

DENIZENS OF THE DARK WOOD™

#8111

A READY-TO-RUN FANTASY ROLE PLAYING ADVENTURE MODULE FROM
J.R.R. TOLKIEN'S MIDDLE-EARTH®



Playable with



Rolemaster™



Three low-to-mid level adventures based on THE LORD OF THE RINGS™ and THE HOBBIT®. Each adventure stands on its own and can be set up in minutes. Produced and distributed by IRON CROWN ENTERPRISES, INC.

DENIZENS OF THE DARK WOOD™

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1.0 GUIDELINES

The *Middle-earth Ready-to-Run Series* is designed for Gamemasters who want adventures which can be set up in a few minutes and played in a few hours. The adventures require little or no preparation.

Denzins of the Dark Wood has four parts. Section 1.0 deals with guidelines regarding the use of the module. Section 2.0 provides pregenerated characters for the players (which can be used as non-player characters if so desired).

The third part consists of Sections 3.0, 4.0, and 5.0, the adventures. Each adventure stands on its own, although a common theme unites the stories. They can be set anywhere in Middle-earth where the story seems appropriate. The fourth part consists of Section 6.0, the Encounter, Beast, Herb, and NPC tables.

1.1 HANDLING PLAY

Each adventure is geared for a different difficulty level. The one found in Section 3.0 is challenging for 1st or 2nd level characters, or inexperienced players. Section 4.0's adventure is aimed at 2nd or 3rd level adventurers, while the adventure in Section 5.0 is designed for 4th or 6th level characters.

The adventures are divided into five standard parts: (1) the tale, which describes how to start in terms of the setting, the background, and the plot; (2) the Non-player Characters, NPCs, a person-by-person description of the prominent non player characters; (3) the primary layouts and area maps: descriptions of the major adventure sites, complete with numbered diagrams and floorplans; (4) the task, a discussion of how to start the adventure, along with the aids, clues, obstacles, and rewards awaiting the adventurers; and (5) encounters, which cover typical or probable meetings between the adventurers and the NPCs.

The GM should skim each section of an adventure before beginning play. Then he can have the players pick pre-designed characters from those provided in Section 2.0, or he can permit the players to design their own PCs. (Of course, the GM can assign PCs.) Once play ensues, the GM should refer to the Encounter Table and the Beast Table at the back of the module.

1.2 ADAPTING THIS MODULE

Like the rest of the series, this module is designed for use with the *Middle-earth Role Playing* game (*MERP*) or the more advanced *Rolemaster* (*RM*) system, but is adaptable to most other major FRP games. Statistics are expressed on a closed or open-ended scale, using a 1-100 base and percentile dice (D100). No other dice are required.

1.21 CONVERTING HITS AND BONUSES

Bonuses: When converting percentile values to a 1-20 system a simple rule is: for every +5 on a D100 scale you get a +1 on a D20.

Hits: The concussion hit numbers found in this module only represent general pain and system shock. They cover bruises and small cuts rather than wounds. Critical strike damage is used to describe serious wounds. The hit figures shown here are less important than those used in game systems where death occurs as a result of exceeding one's available hits. Should you use a game system that employs no specific critical strike results (e.g., TSR Inc.'s *Dungeons and Dragons*), simply double the number of hits your characters take or halve the hit values found in this module.

1.22 CONVERSION CHART

If you play something other than *MERP* or *Rolemaster* and you do not use a percentile system, use the following chart to convert 1-100 numbers to figures suited to your game.

1-100 Stat	D100 Bonus	D20 Bonus	3-18 Stat	2-12 Stat
102+	+35	+7	20+	17+
101	+30	+6	19	15-16
100	+25	+5	18	13-14
98-99	+20	+4	17	12
95-97	+15	+3	16	—
90-94	+10	+2	15	11
85-89	+5	+1	14	10
75-84	+5	+1	13	9
60-74	0	0	12	8
40-59	0	0	10-11	7
25-39	0	0	9	6
15-24	-5	-1	8	5
10-14	-5	-1	7	4
5-9	-10	-2	6	3
3-4	-15	-3	5	—
2	-20	-4	4	2
1	-25	-4	4	2

2.0 PLAYER CHARACTERS

The following chart provides the statistics for the Player Characters that can be used in each of the three adventures. The GM may wish to assign his players a character or allow them to select from the list. Of course, the GM can utilize the unused PCs as non-player characters. After all, the players may design their own characters or employ characters already in use.

The GM should remember, however, that regardless of how the players acquire their characters, each adventure is geared for a different difficulty level (see Section 1.1). We suggest PCs tough enough to meet the challenge.

Codes: See the NPC stats for an explanation of the basic codes.

The following is a list of other codes and abbreviations which might be ambiguous.

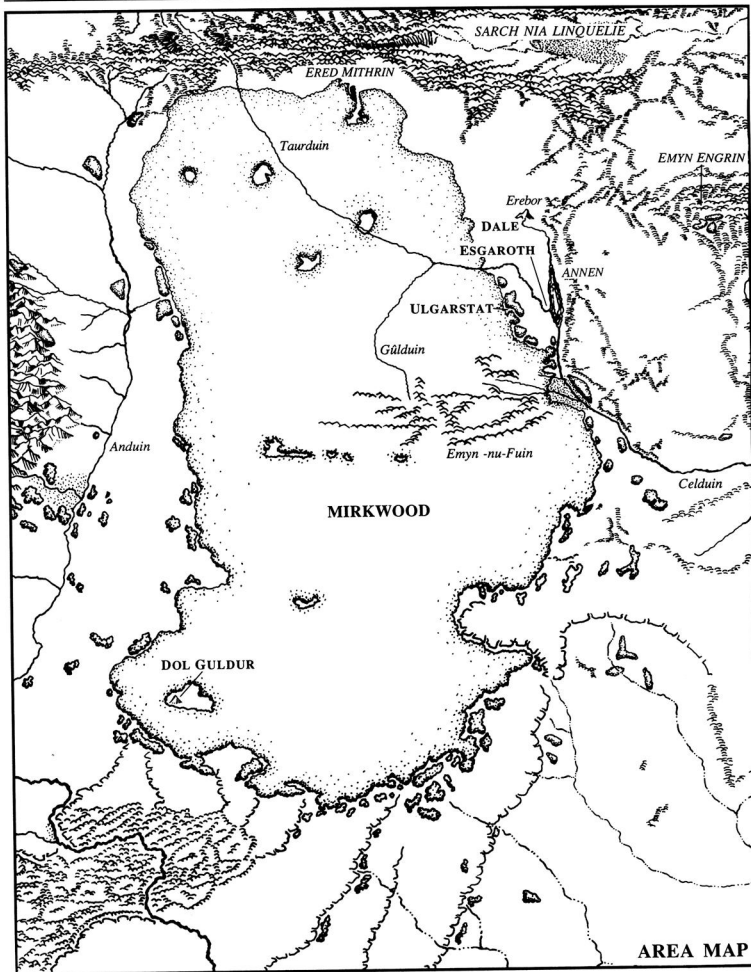
Power Points: The number (if any) given in parentheses indicates the possession of a "bonus spell item" and its bonus (see *MERP*, Section 4.56).

Skill Bonuses: NA, SL, RL, Ch = Maneuver and Movement in No Armor, Soft Leather, Rigid Leather, and Chain; 1HE OB, 1HC OB, 2H OB, Thrown OB, Missile OB, Polearm OB = Offensive Bonuses for 1-H Edged, 1-H Concussion, 2-Handed, Thrown, Missile, and Pole-arms; Dir. Spell=Directed Spells; Secondary Skill= Secondary Skills.

Secondary Skills: Each secondary skill is abbreviated by giving the beginning letters of the skill (*MERP* Section 2.33). The bonus for that skill rank is given following the abbreviation.

Languages: Languages are abbreviated by using their first three letters (see *MERP*, ST-1); exceptions: BS=Black Speech and Bet-Silvan(Bethteur). The rank for each language is given following the abbreviation.

Spell Lists: Spell lists are abbreviated by using the first few letters in each word of the spell list name; for example, "S/L Ways" refers to the "Sound/Light Ways" spell list.



3.0 ATTERCOP ATTACK

To the east of Mirkwood, nestled under the eaves of the great forest, lies a tiny village named Ulgarstat. The village was founded by Ulgar Resticsard some three years before the Great Plague. At the time of the Plague, the community was self-sufficient and isolated. Either because of that isolation, or by some other workings of fate, it escaped the Plague entirely.

Ulgarstat is in a pleasant locale. The land is rolling, graced with tall trees, and crisscrossed by gurgling streams. Sheltered by nearby Mirkwood from harsh winds and the hot afternoon sun, the settlement boasts soft breezes and gentle sunlight. Birds flock and nest willingly among the houses, controlling insects and making the hamlet mirthful by their songs. In spring and summer, the birds' bright plumage vies with the cultivated flowers that bloom in window boxes and kitchen gardens, and with the wildflowers blanketing the meadows.

Flowers are not the only plants that thrive in the area: the soil is rich and the water fresh, so crops and pasture prosper. Farmers and villagers are well-fed; they work hard but are cheerful, and proud of their village. Ulgar is a fair and a wise leader, and is respected by the townspeople.

In the nearby fields, small game animals are plentiful. Until recently, the evil beasts of Mirkwood did not trouble the village that was near but not in the forest. But six months ago, the denizens of the dark wood began to raid Ulgarstat. Ulgarstat, so long self-sufficient, is now looking for help.



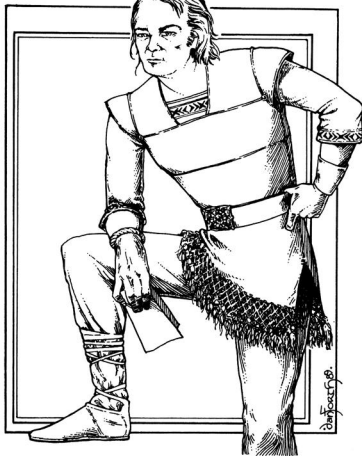
3.1 FEAR IN ULGARSTAT

Six months ago, Ulgarstat began to experience problems with marauding wild animals. Wolves have twice attacked the town and twice been repulsed; the people of Ulgarstat, accustomed to living in peace, had never before kept guards or any type of armed force. After the first attack, they reinforced the wall around the town and posted a night watch. In addition, townspeople began to practice the martial arts, and to keep weapons nearby at all times. These additional safety measures have kept the town fairly well-protected for several months.

Now Ulgarstat is facing yet another hazard. This time, the problem is more difficult to fight. In recent months, several people have disappeared while travelling between Ulgarstat and outlying lands to the north.

Two months ago, a farmer set out for Ulgarstat from his farm in the north. The young man had come alone to Ulgarstat two years before, and was still unmarried, so his disappearance might have gone unnoticed for some time if he hadn't promised to bring his neighbors seed from town. But when he neglected to stop by his neighbors' farm the next day, they became concerned. When he still hadn't returned at the end of a week, the neighbors sent to town to learn what had happened and discovered that he had never arrived there. The man disappeared without trace, leaving behind his moderately successful farm.

ULGAR RESTICSARD



Three weeks later, a peddler left Ulgarstat, announcing his plans to visit Wessun Fraelsen, another farmer in the north. When Wessun visited Ulgarstat the following week, Ulgar learned that the peddler had never arrived at Wessun's farm. Ulgar and Wessun, still disturbed by the farmer's disappearance, tracked the peddler as far as they could along the wooded trail between Ulgarstat and Wessun's farm. Wagon tracks led halfway up the trail, then disappeared into the forest. The two men soon found the wagon, but although they searched the woods around it, they could find no other signs of horse or peddler.

Two weeks after the peddler disappeared, three young men went gamehunting up the northern trail. When they didn't return for supper, their fathers and brothers went after them. No trace of any of the three was found.

The farmers and citizens of Ulgarstat are afraid of this new threat, but don't know what they're dealing with or how to cope with it. Some people believe that bandits are hiding in the forest and are leaving its cover to attack travellers. Others fear that wolves have begun to attack by day. Still others claim that bears are responsible.

Ulgar can't understand why bandits would take corpses, or why wolves or bears would leave no trace of themselves or of a struggle, nor baggage nor clothing from their victims. Unfortunately, he doesn't have any idea of what kind of creature would cause people and their goods to vanish. Though not usually given to hysterical imaginings, Ulgar feels that neither he nor anyone else in his village is capable of dealing with this new menace. He has decided to seek outside help to determine what the menace is, and to somehow destroy it.

3.2 THE NPCs

The people of Ulgarstat are mostly rural Men, some of Northman ancestry. As a group, they are a hard-working, peacable but fun-loving people. They are a bit wary of strangers.

ULGAR RESTICSARD

Ulgar is a plain man. He has thinning grey hair and piercing grey eyes; his height and weight are average. Despite his ordinary appearance, Ulgar is very charismatic: he is charming and persuasive, a dynamic leader, and a good speaker. He has led Ulgarstat for seven years, and is respected by the townspeople both for his fairness and his wise decisions. Ulgar is also noted for his ability to brew a top-quality beer.

Ulgar has been married for seventeen years. He and his wife have three sons and four daughters. Fortunately, all of the daughters and one of the sons resemble their mother, a woman noted both for her beauty and her intellect.

NOTE: Notable Skills—*Ride 32, Track 37, Perception 55, Bartering 67, Brewing 63. Languages* — *Westron 5, Nahaiduk 3, Silvan 1.*

RUNNAL RESTICSARD

Incredibly handsome, very blonde, very blue-eyed, Runnal Resticsard is tall and muscular, with perfect features and a regal bearing. Runnal is universally loved, not only for his exceptional good looks, but also for his sunny disposition, sweet nature, courage, and charisma. Unfortunately, Runnal isn't as smart as either of his parents. His intelligence is average. When stressed, he tends to stammer.

Runnal is desperately in love with Currael Wessuntha, and will do anything in his power to save her from harm.

NOTE: Notable Skills — *Ride 23, Track 23, Stalk/Hide 17, Perception 32, Fletching 53. Languages* — *Westron 5, Nahaiduk 2, Sindarin 3.*

CURRAEL WESSUNTHA

Currael is the oldest child of Wessun Fraelsen. She has two brothers and one sister, all of whom adore her. A farmgirl who does her share of chores, Currael is unusually strong and agile. She is as lovely as Runnal is handsome: tall, slender, and deceptively frail-looking. Her hair is golden, her expressive eyes green, and she has a rose-bud complexion. Wiser men than Runnal would consider suicide for her smile. Reams of (bad) poetry have already been written about her; men noted for being hard-headed have been known to follow her with fatuous expressions and moonbeams in their eyes. Currael has all the intelligence and fire that Runnal lacks: she has a quick wit and a quick temper. Fortunately, she regains her temper as quickly as she loses it, and is generally so sweet-natured that few people remain angry with her. Currael is as devoted to Runnal as he is to her.

NOTE: Notable Skills—*Climb 11, Ride 16, Track 11, Stalk/Hide 17, Perception 18, Leadership 10, Herding (Handling herd animals) 35. Languages* — *Westron 5, Silvan 4.*

WESSUN FRAELEN

Wessun is tall and broad, a huge, sunburned blonde. He looks like a farmer: he is very muscular and fairly weatherbeaten, slow to speak but usually quick to laugh. Wessun and Ulgar are old friends; they have grown even closer because of the engagement of their offspring.

