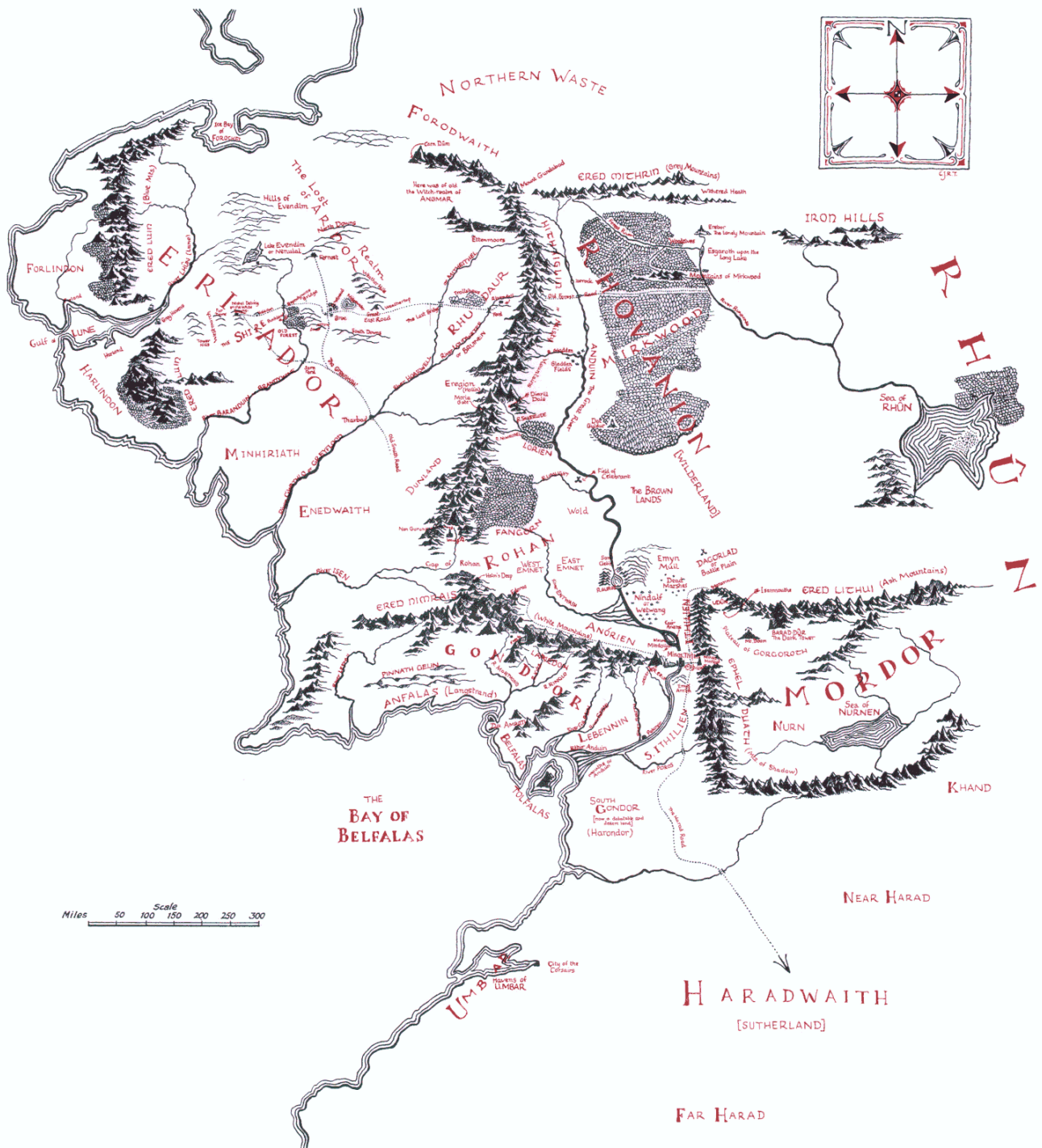


The Bringer of Gifts

A Chronicle for the Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game

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1.0 Introduction

This is a chronicle designed for use with the decipher Lord of the Rings Roleplaying game. The setting is Eriador in the Third age, sometime between the discovery of the Ring and the War of the Ring – the period suggested in the Decipher system. The time period could be readily adapted to suit any chronicle within the restrictions laid out below, but the geographical setting is important to the story.

The chronicle describes the discovery of the whereabouts of an evil artefact of the second age by Gailhen, a Dúnedain from southern Gondor. The item is the rod of Annatar, an extremely powerful creation of Sauron during his guise as Annatar, the 'Lord of gifts'. The rod has extensive abilities in 'persuading' and controlling the minds of others, planting 'suggestions' and making lies seem truthful. Annatar used the rod in his dealings with the Mirdain (see below). At the start of the chronicle, the characters inadvertently aid Gailhen in securing the rod from a cave system in the Trollshaws. Gailhen is greedy for knowledge and power and is soon corrupted by the rod, and begins to amass men to his cause using its power. The characters must discover the nature of the rod and Gailhen's plans and stop his expansion before he can use the rod to subjugate the free peoples of Eriador.



1.1 History of the 'The Lord of Gifts'

In the eight century of the second age Celebrimbor, the grandson of the great elven smith Feanor, founded the Noldorin realm of Eregion. The skills in smithwork and jewel making of Celebrimbor's people – the Mirdain – were second only to the Dwarves of Khazad-dûm and their fame spread far and wide. Four hundred years later, the Mirdain began to receive emissaries from a mysterious stranger who called himself Annatar, a Quenyrin name meaning the 'Lord of Gifts'. Annatar

offered the elves even greater knowledge in the ways of making and presented them with wondrous gifts the construction of which far exceeded their understanding. Some of the Elves such as the lords Gil-galad and Elrond were wary of this stranger, but Celebrimbor was won over by his thirst for knowledge and accepted Annatar's offer of help. Therefore Annatar came to Eregion to teach the Mirdain.

The Mirdain studied the ways of making with under Annatar's guidance for three hundred years. Amongst other secrets Annatar introduced the elves to the making of magical rings. In about 1500, the elves forged the first of the Rings of Power with Annatar's help. The Mirdain made sixteen Rings of Power, each set with a gemstone. However, both the Elves and Annatar secretly forged their own rings. Celebrimbor and the Elves made three Rings of their own which were more powerful than the previous sixteen. They were named Narya, Nenya and Vilya, the Rings of Fire, Water and Air.

Annatar, on the other hand, forged only one other ring. Gil-galad, Elrond and Galadriel had been right to distrust Annatar for he was in fact the Dark Lord Sauron disguised in a fair form. Sauron left the Elves and travelled to Mordor, and there in the fires of Orodrium (mount Doom) secretly forged the One Ring, the Ruling Ring. The One was made to enslave and subjugate the holders of the other Rings of Power and was filled with much of Sauron's might and malice, such that it became an integral part of his being. But Sauron had not reckoned on the Elves forging the Three, and as he took up the One Ring for the first time, the Elves became aware of it and took off their own Rings to foil his ambition.

In wrath Sauron marched on Eregion with a great army. Eregion was destroyed the distraught Celebrimbor was slain as Sauron sought to discover the whereabouts of the three. However, the Elves had already hidden them and they remained safe. The sixteen rings the Elves made with Annatar were however claimed

by Sauron; nine of these he used to subvert nine great kings of men to his cause and these became the Nazgûl or Ringwraiths. Seven rings Sauron gave to the Dwarves with the same purpose, though the Dwarves proves much more resistant to his malice and they remained free.

Centuries later, at the end of the Second Age, Sauron fell in combat Elendil and Gil-galad in the War of the Last Alliance, killing both the kings in the process. The heir of Elendil Isildur cut the Ring from Sauron's hand and claimed it as his own but he was lost in the River Anduin in the disaster of the Galladen fields and the Ruling Ring was lost with him. This freed the Elves to use the power of their Three Rings, and they did through the Third Age.



1.2 Chapter Outline

The chapters that make up the chronicle are outlined below:

Chapter 1: The Outlaw cave

The characters are approached by Gailhen, posing as a Ranger, near the town of Bree. Gailhen states that he has discovered the headquarters of a small band of outlaws that have been terrorising the east-west road. Enlisting their help Gailhen leads the characters to an abandoned cave system in the depths of the Trollshaws where a group of men are entrenched. With Gailhen the characters disperse the men and clear the caves but not without misgivings about Gailhen and the actual purpose of the raid.

Chapter 2: Deception Revealed

On the road back to Bree the characters discover a merchant caravan recently raided by outlaws. With the caravan they discover Belegilf, a real Ranger of the north. Belegilf tells the party that he was asked to lead his Ranger force to the

north, apparently to engage a group of Orcs seen travelling down from the mountains, however despite much searching no trace of the Orcs could be found. Belegilf reveals he never heard of a ranger called Gailhen. At the request of Belegilf the characters hunt down the outlaws in an abandoned tower near the Trollshaws and rescue the daughter of the merchant taken from the caravan.

Chapter 3: Into Shadows

When the characters return to the site of the caravan Belegilf suggests to the characters that return and re-investigate the cave system in the Trollshaws to discover Gailhen's intentions. The characters travel back to the Trollshaws and discover that a doorway has been uncovered in a once-blank wall, revealing a spiral stair descending to darkness. Fresh footprints can be seen in the dust. The complex they have opened is the ancient smithy, long since abandoned, where the rod was first constructed. Investigations reveal original resting place of the item, now gone. They also discover some clues as to the nature of the rod. The Characters return to the west road to meet with Belegilf and discuss their findings.

Chapter 4: Seeking Aid

Belegilf suggests that they travel together to meet Maenist, a Sindar Elf wise in the history of Eregion. Maenist travels the region with a group of Rangers, collecting lore from the peoples, birds and beasts he meets. The characters travel the wild to locate Maenist and his men. Maenist tells the party some of the history of the Rod and suggests some of its powers. He tells them that a group of Orcs has been seen travelling down from the Mount Gram Ettenmoors and heading toward the Trollshaws. Maenist and his group plan to ambush the Orcs and discover their purpose. After the battle, a captured servant of Sauron reveals that the Orcs were ordered down from the mountains to get to the Trollshaws and locate the Rod. Maenist asks the party to accompany him

to relay the word Bree while the rest of the group hunt down the remaining Orcs.

Chapter 5: Honeyed Words

Upon returning to Bree, the characters find themselves the brunt of some serious verbal abuse by the townspeople and have a hard time getting into Bree. People look at them distrustfully and will not talk to them readily. They discover that a stranger has been seen about town stirring up dislike of the Rangers. In a nasty encounter with the townsfolk the party recognise the stranger as Gailhen, now equipped with the Rod. With him are a group of men he has 'swayed' to his cause. Gailhen uses the powers of the Rod to force Maenist to reveal the location of something called the Voice of Annatar. Despite attempts to fight Gailhen, Maenist reveals the Voice is located in the ruins of Annuminas.

