc of Cardoc could. My thanks to you who came to our aid. My love to you, my children, my people." Moments after expressing his love and gratitude, Arnulf dies. Villagers and weary warriors surround their fallen lord. The clouds finally break to reveal light blue sky and the rays of the Sun warm the day.

If the characters and the defenders of Alatopol are losing and are falling to defeat, Arnulf, in desperation plunges into a mass of the enemy, slashing and hacking at the enemy and forcing them back for the moment. An Orc stabs him from behind and as he falls, his opponents overwhelm him. His heroics may allow the heroes to plot a retreat or aid in the escape of some of the people of the hold. It will be a desperate attempt and most will not escape the peril of the invading Orcs.

EPILOGUE

If the characters are successful, after Arnulf is laid to rest, the characters are honored as heroes and Bardwyn as promised composes a song in their honor. The mail armor provided to the characters as part of their reward is of excellent workmanship. The Narrator should make individual skill tests to see if any are actually masterworks. Regardless, each character now has a corselet of chainmail. They are, of course, also given silver from Arnulf's wealth. The Narrator may decide that Malbeth and Deoch grace each character with other treasures.

If the Narrator opted to have Yrreth escape, the characters should realize that the hand behind Cardoc escaped unscathed. If Yrreth escaped Khalin intends to continue his quest for vengeance and will declare his intentions. Whether or not Yrreth escaped the threat of the Tower of Amon Garzak remains and Narrators can use its presence to provide further adventures for the heroes. The Narrator may wish to develop additional encounters in the tower, such as remaining Orc guards, Yrreth and lastly, there's always a threat from the cave that leads into the deep recesses of the earth. Other adventures await in Middle-Earth.