NOTE: Notable Skills — *Farming 55.*

SIGMAR

Sigmar is a very talented blacksmith. One of Ulgar's closest friends, he helped found Ulgarstat. Short but extremely muscular, he is a blonde, green-eyed man, very quiet but very intelligent. Sigmar owns a chain shirt and a hammer that is a family heirloom. He is courting Ulgar's oldest daughter.

NOTE: Notable Skills—*Ride 25, Pick Lock 10, Disarm Trap 15, Perception 25, Smithing 110, Woodcarving 30. Languages* — *Westron 5, Nahaiduk 2, Sindarin 2. Notable Items* — *Hammer +5 OB, +10 to all Smithing Maneuvers.*

GUNTAR RESTICSARD AND AESCSTAN

Guntar, Ulgar's second son, and Aescstan, his neighbor, are both young Men. Guntar is fair and medium height; Aescstan is dark and tall. Both are noted for their good judgement.

THE SPIDERS

The Giant Spiders of Mirkwood are horrifying, hideous creatures. Giant Spiders live in groups, and are capable of communicating with each other. They will work together to capture prey.

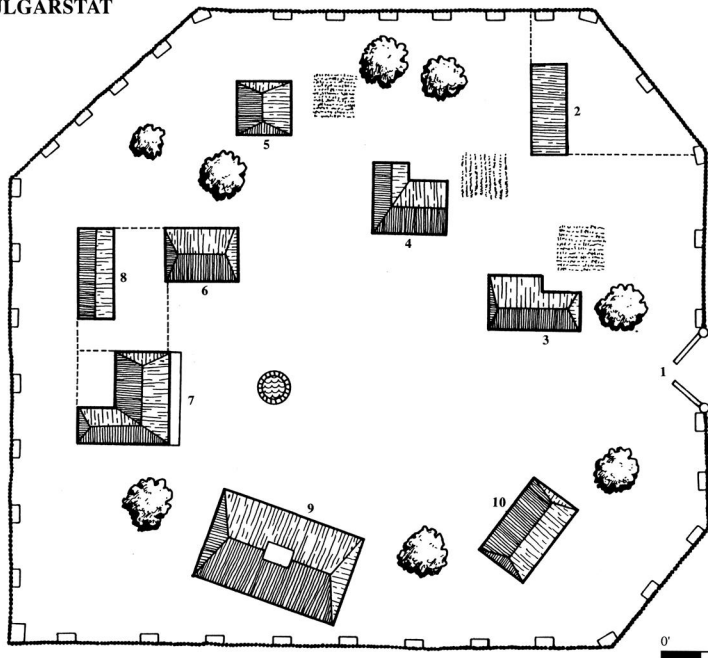
Like most spiders, Giant Spiders weave webs and kill their victims by first injecting a poison, then hanging the victim in their web until they can suck out their predigested guts.

There are five Spiders in the web complex west of the path to Wessun's farm. These five were driven from their more western habitat by hunger and population pressures, and are trying to make a living closer to the forest's edge.

CURRAEL WESSUNTHA



ULGARSTAT



3.3 THE TERRAIN

This adventure takes place in the easternmost section of northern Mirkwood. Even at its edge, the forest is densely wooded, dim, stifling and oppressive. The trees, mostly coniferous, are old; they grow so thickly that they block the sun, and undergrowth is sparse. The land, cushioned with pine needles and rotting leaves, rolls in gentle hills and valleys.

Since Sauron's return, Mirkwood has become a brooding, evil place; but in the eastern edges Sauron's darkness is tempered somewhat by the Elves' presence. The trees here are less twisted and wicked than those to the south: there is an echo and memory of Elvish songs and laughter. In addition to travelling Elves, there are strong Woodmen nearby who still resist Sauron.

Despite these positive influences, Mirkwood is a perilous, and mostly a wicked, forest.

3.31 ULGARSTAT

Ulgarstat lies 28 miles due west of Esgaroth, nearly a mile from Mirkwood's edge in an expanse of field and meadow between the forest proper and the stand of woods east of the hamlet. The village is enclosed by a log palisade surrounded by farmland. The gate to Ulgarstat stands open during the day, and workers labor in the fields. Three paths lead away from the gate: one to the southwest, one to the north, and one east to Esgaroth. The paths are clearly defined though not heavily travelled. A number of farmers live in the community itself and farm outlying fields; many others come from time to time to visit or trade at the general store. Besides the general store, Ulgarstat boasts the only smithy in the vicinity and therefore attracts the business of many. (There is a 25% chance that there are 1-4 visitors in the town at any given time.)

1. Log Palisade and Gate. A six-foot-tall log palisade completely surrounds this hamlet. It is designed to protect the village against wild animals and perhaps bandits, rather than to keep off a serious attacking force. At each of the corners and approximately every twenty feet along the palisade there is a two-foot-tall wooden platform, five-feet wide and ten-feet long, which allows a guard to look over the logs. There is only one gate. The gate is in the middle of the east wall and is about forty feet wide. It consists of two twenty-foot sections. During the day, one half of the gate is usually open. At night, the gate is closed and barred.

2. Communal Pen and Open Shed. The fenced area is a pen used by all the farmers in the community to hold livestock. The fifty-foot by twenty-foot shed is open on the east side. It provides shelter for the stock and some storage space for fodder and hay.

3 — 5. Farmer's Houses. These are the homes of the farmers in the community. Each has a small garden plot next to the house.

6. Blacksmith. This is the house and shop of Sigmar, the local blacksmith. Sigmar shoes the local mules and horses; he also makes and repairs many of the farm tools used by the community and other farmers in the region. An extremely capable smith, he can make virtually any tool or fitting required by rural communities. He usually does not make weapons, but given sufficient time and monetary incentive he can produce non-magic weapons with up to a +10 or +15 OB. He has a 30% success rate of making a +15 weapon; those that fail are +10 instead. The Smithy is divided roughly in half; the western portion is the workshop. The shop has two doors to the outside, one on the south side near the west wall, the second in the middle of the west wall. The southern door is the main entrance. It is large enough to admit a wagon and, weather permitting, is open during the day. The western door opens into the Paddock (#8) shared by the Smithy and the General Store, and is large enough for leading horses into the shop for shoeing. Sigmar can be found working in his shop on most days (01-85). His remaining time is spent helping in the fields (86-96) or in the general store with Ulgar (96-00).

7. General Store. This building serves many functions: it is a store and trading post, a tavern, and a home. Its proprietor is Ulgar Resticsard, founder of the settlement. The major portion of this building functions as a general store/trading post for all the farmers and hunters in the vicinity; the customers do business both by barter and cash. The goods sold or traded to the store that cannot be used in the community are shipped to Esgaroth to be resold there. The northern portion of this building functions as the store. It carries all manner of goods used by farmers and hunters. Weapons, save those used as farm tools (axes, daggers, etc.), are not commonly available, though Ulgar has a few in storage. A decent supply of bolts and arrows are kept on hand. There is a door on the north wall leading to the Paddock (#8) and a door in the middle of the east wall.

On the south wall, ten feet from the eastern corner, there is a large fireplace and hearth. Several tables and stools stand in front of and to the east of the fireplace. This is the tavern. A bar extends about fifteen feet into the room from the south wall, twenty feet from the eastern corner. This bar serves as a counter for both the store and the tavern. A keg of beer or ale will always be tapped behind the bar. The people of the community sometimes gather here to enjoy a cool pint or two, and visitors can purchase food and drink. The western twenty-by-twenty portion of the building is Ulgar's home. A wall with a door in the southern section separates the home from the rest of the building. This section of the house has a loft which is used by the children of the household for sleeping. The downstairs is divided into a living area with hearth, and a bedroom. A door in the north wall of the home leads to the private garden.

8. Paddock and Barn. This fenced enclosure is shared by the General Store and the Smithy. The barn is fully enclosed and has large double doors in the southernmost section of the east wall. Inside are a storage area and stalls for twelve animals. An upstairs loft is used for storing hay and grain. There is a ladder in the middle of the west wall to provide access to the loft from inside the building. There are also small doors at both ends of the loft for moving hay and grain into or out of the loft. A half-dozen horses are generally stabled below. They are available for sale or rental from the General Store. There is only a slight (01-05) chance that one of the horses is other than a riding/draft animal.

9. Meeting Hall. A large structure, this building is used for the occasional community meeting and as a sleeping place for travellers. The interior is one large room with a large firepit in its center. Rough-hewn benches are stacked along the walls for use during meetings. Otherwise the room is bare.

10. Farmer's house. See #3-5.

11. Common Well. This well, located in the "town square," is the primary source of water for all the residents of the community.



3.32 THE ROAD TO WESSUN'S FARM

The path north from Ulgarstat is clear and easy to follow. It passes through open country for a while, but bushes and scattered trees increase in number near the forest. The path enters Mirkwood 1 1/2 miles from Ulgarstat. It remains well-defined during its 4-mile trek through the dark wood, but the vegetation on either side of the path becomes very dense one mile after entering Mirkwood, and remains so for 1 2/3 miles. Soon after the forest begins to thin out again, an overgrown trail, bearing northwest, branches from the main path. Once there was a small settlement three miles down the trail; but the Plague killed all the settlers, and all that remains is the ruins of an old log cabin.

The main path continues for 2/3 of a mile beyond the fork before emerging from the forest. Wessun's farm lies 1 1/2 miles farther along the path, a total of seven miles from Ulgarstat. Beyond Wessun's farm the path continues northward along the Forest edge for many more miles until it reaches the swamps of northern Mirkwood.

1. Clearing. The floor of the depression is covered with a layer of debris. Rotting leaves, fallen branches, and other detritus form a thick carpet. Occasionally, a small and scraggly bush pokes its branches a short distance above the clutter. The air has a generally unhealthy tang to it, corrupted and tainted by the Spiders' presence.

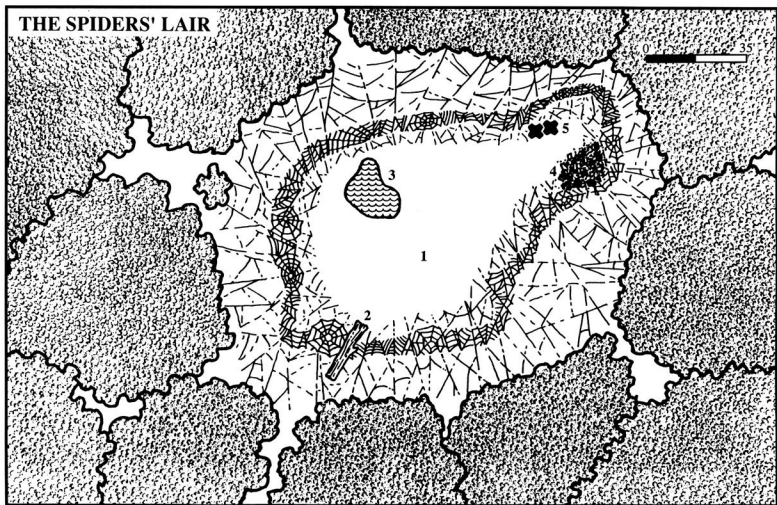
2. Old Rotting Log. This fallen tree trunk provides the only easy access to the Spiders' lair. The Spiders, not having noticed that it is hollow for its entire length, built their webs over the log, leaving both ends open. Discovering that the log is present and hollow requires a Medium (-5) Perception roll. The log lies on the eastern side of the lair, about thirty feet north of the southeast corner. The inner end of the log opens directly into the clearing. There are no webs blocking the access to the lair on this end. To reach the outer end of the log, the characters must pass through at least ten feet of the outer reaches of the web. The log is thirty feet long and has an internal diameter ranging from 20" to 36". A small man would not have too much difficulty squirming through it, though a larger man would find it a tight squeeze in a couple of places. Moving quietly through the log is a Light (+10) Stalking Maneuver, since the rotting interior will silence most noises.

3. Pool. The deepest portion of the depression within the lair has become a small pond. It covers approximately sixty square feet of area in the southwestern portion of the depression. At its deepest point the water is only two feet deep. The water is slightly acidic and extremely filthy. Anyone drinking from this water must make an RR against second level poison or be violently ill for 24-48 hours (-55 to all activity).

4. Refuse Pile. This is the Spider's trash pile: they toss the remains of their meals here. This is therefore the most likely location for treasure. Making a thorough search of the bones and other less-recognizable material will yield a belt of brass rings (+10 DB); a magic emerald (15th-level lifegiving spell — 1 use only); a beautifully crafted morningstar (60% lighter than normal and able to cast *MERP* Wind Law *Air Wall* 1x/day); a small, locked wooden chest (Hard, -10, to pick) containing 24 gp, 64 sp, 360 bp, 550 cp, 450 tp; a velvet pouch holding 16 gp, 40 sp, and 2 gems (10 gp moonstone, 25 gp aquamarine); a silver ring (worth 15 sp); and a gold armband set with garnets (120 gp).



5. Captives. Two vaguely human-shaped cocoons are hanging in the webs, fifteen feet off the ground, at this location. If the cocoons are carefully cut open, they will reveal Runnal and Currael. Both are in very poor shape. They can barely walk and will be of no help to the party, but each will insist on saving the other. The Spiders are most commonly found in this area of the web when they aren't away hunting.



4.32 THE TROLL LAIR

1. Path to the Cave Entrance. The path leading to the cave entrance starts about 60' to the west of the cave mouth, which faces south. The path can be approached from the west by an easy climb up the mountain. Created by the Trolls, the path is little more than 10' wide for its entire length, but narrows after the cave mouth, until it ceases to exist just 20' past the eastern side of the entrance. At the path's beginning, the mountain's slope is moderate, but as the path travels east the slope of the mountain above and below it becomes rapidly steeper. After fifteen feet, the path becomes a ledge, edged on the north by a wall, and on the south by a sheer drop. The Trolls' lair opens into the cliff, which extends twenty feet above the cave opening and thirty feet below.

When the characters approach the path, they will observe that the wagon tracks disappear. Rothaar surmises that the Trolls lifted the wagon to get past the large rocks strewn across the path. The rocks, while they would impede a wagon, don't hinder people on foot. They also don't help: none of them are large enough to hide behind. There is no vegetation on the path. A few scrawny bushes cling precariously to the cliff face, but like the rocks, they offer no cover or protection to travellers approaching the Troll lair.

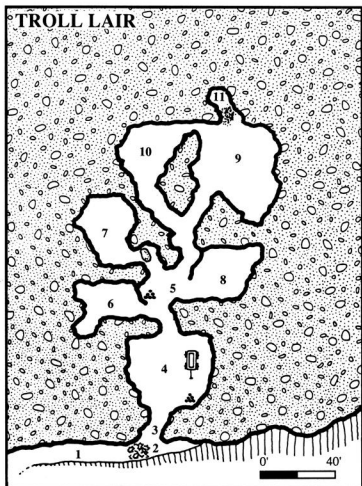
Provided that Trolls are not at the cave's entrance throwing rocks, the path is not normally treacherous (an Easy, +20, Moving Maneuver). However, the ground can be slippery when wet or icy, so during or immediately after a rainfall, climbing the path is a Medium (+0) MM; with snow or ice on the ground, it is a Very Hard or Extremely Hard (-20 to -30) MM. If a player falls, he has a 10% chance of falling down the cliff onto the rocks below, and taking a "D" Crush Critical.

2. Leaf Pile Alarm. Leaves are piled outside the cave's entrance to alert the Trolls to visitors. The leaves are partially decomposed, so they are not as effective as they would be if they had just fallen. Moving quietly through the leaf pile is a Hard (-20) Maneuver.