Chapter 6: Voice from the Past

Gailhen leaves Bree to head northward. A severely wounded Maenist reveals the final piece of the mystery of the Rod, telling the characters that the Rod is one part of an ancient device called the Voice of Annatar. This object allows the powers of the Rod to be greatly amplified over a wide area. The second part of the Voice, the base-block, was captured by the Dunedain many years ago and moved to the now ruined city of Annuminas where it still resides. The party then race against Gailhen and his men to reach Annuminas first. There they find the base-block Voice in a tower guarded by a dwindling band of Green Elves. With the help of the Elves the characters fortify the tower against Gailhens war band and prepare to withstand the siege. A final battle takes place where the party fight to stop Gailhen from activating the Voice.



1.3 Restrictions on Setting

The chronicle involves the lost realm of Eriegion and the Elven smiths and therefore must be set after the destruction of this land. Also, the city of Annuminas must be deserted and ruined, so any time after the wars of the Witch King could be used successfully. The Orc forces of Mount Gram must still be strong for the chronicle to work and so the Forth age is best avoided.

The chronicle is suited to a wide range of player characters, and statistics for the enemies encountered can be altered to suit the strength of the characters party. A diverse mixture of character types is recommended, with the following two exceptions: no member of the party should be an associate of the Rangers of the North as this would lead to difficulties with Gailhens deception, and no member of the party should be a Lore-master with detailed knowledge of Eriador or the rings of power – it helps if the party have never heard of Annatar, then their discovery of the powers of the Rod will be all the more shocking.



1.4 Locations

The following locations are used in this chronicle.

1.4.1 The Trollshaws

This tangled region of upland woods, consisting mainly of beech trees, lies to the west of Rivendell between the Rivers Hoarwell and the river Loudwater. Once part of the Arnorean kingdom of Rhudaur, the Trollshaws are now a dark and dangerous place. After the collapse of the kingdom of Arnor the Trollshaws became the haunt of savage hillmen and outlaws, but they have always been the haunt of trolls such as the three which waylaid Bilbo and his Dwarven companions during the Quest of Erebor, The Trollshaws are generally avoided by wise folk, for the dark wooded hills and dales contain many

monuments of times gone by when this region of Middle-Earth bore the brunt of long and destructive wars between the Kingdoms of Arnor and the evil of Angmar.

1.4.2 Bree

The land of Bree consists of the four villages; Bree, Staddle, Combe and Archet, which all surround the flanks of Bree hill. One of the largest and most civilised settlements in the region, Bree is home to a wide selection of middle and lesser men along with a smattering of Hobbits. Generally hospitable, Bree is not unused to seeing travellers on the East-west road (often Dwarves travelling to and from the Blue Mountains) and the Greenway, but in recent times these transients have become a rare sight. To good folk Bree is still a welcome sight, but many may find the inns and taverns of the town now populated by less than friendly faces.

1.4.3 Eregion

The land founded by Celebrimbor and the Noldor in the west of Middle-earth during the Second Age. The elves were famed for its smith work and developed a strong friendship with the Dwarves of the nearby realm of Khazad-dûm. However, the Elves of Eregion came under the influence of Sauron in the fair form of Annatar and unwittingly aided him in the making of the Rings of Power. The land of Eregion was destroyed by Sauron during savage wars in the Second Age.

1.4.4 Nenuial and the Hills of Evendim

Nenuial is the Sindarin name for the lake in the Hills of Evendim in the north of Middle-earth; Annúminas, the city of Arnor, was founded on its shores. The hills above Lake Nenuial in the north of Middle-earth are called by the Elves Emyrn Uial.

1.4.5 Annuminas

Annuminas was the greatest city of the Kings of Arnor. Founded by Elendil himself on the shores of the northern lake Nenuial

near the sources of the Baranduin (Brandywine), Annuminas was the chief city of the Kings of Arnor for several centuries. It was also home to one of the three palantíri of the North-Kingdom.

The Evendim Hills surrounded the city to the west and south and the people of Annúminas were much dependent on the River Baranduin for their contact with the other Dúnedain cities that lay along the river. In the early days of Arnor Annúminas was one of the most glorious sites of Middle-earth. However, soon after its founding the numbers of the Dúnedain of the North began to dwindle and the population of Annúminas fell, until eventually it was deserted over a thousand years later and the capital removed to the fortress city of Fornost Erain to the east. After the city's desertion it gradually fell into decay.

Two relics of the greatness of Annúminas have survived, the palantír and the Sceptre of Annúminas. The palantír remained in Middle-earth for more than a millennium after the loss of its city but was ultimately drowned with King Arvedui in the seas to the north. The silver Sceptre of Annúminas, the symbol of Kingship in the North-kingdom, was originally the rod of office of the Númenórean Lords of Andúnië. It eventually came to be kept by Elrond in Rivendell.



2.0 The Bringer of Gifts Chapter 1 – The Robber’s Cave

2.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the characters to the chronicle ‘The Bringer of Gifts’. It involves what seems a simple mission to clear the Trollshaws of a group of robbers who have been terrorising the East-West Road. In truth, the characters become pawns in Gailhen’s quest to recover the Rod of Annatar.

2.1.1 What’s going on?

Gailhen (see NPC’s below) is a man of high Numenorean blood from the south of Gondor. He is learned in the history of Middle-Earth and especially the Elven realm of Eregion. This interest in the Eleven-Smiths is driven by his fascination with the Rings of Power, and he has learned much of this subject. It was this fascination with power and his greedy nature which have driven him to his current course of action. During his research, Gailhen discovered that when Sauron approached the Elves of Eriador in the guise of Annatar, the ‘Lord of gifts’, he had used his great skills of crafting to produce several powerful magic items to aid him. One of these was the so-called rod of Annatar. With the aid of the Rod Sauron could bend the minds of weak-minded men to his will. Further more, Gailhen discovered that the Rod still exists and is located in an ancient Smithy-complex in the Trollshaws. He also discovered the key to the complex, a jewelled ring. With this knowledge in hand Gailhen hired a group of Black Numenorean mercenaries and set off to the Trollshaws to recover the Rod.

Gailhen hired the mercenaries promising gold from a hidden and forgotten Dwarven hoard. He led them to a series of caves in the depths of the Trollshaws and aided them in clearing out the occupants of the caves at that time, a pair of hill trolls. However, during the fight a large group of wolves joined the fray which the mercenaries ended up fighting for their lives. When the fight was over, they discovered two of their number and

Gailhen missing, presumed dragged away by the wolves.

The Black Numenoreans, believing Gailhen dead, have occupied the cave system in the hope of discovering the Dwarven gold. In reality, Gailhen used an affinity he has with wolves to ask the aid of a pack of nearby Wargs, promising them fresh meat. Gailhen hoped the Wargs would destroy the mercenaries and leave the cave unoccupied. But the Black Numenoreans repelled the wolves and remain entrenched in the caves. Gailhen left the site of the cave to consider his options. Fortunately for him, in the forest of the Trollshaws he spied upon a ragged group of robbers who had been preying on merchants travelling the East-West road. Gailhen saw his chance to remove the annoying Black Numenorean mercenaries and recover the Rod for himself...

2.1.2 Searching for Herbs

The chapter begins with the characters in the wild to the north of Bree, collecting herbs for Fornester, a healer residing in the village of Archet on Bree-Hill. The characters had met in the Prancing Pony, the famous Bree Inn run by Barliman Butterbur, during a typical night of carousing, sharing stories of their journeys from their homelands and how they came to be in Bree-land (the characters should have some idea as to why they are adventuring). Come the next morning, the group met again to break fast together and to reaffirm their growing friendships. It was while they ate in the Inn that Fornester, a particularly withered crone with straggled grey hair and tattered clothing approached them. Despite her off-putting appearance and harsh tongue Barliman greeter her warmly, and she told all in the hall that she required help in gathering a root called ‘Widow’s tongue’ which grows in abundance in the wild. She is treating a child of the town who has contracted a fever and a pultice of the root is known to be the only effective treatment. The characters agreed to this noble cause and set out to the wild, bearing instructions on how to locate the root, laden with

sumptuous provisions provided by the Innkeeper.

2.2.1 Scene 1 – Wolf Attack



The first scene starts at the end of the task, as the characters sit gathered around a warm campfire a days journey from Bree, a satchel stuffed with the roots tossed carelessly by the bedrolls. It is a starry but cold night as the year draws to a close; in the darkness the characters discuss the unpleasant task of scratching roots from the cold earth whilst chewing on rabbit meat.

It is a lonely scene with the impenetrable darkness, the emptiness of the wild and the silence of a winter night. The characters are startled when a wolf howls nearby. A few minutes later an answering call sounds. Then another, and another, closer and closer to the fire - the characters are surrounded by wolves, and they can hear the panting of the beasts in the night. The wolves run around and around the fire, drawing ever closer, until some brave the flames and attack the characters.

The wolves are not particularly brave or strong and are fearful of the fire, so the characters should be able to hold them off fairly comfortably. Introduce enough wolves to get the characters worried, but not seriously harm anyone.

Halfway through the fight, a dark shape rushes to the characters aid, diving at the largest wolf and driving it off. The rest of

the wolves break away into the night, yelping as they run. The stranger walks into the firelight and introduces himself as Gailhen, a Ranger of the North.

2.2.2 Scene 2 – Gailhen's Request

Gailhen says he is travelling to Bree and saw the light of the fire from a nearby hill. He heard the wolves drawing near and rushed down to the character's aid. He asks if he might journey with the characters to Bree the next morning. He says he is willing to share the watch for the remainder of the night and tend the fire. If any of the characters suggests that it is strange for wolves to attack a large group of people, especially with a fire, test an appropriate survival skill at TN 10. If successful, agree that it is rare. A superior success tells the character that it is unheard rare. Gailhen shrugs this off saying the wild wolves often attack when driven by hunger, and ignores any comments by the characters on the ease with which they found food.

The next morning, Gailhen journeys with the characters back to Bree where they can deliver the roots to Fornester. During the march, he tells them that he is travelling to Bree to seek the aid of brave men to help free the east west road from a group of robbers hiding out in the Trollshaws. He states that the rest of the Rangers are engaged in the north and cannot help him so he must find aid where he can. If the characters offer to help he will whole-heartedly agree, if they don't offer Gailhen will eventually ask their help. During the journey Gailhen seems restrained and serious - he takes little interest in the characters search for Fornester's roots, only becoming eager when trying to persuade them to help him fight the robbers.