3. Cave Entrance. The entrance to the Trolls' cave is a hall, roughly ten feet wide and twenty feet long. The ceiling is approximately eleven feet high. The size of the room and height of the ceiling vary with the natural rock formations of the cave. The cave itself is limestone with veins of smokey quartz. The opening and cave complex beyond are natural, although the rock floor has been somewhat smoothed by the beating of the Trolls' feet. The floor of the entryway slopes gently downward: the floor beyond the entrance is five feet below the floor at the cave mouth. As the floor drops, the ceiling rises a little: the height of the cavern roof reaches nearly eighteen feet at the end of the entryway.

Immediately upon entering the cave, anyone, even those fortunate enough to be suffering from a severe cold or allergy attack, will notice the stench from the Trolls' rooms. More fastidious characters, or those with delicate stomachs, may be overcome. To determine which of the characters succumb to the smell, make an RR versus 2nd level Poison Attack. Those who fail the RR will be at -10 to all activity for at least five minutes. The stench will worsen as the PCs advance, but they should grow more accustomed to it. For those who failed their first RR, reroll every five minutes. Failure indicates continued discomfort: the -10 to all activity remains unchanged. If the RR is made, the characters have accustomed themselves to the stench, and are capable of normal activity.

4. Common Chamber. The opening directly behind the entryway is the Trolls' Common Chamber. This room is nearly square, and measures approximately forty feet by forty feet, with a ceiling thirty feet above the floor at its highest point.



The first thing that the PCs entering this room will see is a wagon to their right. The wagon is piled high with furs of various kinds and varying values. The tarpaulin covering has been tossed against the wall behind the wagon. Anyone who knows of the secret panel in the wagon bed can easily find the box containing the mithril and gems. The Trolls have not discovered the panel, so the box and its contents are intact.

In addition to the wagon, the room contains a flattened boulder and a large pile of rocks. The grapefruit-sized rocks are to the right of the room, the boulder to the left. The Trolls use the rocks to greet visitors with. The boulder seems to be a dinner table: it holds some cheese and roasted meat.

The floor of the room is strewn with bones, small pieces of rotting flesh, and miscellaneous trash and oddments. The latter includes a pile of clothing, buttons, and a brass pot. The buttons are mostly wooden or bone, but three are silver and worth 2 sp each. The pot is worth 1 sp. The clothing is all rotting and worthless.

5. Hallway and Watchpost. An opening in the northern wall of the Common Chamber leads to a short corridor. The corridor is nearly twenty feet long and ten feet wide, with a twenty foot ceiling. An opening to the west of the corridor leads to a Food Storage Chamber; to the north, the corridor opens up into a small central room that functions as the Trolls' Watchpost.

The Watchpost is roughly twenty by twenty by twenty, with a total of five large openings leading to different rooms. The only furniture is one large stool, which stands in the middle of the room. A pile of rocks, like the one in the Common Chamber, stands beside the stool, near the door to the Food Storage Chamber. As in the Common Chamber (and, indeed, throughout the caves) the floor is littered with debris.

3.4 THE TASK

The adventurers' task is to find and eliminate the Spiders, and to rescue Runnal and Currael.

3.41 STARTING THE PLAYERS

This adventure begins in Esgaroth. Ulgar has sent two Men, his younger son, Guntar, and a neighbor, Aescstan, to hire adventurers. Guntar and Aescstan have posted notices requesting adventurers to ask for them at the Vodagarazun, the largest inn in town. Generally the inn's customers are from the wealthier classes, but both Guntar and Aescstan felt that being located just to the right of the bridge entry to Esgaroth would be worth the slight increase in cost.

Finding the inn is easy: it is taller than most of the other buildings in the town. The Vodagarazun is three stories, with a four-story tower. When adventurers arrive at the inn, they will be directed to Guntar's and Aescstan's private room.

Guntar and Aescstan were chosen for this trip because they are good at judging people. They are looking for honest (relatively honest, at least) adventurers, preferably brave, experienced, and referenced. Obviously, they do not want to hire anyone who might attack Ulgarstat, or rob, pillage or plunder the village for added recreation. The two would prefer to hire inexperienced adventurers they can trust than experienced ruffians. Guntar and Aescstan are hoping to find at least one Ranger or Scout who can discover and track his prey, and at least one doughty Warrior.

Once Guntar and Aescstan are satisfied with the applicants, they will explain that five people have disappeared north of their village. They will tell the adventurers the various theories about what is causing the disappearances (see Section 3.1), and say that they need a party of adventurers to solve the mystery and destroy whatever has kidnapped or murdered the five missing people. The adventurers will be offered 100 gp for proving that the mysterious attacker(s) is destroyed. The party will need to supply its own equipment.

If the party accepts Guntar's and Aescstan's offer, Guntar and Aescstan will accompany them to Ulgarstat. The road from Esgaroth to Ulgarstat is safe; players may walk or, if they have horses, ride. Guntar and Aescstan will provide food for the journey.

When they arrive in Ulgarstat, the adventurers will find the town in turmoil. Runnal and Currael have disappeared. The two left Wessun's farm the previous morning, but never arrived in Ulgarstat. Wessun had intended to follow shortly behind them, but was detained until late afternoon. Arriving at Ulgar's house at nightfall, Wessun learned that Runnal and Currael had not yet arrived. A search party was organized, but could see nothing in the dark. They set out early the next morning, but will return to town shortly after the adventurers' arrival, having found no trace of the missing pair. Runnal's and Currael's distraught parents will offer the adventurers an additional 50 gp for the safe return of each of their missing offspring.

3.42 AIDS

Ulgar and/or Wessun can escort the adventurers along the northern trail, and show them where they found the abandoned wagon. Ulgar will supply arrows and crossbow bolts, or the smith can mend or make weapons for a fee.

At the Spiders' lair, the hollow tree is a useful entrance (see Section 3.35). Otherwise, the players are on their own.

3.43 OBSTACLES

There are two major obstacles to completing this adventure: the party must be able to find the Spiders' lair, and they must kill the Spiders. For their part, the Spiders are as willing to dine on visiting adventurers as on the local populace. In addition to the Spiders, the party must contend with the everyday dangers of Mirkwood, including hostile inhabitants, poisonous plants, false trails and the risk of getting lost. If the party runs out of water, they may also have trouble finding potable, unenchanted water.

3.44 REWARDS

In addition to the 100 gp offered for killing the Spiders, the party may keep the Spiders' garbage. If they succeed in rescuing Runnal and Currael, they will earn the additional 100 gp and the undying gratitude of Runnal, Currael, and their parents. The successful party will eat and lodge for free in Ulgarstat, and will probably be invited to some sort of celebration. Depending on how they treat the rescued progeny and how they impress the parents, the adventurers may go home with a young horse (from Wessun), an old wagon (Wessun's, mended by the smith), preserves and bread (from Wessun's wife and daughters), several smoked hams, a keg of ale, and some dry goods (from Ulgar), some nice lengths of material and lace (from Ulgar's wife)...

3.5 ENCOUNTERS

For general encounters, see the table in Section 6.0.

THE SPIDERS

Five Giant Spiders reside in this web complex. All have eaten well recently, so they will probably (01-85) all be in their lair. If not, two will always be there; the others will be out hunting in a single group consisting of one (01-25), two (26-70), or three (71-00) individuals.

The Spiders, when in their lair, generally occupy the north-westernmost portion, either over the refuse pile or within 20' of the captives. They will immediately and unhesitatingly attack any creature entering their domain. Their favorite tactic is to send 1-3 Spiders (depending on how many are present and how great the threat) in a frontal assault while the remainder divide and circle to attack both flanks and/or the rear of their foes.

If any Spiders are out hunting, the chances are very slim (01-10) that they are between the lair and the road, since they recently made a capture there. They will most likely have travelled in a northerly or westerly direction to hunt. The time of the missing Spiders' return is left up to the GM; however, it is suggested that all of the Spiders be encountered before the end of this adventure. To determine that Spiders are missing from the lair and the number gone, characters must make a Hard (-20) Perception roll.



4.0 TROUBLE WITH TROLLS

This adventure may follow from the preceding scenario, *AT-TERCOP ATTACK*, or can stand alone. It is not, however, intended for first level player characters. Depending on party size and strength, second, third, or fourth level characters should be able to successfully complete the task, using the aids provided.

4.1 THE LOST CARAVAN

Once home to thousands of animals and flocks of singing birds, Mirkwood in T.A. 1640 has grown eerily silent. The human population, never very large, has been reduced by the Plague of 1636 and by the famine that followed. The birds and most of the animals, from giant eagles to thrushes, from bears and wolves to squirrels and mice, survived the Plague, but now, they too are troubled. A shadow darker and crueler than that of the Plague lies over Mirkwood: Sauron moved to his fastness at Dol Guldur six hundred years ago, and his power has spread a sickness far worse than the Plague over the once-thriving forest. Plants and animals alike have become twisted and stunted under his influence; only the evil beings, the birds that are his spies, the Giant Spiders, the Trolls, the Dragons, the Orcs and Wargs, are content.

Though everyone treads warily in Mirkwood now, people of all races still travel on the Men-i-Naugrim. The Men-i-Naugrim or Old Forest Road was the path taken by Oromë and the Elves in the First Age, and is still a major thoroughfare. But lately, people have come to grief there.

Merchant Thal Eolsen of Esgaroth is especially concerned about the dangers on the Men-i-Naugrim. From his store in Laketown, he trades with peoples of all races in the town, as well as Dwarves in the Iron Hills, and Elves and Men in Mirkwood. Some of his goods travel all the way to Men in Nan Anduin and Dwarves in Moria. From the Beornings, he buys honey and good wine; from scattered trappers in Mirkwood, he buys furs; from Elves, he buys fine materials and bows; from Dwarves, both raw and crafted gems and metals. His latest shipment through Mirkwood is particularly valuable: he purchased two wagonloads of good furs from trappers, and from the Dwarves in Moria he bought several large, faceted rubies and a precious bar of mithril.

The rubies and mithril were placed in a magic box that only Merchant Eolsen and his caravan leader, Rothaar One-Leg, can open. The box was hidden in a secret compartment in the bed of one of the wagons, which was filled with furs and covered with a tarpaulin. A second wagon, loaded with furs, looked exactly like the first wagon, but had no secret compartment. Each wagon was drawn by two horses; with the wagons were two drivers and eight mounted guards. The leader of the caravan had brought shipments safely through Mirkwood many times for the merchant; but for some reason, Eolsen was anxious about this caravan.

To ease his mind, Merchant Eolsen hired a Seer to check on the progress of his caravan. The Seer dreamed that the caravan had been destroyed, but she further dreamed that there was hope for the eventual recovery of some or all of his merchandise. She counseled the merchant to await further developments.

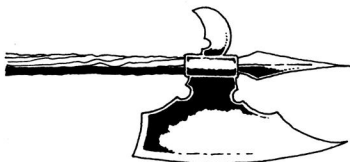
Two days later, the leader of the caravan, Rothaar, returned alone to Laketown. Rothaar told Merchant Eolsen that his caravan had met another party of travellers carrying wounded on the road. They had been attacked by a group of Orcs. The travellers' party was large, and had managed to repulse the Orcs, but Rothaar was

worried about his smaller caravan. After setting up camp for the night, Rothaar decided to travel ahead of his comrades to scout the curve in the road where the other party had been attacked. Rothaar travelled that night, but waited until morning to search the area where the attack took place. By the dawn's light, he found the trail of the retreating Orcs, and one Orc body, but no ambush of living Orcs that might attack his caravan.

Returning to his comrades with the good news, Rothaar came upon a scene of carnage. One wagon of the caravan remained, but it was empty and smashed. The horses had all fled into the forest. Rothaar found the corpses of five men, but could find no trace of the other four. Making a thorough search of the area, Rothaar discovered Stone Troll and wagon tracks, but no escapees from his own caravan. By following the trail of the Trolls and wagon away from the wreckage, he discovered the Trolls' lair.

Rothaar could not find any trace of his missing companions, nor could he approach the remaining wagon, which the Trolls had taken into their cave with them. He learned from their tracks that four Stone Trolls lived in the cave. Knowing that he could not fight them all alone, he returned to Esgaroth to seek help.

After hearing Rothaar's tale, Merchant Eolsen decided to hire a party of adventurers to return to Mirkwood with Rothaar, rescue any of his hirelings who remain alive, and recover his merchandise.



4.2 THE NPCs

In this adventure, most of the NPCs are from Laketown. The people of Laketown, like many Urban Men, are racially mixed. There is some Dúndan and Haradan blood in Esgaroth, but there is more Northman ancestry among the Laketown inhabitants than in most other cities. Some families are even rumored to be of Beorning or Woodmen descent. The other NPCs listed are the Trolls.

MERCHANT EOLSEN

Thal Eolsen is a tall, forbidding man in his late forties. He has black hair and a bushy black beard, and is exceptionally tall and broad. His eyes are black and piercing, his voice gruff, as though he has spent too much time shouting. Actually, he speaks quietly — as big as he is, he has no need to raise his voice.

Merchant Eolsen has a reputation for dealing fairly with good hirelings, and for harshness towards those who try to cheat him. He is a wealthy man, and can survive the loss of this shipment, but much of his livelihood depends upon shipping along the Men-i-Naugrim. Therefore, he's willing to pay well to recover his supplies, destroy the brigands who stole them, and rescue his hirelings (assuming that any of them are in a condition for rescuing). Ultimately, he is anxious to keep the road open for business.

ROTHAAR ONE-LEG

Rothaar One-Leg is a burly, green-eyed, bearded redhead in his late thirties. He was born in Mirkwood, but has lived in Laketown for twenty years. For fifteen of those years he has supervised shipping for Merchant Eolsen. Rothaar lost his right lower leg seven years ago while protecting one of Merchant Eolsen's shipments from a party of Orcs. He now walks and rides with a wooden leg attached below his knee. Rothaar is a big and powerful man and, even with one leg, is a vicious fighter. His favorite weapon is a war hammer, but he is also skilled in the use of a long-bow. Rothaar is loyal to Merchant Eolsen, and cannot be convinced to rob or betray him.

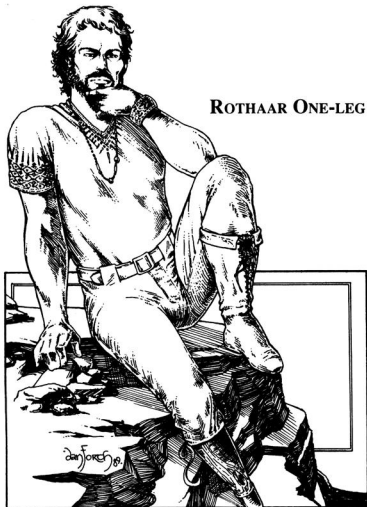
Rothaar doesn't talk much. He is willing to advise the party, but won't chat about himself or anything else. He is usually serious, but he enjoys a good joke. For a quiet man, he has a surprisingly loud, hearty laugh. Rothaar also enjoys a good drink, but no one has ever seen him even slightly drunk.

A conscientious man, Rothaar will attempt to rescue all of Merchant Eolsen's goods and hirelings. He will also do his best to help and, if necessary, rescue, any one of the party members he is leading in the rescue attempt.

Rothaar detests Trolls, and will want to kill all four. He's a brave warrior, and doesn't hang back in a fight.

NOTE: Notable Skills — *Climb 36 (no bonus to climbing walls, cliffs, or other sheer surfaces), Ride 61, Swim 21, Track 95, Ambush 35, Stalk/Hide 66, Perception 78, Foraging 40; Languages—Nahaiduk 5, Westron 4, Silvan 2; Spell Lists—*

ROTHAAR ONE-LEG



Nature's Lore, Nature's Guises; Notable Items — +15 war hammer, +10 long bow, Ring of Healing (the ring heals 3 hits/round, 1 pt. of bleeding/round, and heals any other physical damage at 10x normal rate.)

ELISA

Elisa and Marluk are the only two prisoners left alive in the Trolls' prison. Elisa is Rothaar's second-in-command. Unlike Rothaar, she is normally loquacious and witty (although these qualities won't be obvious when she is first rescued); like Rothaar, she is conscientious, loyal to Merchant Eolsen, and a fierce warrior. The Trolls took her prisoner by hitting her over the head and knocking her out; otherwise she would have died defending the caravan. Elisa is a third-level warrior. She has worked for Merchant Eolsen for seven years.

NOTE: Notable Skills — *Climb 18, Ride 23, Stalk/Hide 10, Perception 10.*

MARLUK

Marluk is a first-level warrior. This is his first assignment and likely to be his last. After his encounter with the Trolls, Marluk has decided that, if he survives, he will give up guarding caravans and become a farmer, so he can remain dry, sleep in a bed, eat warm meals, and never see another Troll as long as he lives.

NOTE: Notable Skills — *Climb 6, Ride 16, Stalk/Hide 5, Perception 5.*

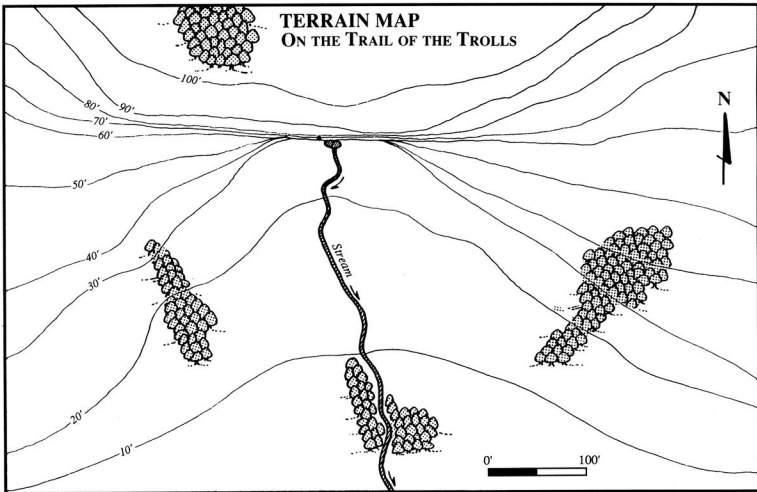
FRADURAG

Fradurag is the ringleader of the Troll band. He's average height for a Troll (10'3"), but uglier than most. A tangled mat of brown hair, protuberant black eyes, and a grey hide, as well as a cauliflower ear, a very large, very crooked nose, and no visible neck contribute to his hideous appearance. In many ways, Fradurag is a typical Troll. He loves violence and eating, frequently finding ways to combine both pastimes; he's extremely disagreeable, has a foul temper, and is incredibly strong. But Fradurag has something that most other Trolls lack entirely: a modicum of intelligence. For a Troll, Fradurag is brilliant, capable of speaking in complete sentences. Occasionally, he even thinks. He masterminded a simple burglar alarm for the doorway of the Trolls' cave. When walking or, really, stomping through the woods one day, he noticed that leaves rustle when stepped on. Taking this astute observation farther, he conceived the notion of piling leaves in front of the cave door. Unfortunately, his insight stopped there: he never noticed that when the leaves decompose, they stop rustling, so his alarm system is somewhat less effective than it was at first. Fradurag's exceptional (for a Troll) intelligence makes him even more dangerous than average Trolls.

NOTE: Notable Items — *Battleaxe casts MERP Spell Defense Protection II 3x/day. Fortunately, Fradurag doesn't know how to use the spell.*

THE TROLL BAND

Fradurag lives and works with three other Trolls: Tumag, Tumag, and Umrik. Tumag and Tumag are twin brothers. Although they are non-identical, their mother couldn't tell them apart, and gave them the same name to prevent (or ensure?) confusion. Tumag and Tumag are both 10th-level; Umrik is 7th level. Tumag and Tumag are 10' tall and 9'9", respectively; Umrik isn't full-grown yet, and is only 8'3" tall. All three lack Fradurag's superior intellect, and are, in every way, utterly terrible, hideous, violent, average Stone Trolls.



4.3 THE TERRAIN

4.31 ON THE TRAIL OF THE TROLLS

The Trolls' tracks leave the Road and lead directly north from the site of the ambush, down a short, steep hill, then into the woods.

The Trolls obviously had some trouble dragging the wagon through the thick trees. They managed to pick a twisting trail, but when they couldn't find a space wide enough to pull the wagon through, they made one. Newly-fallen trees lie at intervals on either side of the trail.

The trees in the forest are mostly pine, with an occasional stand of oak. The forest is a dark, stifling, oppressive place. The trees link branches overhead, allowing neither sunlight nor wind to find a way to the forest floor. Because the foliage blocks the sun, there is very little undergrowth. Instead, the ground has a thick carpet of mouldering leaves and pine needles.

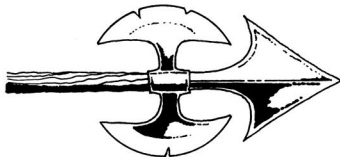
After the drop from the Road, the trail climbs steadily as it approaches the Emy-nu-Fuin to the north. The nearest mountains are only eight miles north of the trail, but because of the thick foliage, they are not visible from the Road. The slope, though gradual at first, becomes steeper near the Emy-nu-Fuin. As the elevation rises, the ground becomes more rocky, and trees are shorter and farther apart. Though the gaps in the forest canopy allow some sunlight in, the light does little to alleviate the dread that shrouds Mirkwood.

The trees, less dense than before, did not hinder the wagon's passage near the mountains. Nevertheless, the ground is littered with torn branches and broken trees. Trolls love destruction even without cause, and the area around their lair is brutalized by their frequent passage.

A mountain rises above the tortured trees; on the south side, almost halfway up the mountain, looms a cliff face. The cliff is 50' high and 120' wide. An opening in it forms the entrance to the Trolls' caves. The bluff is sheer, and would be almost impossible to scale; the Trolls reach their lair by using a ledge that cuts from west to east across the rock face.

To the west of the cliff, the mountain's slope is more gradual. The tracks of the Trolls and the wagon lead up this slope to a path that begins here. The path was created by the Trolls. It travels east, along the ledge, to their lair.

Directly beneath the cave opening, at the base of the cliff, is a small pool with a stream issuing from it. The pool, fed by underground springs, is fouled and muddied by the Trolls. The polluted rivulet flows south down the mountain. The waters of the pool and stream near its source are bitter cold. Sedges, grasses and cattails grow on the pool's banks. A few pathetic fish eke out an existence in the dirty water, but no animals will drink from it, both because of its filth and its proximity to the Troll lair.



One Troll will almost always stand guard here: 95% of the time during the day, 70% of the time at night. Usually Urnik gets stuck with guard duty. Urnik will often be on guard during the day (01-80); sometimes he also guards at night (01-25). Since he has little opportunity to sleep in his bed, he tends to fall asleep on duty. He will often (01-60) be asleep at night, but is more cautious during the day and will only rarely be asleep (01-10). He has been caught sleeping on duty several times by the other Trolls, and is, consequently, a light sleeper. There is a very good chance (01-80) that he will awaken at any disturbance. When Urnik isn't the guard, Tumag or Tumag is. They rarely sleep on duty (01-10, day or night). When they sleep, they sleep soundly, and have only a slight chance (01-20) of being awakened by any quiet noise. (Obviously, any Troll will wake up if people arrive at the front door and scream hello, or if a melee is going on in the next room). Fradurag never stands watch.

The watchpost has several openings that lead to the other rooms in the lair. On the eastern wall is the entrance to Urnik's Bedchamber. An opening in the northeast leads to a hallway. The hallway runs northeast for ten feet, then curves northwest for twenty feet, then forks. The northwest corridor continues for another ten feet, then opens into Fradurag's Bedchamber. The northeast fork continues for twenty feet, opening into Tumag's and Tumag's shared Bedchamber. The hallway is ten feet wide and twenty feet high.

Another hallway exits the watchpost at the northwest wall. The hall is twenty-five feet long, ten feet wide, and has a twenty foot ceiling. The hall curves to the west; the end is blocked by a large boulder. Scratches on the floor show that the boulder has been shoved from the end of the hall to the right-hand side and back again. The boulder is used to block the entrance to the Prison.

As previously mentioned, a hallway to the south leads to the Food Storage and Common Chambers.

6. Food Storage Chamber. The Food Storage Chamber is to the west of the Watchpost. The room is approximately twenty feet wide and thirty feet long, with a seventeen foot ceiling. A wooden table stands by the western wall of the room. It holds a whole round cheese and cheese pieces. Two whole goat carcasses and a sheep carcass hang from iron hooks in the ceiling. Two open barrels of inferior beer stand against the northern wall. In an alcove to the southwest, there is a small cask of fine brandy. The Trolls, deeming the brandy worthless, threw the cask into the corner unopened. The cask is hidden in a pile of broken barrels, bones, glass, and other useless items, so is difficult to find: a Hard (-20) Perception Roll.

7. Prison. The Trolls' Prison lies to the northwest of the watchpost. The Prison is a fattening and holding chamber for the Trolls' captives. The entrance of the prison is blocked by a large boulder in the hall. Moving the boulder requires a combined strength bonus of +30.

The Prison currently contains two prisoners, Elisa and Marluk. Trolls don't take very good care of prisoners, and these two are -60 to all activities due to weakness and wounds.

8. General Storage Chamber and Bedroom for Urnik. Urnik's bedchamber lies to the east of the Watchpost. It's roughly thirty feet by thirty feet, with a fifteen foot ceiling. The room contains one sleeping pallet for Urnik, and assorted other objects. Iron spikes driven into the rock wall hold Urnik's extra clothing — a pair of pants, a tunic, and a length of wool that functions either as a cloak or blanket. A suit of rigid leather armor lies on the floor beneath the pegs. The armor is much too small for a Troll, and would fit an Elf or slender man. It looks shabby, but is magical: +10 DB. Lying by the armor is a pile of costume jewelry (bone,

feather, wood beads), some coins (6 gp, 34 sp, 56 bp, 31 cp and 37 tp), a broken and rusted dagger, and some buttons, one of which is small, but made of mithril. The mithril button is worth 5 gp, the other buttons, jewelry, and dagger are worthless.

9. Sleeping Area for Tumag and Tumag. Tumag's and Tumag's bedchamber is to the northeast of the Watchpost. It is approximately fifty feet by forty feet, with a twenty-foot-high ceiling. Two huge sleeping pallets dominate the chamber. The pallet on the left is partially covered by a richly-woven, man-size blue cloak, embroidered with silver stars, lined with ermine. The cloak is magical: it gives the wearer +10 to his DB. The other pallet is covered by a thick wool blanket. Beside the pallet on the right is a wooden box, containing a braided gold necklace (value: 21 gp), a small silver bracelet (very tarnished, and worth only 1 gp), ten flamboyant brass buttons (total value: 1 sp), and two pearl earrings (15 gp). Beside the other bed is a small pile of trinkets, including an intricate ivory ring (7 gp), a figurine with jade flowers set on gold stems (19 gp), and a large cut amethyst (12 gp). Between the beds stands a small iron cauldron; inside its maw glimmer 10 gp, 36 sp, 40 bp, 53 cp, and 97 tp.

10. Fradurag's Chamber. Fradurag's bedchamber lies to the northwest of the hall. The room is roughly thirty feet by thirty feet, with a twenty-five foot ceiling. It is better furnished than the other rooms, and contains a bed, a chest of drawers, a stool, and two chests. The head of the bed is against the north wall; it is flanked by the two chests. The bed has a thick mattress, covered by two wool blankets, and a pillow. Under the pillow lies a small leather pouch, containing three Mirennas berries. Buried under the mattress is a beautiful short sword. A vine, etched in gold and studded with faceted jewels, shaped like flowers, twines around the hilt. The sword is not magical, but is so well crafted that it is lighter than the average short sword, weighing only one-and-a-half pounds. The weapon is worth 39 gp.

On either side of the bed stands a chest. The chest on the left is cedar, the one on the right carved oak. The cedar chest is open and unlocked. It is average size: two feet wide, two feet tall, three feet long. It weighs 25 pounds if emptied, 27 pounds with its contents. It contains a bottle of mead (unopened, worth 1 bp), several very large tunics, and a dagger. The dagger has a silver pommel shaped like a hawk's head, with emerald eyes. The blade is strong with a good edge, and the balance is excellent. Because of its superior balance, the blade gives the wielder +5 to his offensive bonus. It is worth 27 gp. Hidden in the folds of one of the tunics is a heavy gold drinking goblet, carved with pictures of dragons (34 gp).

The oak chest is locked. Fradurag has the key in his pants' pocket. If the chest is opened without the key, it will scream for help (see Section 4.43). The chest is Troll-size, standing three feet tall, three feet wide and four feet long. It weighs 50 pounds when empty. Currently it weighs 66 pounds. It holds loose coins (731 gp, 1809 sp), a gold brooch depicting a running horse with mane and tail streaming behind (worth 7 gp), a Dwarf-sized chainmail shirt and coif (40 sp), a pair of metal arm guards (4 sp), a twisted gold bracelet (5 gp), and a leather pouch containing one dose of dried Athelas.

A chest of drawers stands against the south wall of the room. The chest has three drawers, stuffed with clothing and personal effects from the Trolls' victims. Fradurag kept the exceptionally good clothing: a fur-lined cloak, a beribboned velvet gown, silk and embroidered shirts and shifts, etc.; also fangs, purses (empty, of course), spurs, lace handkerchiefs, hats, and so on. Most of the articles are rotting and mildewed. The chest and its contents may be worth as much as 5 gp, but would be awkward to carry.

11. Tunnel. An old tunnel leads into the mountains from Tumag and Tumag's chamber. The tunnel is blocked from rubble by a partial collapse, and by rocks moved into the opening by the Trolls.

If the players successfully kill the Trolls, and want to use their lair as a base camp, the Gamemaster can map out the tunnel to expand their home. Or the tunnel could lead to more adventure...

4.4 THE TASK

The adventurers' task is to recover Merchant Eolsen's goods. They may also want to acquire the Trolls' treasure for themselves. Depending on their professions or personalities, the players have several options. They may try to sneak into the lair when one or more Trolls are away and steal the goods, if possible, without a fight; or they may prefer to be heroic and kill all the Trolls. (Someone — Rothaar or Merchant Eolsen or an NPC — should mention that it's wiser not to fight all the Trolls at once, even if they plan to kill them all). A less-than-noble party may decide to steal Merchant Eolsen's goods (see Section 4.4.3).

4.4.1 STARTING THE PLAYERS

Merchant Eolsen has told friends and tavernkeepers in Laketown that he is hiring a party of adventurers. He has also posted signs in his shop and on street corners. As a result, any adventurers in Laketown probably will be referred to him.

When the PCs meet Merchant Eolsen, he will explain that his caravan was attacked by Trolls, and that one of his wagons and all of his goods were stolen. The Trolls may also have taken prisoners. Merchant Eolsen wants to hire a party of adventurers to save any of his people who may be alive and to recover his merchandise. Rothaar will lead the party to the Troll cave and aid them in any way possible.