When the characters arrive in Bree, Fornester accepts the roots without giving thanks though Barliman informs them that this is her way and that they have likely made an ally for life. If they take the time in the town to ask about, they (with an

appropriate tests for each piece of information) will discover the following:

- No one has heard of a Ranger called Gailhen – people generally distrust the Rangers. If confronted about this Gailhen says he spends much of his time in the wild protecting the people of Bree, not lazing about in the town or its Inns.
- Fornoster (or similar individuals who deal with the wild) know many of the Rangers by name. They have not heard of Gailhen, but can confirm that the Rangers left three days ago after rumours of Orcs travelling down from the Ettenmoors reached Bree.
- People have complained of a group of robbers attacking travellers near the Trollshaws. The robbers are described by survivors as a group of swarthy men, ill clothed and in bad condition.

Gailhen is keen for the characters to set out as soon as possible, saying that the robbers must be stopped before more innocent travellers are molested. He says that the robbers have made camp in an abandoned cave system in the Trollshaws, and that it was from reconnoitring this site that he was returning to Bree. Needless to say, for the chronicle to progress it is vital that the characters agree to accompany Gailhen to the robbers cave.

2.2.3 Scene 3 – The Trollshaws

The journey to the Trollshaws is approximately 70 leagues and takes just over a week marching, although Gailhen has a horse, a black stallion called Grimmel. The travelling is easy along the road – the snowfall of winter as of yet is not hard, only a dusting of white covers the ground. Gailhen seems very keen for the characters to make as fast a pace as possible, citing that he wishes to capture the robbers before any more innocents are lost.

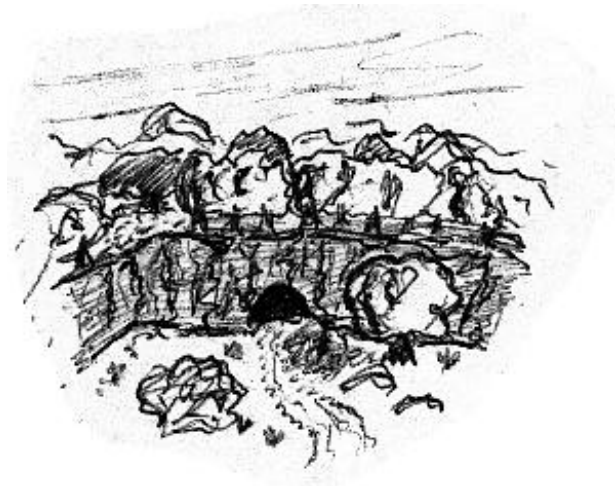
Several days into the trip, as the characters near the hilly ground of the Trollshaws, the road enters a deep valley

cutting between two hills. Trees fill the valley, the sparse branches making stark contrast to the snow. As the group turn a bend the road dips down a valley and then curve up to twist out of view. At the bottom of the valley, three black shapes lie on the ground, and the white snow is stained red with blood.

The three bodies are those of a two middle-aged men and a young woman, dressed in common (if poor quality) travelling clothing. They have been hacked down from behind, clearly whilst running, and their faces still show the vestiges of fear. Anyone who can make a TN 15 test with Perception and Armed Combat will recognise that the wounds are ragged and clumsy, inflicted by poor quality weaponry wielded by an unskilful man, and that the weapons are clearly not Orkish. The bodies have been hastily searched, stripped of all valuables and just left in the road. Testing tracking skills (TN 10) will show that at least six men were involved in the attack and made no attempts to cover their tracks. However, once in the woods the trails is lost in the snow drifting down from the trees.

Gailhen states that the bodies are the work of the Robbers, and will berate any who he feels have held the characters up. There are no signs that the Robbers are nearby, but the scene is very tense with the silent woods that crowding the road. Gailhen is eager to press on, and considers burying the bodies a waste of time. However, if the characters are insistent (which they should be) he will aid them.

2.2.4 Scene 4 – The Robber’s Cave



When they reach the Trollshaws, Gailhen will lead the characters toward the site of the Robber’s cave. He is keen that they approach the caves right away, but if the characters wish a more cautious approach he will grudgingly agree. The entrance to the cave lies at the bottom of a deep wooded depression, sided by stony 20ft cliffs, as shown in figure 1. A narrow route leads from the bottom of the depression up a steep slope that cut through the cliffs; otherwise it is a difficult climb (TN 15, TN 15 test against stealth not to make any noise). The route enters the depression roughly 50 feet opposite the cave entrance.

Outside the Caves – At any time, day or night, two men acting as guards stand outside the caves. By night they tends to pace the cave mouth, slapping arms against the cold, relying on a small lantern to provide illumination when the moon is not bright. During the day, they rest against the trunk of a nearby tree and are very difficult to spot (TN 20) from the top of the cliffs. Contrary to what the characters may believe, they are very well armed and armoured (see below). Lying by the side of the cave entrance are the vitrified bodies of two hill trolls. Beneath the trees are the graves of the five men who died in the battle with the trolls and Wargs.

1. Low chamber – The entrance chamber to the cave complex is a wide, low, earth-floored room with a ceiling at the most 5 ft high and in many places lower. A channel runs through the middle of the chamber, where a stooping man can make his way to the rest of the caves. Two meters from the entrance the mercenaries have rigged a tripwire across the cave. Anyone tripping the wire will set a bell ringing in the guardroom, alerting the guards and giving them time to collect weapons (see below). A heavy cloth covers the wide entrance to the rest of the caves and so no sound or light enters chamber 1 from the caves beyond. Similarly, the occupants of the rest of the cave system will not be alarmed by anything that happens outside the caves or in chamber 1 unless a loud shout is raised or heavy combat takes place inside chamber 1. Beyond the cloth wall torches in brackets illuminate the rest of the upper region of the cave complex.
2. Guard room – A round, tall ceiling room 15 ft long serves as the main guard chamber. A rough table, newly constructed, fills the room and several stools are scattered about, as well as the sleeping rolls of four men. Three men occupy this room, one armed and armoured and the other two relaxing (but with weapons nearby) – all wear bandages covering fresh looking wounds. They are talking together in Westron, their voices can be heard from just beyond the cloth wall. (Note: the number of men should be set such that they pose a significant threat to the characters and so that a better way of combating them must be found than just charging in.) Strong lantern light provides illumination from several niches around the chamber, casting flickering shadows on the wall. No fire has been lit and the remains of opened rations lay scattered about.

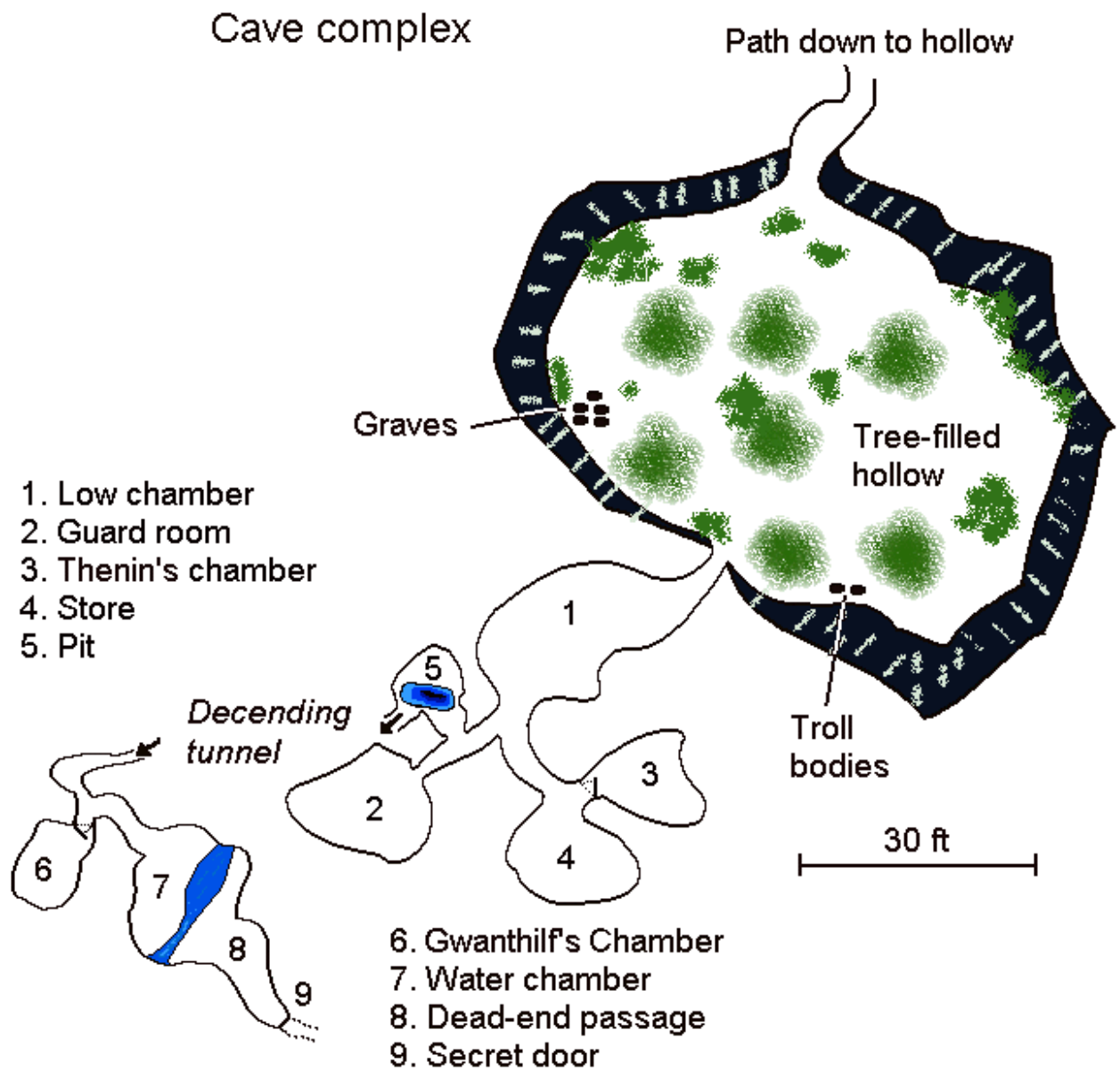


Figure 1. The cave complex in the Trollshaws.