When Merchant Eolsen hires the party, he will tell them, in case of Rothaar's death, that he has a box hidden in a secret compartment in the wagon bed. If they cannot save the wagon or any other goods, he wants them to save the box. He will explain that if anyone other than himself or Rothaar tries to open the box, it will explode. He won't tell them that it contains mithril and gems.

Merchant Eolsen is willing to equip the party. In addition to food and other basic equipment, he will lend horses, ponies, and wagons to the party and will provide a basic "first-aid kit" of healing herbs. He is offering a reward of 500 gp for the return of his possessions or hirelings, or 300 gp for the return of the box alone.

4.4.2 AIDS

Player characters have several aids to help them through this adventure. The Trolls themselves provide aids of a sort: if they can be lured outside at dawn or during daylight they will turn to stone; they are prone to fight among themselves; and the Troll standing guard is apt to fall asleep. Rothaar should be a considerable help, both in battle and with advice (having grown up in Mirkwood and spent much of his adult life travelling through it, he knows a lot about the forest and its inhabitants). Merchant Eolsen provides herbs and supplies, and, if the party is weak, might tell them about some NPCs they could hire. Trolls are always challenging, so be

sure your party is pretty tough before it takes them on.

FRADURAG

4.4.3 OBSTACLES

Although four Trolls should be obstacle enough for almost anyone, Mirkwood is populated with many other evil creatures. See the tables in Section 6.0 for specific encounters.

Mirkwood has other dangers than the fell beings that inhabit it. The party has a good guide, but the forest is treacherous. Vegetation can shift and trails can change; plants may be poisonous and trees are almost alive. Still, Rothaar has found his way through Mirkwood many times, and can alert the party to dangerous plants and waters. He will warn them not to drink from the pool or stream near the Troll lair, and advise them to approach the lair as silently as possible. He also has sense enough to realize that the path to the Troll lair can be risky in bad weather.

There is only one trap in the Troll lair. If Fradurag's oak chest is broken into without a key, it will scream, "Help help...!" The scream can be

heard by any Troll (or anyone else, for that matter) within 100 yards of the chest. Characters in the same room as the chest when it screams must make an RR versus 6th level magic, or be deafened for 1 round for every 5% of RR failure. Characters elsewhere in the caves resist vs. 3rd level effect, or suffer the same results.

If the players choose to steal Merchant Eolsen's goods, they will first have to kill Rothaar and Elisa (if the Trolls haven't already killed them). Marluk has completely lost any loyalties he once had and wants only to live, so he won't fight to protect the box. If a fight breaks out and he's capable of it, he will run, walk, or crawl away.

Even if the PCs manage to kill Rothaar and Elisa and gain possession of the wagon and its contents, they will have to cope with the trapped box. Attempting to open the box without speaking the proper command word will cause an explosion. The box's maker's name (Glingal) is the command word; guessing the name is an Absurd (-90) Maneuver, and any result less than full success will spring the trap. The explosion will not harm the box or its contents, but anyone within a ten-foot radius of the box will take damage from a +50 fireball.



4.44 REWARDS

Through their years of murder and plunder, the Trolls have accumulated a considerable hoard. The player characters are welcome to claim it with the exception of Merchant Eolsen's wagon and goods. If the players choose to steal Merchant Eolsen's goods they will gain a bar of mithril worth 730 gp, and gems worth 295 gp. The wagon and its load of furs is worth 360 gp.

If the party returns the wagon with its contents (or even just the mithril) and the prisoners to Merchant Eolsen, he will of course pay them the offered reward. He may give them an additional reward for ridding the forest of four Trolls; certainly he will give them a hero's welcome with food, drink, and free lodging for the night.

4.5 ENCOUNTERS

THE TROLLS

If the players approach the Troll lair by daylight, all four Trolls will be in their caves. Three will probably lie sleeping, but one will be on guard and might be awake. The players may choose to attack the sleeping foe immediately. If they do, they will have to fight all the Trolls before they can escape with Merchant Eolsen's possessions. Even in their darkened cave, the Trolls' actions are -20 during the day. If they step outside into the sunlight (very unlikely), they will be instantly turned to stone.

By night, the Trolls are frequently out on business, smashing, breaking, murdering, destroying, and terrorizing the countryside. The Trolls may seek amusement singly or in groups. The players may choose to camp near the caves and watch in the hope that all the Trolls will leave at once. If the players camp near the Trolls' caves, they risk being discovered by one or more Trolls outside the cave. Trolls are a noisy lot, so the players shouldn't be surprised by their approach. (Easy, +20, perception roll to hear the Trolls coming if a guard is posted; Medium, -0, if all PCs are sleeping.)

To determine the number of Trolls encountered at night, roll percentile dice and consult the following chart. The chart tells how many Trolls are in the caves, or how many are encountered outside. One or more Trolls may be unaccounted for. In an outside encounter, any Trolls unaccounted for (either not in the caves or in the group outside) may join the battle at any time. In an inside encounter, any Troll outside the cave may return at any time. The GM should use his discretion in deciding when to introduce additional Trolls to a melee.

NOCTURNAL TROLL ENCOUNTERS

This table can be used to determine the number of Trolls encountered at a campsite, at an ambush site, or while the players are moving through the area around the Troll lair. The table can also be used to determine how many Trolls will be inside the lair at night. When determining the number of Trolls inside, disregard column two (# Outside).

Roll	# in Caves	# Outside
01-05	0	4
06-10	0	3
11-15	0	2
16-20	0	1
21-45	1	3
46-60	1	2
61-70	1	1
71-80	2	2
81-85	2	1
86-90	3	1
91-00	4	0

5.0 THE TITHING TRAIN

This adventure may follow TROUBLE WITH TROLLS, or may stand alone. This section is both more challenging and more rewarding than the two preceding adventures.

5.1 GRIMBOLD'S TALE

Grimbold, a Boorning Warrior from the Misty Mountains, was travelling through Mirkwood when he came across two Orcs. He overheard one Orc mention "the Necromancer's tithe." Interested, Grimbald questioned the Orcs before he killed them.

Grimbold discovered that the Orcs and other fell beings in Mirkwood are required to tithe a portion of their ill-gotten goods to Dol Guldur each year. He further learned that the Orcs of Northeastern Mirkwood are currently gathering goods and supplies and preparing to send them out under guard to the Necromancer. Best of all, the Boorning Warrior knows where the goods are being collected, and has come to Esgaroth to find other adventurers to help him kill the Orcs and steal the Necromancer's tithe.

5.2 THE NPCs

Grimbold the Boorning and the Orcs are the only NPCs in this adventure. For a weak or small party, the GM may wish to add additional NPCs. A good Scout and some healing ability are essential. Additional NPCs may be chosen from Section 2.0.

GRIMBOLD

Grimbold is a Boorning in his early thirties. The warrior is like most Boornings, only more so: he's large, red-haired, and so hairy that, although he is not a shape-changer, he looks bear-like at all times. He speaks in a soft grumbling growl, and has a disconcerting habit of staring at the person to whom he's speaking.

Like other Boornings, Grimbald hates Wargs, Trolls, Dragons, and Giants; but he abhors Orcs. When Grimbald was little more than a toddler, his parents and brother were killed by a group of goblins. Grimbald's sister escaped with her baby brother; Grimbald thinks killing Orcs is his personal quest.

Grimbold is a mercenary. He'll be fair about dividing the treasure, but he's fond of money and will want his share. His favorite weapon is a flail, though he uses almost all weapons with equal skill. Grimbald wears chain armor with greaves (Ch/14).

NOTE: *Notable Skills*—Ride 36, Track 36, Ambush 4, Stalk/Hide 30, Pick Lock 5, Disarm Trap 10, Perception 45, Foraging 30; *Languages*—Auldruk 5, Waildith 5, Westron 5, Nadhaiduk 5, Orkish 3; *Notable Items*—+20 Flail, +10 Chain and Greaves, +10 Shield.

THE ORCS

The Orcs garrisoning Ilmaryen Keep belong to a relatively small tribe, the Blogrum-hai (Or. "People of the Bloody Skull"). Their emblem is a tusked skull bleeding from the mouth. The tribe is spread throughout the southeast Emyrn-nu-Fuin and into the Forest south of the Men-i-Naugrim. The Blogrum-hai are nomadic, travelling from camp to camp most of the time. They tend to move in groups of five to twenty-five members. Their only two permanent settlements are Ilmaryen Keep and their main stronghold, Fhahoz-Blogrum (Or. "Great Hole of the Bloody Skull"); it lies northeast of Ilmaryen Keep, deeper in the Emyrn-nu-Fuin.

The basic fighting unit of the Blogrum-hai is the Korlagz (Or. "Jaw", pl. Korlagzrim). A Korlagz consists of five individuals: four Kragashi (Or. "Teeth", sing. Kragash) led by a Korlagz-drartul (Or. "Sergeant of the Jaw"). Two or more Korlagzrim will be led by a Korlagzrim-gottul (Or. "Lieutenant of the Jaws"). The commander of a particular region or camp is called a Goth-korlagzrim (Or. "Master of the Jaws").

GRIMBOLD



The armor and weaponry of the Blogrum-hai is related to their motif. Their primary weapon is a sword about the same size and weight as a broadsword. It is slightly curved, to resemble a fang. This sword is called a Kragashard (pl. Kragashardis). In addition to their Kragashardis, two Kragashi in each Korlagz also carry bows. The Korlagz-drartul and the other officers carry a slightly-curved throwing knife called a Kragrif (Or. "Fang-knife", pl. Kragrifrim). The knives, like the swords, resemble fangs. They are usually carried in sets of four and are used by the officers before they close for hand-to-hand combat.

The most common form of armor found among the Blogrum-hai is rigid leather. Chain armor follows a close second. Plate is rare, and only a few Scouts prefer soft leather to rigid. The helm worn with a suit of armor is skull shaped and painted red in the mouth region. Shields are mostly wooden with iron bindings and are painted with the bloody-skull emblem of the tribe.

The thirty Orcs at Ilmaryen Keep are typical of the Blogrum-hai. All are armed with Kragashardis; two Kragashi in each Korlagz carry bows. The lesser Orcs carry short bows, the Uruks longbows. They wear rigid leather armor (RL/10) and carry shields.

THE KORLAGZ-DRARTUL

The Orcs are divided into six Korlagzrim: two are Uruk, the other four are lesser Orcs. The lesser Orc Korlagzrim include two first and two second level Kragashi; the Uruk Korlagzrim have two second and two third level Kragashi. All six Korlagz-drartul are proficient with the Kragrifrim. The two Uruk Korlagz-drartul,

Ukrish and Gormuk, are essentially interchangeable. Both are fourth level; neither has any particular distinguishing characteristics. The four lesser Orc Korlagz-drartul are all third level. Only one of the four is not remarkable: Bokdankh, the newest of the lot. Sokralg is disgusting even by Orc standards. Fektalgh is neat for an Orc, keeping even his clothes semi-clean. Hagrakh has a penchant for knife throwing: he practices with his Kragrifrim constantly and receives +10 OB when using them. All six wear chain shirts with arm and leg greaves (Ch/14) and carry shields.

MARLURG

The Korlagzrim-gottul at Ilmaryen is Marlurg (fifth level). He is old for an Orc, but still quite strong. He is a little dull mentally, even for an Orc; his rise in power has been slow. He does have sufficient cunning to hold any position he attains. Marlurg, while not a coward, firmly believes that discretion is the better part of valor; he will not hesitate to flee if all seems hopeless. In melee, Marlurg fights with an especially well-made Kragashard and uses a shield. He carries eight Kragrifrim instead of the usual four and will always try to use those first, then close for battle (or, if appropriate, flee). Marlurg's armor is a chain shirt and greaves (Ch/14).

NOTE: *Notable Skills:* Climb 30, Track 10, Stalk/Hide 10, Perception 5; *Languages:* Orkish 5, Black Speech 2, Westron 3; *Notable Items:* +10 Kragashard, +5 chain shirt and greaves, +5 shield.

YAGRASH

Yagrash, the seventh-level Gothkorlagzrim at Ilmaryen, is almost the opposite of Marlurg. An Uruk of exceptional ambition, he is young to be holding his current position, and he lacks neither the strength nor the intelligence to continue holding it. Though he seeks to rise still higher in the tribe hierarchy, he is proud of being Gothkorlagzrim and will almost certainly fight to the death to maintain that title (88% chance he will not flee the keep). In combat, Yagrash prefers to use the excellent war hammer he took from a fallen foe. He also uses a Kragashard and a long bow. He frequently (01-65) uses both the war hammer and the Kragashard together and leaves his shield slung on his back. His armor is a full chain hauberk (Ch/16).

NOTE: *Notable Skills* — Climb 32, Ride (Warg) 25, Track 27, Stalk/Hide 15, Perception 15; *Languages* — Black Speech 5, Orkish 4, Westron 4, Logathig 2; *Notable Items* — +15 war hammer, +5 Kragashard, +5 long bow, +5 chain hauberk, +10 shield, an invisible key (Very Hard, -25, to find).



5.32 ILMARYEN KEEP

The keep itself is a 46' high stone structure. It consists of two round towers, each 100' in diameter, and an 80' wide, rectangular, central section joining the two towers. The overall shape is thus much like a dumbbell. The keep has three levels. The cellars, which are partially above ground, have no openings in their walls. The first floor has a 16' wide, 10' high stone slab in the middle of the north side — the door. This level is ringed with arrow slits, one every 20'. The second floor has metal-shuttered windows facing in all directions. The shutters will all be closed unless an Orc is looking outside. Curiously, the shutters do not appear to have rusted at all. Above the second level are the tower roofs. Each is surmounted by a crenelated parapet; each merlon contains a downward-slanting arrow slit.

The cellar walls are 12' thick at their base, but taper until they are 5' thick above-ground. From the ground up, all exterior walls are five feet thick. The interior walls and floors/ceilings are two feet thick. The inner perimeter wall on the second level is four feet thick. All walls are solid stone. The first and second levels have 15' ceilings, while that of the cellar is twenty feet high. All interior doors are made of hardwood with iron hardware. As with the window shutters, none of the ironwork has rusted. Most of the doors have a drop-latch arrangement as a locking mechanism.

FIRST LEVEL

1. Keep Entrance. The only door into the keep is in the middle of the north wall of the first level, ten feet off the ground. To reach the door, an earth and stone ramp about twenty feet long rises to the level of the doorway. The ramp, however, stops ten feet from the wall. Currently, a wooden platform spans the gap. It rests on the ledge in front of the door and on the end of the ramp. The door itself is a 16' wide, 10' high, 3' thick stone slab. The slab is recessed two feet. It opens by rising upward. The mechanism is explained in #24. The door will be open unless an alarm has been sounded.

2. Entry. The entry hall is 20' long and 16' wide. The north wall is the keep's stone front door. The south wall is made up of a set of heavy, iron-bound oak double doors that lead into the Great Hall (#3). The east and west walls are four feet thick; each has three arrow slits facing into the entry. The ceiling has a dozen murder holes in it.

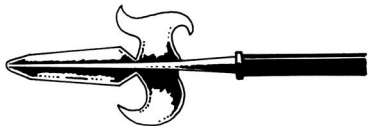
3. Great Hall. This room once served as the main hall of the keep. Now it serves as a common room for the Orcs. It is 60' by 80'. Four thick cloths hang on the south wall; each covers an arrow slit. There are four visible exits: the large double doors leading to the entry, which can be barred by a heavy oak beam on this side; one door on each side of the double doors; and a door in the west wall 10' from the north corner. There are also two secret doors, one in the southernmost section of the east wall, the other in the southernmost section of the west wall. Both are Easy (+20) to discover. The Orcs have found the secret door in the east wall but not the one in the west. Anyone touching the door in the west wall (to room #6) will have a Light (+10) chance of noticing that the door is warm to the touch compared with any other door in the room.