3. Thenin's chamber – Thenin is the leader of the mercenary force when it comes to fighting. The chamber he occupies has a rough-cut door placed in the entrance – Thenin demands privacy and does not mingle well with others. Inside the chamber are Thenin's sleeping roll and table and his personal equipment. If the characters managed to neutralise the guards without making any noise, Thenin will be resting prone (but not asleep) on his bedroll - he always has his weapons close to hand. Any noises of battle will draw him out to join the attack in his typical frenzied manner.
4. Store – In this chamber the mercenaries have stored their rations etc. salvaged from their packhorses which were killed by the wolves. There is little here to suggest that the men in the caves are robbers, the chamber only containing general supplies for an expedition (ropes, rations etc.).
5. Pit – The floor of this small with low roofed (5ft) chamber is nearly completely occupied by a deep pit. Water dripping into the pit from the roof suggests the water level is several fathoms down. During the battle several wolves and one of the mercenaries fell into the pit, and an evil reek rises from the darkness. A rope has been fastened to the wall around the pit, using the rope and ledge still makes traversing around the pit treacherous (climbing with TN 10 to avoid slipping). Without the rope it is dangerous (TN 20). Any one falling into the pit finds the ice-cold water level 30ft down – climbing out of the pit unassisted is extremely difficult (TN 25), but there are three lengths of rope in the store that could be used. Beyond the pit a narrow passage twists gently downwards for 200 ft. The passage - like the rest of the lower region of the caves apart from location 8 - is unlit.
6. Gwanthilf's chamber – Despite her slight appearance Gwanthilf is the leader of the mercenary group and commands the respect of all the men (and the total devotion of Thenin). A rough-cut door fills the doorway but is ajar. The chamber contains a scattered jumble of books, herbs and scrolls strewn about the floor – Gwanthilf has been trying to find any reference in her annals to the Dwarven hoard. Regardless of when the characters enter the caves, Gwanthilf will not be here. Most of the scrolls and books are written in Westron and describe herbs and lore of Gondor, all written in the same hand (Gwanthilf's). These books could be used as study aids to anyone learning herb lore or the history of Gondor. Several however are clearly ancient and written in a strange tongue (the Black Speech) – these contain references to the smithy system, Gwanthilf found them amongst Gailhens possessions but cannot translate them. Amongst the herbs in the chamber are 3 doses of 'Sulerrain' – a healing herb that if ingested in hot water doubles the rate of natural healing for one week, and 5 dose of 'Namerall', a mild poison which causes victims to fall unconscious for 12 hours when the smoke of the burning leaf is inhaled – Fornoster or any other with knowledge of herbs could identify these.
7. Water chamber – This wide-open chamber demonstrates the beauty of the underworld. Rich crystalline deposits cover the walls, refracting any light the characters are carrying until it fills the entire chamber with a burning fire. A fast running, icy cold stream runs through the chamber. Although relatively narrow (5ft wide), the bottom of the river cannot be seen and any who try to wade it

will find it 4 ft deep and the current strong enough to sweep them toward the river exit (strength/swim test TN 15). Anyone swept away will find himself trapped in a constriction in the water tunnel 10ft from the exit in the chamber (the water will escape around them so they won't drown). A rope will be required to free them.

8. Dead-end passage – Across the water in chamber 7 the characters will see a beautiful young woman standing by a featureless wall - this is Gwanthilf. She has heard the characters travelling down the passage. She will wait for the characters to enter chamber 7 - if they seem reticent, she will try to persuade them to come out of the passage with soft words and gestures, telling them she has been captured by the men in the upper caves. A flickering candle in a holder by her feet provides enough light to fill the chamber with an unearthly flickering glow. Once they have all entered the chamber, she will quickly cast 'blinding flash' which will blind all members of the characters for at least 10 rounds (the refracting crystals amplify the effect). During this time she will run, laughing, out of the chamber and escape, but not before whispering to Gailhen in Sindarin ('you returned'). She will however make no attempt to attack them.
9. Secret door – To the characters this will appear just to be part of a blank wall, and it is not clear why the woman was standing by this wall. In truth this is the secret door that leads to the Ancient Smithy, and Gwanthilf, sensing the magic of this spot, was attempting to discover how to open it. Once she saw Gailhen, she realises that he must hold the key to the door and that if the characters are this far into the caves then Thenin and the mercenaries must be dead. She

reasons that she cannot overcome the PC alone and so retires to await for further developments.

2.3.3 Clearing the Caves

Clearing the caves of the mercenaries is a challenging task but the characters do have the initiative. The guards at the entrance to the caves could be surprised from the cliffs 20ft above, and if the characters are particularly cautious then they may spot the trip wire before it is triggered. However, alerting the guards either by failing to effectively neutralise the men at the entrance or triggering the trip wire will make the situation far more difficult. The mercenaries will neither give up nor talk – they have travelled too many leagues to uncover their 'Dwarven hoard' and lost too many men already to consider surrender.

Fighting in the cave can be difficult – in the upper caves illumination is poor and space restrictive (especially in the doorways), giving TN modifiers of +5 - +10. During any fights that take place, Gailhen will hold his own with the members of the party. However, unlike the characters, he will try to ensure that all the Black Numenoreans are killed so that they cannot tell anything of his involvement to the characters. His task will be made far easier by the mercenaries who will fight with suicidal intent. He will try to avoid meeting Thenin. If they do come into close proximity, Thenin will mutter 'You!' and attack Gailhen regardless of any personal danger.

Gwanthilf, once she has blinded the characters and escaped the cave complex, will disappear from the area – no trace of her can be found.

2.4 Aftermath

After the Black Numenoreans have been cleared from the caves, Gailhen heartily congratulates the characters on their noble and selfless actions. He seems little concerned of the Gwanthilf's escape, commenting that she was probably just a

hanger-on in the robber's group and that the blinding flash was probably a 'trick of the light'. He suggest that they travel back to Bree to tell the good news to the concerned towns people, stating that because of fear of the robbers many travellers have been forced to delay their journeys. He states he will travel to the north to meet with the other Rangers and report to them the end of the outlaws.

By the end of this chapter the characters should be suspicious of the supposed 'Robbers' and of Gailhen's motive for the attack. However, the mercenaries were clearly hostile and brooked no surrender. It is important that the characters let Gailhen leave them at this point. They should realise that returning to Bree is the best option. When they set off to Bree, Gailhen leaves them to travel north. In truth he follows them, hiding in the woods, spying to check that the characters leave the area. Once he is certain they have left he makes his way back to the caves...

The chronicle is continued in **Chapter 2: Signs and tokens**

2.5 Non-player Characters (NPC's)

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.

2.5.1 Fornoster



FORNOSTER

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

Reactions: Stamina +0, Swiftiness +2, Willpower +2, Wisdom +2, Defence 11, Health 7.

Order: Lore master.

Skills (selected): Appraise (herbs) +4, Craft (treatments) +5, Healing +5, Intimidate (appearance) +3, Lore (flora of Eriador) +4

Fornoster is truly repellent to look at, a classical old crone with wild hair tangled with twigs and leaves and ragged, torn clothing worn in many layers like the skin of an onion. She has, however, a soul of pure gold and the people of Bree are willing to risk her sharp tongue for her assistance. She is a skilled healer and is recognised by even such noticeables as Elrond for her knowledge of the herbs of Eriador, which is second to none.

2.5.2 Gailhen (S. 'True-eyed')



GAILHEN

Attributes: Bearing 9 (+1), Nimbleness 8 (+1), Perception 11 (+2), Strength 12 (+3), Vitality 10 (+2), Wits 9 (+1).

Reactions: Stamina +3, Swiftiness +2, Willpower +1, Wisdom +2, Defence 11, Health 13.

Order: Warrior / Lore master.

Skills (selected): Armed combat (long sword) +7, Ranged combat (long bow) +4, Intimidate (Majesty) +4, Survival (forest)

+2, Siegecraft (attack) +3, Lore: History (Eriador) +3

Equipment: Gailhen uses a fine steel Longsword of Gondor (superior quality) and an ash long bow. He wears a shirt of chainmail which he covers with a doublet and a dark cloak. The knapsack on his back holds his rations and sundry items. Gailhen also has amulet, given by Gwilbil, which allows him to communicate with wolves and Wargs.

A man of high Numenorean blood, Gailhen comes to Eriador from the southern city of Pelagir, the largest of the cities in the coastal regions of Gondor. Born a son of a local noble, Gailhen was a strong and powerful youth who excelled in the fighting arts becoming the commander of his father's forces at an early age. However, as he grew in his father's court he found that although he won much praise for his feats of arms, his younger brother, Melator, was held in higher esteem by the common people - Gailhen was seen only as a good soldier. Although Melator was not a powerful fighter like Gailhen, he was wise and coupled his knowledge of the requirements of his father's people with a natural grace and humility, something Gailhen could not emulate. As the years passed Gailhen's jealousy of his brother's success led to a deep-seated bitterness that soured his nature. This feeling opened a chink in Gailhen's personality that was exploited by Gwilbil (S. 'Peaceful'), a magician and sooth-sayer in his fathers employ. Gwilbil counselled Gailhen to turn from the pursuit of arms to the study of knowledge and making, instructing Gailhen that imperfections of the mind could be compensated for by the knowledge. Slowly but surely Gwilbil introduced the naïve Gailhen to magical arts and finally to sorcery. Finally, after much study, Gwilbil persuaded Gailhen to seek out the Rod of Annatar, a powerful magical device which would help him to achieve the respect and honour he felt he deserved.

Gailhen left his home to spend many years in Minas Tirith researching in the libraries and serving in the Royal Guard. Eventually

he located what he desired – the magical key to the smithy in which the Rod rests. Gailhen then gathered a party of mercenaries to him and set out for Eriador to claim the Rod.

Gwilbil, the man who slowly corrupted Gailhen's nature, is in fact a vampire sent to Gondor from Minas Morgul on a mission to corrupt the high families of the ruling class of Gondor. He has spent many years training Gailhen and understands that he could become a powerful tool of evil in the heart of the west.

Gailhen is tall and strong, with thick dark hair and intense blue eyes. His skin is rough and ruddy, fractured with many lines due to intense research in badly lit chambers. His face is stern and not quick to smile or laugh. He is a powerful warrior, familiar with many weapons of war, but has also become a learned Lore Master who understands many of the ancient arts of making originating in Eregion. He treats all matters seriously and fails to find levity in anything, which isolates him somewhat from the people, even from the fellow soldiers he is most comfortable with. Despite his close proximity to Gwilbil he is not innately evil. However, the insights into sorcery given by Gwilbil have made his descent into the shadow inevitable.

2.5.3 Black Numenorean Mercenaries



BLACK
NUMENOREANS

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

Reactions: Stamina +2, Swiftsness +1, Willpower +1, Wisdom +1, Defence 11, Health 10.

Order: Warrior.

Skills (selected): Armed combat (long sword) +4, Ranged combat (long bow) +2, Survival (forest) +2, Siegecraft (attack) +3.

Equipment: The Numenoreans wield longswords and battle-axes. Most wear chainmail shirts and wear high helmets. They also carry shields but they might not be able to use them in the confines of the cave.