There are seven wagons in the room, four against the east wall, three against the west. There is a five-foot gap between wagons, which are currently all empty. The northwest portion of the room holds four rough-hewn tables and benches which, judging by the food scraps on and around them, are used by the Orcs as tables.

4. Perimeter Hall. This corridor stretches around the perimeter of the first level and is interrupted only by the Entry (#2) and the Great Hall (#3). Access to the corridors is through the doors on either side of the double doors in the Great Hall, or the secret doors at the south end of the Great Hall. It is obvious that the Orcs use these corridors regularly: they are filthy. Each is only 8' wide and has an outward-facing arrow slit every 20'. The arrow slits facing into the Entry (#2) also begin here.

The eastern corridor has three doors in it. One is on the north side, 30' from the entry wall; the second is at the farthest eastern point of the corridor; and the third is adjacent to the secret door leading to the Great Hall. The western corridor has six doors. All are in the circular portion of the corridor.

5. Storeroom. There are two weapon-racks built onto the south wall of this room and a large, plain bin against the north wall. The racks are empty, but the bin holds one hundred black-feathered Orc arrows. Thus, the room still serves the purpose for which it was originally intended.



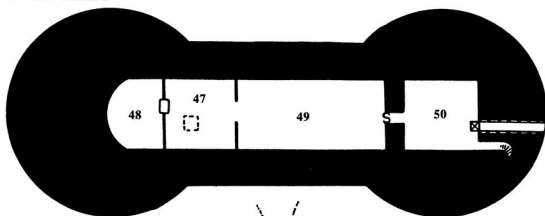
6. Kitchen. This room is insufferably hot. Regardless of the external temperature, the kitchen temperature is at least fifty degrees hotter. The reason for this is the roaring fire in the large fireplace on the west wall. There is no apparent fuel source in the room, and the output of the flames seems to far exceed the number of logs on the fire. The observant will note that the Adûnaic word for "fire" is carved into the stone above the fireplace (an Easy, +25, maneuver to find). The fire is magical and it is this word when spoken that controls the fire. If the word is whispered, the fire becomes little more than glowing embers; if shouted, the fire becomes a roaring inferno; if spoken in a normal tone of voice, a nice cooking fire is produced. At some time in the distant past, an Orc shouted the word; the result is the fiercely-burning flame in the fireplace. The Orcs have not discovered the fact that the fire can be returned to more normal proportions. Of course, they don't cook their food anyway.

There are three doors in this room, two in the east wall, in the northernmost and southernmost sections, and the third in the south wall, ten feet from the eastern corner. The doors lead to the Great Hall (#3), the Larder (#6a), and the Kitchen Storeroom (#7), respectively. There is also a closed trapdoor in the ceiling about midway along the east wall. The trapdoor opens into the Holding Room (#25a). A counter against the north wall extends from the northwest corner and ends ten feet from the east wall. One table stands in the middle of the room; a second table is against the south wall. The Orcs tend to avoid this room except to get supplies from the cellar via the Kitchen Storeroom (#7).

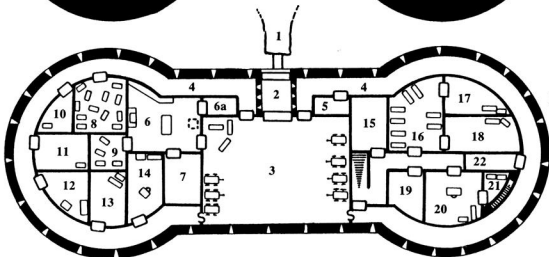
6a. Larder. This room is empty. There are shelves along all the walls, making it fairly easy to discern its original purpose.

ILMARYEN KEEP

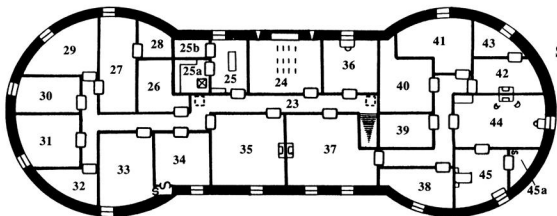
THE CELLARS



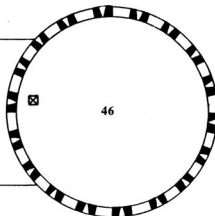
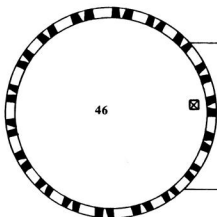
FIRST LEVEL



SECOND LEVEL



TOWER ROOFS



7. Kitchen Storeroom. The only door to this room is in the north wall; it leads to the Kitchen (#6). There is also an 8'x8' trapdoor in the northeast corner of the room. It opens downward and stays open or closed by means of a counterweight system built into the trapdoor and the cellar. There is a fair (01-25) chance that the trapdoor is open. A 7'x7' platform-and-pulley system hangs over the trapdoor. There is a winch on the north wall just east of the door and another on the east wall 12' from the northern corner. The winch by the door controls the trapdoor. The winch on the east wall controls the platform. It is by means of the platform that supplies are moved to and from the cellars. Refuse at the southern end of the room indicates that crates and barrels were once stored here.

8. Main Barracks. These are the living quarters of the largest body of Orcs, the first and second level Lesser Orc Kragashi. There are twelve sleeping pallets on the floor and scattered debris is everywhere. Sixteen Orcs share this room and the back room (#9) to the south. The door between the two rooms has been broken off its hinges but is otherwise intact. No Orc sleeps on the same pallet two days in a row: they are constantly fighting and gambling for the "privilege" of sleeping in the back room (#9). Because of the constant change (and the untrustworthiness of their compatriots) the Orcs carry all their treasures. Each of the sixteen carries 1-20 bp, cp, and tp (roll each type of coin for each Orc), and 0-10 sp (roll d20 and subtract ten; negative numbers are 0).

9. Barracks "Back Room." There are four pallets in here. The four current "champions" get to sleep here.

10. Korlagz-drartul's Quarters. This room is occupied by Bokdankh, one of the third level Korlagz leaders. It contains a long weapon-rack built against the east wall, extending from the southern corner to within 10' of the northern corner. The rack is empty. Against the west wall, near the door, is a storage bin containing sixty black-feathered Orc arrows. In the southwest corner of the room, there is a single sleeping pallet and a small chest. The chest is locked (Medium, +0, to pick); Bokdankh has the key. The chest contains 14 gp, 23 sp, 3 cp, 46 tp, a copper bracelet (value: 3 sp), a small lapis-lazuli (2 gp) in a pouch, and a pile of Orc clothes covering the loot.

11. Korlagz-drartul's Quarters. This room currently houses Skorlag, the leader of another Korlagz. Skorlag is a slob even by Orkish standards: the filth in this room is impressive. Anyone entering the room must make a 2nd level RR against poison or be nauseated (-5 to activity) while in the room.

In the southeast corner of the room are a nastier-than-usual pallet and a small chest. The chest is locked and has a poison needle trap built into the lock (Medium, +0, to discover; Hard, -10, to disarm; Hard, -10, to pick). The needle is coated in Uraana, a 6th-level poison causing 3-30 hits and severe blistering in the affected area (-35 to activity involving the affected area). Failure to disarm the trap before attempting to pick the lock will result in a +45 dagger attack against the lock-picker. Any strike delivering a puncture critical will cause the poison to act (use critical result only if applicable). Using the proper key to open the lock will not set off the trap; using the wrong key will. Skorlag carries the key. Inside the chest are a disgusting pile of rags (clothes?). Under the rags lie a pouch containing 2 gp, 63 sp, 32 bp, and 8 cp; an engraved silver ring (14 gp); and a small wooden box holding a jade pendant (without a chain) in the shape of a leaf. The pendant grants a +5 bonus to hiding maneuvers when worn about the neck.

12. Korlagz-drartul's Quarters. The Orc living here, Fektalgh, is tidier than most. His room contains a pallet and a chest. Both are in the southernmost corner of the room. The chest is locked (Hard, -10, to pick). The key is hidden under a loose stone in the northeast corner of the room. Finding the loose stone is a Very Hard (-25) maneuver. Inside the chest is a set of Orc clothes; a rather fine robe (2 gp); a leather pouch containing 34 gp, 53 silver pieces, and 68 bp; and a silk bag (too dirty to be of value) that holds a small emerald (43 gp).

13. Korlagz-drartul's Quarters. The Korlagz-drartul residing here is named Hagrakh. His bedding and chest are in the northeast corner. A pile of clothing lies on top of the chest, partially burying it. The chest is (as always) locked (Hard, -10, to pick), and the key is in Hagrakh's possession. The chest holds a sack containing 8 gp, 86 bp, 42 cp, 154 tp; a small ivory bust (33 gp); and a jeweled dagger (17 gp). The dagger is Dwarf-made and has a +5 OB due to its excellent workmanship.

A man-sized bag stuffed with straw hangs in the southeast corner of the room. Close examination will reveal that the bag has been patched in the chest region many times and that there are innumerable small slits in the bag. Hagrakh uses the bag to practice with his Kragrif.



14. Korlagz-gottul's Quarters. This room is furnished more nicely than the others in this area of the keep. Against the north wall stand a large chest and a crude bed. On the bed lies a stuffed bag for a mattress and a large, tattered, grey cloak for a blanket. The cloak is Elven. It is spelled to appear tattered and to hide its magical properties. The wearer of the cloak is protected as by Nature's Ways *Cold Resistance* and adds +75 to his hiding chances while stationary, +25 if moving slowly. Marlurgh, the Korlagz-gottul, does not know about the cloak's magical properties.

The chest beside the bed is secured by a double lock (two keys are required to open the lock), and is Extremely Hard (-40) to pick. Marlurgh carries one key and has hidden the second in the bottom of his "mattress." The chest itself is made of ironwood and is therefore very difficult to break open: 150 hits are required to break it (treat as plate armor, PI/19). Inside the chest are a small cask, a leather shoulder bag, a small jewelry box, and Orc clothes. The cask contains (packed in straw) an obsidian statuette of a running horse (138 gp). The leather bag holds 233 gp, 425 sp, and 38 cp. Inside the jewelry box, there are two silver rings with small sapphires mounted in them (85 gp ea.) and a necklace with a black pearl pendant (120 gp).

In the middle of the room stands a plain desk with a chair behind it. The desk has three drawers on its right side. The top drawer is empty, the middle drawer contains some papers written in Orkish, and the bottom drawer holds a rough map of the keep. The papers in the middle drawer pertain to the supplies and captured goods at the keep; one of the papers is current and lists the supplies in the basement and some of the goods in one of the Storerooms (#19). None of the papers has a date. The map in the bottom drawer is accurate, but does not show any of the secret doors. There are notations in Orkish on the map to give some clue about a room's current use.

5.3 THE TERRAIN

This adventure takes place in Mirkwood, in the Emyrn-nu-Fuin, north of the Men-i-Naugrim. The trees in the forest are tall and dense; since Sauron's return to Dol Guldur, the dark wood is a sunless, depressing place.

The Emyrn-nu-Fuin are an old mountain range, well-worn with time but still powerful. Trees aren't as dense in the mountains; there is even some undergrowth where the sun finds the forest floor. Without the Evil brooding in Dol Guldur, the Emyrn-nu-Fuin would be a lovely setting for a home. Centuries ago, a Númenórean noble built his residence on a hill, above a lake in the Emyrn-nu-Fuin.

5.31 ILMARYEN'S SURROUNDINGS

Ilmaryen is an ancient keep, built in S.A. 2937 by a disgruntled Númenórean noble originally living along the coast of the Bay of Belfalas. The builder grew disgusted with the politics of Númenor and decided to remove himself and his family to an area far from central government. He moved up the Anduin and into Greenwood the Great, where he found the isolation he sought. He, his family, and later, his descendants, occupied the keep until the Last Alliance at the end of the Second Age. The lord at that time, more noble than some of his predecessors, sealed the keep and moved to south to join the alliance. He and his sons were killed in the war and his wife and daughter would not return to the remote keep.

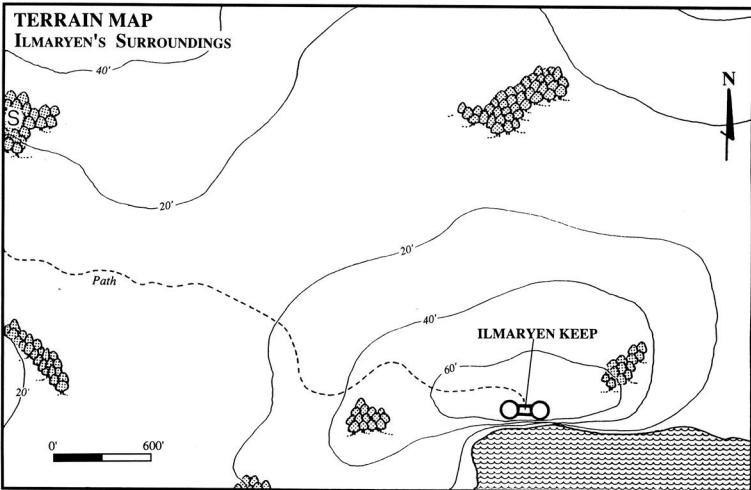
Ilmaryen Keep remained empty until the expansion of Dol Guldur's influence brought Orcs to the area. Goblins probably did not penetrate the keep until about T.A. 1400. They began to use it

as a staging area for shipments to Dol Guldur only about 100 years ago. The keep's use and location have been a closely-guarded secret until Grimbold learned of its existence.

Ilmaryen Keep is located eight miles north of the Men-i-Naugrim, in a series of hills at the western end of the southernmost chain of the Emyrn-nu-Fuin. The hills are relatively free of the dense vegetation characteristic of Mirkwood. Instead, they are covered with grasses, brush, scattered trees or small groves, and occasional patches of dense woods. The nearest patch of heavy woods is 350' to the northeast of the keep; the second nearest is 800' to the west. There are no other wooded areas within 1500' of the keep.

A wagon track passes from the front of the fortress (the north side) westward down the hill and on until it turns south about one and a half miles from the donjon. The path continues south for three miles until it joins the main path through the Emyrn-nu-Fuin and ultimately reaches the Men-i-Naugrim. Behind Ilmaryen Keep, there is a substantial lake. The lake is just over three miles long and one mile wide at its widest point. The keep is on the lake's northern shore, about halfway down its length. Although the keep is only 50' from the water's edge, it is on a hilltop, so there is a 30' drop from the keep to the water. Between keep and lake, the ground was once terraced gardens. Time has erased what beauty was there; now there is little evidence of what man wrought.

A battlemented wall once stood at a 50' distance from the keep in all directions, but all that remains to mark this boundary is an occasional pile of stone and the lack of any vegetation save grasses within the area. This bailey was once paved in stone. Though earth now covers it, the stone prevents the growth of trees and bushes.



15. Storeroom. There is nothing in this room at present, though there is evidence that it has been used as a storeroom in the past.

16. Uruk Barracks. Eight Uruk Kragashi use this room as their barracks. Being better disciplined than regular Orcs, they keep some semblance of order here. There are six pallets against the west and south walls and two pallets in the center of the east wall. There are also two doors in the east wall, one in the nothernmost, and the other in the southernmost section. The sleeping arrangements are fairly constant. Still, any treasure owned by these Orcs is with them. Each Uruk Kragashi carries 1-30 sp, bp, cp, tp (roll each type of coin for each Orc).