The mercenaries are strong, hardened fighters, veterans from endless skirmishes between Gondor and Umbar. They have tough leathery skin darkened by the sun of the south and dark braided hair. Well-armed and armoured with mail, axes and swords, they do not at all fit the description of the robbers given in Bree or the profile of the poorly armed and trained attackers who killed the travellers. They have shields and bows but these are not used in the confined spaces of the cave. All the shields are marked with the sign of Gwanthilf's family – two fists on top on one another as shown in figure 2.

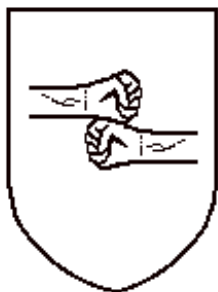


Figure 2. Emblem of the House of Amberlas (Gwanthilf's family).

2.5.4 Thenin (S. 'Firm, true')



THENIN

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

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

Order: Warrior.

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

Equipment: Thenin wields a wicked longsword with a serrated edge. He wears a scale mail shirt.

Thenin is an almost psychotic fighter who can only be restrained in his actions by the soothing words of Gwanthilf, who he dotes over like an old man over a child. Small and wiry, he fights with a large double-handed sword, or in the tight spaces of the caves with two wicked serrated short swords. As a captain of an Umbar vessel, he was severely burned about the face and neck when fighting on a flaming ship, an experience that nearly killed him. He fell senseless from the burning vessel but was rescued from the sea by the forces of the Court of Amberlas, a local noble. There he was nursed back to health by Amberlas's daughter, Gwanthilf, and became her most ardent servant. When Gwanthilf agreed to set out with Gailhen, Thenin was

compelled to accompany her with a force of Amberlas's troops.

2.5.5 Gwanthilf (S. 'Beautiful heart')



GWANTHILF

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

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

Order: Magician.

Skills (selected): Armed combat (dagger) +3, Intimidate (cold beauty) +3, Spellcasting, Spell speciality (sorcery).

Spells: Burning sparks, Create light, Dumbness, Fiery missile, Kindle fire, Sense power, Smoke weaving, Voice of command, Wizard's guise.

Equipment: Gwanthilf carries a razor sharp dagger which she will use if forced to fight but she wears no armour.

A noble-lady of Umbar, Gwanthilf is blessed with a quick mind and a restless nature that have driven her to become a reckless seeker of adventure and profit. A magician of some power, she decided at a young age that the stuffiness of her father's court did not fulfil her. Restrained by her father from leaving home, her impressionable mind sought relief in punishing the people of court that did not

please her. By the age of twenty-five when her father finally consented for her to leave Umbar she was already accomplished in the magical arts, but her mind had become twisted by malice and a greed for excitement. Now, two years later, she lives only for excitement, power and wealth, and cares for no one - not even her dotting servant Thenin. It is typical of her calculating manner not to kill any of the characters in the water chamber when she has blinded them (see above) - she realises that her chances for profit and power increase if Gailhen still lives.

3.0 The Bringer of Gifts Chapter 2 – Deception Revealed

3.1 Introduction

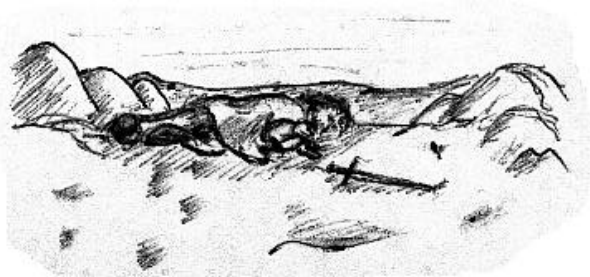
'Deception Revealed' is the second chapter in the 'Bringer of Gifts' campaign for the Lord of the Rings roleplaying game. The action in this chapter follows on directly from the events in the first chapter, 'The Robber's Cave', and so this chapter must be completed before running 'Deception Revealed'.

3.1.1 What's going on?

At the end of the first chapter, Gailhen, the Ranger impostor, had successfully duped the characters into assisting him in clearing out a group of Black Numenorean mercenaries that were occupying a series of caves in the Trollshaws. Originally hired by Gailhen, the mercenaries had accompanied him from Gondor in the hunt for a lost 'Dwarven hoard, but actually they were aiding Gailhen in his search for a magical item of considerable power called the Rod of Annatar. Gailhen seeks the Rod in order to rule the people of his homeland and to claim the recognition and respect he thinks he deserves.

As the last chapter ended, Gailhen had left the characters saying that he needed to head north to meet up with the rest of the Rangers who were supposedly hunting Orcs from the Ettenmoors. The Characters were heading back along the road toward Bree to tell the townsfolk that the robber threat had been removed. This is where the second chapter begins.

3.2 Scene 1 – The Merchants Caravan



The characters have been travelling back towards Bree for one day and night. The first hard snow fall of winter has come and the harsh wind from the east is building up drifts of snow across the road.

Suddenly, turning a bend in the road, the characters spot a wagon halted diagonally across the road. The passage is narrow in this region and the wagon nearly blocks the entire road. There are no horses nearby and no people can be seen. Some snow has drifted around the wagon's wheel suggesting that it has been there for some time.

This is the caravan of Burlas, a travelling merchant of metal wears. The wagon left in the road and another are the latest victim of the real group of robbers that have been terrorising the West road, a sorry band of outlaws and cut-throats led by a wild Dunlender called Dullic. The second wagon contained Burlas's wears and was stolen by the robbers. Burlas himself lies in a snowdrift on the side of the road, seriously wounded (he will be visible as a dark huddled shape when the characters draw nearer).

Three hours previous to the characters arrival the wagons were attacked and robbed by a group of men. However, during the skirmish Belegilf, a real Ranger of the North, came across the scene and rushed to the merchant's aid. Unfortunately the merchant and the Ranger were soon overcome by more numerous if less skilled opponents - Belegilf was knocked unconscious by a stinging blow to the head, stabbed in the shoulder and left for dead. However, the wound was not mortal and when the characters arrive Belegilf is propped up against the wheel of the far side of the wagon, facing way from the characters, where the robbers left him. To the left of the road, a narrow road leads through the snow. Although long disused, the tracks reveal that a second wagon was taken off the road at this point and led through the woods.

Although the robbers have left the scene, the characters do not know this and should

approach the scene with a good deal of caution. If they approach Belegilf, he will struggle to rise with his sword in his hand. However, it will be soon apparent to him that the characters are not the robbers. With some help Belegilf can move about and will urge the characters to help Burlas. Once Burlas has been seen to, Belegilf will tell the characters that the wagon stolen by the robbers contain more than merely Burlas's goods - in the skirmish his young daughter, Rosallow, hid amongst the wares and was also taken. Belegilf and Burlas are too weak to rescue her, but Belegilf urges the characters to track the second wagon and recover the innocent child.

3.3 Scene 2 – Erethrin Tirin (S. 'Lonely watchtower')



The trail of the wagon along the dirt track is easy to follow. It winds for about a league along a narrow defile towards a tall hill rising above the surrounding countryside. After about a mile the ruins of a tower can be seen atop the hill, clearly the destination of the disused road. Dark birds wheel around the tower like a small cloud. As the characters approach the tower, the skies darken and snow begins to fall, the wind building and a blizzard setting in, obscuring further views of the tower. This is the ancient Rhudaurian watchtower called Erethrin Tirin due to the lonely location, which once commanded an impressive view over this region. During the wars with Angmar the tower was sacked and is now mostly ruined, but it is within these walls that Dullic has gathered his outlaw band. A wretched collection of vagabonds and rogues, the outlaws should present no problems for carefully prepared

characters. Residing with them in the tower is Kerrec, a female Dunnish witch whose powers are not to be underestimated. Below is a description of the locations around the watchtower which is shown in figure 3.

Outside the tower – Trees now grow against the walls of Erethrin Tirin and only the topmost tower (location 10 below) rises above the surrounding forest. The outlaws do not leave the walls of the tower unless on a raid, for the Trollshaws are a very dangerous place, so getting to the foot of the walls under cover of the trees is an easy task. However, location 4 has rubble 'window's that afford views outside and these are manned so the characters must be wary. The main entrance to the watchtower is a large reinforced wooden gate – the outlaws have repaired this to produce a sturdy barrier.

The watchtower – The building remains mostly intact, with all the walls in place. The towers are various states of disintegration. All the remaining tower and wall tops are crenulated and tops of the walls by locations 2, 3 and 4 can be accessed.

1. The courtyard – Once, when the watchtower was in use, this courtyard housed several buildings holding the weapons, supplies and the sleeping quarters of the garrison. When the watchtower was sacked these buildings were razed and the burnt remains can still be seen sticking out of the ground. The outlaws have used the remains of the buildings and wood from the forest to construct some new buildings in the courtyard. A well in the courtyard supplies water – bitter, but drinkable. The stolen wagon is in the courtyard but it is now empty.
2. Outlaw's quarters – This decrepit shack sleeps the majority of the outlaws on rough wooden pallets.

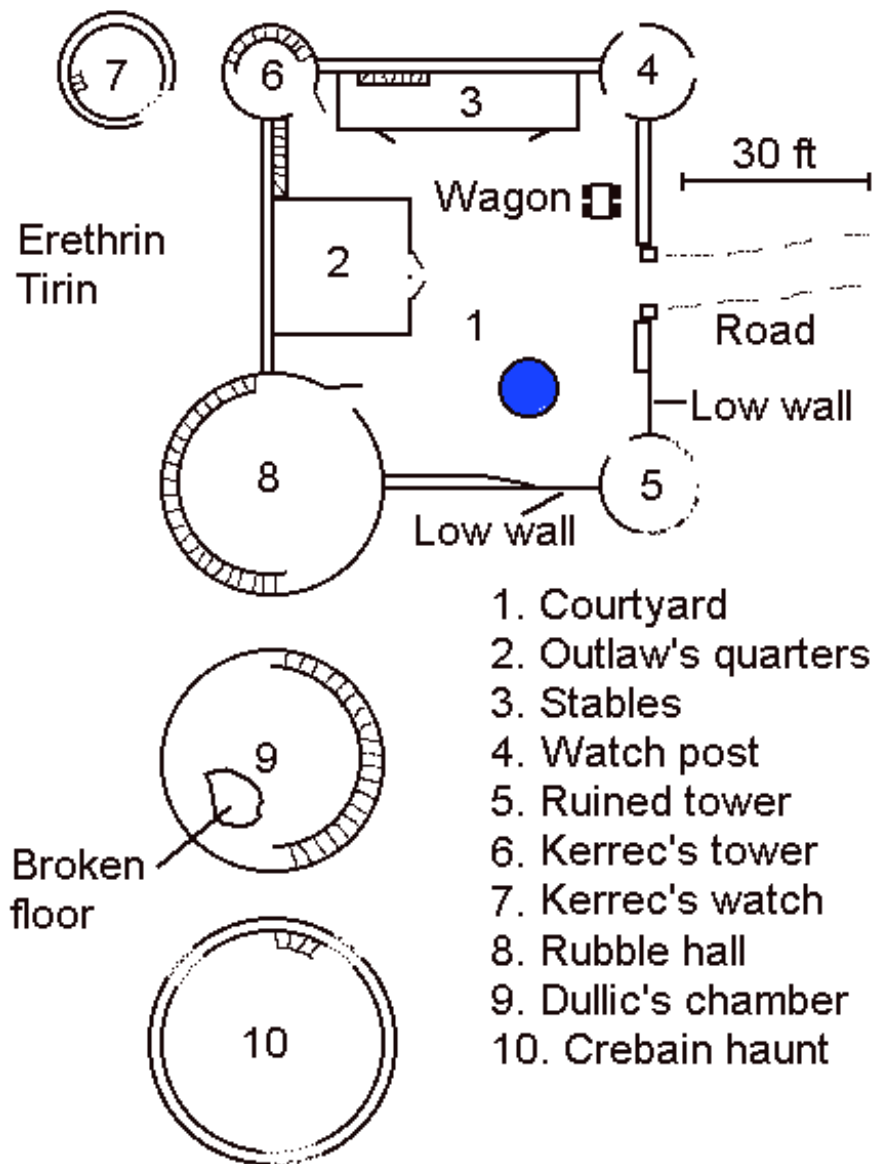


Figure 3. Erethin Tirin (S. 'Lonely watchtower').