17. Koralagz-drartul's Quarters. Ukrish, the sergeant of one of the two Uruk Koralagzim, is stationed here. He has a crude bed and a small chest in the southeast corner of the room. The chest is locked (Medium, +0, to pick); Ukrish carries the key. The chest appears to contain only clothes. There is, however, a false bottom, Hard (-15) to spot. Once the bottom is removed, a hoard of 63 gp and a pouch holding 6 small turquoise (values: 5, 4, 4, 7, 8, 10 gp) will be found.

18. Koralagz-drartul's Quarters. Gormuk, the other Uruk sergeant, resides here. His bed and locked chest (Hard, -10, to pick) are in the northeast corner of the room. In the chest are the ubiquitous clothes, 33 sp, 40 bp, 3 cp, 172 tp, and a long and heavy gold chain (233 gp). Gormuk has hidden the key to his chest in the hollow portion of his southwesternmost bedpost (a Very Hard, -20, maneuver to find). Also in the hollow post is a plain ebony wand. The wand has the power to cast *MERP* Living Change *Haste* 13x/day. Gormuk knows of this property, but has not been able to make it work for him.

19. Storeroom. The goods that are going to be shipped to Dol Guldur are stored here. They include 24 bolts of cloth, two large tapestries, three crates containing iron ore, four barrels of salted meats, a box of 12 swords, a crate holding 200 arrows, two large casks of honey, four barrels of beer, a crate holding four suits of chain armor with arm and leg greaves, 22 bags of various grains, and 13 casks of mead. The room is so full that ten man-hours would be required to complete an inventory of the contents.

20. Gothkoralagzrim's Quarters. Yagrash, the Gothkoralagzrim, has made this chamber his quarters. He is the overall commander of the forces garrisoning Ilmaryen Keep. In the center of his room stand a desk and chair. The desk has three drawers on each side and a small central drawer. All of the drawers, except the top right which contains writing supplies, are stuffed with papers covered with scribbles, mostly in Orkish. Only one of the papers contains any information of interest: it instructs the Gothkoralagzrim to have the wagons loaded and ready within a month and a half of receipt of those instructions. By the date on the message, characters who can read Black Speech will discover that they have three weeks to act before the wagons are supposed to be ready.

The middle of the room's east wall holds a door. In the southeast corner are a bed and a chest. The bed is reasonably constructed and has a straw mattress and a wool blanket. The chest is very well constructed. The lock is Extremely Hard (-40) to pick. Yagrash carries the key with him at all times. The chest is also trapped (Medium, +0, to find; Hard, -15, to disarm). Anyone opening the chest without disarming the trap first will suffer three +34 knife attacks as three spring-loaded blades fly from the back of the chest, angling just over the front lip of the chest (a person kneeling in front of the chest while it is being opened would get hit in the chest by the blades). Using the correct key will disarm the trap, but only while the key remains in the lock. Inside the chest are three sets of

Orc clothes, a leather bag, a small coffer, and a wooden tube. The bag contains 318 gp, 631 sp, 85 bp, and 244 cp. The contents of the coffer are a matched pair of malachite earrings in gold settings (132 gp), a topaz ring in a silver setting (43 gp), and a pouch containing three fire opals (60 gp ea.). Inside the tube, there is a fine, grey-brown powder, a very concentrated preparation of Arkasu. It heals 4-24 hits, and quadruples healing rate of major wounds when mixed with a little water to form a salve and applied to the wound. The tube contains seven applications (total value: 168 gp).

21. Treasure Room. This room contains only two large chests. Both rest against the north wall; both are locked (Hard, -15, to pick). There is no key at the keep for the easternmost of the two chests, since it was delivered to the keep by another group of Orcs for transport to Dol Guldur (and Orcs do not really trust each other enough to leave a key). Yagrash carries the key to the second chest, but it requires a Very Hard (-25) Perception roll to find it on him, since the key is invisible (this spell is permanent).

The first chest is trapped, a well-known fact among the Orcs at the keep. If queried, any of the Orcs will inform the querant that opening the chest will cause all in the room to die a horrible death. To the uninformed, the trap is Hard (-10) to find. The trap is a gas trap and, if not disarmed (an Extremely Hard, -40, maneuver), will affect anyone within a 10' radius with Na-del, a distilled spider venom which starts to dissolve any living tissue it contacts (1v1 5; causes 3-30 hits and if inhaled causes massive internal bleeding — eight hits per round). If the chest is opened, a vast treasure is revealed. The chest is almost half-full of coins of all types. Heaped together are 562 gp, 2205 sp, 6229 bp, 8896 cp, and 11,624 tp.



HAGRAKH

Mixed with the coins are a solid turquoise ring (14 gp); a large smokey quartz pendant on a gold chain (29 gp); a small leather pouch holding a dozen large tiger-eyes (6 gp ea.); a silver tiara set with five amethysts of exceptional clarity (223 gp); a silk pouch holding four mithril pieces; a golden, bear-headed scepter with ruby eyes (362 gp); a wooden box containing (in straw packing) a 9" tall, intricately carved, black-and-white onyx statue of a tree (412 gp); and a plain bag with 20 small, pink pearls in it (5 gp ea.). Among the jewels and coins, there are several magic items. The first is a shield which is 20% lighter than normal and casts **MERP** *Illusions Invisibility* 3x/day. Unfortunately, the shield's creator made a mistake: the *Invisibility* spell only affects the shield, not the wielder. There is also a large, uncut garnet on which the brown and green coloration seems to be moving very slowly. The garnet's possessor can cast **MERP** *Nature's Guises* 1x/day by grasping the stone and concentrating. The final magic item is a 1' long miniature spear, made of jet. The spear is called "Aldataur" (S. "Commander of the Woods"). Its name is carved on its side in scale with the spear. If its name is spoken or even whispered, Aldataur becomes full-size and fully functional as a weapon; when the name is spoken again Aldataur will return to miniature size. Anyone possessing Aldataur will receive +10 bonus to DB and RR. An Animist or Ranger who owns Aldataur will also be able to cast 20 PP/day from the **MERP** Plant Mastery and Animal Mastery spell lists while Aldataur is full size.

The second chest is protected by a permanent visual illusion. When the chest is opened it appears to be empty, regardless of what it actually contains. If it is tipped over, the contents will of course spill out; and if anyone pokes around in the chest the contents can be felt and heard, but will not be seen until removed from the chest. This chest, like the first, holds much wealth. It contains 969 gp, 9017 sp, 3082 bp, 2305 cp, 27,303 tp. Amidst the coinage lie 14 silver rings (11 sp ea.); eight gold rings (4 gp ea.); a copper bracelet with a very large, near-perfect moonstone (38 gp); a gold- and silver-inlaid, mallow-wood jewelry box (47 gp) containing three silver rings (18 sp ea.); a plain gold necklace (5 gp); a silver brooch set with five beryls in a star pattern (52 gp); a mithril ring carved like twining ivy (488 gp); a golden girdle of holly leaves set with ruby berries (750 gp); and a velvet-lined, wooden box containing four pale-blue quartz wine goblets shaped like niphredil flowers (80 gp ea.). Magic items include a finely-crafted steel scepter with six flanges (it is a 50% lighter than normal, +5 OB, magic mace); a very small suit of half-plate armor (Pl/19) - about Hobbit size but not quite stout enough (in fact the armor will grow or shrink to fit almost anyone who concentrates on changing the armor's size) — the armor gives +15 DB and +30MM, and is 80% lighter than normal; and a pair of green, soft-leather boots with gold-thread tracery in the shape of a group of trees (the boots can cast **MERP** *Lofty Bridge Leaving*, 100ft range, 3x/day and provide the wearer with +5 bonus to DB and MM).

22. Storeroom. The north, south, and west walls have weapon-racks on them. The room is bare except for a rusted short sword hanging in the shadows in the northwest corner of the room. If the rust is cleaned off, the sword will be found to be in excellent shape, +5 OB in fact. Within an hour of being cleaned, the blade will begin to rust again. Within eight hours the blade will be completely covered by rust. The rust does not affect the sword's OB, but 10% of the creatures struck by the sword will get Lockjaw (a disease that causes paralysis of the voluntary muscles). Paralysis begins after eight hours, and full paralysis occurs after one week.

SECOND LEVEL

23. Upstairs Corridor. This corridor provides access to all the rooms in the western and central portions of the second floor. At the corridor's eastern end, stairs lead to the first floor. A ladder is clamped to the north wall, three feet from the east wall. The ladder leads to a trapdoor in the ceiling. A second ladder-trapdoor arrangement is 90' down the corridor to the west, again on the north wall, three feet from the west wall, where the corridor turns south. Each 3'x3' trapdoor leads to a tower roof (#46). The ladders can be removed from the clamps. The trapdoors will be open at night and probably bolted on the inside during the day, though the Orcs sometimes (01-25) forget to bolt the trapdoor. The hall shows signs of constant use between the two ladders.

The western end of the corridor, the T-shaped area after the corridor jogs south, shows only occasional use. Apparently the Orcs simply do not bother the chambers off this hallway (#26-34).

24. Gatehouse. The purpose of this room is evident. The stone door or Entrance (#1) is in the middle of the north wall, with a pulley system in the ceiling to raise and lower the door. The controlling winch and counterweights are against the east wall. Two heavy pieces of cloth hang on the north wall, one on either side of the stone door. Each drape covers an arrow slit. The 20'x20' area immediately south of the stone door is slightly depressed and has a dozen murder holes in it, which can be used to fire arrows down at attackers in the Entry (#2), or to pour boiling oil or water on them. The room is bare of any furnishings.

25. Upstairs Kitchen/Pantry. This room has a table just east of the center of the room and a 3' wide counter on the south wall, extending 8' from the west wall. There are two doors in the west wall.

25a. Holding Room. Against the west and much of the north wall there is a counter designed for keeping food at a particular temperature. Under the counter there are six one-foot-square doors leading to insulated compartments. Some show signs of once having had fire or coals in them. Hot coals or ice can be placed in the compartments, heating or cooling the countertop to keep any food placed on the counter at a given temperature. Next to the door to the Upstairs Kitchen (#25), there is a winch that lowers the dumbwaiter hanging from the ceiling through the trapdoor in the floor to the kitchen below. If someone takes the time to feel the floor (perhaps searching for valuables), he will notice that the floor is warmer than in other areas, due, of course, to the roaring blaze in the Kitchen below.



25b. Upstairs Pantry. The walls of this room are lined with shelves just like its counterpart (#6) below. The shelves are bare.

26 — 34. Guest Chambers. All of these rooms were once furnished as guest chambers. Most of the chambers contained a bed, a nightstand, and an armchair or two; the exception being Rooms #27 — 28 which were a suite: #27 was the sitting room and #28 the bedchamber. Little (if anything) remains of the furnishings, and certainly nothing of value will be found here.

35. Guest Hall. Arranged as a sitting or dining room, depending on the need, this room was reserved for use by guests. There is no furniture left, but there are indications that hangings once covered the north and south walls of this room. There is a fireplace in the center of the east wall. It has not been used in a long time. The west wall holds floor-to-ceiling bookshelves. There are only a few books remaining on the shelf, the others having been destroyed by Orcs or time. These books are so fragile that they will crumble unless handled with extreme care. There are two titles which might be of interest to non-Orcs entering here: "The Poetry of Mar-dooren" and "Herblore in the Mountains of the Greenwood." The first is a collection of poetry from Númenor. The second, written sometime during the first part of the Third Age, is a treatise on the herbs found in the Mountains of Mirkwood (once called Greenwood the Great). It lists all the herbs found in the area, along with their properties and uses.

36. Office/Study. There are bookshelves on the east and west walls and on both sides of the door in the south wall. A desk and chair stand under the window in the north wall. Both are covered with decorative carving. The desk has six drawers, three on each side. The lowest left-hand drawer has a secret compartment (Hard, -10, to find) in the bottom, and there is a secret compartment in the middle portion of the desktop (Extremely Hard, -30, to find). All the drawers and the compartments are empty.

37. Minor Hall. This upstairs hall was once used as both a dining and a sitting room by the lord of the keep and his family. No furniture remains in the room. There is a fireplace in the middle of the west wall. The east wall holds a door, 12' from the southern corner, leading to the bedrooms of the family. There are virtually no signs of Orcs, since any evil being will have a vague feeling of unease while in this room. If any evil creature passes through the door in the east wall (leading to the Bedchambers #38-45), it will have to make a RR vs 20th level Essence magic. If it fails that RR, it will have a strong feeling of unease and wish to leave this portion of the keep immediately. Once it leaves, the feeling will fade. If it returns, so will the feelings. Those evil creatures that successfully make their first RR will have to make new rolls each time they attempt to reenter this portion of the keep.

38—43. Bedchambers. These rooms were the private chambers of the lord's family or were used for storage. The suite (#42 and 43) was usually given to the heir to the estate, while the rest were simply used as needed. Rooms 39-41 each contain a bed, a clothespress, a nightstand and a writing table; Room 42 has two comfortable armchairs, a desk, and a sideboard; there is a fireplace in the middle of the south wall. Room 43 contains a bed, a clothespress, and a nightstand. All of the rooms have been thoroughly searched by the Orcs as evidenced by the disarray of the furnishings. Having discovered nothing, the Orcs no longer visit these chambers.

44. Sitting Room. The elegant furnishings of this room clearly mark it as the private chamber of the lord and his lady. There is a fireplace a little to the east of the middle of the north wall and a door in the south wall, 12' from the southwest corner. There are two beautiful armchairs near the fireplace, a writing table and chair under the window in the east wall, a sideboard in the northwest corner, and a spinning wheel in the southwest corner. The spinning wheel is extremely well crafted and adds a +5 bonus to any spinning done on it (value: 25 gp). All of the furniture (except the spinning wheel) in this room and in the Master Bedchamber (#45) is carved out of a single, immense birch tree.

45. Master Bedchamber. The first thing that catches the eye is a huge, birch, four-poster bed. It is 8' long and 5' wide, and rests against the west wall. The bedposts are worked to resemble vine-covered tree trunks. The head- and foot-boards are elegantly carved around the edges but left rather plain otherwise. There is a secret compartment (Sheer Folly, -45, to find) in the headboard of the bed. In it lies a velvet bag; inside the bag there are eight perfectly-matched star sapphires (50 gp ea.; 600 gp as set). Nightstands occupy either side of the bed, and a washstand with a marble basin rests under the window. There is a door in the east wall, two feet from the northeast corner.

45a. Closet. Judging by the numerous hooks on the walls and the large clothespress in the northeast corner, this room was used to store clothes. A portion of the north wall and the floor form a secret door (Very Hard, -20, to find). Opening the secret door reveals a very steep, very narrow (2 1/2' wide) stairway. The stairs curve slowly to the left, following the curve of the tower, as they progress downward. They open into a short passage leading to the hidden basement (#50).

TOWER ROOFS

46. Rooftops. The roofs have a 6' high battlement around them. The merlons are spaced about 10' apart and are 10' wide. Each is pierced by an arrow slit. The roofs slope slightly, allowing water to run to the edge and out through small holes in the base of the battlement. There are three sets of depressions in each roof. They are about 20' from the wall in the three outward-facing directions. Each set consists of four square holes (about four inches square and six inches deep) which form the corners of a 4' x 6' rectangle. They were put in to stabilize small catapults. The catapults were never installed.

THE CELLARS

47. First Cellar. The main feature in this room is the well in the northeast corner of the room. The well has a 3' high wall around it and is 60' deep, the bottom 10' of which is filled with water. Next to the well, there is a bucket and a rope long enough to get water out of the well.