The number of men who sleep in here will depend on the size of the character's group and should be tailored to make a direct assault on the outlaws a dangerous proposition. A description of the outlaws is given at the end of the chapter. There is little else in this dirty room, Dullic has claimed everything of value.

3. Stables – Newly constructed to house Dullic's two horses, the stables are quite large as Dullic hopes to increase his stock. However, the new building has been badly constructed and the horses, the black roan and an old brown mare from Burlas's wagons, have clearly not been cared for.
4. Watch post – This tower is nearly collapsed with no upper storey and only a sagging roof over the lower room. The walls have wide cracks in two places giving those inside a clear view to the front gate. Normally two men stay on duty here, watching the approach to the gate. However, like the rest of the outlaws (see below), they are complacent if the characters reach this stop without raising the alarm the outlaws will be sitting around the fire talking and drinking.
5. Ruined tower – The outside of this tower has completely collapsed, the doorframe leading to the rest of the compound has been boarded up with heavy wooden planks.
6. Kerrec's tower – This locked chamber houses Kerrec the witch woman. Scattered with plants, dead animal skins and bones, Kerrec remains in this chamber when she is not on the roof (see 7) or out gathering her ingredients. The door is locked with a rusty mechanism that is fairly easy to pick (TN 15). Most of the useful herbs in this room have been used to make 'Urther', a thick black oily healing ointment.

There is enough here for four doses, which when smeared on an open wound reduce the TN of healing tests by 5, also inducing mild hallucinations as a side-effect. Also in this chamber are three pots (five doses) of 'Mallic', a painful and slow poison which works by ingestion (Fornoster would recognise these treatments). Rosallow is in this room, locked in a wooden cage originally designed for foxes. Kerrec plans to teach the child the ways of herbs and beasts so she can collect for her and save here from leaving the tower and her precious Crebain (see location 10). If anybody tries to break into the tower, Kerrec will threaten to kill the child. In reality, she will climb to the top of the tower and summon the Crebain (see below) or, if things look bad from the tower top, lower herself off the parapet and down the watchtower with a rope she keeps for the purpose – of course those attempting to break in will not know she has gone.

7. Kerrec's watch – Kerrec uses the high platform formed by this still mostly intact roof to watch the surrounding land and to contact and command the Crebain that occupy the top of the large tower (see location 10). There are broken crenulations surrounding the tower top giving some protection to anyone on the roof. From her tower top, Kerrec can command the Crebain to attack those on the ground by chanting continually in a croaking singsong voice. The attacks of the Crebain involve the birds wheeling in the air and diving as Kerrec's directs, inflicting 1 wound level per round unless the targets chose to attempt to dodge the attacks in which case all other actions are effected (+10 to all TN tests) until either the target can get inside or can successfully distract Kerrec from her chanting.

8. Rubble hall – The floor of this broken chamber is littered with rubble from the partially collapsed floors above. Dullic keeps his most loyal servant here, Ruffis, a large hunting hound, and the room smells of his food and waste. Anyone attempting to enter this room (the main door is unlocked) will set the hound barking. Anyone trying to climb the stairs will be attacked by Ruffis, a dedicated protector of his master. There is no light in this chamber except that from the floor above and all the windows have been boarded up.
9. Dullic's chamber – Unlike the rest of the compound, this chamber is richly adorned with goods stolen from the highway. The walls and floor are hung with tapestries and good quality furniture, and Dullic eats off of well-crafted plates. Dullic does not permit any of the other outlaws in this chamber, and Ruffis guards the entrance well. Here Dullic relaxes, revelling in dreams of his grandeur to come. The scattered goods in here are worth many silver pieces but of course are all stolen from travellers on the road.
10. Crebain haunt – Dullic does not climb the top of his tower for fear of his life. Twenty Crebain make their roost up here, drawn by this excellent nest site and Kerrec's influence. During the day the Crebain circle over the watchtower, reporting all who draw close to Kerrec, the only person allowed to enter Dullic's tower (Ruffis is fearful of her and shies away when she approaches).

3.3.1 Rescuing Rosallow

When the characters reach the position of the tower, the skies are darkening toward night and a blizzard has set in cutting vision to approximately 30 feet. The characters should be urged not to delay in

their rescue attempt, as the fate of Rosallow is in their hands.

Successfully rescuing Rosallow is not an easy task. Although the outlaws are relatively weak, storming the watchtower is simply not an option. The gate is kept locked and is robust, and men posted on the wall from location 4 are armed with bows. Also, once alerted, the outlaws under the command of Dullic would be very difficult to uproot from their defensive position.

Stealth is the best method of gaining access to the watchtower and the weather conditions should help the characters. Due to Dullic's constant bragging of his power and invincibility, the outlaws have become complacent and do not really expect anyone to be foolish enough as to attack them. In the bad weather apart from the two men on the walls by the gate and the men huddled around the fire in location 4, the remaining outlaws remain in location 2. Dullic himself remains languishing in his tower unless roused by the cries of his men. Therefore with a little forethought the characters should be able to breach the walls and enter the watchtower. The best approach is over the walls, which in places around location 5 are only six feet high. If they try to approach the main gate, they are in danger of being spotted by the watch in location 4, although they are far more likely to hear the outlaws than vice versa. Kerrec's Crebain are likely to spot any who approach the walls by day without employing any stealth. All of the men know that Kerrec has the girl, but none know for what purpose.

The outlaws as a force will be broken if Dullic is killed – this remains the best option for freeing the west road from their attacks.

3.4 Scene 3 – Aftermath

Regardless of the outcome of the rescue attempt, the characters should eventually return to the scene of the attack on Burlas. Belegilf will be waiting by the side of the road with the still badly injured Burlas.

Belegilf has recovered his horse and set up a camp, when the characters approach he will be cooking game. Burlas, now conscious, rests in the back of the remaining wagon.

Belegilf will discuss the rescue with the characters, and will question whatever attempts they made to rescue the child, but he will be understanding if they have made their best attempt at the rescue. If they did not manage to kill Dullic and scatter the outlaws, Belegilf will promise to return with some Rangers to remove the threat of the outlaws for good.

In this time, the characters should have some time to discuss their mission with Gailhen to the cave system in the Trollshaws. Belegilf knows of no Ranger of that name, and points out (obviously) that the robbers terrorising the road were the outlaws of Erethin Tirin, not the group the characters originally encountered in the Trollshaws. Belegilf says he will stay by the road and tend to Burlas and hopefully Rosallow until some passing merchants can help them back to Bree. He suggests that the characters return to the cave system in the Trollshaws to see if they can discover Gailhen's intentions and then return to discuss what they find.

The chronicle is continued in **Chapter 3, 'Into Darkness'**.

3.5 Non-player Characters (NPC's)

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.

3.5.1 Belegilf (S. 'Great heart')



BELEGILF

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

Reactions: Stamina +1, Swiftiness +2, Willpower +1, Wisdom +2, Defence 11, Health 9.

Order: Warrior.

Skills (selected): Armed combat (longsword) +5, Ranged combat (short bow) +4, Inspire (leadership) +3, Survival (forest) +5, Teamster +3, Track (forest) +6, Weather-sense +4.

Equipment: Belegilf wields a longsword and carries a long thin dagger at his waist. He is clothed for travel in the greys, greens and browns typical of the Rangers.

A Ranger of the north, Belegilf is a dedicated follower of Aragorn and a faithful defender of the innocent. Tall and dark, with a slender frame and narrow shoulders, he is none the less a strong warrior and an accomplished woodsman, brave and fearless in the face of the many bitter fights he has endured. Belegilf is perhaps more calculating than some of his fellows, with a tendency to cover all the angles of a problem before proceeding, and this thoroughness tends to be his undoing as he often loses initiative in situations. Like all the Rangers, the folk of Bree consider Belegilf (whom they all 'Longshanks' on account of his long legs

and flowing gait) untrustworthy and treat him with suspicion. He is quiet and methodical, but those who he chooses to befriend will find him a trustworthy and dependable companion.

3.5.2 Dullic



DULLIC

Attributes: Bearing 9 (+1), Nimbleness 7 (+0), Perception 8 (+1), Strength 11 (+2), Vitality 10 (+2), Wits 9 (+1).

Reactions: Stamina +2, Swiftiness +1, Willpower +1, Wisdom +1, Defence 10, Health 12.

Order: Warrior.

Skills (selected): Armed combat (long sword) +6, Ranged combat (long bow) +3, Intimidate (threats) +3, Inspire (rhetoric) +3, Survival (forest) +5.

Equipment: Dullic uses a scimitar and wears a chainmail shirt. He is fairly richly dressed but his clothing does not match and is clearly stolen.

Dullic is a Dunnish man from south of Eriador. A bully and conman, he was forced from his clan after attempting to steal horses from another member. Tall and strong, he has an extroverted and friendly manner and is accomplished at arguing his position. Left wandering Eriador after his banishment, Dullic found himself near the Trollshaws, a notorious region of robbers and thieves. Making the inevitable contact with these men, Dullic managed to persuade them to join him, offering riches and power. Currently, the

outlaws have been taken in by his rhetoric, but it is only a matter of time before his segregation of the loot causes the outlaws to turn against him.

3.5.3 The outlaws



OUTLAWS

Equipment: The outlaws are a ragged bunch, armed with short swords and daggers. Some wear leather armour.

A rough and unpleasant collection of men, the outlaws currently follow Dullic, persuaded by his rhetoric and the success of their raids on the road. A mixture of Middle-men and Dunlenders, use the statistics for Dunlenders (Core Rules book, page 289) for these men.

3.5.4 Kerrec



KERREC

Attributes: Bearing 6 (+0), Nimbleness 10 (+2), Perception 8 (+1), Strength 6 (+0), Vitality 6 (+0), Wits 10 (+2).

Reactions: Stamina +0, Swiftiness +2, Willpower +2, Wisdom +1, Defence 12, Health 6.

Order: Loremaster.

Skills (selected): Armed combat (dagger) +3, Intimidate (witch ways) +3, Lore (herbs) +5, Lore (beasts) +5, Survival (forest) +3.

Equipment: Amongst several charms made from animal parts, Kerrec owns a small dagger which she had honed to a viscous point.

Kerrec is a Witch woman, although she knows no magic she is wise in the ways of herbs and beasts. Darkly beautiful in a strange way, she is small and slight but the sight of her mumbling incantations is enough to unnerve anyone. She has an affinity with the Crebain of Erethin Tirin with which she can communicate and she uses them as spies. She is not inherently evil, but her close association with the Crebain has rubbed off on her mind making her as furtive and malicious as the birds.

3.5.5 Burlas



Burlas is a respected trader often seen in Bree and the surrounding villages. His daughter, Rosallow, is only five years old and was born to him by his wife Celkar who later died of a fever. If the characters rescue Rosallow they can expect to have found a friend for life in the old man.

4.0 The Bringer of Gifts Chapter 3 – Into Shadows

4.1 Introduction

This chapter follows directly the events described in chapter 2, ‘**Deception Revealed**’, and should only be attempted when the previous chapter is complete.

4.1.1 What’s going on?

The characters have discovered from Belegilf, a Ranger, that Gailhen is not what he seems. They have also discovered that the company of men they helped clear out of the cave system in the Trollshaws were not the group of robbers that had been terrorising the West road, but something else. The characters have been advised by Belegilf to return to the caves to see if they can discover what is really going on.

In the meantime, Gailhen, once sure that the characters had departed, returned to the caves with his key and opened a hidden entrance to Taglos Gwathren, the forgotten smithy where Annatar constructed the Rod and the resting place of the device since the second age. He removed the Rod and vanished, leaving the characters to guess his intentions.

4.2 Scene 1 – Returning to the Caves



The characters should see the sense in following Belegilf’s advice. The cave system is only a day and night’s travel away. Belegilf will offer to help heal any of the characters injured in the previous

chapter, and can identify any healing unguents the characters may have obtained.

The location map for the caves is shown in figure 1 in chapter 1 ‘**The Robber’s Cave**’. When the characters arrive at the site, the observant among them (with appropriate tests) will notice some changes have occurred:

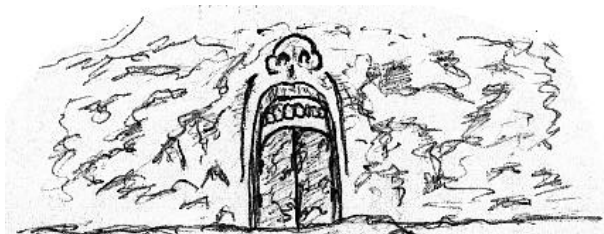
- a) Any bodies either left or buried outside the cave have been disturbed. Graves have been opened and the bodies removed, the Numenorean’s burials have been roughly dug up and the corpses are missing.
- b) The entrance to the cave is surrounded by broken stones and loose earth, as if something has tried to force itself into the cave.

Unfortunately for the characters, an Etten (a rare breed of two-headed Troll) has made the cave his most recent den. Discovering the buried bodies of the Numenoreans, he has dug them up and dragged the corpses (along with any others about) into the cave, scattering much rubble and loose rock from the entrance in the process. By day he now sits hunched over in the low chamber (see chapter 1) gnawing on the bones of the corpses and arguing with himself. By night he leaves the cave in search of food, returning with his catch before daybreak. His presence is betrayed by the dreadful stench of decaying flesh that permeates the cave mouth.

The Etten makes for a formidable opponent. Attacking the Etten in the cave is not an easy task, there is not much room for characters to enter or swing weapons and the creature has a long reach. If the characters reach the cave by daylight, anyone foolish enough to enter the cave will be grabbed and squashed (i.e. attacked). By night the characters may avoid the Etten who will be out roaming in search of fresh meat, but they may then

find themselves trapped when they try to leave the cave system. The main advantage the characters have is that although the Etten is fairly intelligent by Troll standards, his two heads have grown to hate each other (see below for a description of the Etten). It is possible that they could confuse the creature or induce it to fight with itself, thereby giving them room to get passed, and an especially skilled and cunning group of characters could even dupe the Etten into exposing itself to the sun.

4.3 Scene 2 – Taglos Gwathren (S. ‘The Smithy of Shadows’)



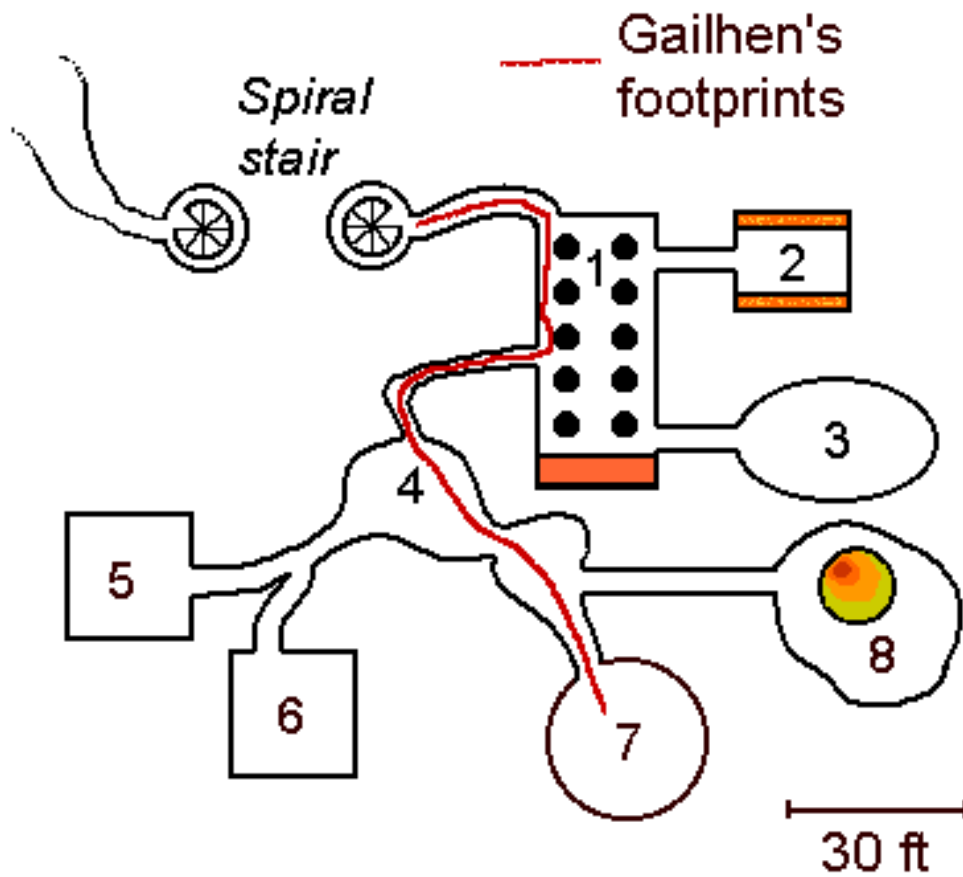
After the events of chapter 1 ‘**The Robber’s Cave**’ the characters left the area of the Trollshaws, whereas Gailhen returned to the cave system and made his way down to the lowest chamber (location 9). Using the ring-key he gained in Minas Tirith, Gailhen opened the hidden door, unsealing the entrance to Taglos Gwathren, the Sindarin name for the Smithy of Shadows where Annatar constructed the Rod. Retrieving the Rod from the depths, Gailhen left the caves. By the time the characters arrive Gailhen has deserted the area leaving the complex for the characters to explore. Gailhen, in possession of the Key, entered and left the complex without disturbing the foul beings that rested there. The characters will not be so lucky for the complex contains powerful guardians. There follows a description of the ancient Smithy which is shown on Figure 4.

The door - At location 9 in figure 1 (chapter 1), where once there was a blank wall there is now an open stone door. Surrounding the door is

the outline of an open mouth, stretched wide. The mouth is drawn in a dull red tracery of liquid fire, but as the characters approach the lines brighten and shimmer. Once the characters reach the threshold a stale wind blows up from the depths like a long dry sigh. A few feet behind the door a spiral staircase winds downwards. Like the rest of the complex, the area is unlit and appears to have been carved from solid rock. The ground behind the door is coated in a thin layer of dust. Any characters looking will notice a pair of footprints entering the door, and a second pair leaving. The footprints can be fairly easily followed through the complex to location 6.

1. Column Hall – The staircase winds downwards for several hundred feet, the air stale and motionless. Eventually, the staircase opens into a curving passage which opens into a wide vaulted hall. Running the length of the hall are two rows of columns. Shaped like forearms, the columns are topped in hands carved from the black rock. At the entrance to the hall, the hands are open, holding up the roof. As the characters progress down the hall, the column ‘arms’ they pass are in different positions, some as fists, some seemingly held in warning, some stretched over the floor, grasping. Flickering light from location 2 shines into the hall, lighting the scene with a dull red glow.
2. Smithy Chamber – Here Annatar constructed the Rod, using a combination of the heat of the earth’s fires and his own sorcerous abilities. Lining the walls of the chamber two rivers of lava give off intense heat. On the far wall opposite the door an image is outlined in dull red (as is the door to the complex outlined above). The image shows a human form, slender

Taglos Gwathren



1. Column hall
2. Smithy chamber
3. Dark arena
4. Warning
- 5 & 6. Wraith's chambers
7. Chamber of Annatar
8. Fire well

Figure 4. Taglos Gwathren (S. 'Smithy of shadows')

and tall, leant over an item held on an anvil. A hammer is raised to strike the object. Although seemingly unremarkable, something about the shape will fill the viewer with foreboding. Viewers must oppose an Intimidate (fear) test at a skill level of +3. The effects of the fear result will stay with the characters while they remain in the complex.

3. Dark Arena – Although this site was principally used as a Smithy, the owner still liked to view his favourite games whilst in residence. The entrance opens to a large pit. A narrow walkway runs around the side to a small platform occupied by a large unadorned stone throne. The floor of the pit is 15 ft down with sheer sides. Anyone entering the pit will find it littered with ancient bones that crumble to dust if disturbed, dressed in rusted armour and withered rags. The bones appear to be of humanoids, but mixed with these are much larger bones of unknown beasts. Glimting of the far side of the pit, one near-complete skeleton wearing a shirt of golden scale armour. A work of Numenor, the armour provides +6 damage absorption points but weighs only 10lbs.
4. Warning – This chamber is a wide, seemingly natural cave. Splitting into two channels, in the centre of the chamber is a pillar of black stone. Unmarked, it stands like a needle pointing to the sky. As soon as any characters walk past the needle, they hear the warning. Like a muttering in the mind, a dry and rasping voice recounts the warning in an ancient form of the Black Speech. Although none of the characters will understand the words, the meaning should be clear – that this is a warning not to proceed. The characters hearing the warning must make an Intimidate (fear) test at a skill level of +5. The effects of the fear result will stay

with the characters while they remain in the complex. Simultaneously as the warning ends, two long, hollow wails will issue from locations 5 and 6 as the Wraiths are released.

- 5 & 6. Wraith's Chambers – Once the warning has been given, the two Wraiths imprisoned in these chambers are released. They will rush down the passageways towards the characters in location 4 and attack them (for a description of the Wraiths and their attacks, see the NPC's section). The rooms the Wraiths inhabited are square and empty apart from a tall, central column of a dark glassy material. Looking closely at each column with the aid of a torch reveals the entombed remains of a proud man (location 5) and a beautiful young woman (location 6), dressed in ancient Numenorean finery. These are the mortal remains of the Wraiths, existing in a state of unlife. The Wraiths can only be completely destroyed if the columns are shattered and their link to the realm of the living is broken. This can be achieved by striking the columns with a blunt weapon and inflicting ten would levels. Once the columns are broken the contents are revealed as desiccated and withered human remains – the images projected from the interior are of the man and woman at the time when Annatar first enslaved them with his promises and lies.

7. Chamber of Annatar – For hundreds of years this has been the resting place of the most powerful artefact constructed in Taglos Gwathren – the Rod of Annatar. The whole chamber permeates with evil, welling from the floor and sliding from the walls like a mist, dimming the light of even magical illuminations. Anyone entering the chamber must make an Intimidate (fear) test at a skill level of +4. The

effects of the fear result will stay with the characters while they remain in the complex. Any characters failing the test will see from the corners of their eyes the shape of a tall, slender man or elf in watching them from the dark shadows that fill the room - it is clear that in this room the spirit of Annatar lives on. The centre of the room holds a dais on which rests a carved block of solid granite. The shape of the block indicates that it is a resting place for a 4ft long object, roughly 2" in diameter – the rod of Annatar. An inscription has been carved onto the block; the inscription is in Feanorean letters but the words are in Westron. The inscription is shown in figure 5 and reads in Westron " This is the place of the lord of gifts, the bringer of lies and the master of deceit. With the tool held here the minds of all men are striped bare. His dark hand shall bring shadow back to the land. All shall return to darkness". It is important to the chronicle that the characters jot down or otherwise memorise the inscription – they will need it in the next chapter. The footsteps in the dust lead to this spot; obviously this was Gailhen's destination.

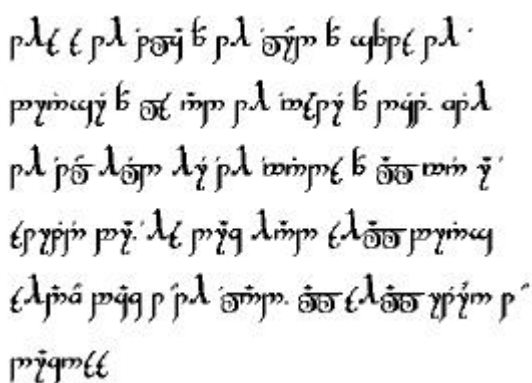


Figure 5. The Feanorean inscription.

8. Fire Well – This chamber is filled with a fierce orange light which issues from a well in the centre of the room. A low (3 ft) well surrounds

the well. On closer inspection the well can be seen to contain thick red lava. Dwelling in the depths of the well is a spirit chained and locked into the lava. During the complex forging processes that took place in Taglos Gwathren Annatar used the spirit to control and direct the heat of the earth as he wished. Since Annatar left the complex the spirit has slumbered in the depths of the well, but anyone entering the chamber will awaken it (see NPC's section for a description of the lava spirit). Behind the lava well, on a low bench, are two black crystals. These are the Kilnarni, which are described below.

4.4 Leaving Taglos Gwathren

When the characters leave Taglos Gwathren they should be aware of two things. Firstly, they should understand that Gailhen entered the complex and took something from Chamber 7. Secondly, they should have some copy of the inscription on the block that held the missing item. There is no need for the characters to destroy everything in the complex, and indeed the Lava Spirit would be difficult to kill, but they should be aware that they have entered a place deep in shadow, clearly a work of powerful evil. When the last of the characters leave the complex, the heavy stone doors will swing silently closed sealing the chambers forever. The outline of the door and the red mouth will fade, leaving just the bare wall.

Once the characters are outside the complex, they should meet with Belegilf on the west road.

The chronicle continues in Chapter 4 – Ambush and Stories.

4.5 Non-player Characters (NPC's)

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.

4.5.1 The Etten



THE ETTEN

Attributes: Bearing 9 (+1), Nimbleness 5 (+0), Perception 8 (+1), Strength 14 (+4), Vitality 14 (+4), Wits 5 (+0).

Reactions: Stamina +6, Swiftiness +0, Willpower +1, Wisdom +0, Defence 10, Health 18.

Order: Warrior.

Skills (selected): Armed combat (hammer) +6, Unarmed combat (grappling) +5, Intimidate (might) +5.

Equipment: The Etten carries a hammer and a club, favoured weapons of the two heads, and a few scraps of clothing.

Monstrous trolls mainly of the Ettenmoors, Morgoth created this dark race in the first age. Similar in stature and strength to hill trolls; Ettens differ in that they have two heads resting on their broad shoulders. The heads are both equally intelligent (as intelligent as trolls anyway) and are capable of fully independent thought. In combat they allow the Etten to track two enemies at once. As a result Ettens typically wield two weapons, either hammers or clubs, and can fight two enemies simultaneously as if they were two separate entities. However, if they do this they suffer a -5 penalty to dodge and to attack as their two heads fight to control the body. Legends speak of the two heads

of an Etten arguing and fighting, even resulting in a sort of one-troll wrestling match. Sadly for the Etten these rumours are true, trapped next to each other for their entire lives means that the two heads hate each other. If an Etten is faced with a decision where the two heads have contrary opinions (such as which opponent to chase) both heads must make a willpower test to effectively control the body – if neither head wins by more than 5, then the Etten effectively become paralysed while it's two heads argue.

This Etten is an itinerant with no fixed abode – the two heads cannot agree on where to stay! Similarly, the troll has no real possessions (except weapons) as endless arguments have taken the tarnish off collecting treasure.

4.5.2 The Wraiths



WRAITH

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

Reactions: Stamina +4, Swiftiness +4, Willpower +4, Wisdom +3, Defence 11, Health 13.

Order: No order.

Skills (selected): Armed combat (draw strength, see below) +6, Intimidate (fear) +4.

Equipment: The wraiths have no equipment.

Long before Sauron created the Ring-Wraiths, he experimented with methods of trapping souls at the boundary of the mortal realm and the shadow world. The Wraiths of Taglos Gwathren are examples of this work. Trapped within the decaying corpses preserved within the pillars in chambers 5 and 6, the Wraiths have endured for endless years, waiting to be freed. When the 'Warning' at location 4 is issued the wraiths are released from their prisons.

The Wraiths lust after life and the warm touch of flesh. Appearing as wispy figures of smoke or fog, they will attack anybody they can approach. If they successfully hit with their 'draw strength' attack (which cannot be parried due to the tenuous nature of the Wraiths), they will draw off one point of strength and vitality every round until they are driven off. The Wraiths fear only one thing – fire. Flaming torches can be used to drive them away and hold them at bay. Drained statistics will recover at a rate of one point per day but if a character is attacked and drained until his vitality or strength falls to zero then they will collapse unconscious for 1D6 hours. When they recover they will have permanently lost a point in each statistic. The Wraiths can only be destroyed if the pillars in chambers 5 and 6 are smashed (see the location descriptions).

4.5.3 The Lava Spirit



Attributes: Bearing 9 (+1), Nimbleness 8 (+1), Perception 4 (+1), Strength 7 (+1), Vitality 10 (+2), Wits 10 (+2).

Reactions: Stamina +4, Swiftsness +4, Willpower +4, Wisdom +3, Defence 11, Health 13.

Order: Warrior.

Skills (selected): The creature has no attacks as such.

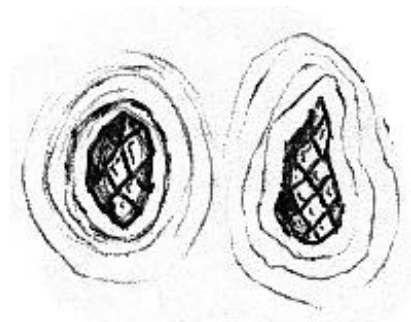
Equipment: The lava spirit has no equipment.

Enslaved by Annatar and tied to the lava in the well, this spirit allowed its master to exert fine control over the earth's heat. Slumbering in the depths of the well, the spirit awaits the return of Annatar. Once awoken from its slumber, the snake-like creature of lava will rear from the well and seek about for its master, reaching toward all the walls of the chamber. Totally blind and devoid of sense (despite its appearance), the creature can be avoided, but the nearer the characters come to the well, the more frantic the movements of the beast will become (an opposed swiftsness test with the creature to avoid). Anyone touched by the creature will suffer fire damage equal to a bonfire (see page 245 of the Core Book). However, as the creature has no sense of the characters it will not attack them directly. The creature can be destroyed if the lava of its body can be cooled sufficiently to crack and shatter.

4.6 Items

There follows a description of the item that could be found in Taglos Gwathren.

4.6.1 The Kilnarni (Q. 'See-stones')



These objects resemble dark black crystals, one egg sized and shaped, and one pointed. Both are cut with many facets. Strangely for their current location, the Kilnarni are actually Elvish in design and were presented to Annatar by the Elves of Eregion. Anyone holding the stones will feel their inherent rightness, perhaps the reason they were left when the complex was deserted. The stones are magically connected. Anyone holding one of the stones and concentrating can view the scene around the other stone in the facets of the crystal. A three dimensional view can be seen by moving around the stone. The range of the stones is quite limited; they must remain within 100ft of each other to function. Furthermore, whichever stone is 'transmitting' will be surrounded by a glow of a soft blue light. Anyone using the stone must make a weariness test to withstand the draining effect of the magic as per spell casting.