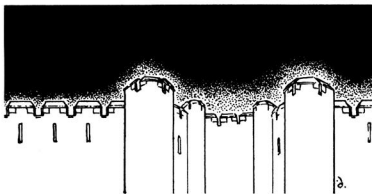
In the center of the east wall is an archway into the Main Cellar (#49). There is a door in the west wall, 12' from the northwest corner, leading to the Wine Cellar (#48); and a trap-door in the ceiling, just southwest of the center of the room, through which goods are moved from the Kitchen Storeroom (#7) to the cellars. Other than the bucket, the room is bare of furnishings.

48. Wine Cellar. The walls and most of the floor space are taken up by wine racks, all empty. There is nothing left to find here.

49. Main Cellar. This is the main storeroom of the keep. Currently there are about two dozen crates, bags, and barrels here. All contain foodstuffs or beverages, only one of which is worth mentioning: one small crate is packed with straw and twenty jars of the finest quality, Beijabar honey (5 sp ea.). There is a secret door (Extremely Hard, -40, to find) in the east wall of the room, 15' from the southeast corner. The door leads to the Secret Cellar (#50), and is made of 3' thick stone. The possibility of hearing a hollow sound while tapping on the door is almost impossible (Sheer Folly, -60, Perception roll).

50. Secret Cellar. This room was built as a refuge for the owners of the keep in times of trouble. There are three entrances: the secret stairs from the Master Bedchamber (#45a), the secret door from the Main Cellar (#49), and the secret escape tunnel. The entrance to the escape tunnel is a trapdoor in the floor against the east wall, 15' from the southeast corner. The passage descends down a stair heading west-northwest and runs straight for 3350', after which it climbs another stair and exits into a very dense patch of woods. The woodland exit is well hidden (Very Hard, -20, to find); it is a slightly altered, natural fissure well protected by plant growth. The Orcs have found neither entrances nor Secret Cellar.

The Secret Cellar has a single article of furniture in it: a chest. The chest is neither trapped nor locked (though it could be locked if a key was made for it). It does have a false bottom that is Very Hard (-15) to detect. If opened, the hidden compartment will reveal a hand-axe. The axe appears to be well-made, but not very special. There is tracery on the axehead, and the haft has a little decorative carving. The axe is an Axe of Orc-slaying. Normally it functions as a +15 OB hand axe; but against Orcs it has +25 OB, gives a second slaying critical, and bestows *MERP* Protections *Resistance* (+10 to RR and DB) on its wielder for the duration of combat.



5.4 THE TASK

The adventurers' task is to kill the Orcs and steal Sauron's tithe.

5.41 STARTING THE PLAYERS

Grimbold has come to Esgaroth to find adventurers. He needs help in attacking and robbing a garrison of Orcs. Grimbold has posted notices, and will wait for applicants one night in the taproom of a tavern.

5.42 AIDS

The party has its wits, its experience, its own supplies, and Grimbold. If they need more help than that, the GM may provide other NPCs (see Section 5.2), healing herbs, minor magic items and supplies, all of which are available in Esgaroth.

5.43 OBSTACLES

Ilmaryaen Keep is protected by thirty Orcs. Once the Orcs have been dealt with, the party must cope with the treasure, some of which is protected by traps.

The GM should feel free to adjust the numbers and activities of the Orcs (e.g., all awake, aware, and attacking versus asleep, separated, surprised) to suit his game and players.

5.44 REWARDS

The Orcs' treasure can be divided equally among all survivors. Since Grimbold is providing the information on the tithe and the location of the keep, he will want first choice of treasure. He is a fair person, though, and will expect to divide the hoard evenly, especially since there should be plenty for even the greediest player to try to carry away.

5.5 ENCOUNTERS

THE ORCS

The Orcs garrisoning Ilmaryaen Keep can be encountered either inside or outside the keep. Once the characters leave the Men-i-Naugrim, northbound, any nighttime encounters with Orcs are likely to be with the Orcs from Ilmaryaen Keep (01-70% that any Orcs encountered between the road and the outer edge of the hills around Ilmaryaen Keep will be from the keep; 01-85% that Orcs encountered between the edge of the hills and the keep itself will be from the keep). Any Orc casualties from such an encounter must be subtracted from the garrison of the keep. Use GM discretion or a random roll to determine whether one, two or three Korlagzrim are involved in an encounter. To find which specific Korlagzrim are involved, eliminate two consecutive Korlagzrim from the watch order listed below and choose from those remaining. Which Korlagz-drartul is leading each Korlagz is left to the GM.

If the Orcs encountered are not from the Keep, the number of Korlagzrim encountered will still be 1-3, but the casualties should not be subtracted from the keep's garrison. Use the stats from the NPC Table.

The Orcs at Ilmaryaen Keep maintain an organized watch system. All the Korlagzrim share the watch duty equally. Since they are nocturnal, the Orcs have three four-hour watches during the day and two six-hour watches at night. One Korlagz (five Orcs) watches at a time. The Korlagzrim rotate guard duty in the following order: Lesser Orc Korlagz — Uruk Korlagz — Lesser Orc Korlagz — Lesser Orc Korlagz — Uruk Korlagz — Lesser Orc Korlagz. Since there are five watches for every 24 hours and six Korlagzrim, each Korlagz has one day in every six off.

During the day, two of the Orcs on watch are in the Gatehouse (#24), while the remaining three are in the Great Hall (#3), occasionally checking for disturbances through the arrow slits in the south wall. Lesser Orcs will be -65 to all activity during the day, and will avoid the light as much as possible; arrow slits in the Gatehouse (#24) and Great Hall (#3) are covered by heavy material to keep out the light, and the Orcs will peek from behind those cloths only rarely. Uruks do not fear the sun as much as Lesser Orcs do, and will watch outside more diligently. Those Orcs not on watch during the day will be sleeping in their rooms.

At night, there are two Orcs on guard on each tower roof surveying the surrounding area, and one (the Korlagz-drartul) patrolling between the Upstairs Corridor (#23) and the Great Hall (#3). Almost half of the time (01-40), 1-3 Korlagzrim not on guard duty that night will be out raiding. Of the Orcs not raiding or on guard, most (01-75) are in the Great Hall (#3) drinking, gambling, and pursuing other Orcish pastimes; the others (76-00) will be in their rooms.

The doors to the keep will be open at night unless an alarm has been sounded. During the day, the inner door to the Great Hall (#3) is closed, but is barred only sometimes (01-20). The outer stone door (area #1) will only be closed if the keep is under attack.

6.0 TABLES

6.1 ENCOUNTER TABLE

Encounter	Open	TERRAIN		Swamp
		Forest	Mountain	
Chance (%)	40	25	20	15
Distance (Miles)	5	3	3	3
Time (Hours)	2	2	4	4
Creatures				
Black Bears (N)	—	01-05	—	—
Black Minks (D)	—	06-10	—	01-15
Boars (N)	—	11-17	—	—
Crebain (D,N)	01-05	18-20	01-07	16-20
Coireals (D)	—	21-26	—	—
Dire Wolves (D,N)	06-15	27-30	08-16	—
Dwarves (D)#	16-22	31	17	21
Elves (D,N)#	23-25	32-34	18	—
Fell Beasts (D)	—	—	19-25	—
Giant Martens (D,N)	—	35-41	—	—
Giant Spiders (D)	—	42-45	—	—
Great Bats (N)	—	46-50	26-34	—
Great Hawks (D)	—	—	35-41	—
Grey Wolves (D,N)	26-40	51-56	42-53	—
Huorns (D,N)	—	57-59	—	—
Lesser Giants (N)	—	—	54-59	—
Men (D,N)#	41-55	60-62	60-61	22
Mersic Tyka (D,N)	56-70	—	—	—
Nethraich (D)	—	—	—	23-40
Nimfiara (D)	—	63-70	—	—
Ninevet (D,N)	—	—	—	41-54
Orcs (N)	—	71-74	62-69	55-57
Pike (D,N)	—	—	—	58-75
Short Eared Owls (D)	—	75-80	—	76-85
Thrushes (D)	71-85	81-88	70-81	—
Trolls (N)	—	89-91	82-91	—
Wargs (N)	—	92-95	—	—
Wels (D,N)	—	—	—	86-00
White Foxes (N)	86-00	96-00	92-00	—

* — The letter in () after the creature's name gives the time of day when the creature is most active: (D) diurnal is most active during the day; (N) nocturnal is most active at night. An encounter with nocturnal creatures during the day, or diurnal creatures at night, can only occur if the characters are moving (if no one is going anywhere there can be no encounter) and such an encounter will occur at the creature's lair. There is an overlap of diurnal and nocturnal activity at dawn and at dusk.

— In "Open" terrain such encounters might include the local inhabitants, fellow travellers, and bandits. In any other terrain the encounter is more likely to be with the less savory members of the race in question, though there will be a few travellers on the roads and, rarely, a Ranger, Animist or Woodman elsewhere. The number of creatures encountered is given in the Beast Table (6.2). Orc encounters will be with groups of 5, 10, or 15 individuals (see 5.2 for details about the Orcs in this region and "NPCs in The Tithing Train" for their stats). The number of other NPCs encountered is left to the GM.

Use of the Encounter Table and Codes:

Choose the column appropriate to the character's location and roll (01-100) for an possible encounter. If the roll is less than or equal to the Chance given on the chart an encounter will occur. Make a second roll (01-100) to find the exact nature of the encounter (see table below). A third die roll (01-100) may be used to determine the seriousness of the encounter: the higher the roll the more dangerous the encounter is for the PCs (e.g. a roll of 14 may be only a distant sighting of a creature, benign or vicious; a 53 may be a brief attack or a momentary standoff before the creature turns and flees; a 79 could be a fight to the death or the sudden explosion of a creature from cover, giving half the PCs heart attacks). This die roll may be modified by the PC's perception bonuses (positive modifiers are subtracted from the roll; negative modifiers are added). The period of time covered by an encounter roll is given by the Time listed on the chart OR by the time it takes to cover the Distance listed on the chart, whichever is less.

6.2 BEAST TABLE

Type	Lvl	# Enc	Size/ Crit	Speed	Hits	AT	DB	(Primary/ Secondary/Tertiary) Attacks	Notes
Black Bear	5	1-5	L/I	MF/MF	150	SL/8	20	65LGr/60LCI/40MBi/70MBa	Aggressive.
Black Mink	1	1-10	M	VF/VF	50	SL/3	60	50MBi/—	Aggressive. Fierce. Ignore Stun Results.
Boars	3	1	M	FA/MF	120	SL/4	30	50MHo/50MBa/40STs	Mean-tempered.
Crebain	3	3-30	S	FA/FA	25	No/3	50	20SPi/20SCi/—	Evil. Large black crows, excellent spies.
Coireals	2	1-2	S	SL/VF	30	No/1	40	55SSSt/poison/—	Passive. Lvl 1 Nerve poison.
Dire Wolves	4	2-20	L/I	VF/FA	110	SL/3	45	75LBi/45MCI/—	Aggressive. Attack in cooperative groups.
Fell Beasts	20	1-5	L/La	FA/FA	240	RL/12	50	90HCl/90LGr/90LBa/60LBi	Small, Dragon-related monsters.
Giant Martens	4	1-2	M	VF/VF	75	No/3	50	60MBi/50MCI/—	Crazy, mean, fierce
Giant Spiders	8	1-10	M/I	MF/FA	160	SL/4	40	70LPi/75LSSt/poison	Evil. Uses webs to trap victims.
Great Bats	5	1-20	M	VF/VF	60	No/3	60	75MBi/70MCI/—	Aggressive. Nocturnal predators.
Great Hawks	10	1-2	L/I	VF/VF	100	SL/4	60	90LCI/60MPi/50MBa	Rare. Maneuverable.
Grey Wolves	3	2-12	M	FA/FA	80	SL/3	30	55LBi/30MCI/—	Hunt in packs.
Huorns	25	1-3	H/La	VS/VS	400	PI/20	0	80HBa/70HGr/100HCr	If HGr grabs Prey, HCr next round.
Lesser Giants	12	1-5	L/La	SL/MD	250	RL/11	20	95we/80LGr/110LCr/80ro(175)	If LGr gets crit, use LCr. Triple damage with we; ro attack is LCr
Mersic Tyka	1	7-12	S	FA/FA	55	SL/3	40	45MBi/—	Feral cowardly dogs.
Nethraich	1	1-2	S	MD/BF	25	No/1	25	35SSSt/poison/—	Territorial snake
Nimfiara	4	1-10	L	FA/FA	110	No/3	25	55MHo/65MTs/—	Lvl 2 Muscle poison.
Ninevet	5	1	L/I	MD/VF	130	SL/7	10	70LBa/80LGr/40MBi	Wily.
Pike	2	1	M	MF/FA	75	No/1	35	45MBi/—	Aggressive water monster. If LGr gets crit will try to drown prey.
Short Eared Owls	4	1-10	S	FA/FA	20	No/1	50	50SCi/25MCI/—	Aggressive freshwater predator.
Thrushes	0	1-2	T	VF/FA	6	No/1	60	15TPi/—	Intelligent predator.
Trolls, Cave	12	1-5	L/La	MD/MD	220	RL/11	25	100HCl/85we/80ro(150')	Intelligent messengers.
Forest	6	1-6	L/II	MF/MD	150	RL/11	10	70LCI/60LBi/40we/50ro(80')	Hostile; ro attack = LCr.
Stone	7	1-6	L/II	SL/MD	150	RL/11	15	80LBa/60LCI/40we/60ro(90')	Hostile; ro attack = MCr.
Wargs	8	4-20	L/I	VF/VF	180	SL/4	60	75LBi/60LCI/—	Hostile. Affected by "stun" & "hits/rnd"
Wels, small	3	1-5	M	SL/MF	160	SL/3	30	60MBa/60MGr/—	Ugly bottom feeder.
large	7	1-2	L/I	VS/MD	260	SL/4	15	90LBa/90LGr/swallow	Ugly bottom feeder.
White Foxes	1	1-5	S	MF/MF	40	No/3	60	35SBI/25SCi/—	Rare, shy.

NOTE: For a full description of all the creatures listed here see ICE's *Creatures of Middle Earth*.

CODES: The statistics given describe a typical creature of that type. Most of the codes are self-explanatory: Lvl(level), #/Encount (number encountered), Size (Tiny, Medium, Large or Huge), Hits, and DB (Defensive Bonus). The more complex statistics are described below:

Crit: When a creature takes a Critical result, resolve it on the Critical Strike Table indicated by this stat: no code=normal tables, La=Large Creature Table, SL=Super Large Table (Large Table with a -10 mod for MERP), I=normal table with severity reduced by one (e.g. "E" becomes a "D", "D" becomes a "C", etc.; ignore "A" results), II=normal table with severity reduced by two (e.g. "E" becomes a "C", "D" becomes an "A", ignore "A" and "B" results).

Speed: A creature's speed is given in terms of "Movement Speed/Attack Quickness": C=Creeping, VS=Very Slow, S=Slow, M=Medium, MF=Moderately Fast, F=Fast, VF=Very Fast, BF=Blindly Fast.

AT (Armor Type): The two-letter code gives the creature's MERP armor type (No=No Armor, SL=Soft Leather, RL=Rigid Leather, Ch=Chain, Pl=Plate); the number is equivalent to the RM armor type.

Attack: Each attack code starts with the attacker's Offensive Bonus. The first letter indicates the size of the attack: T=Tiny, S=Small, M=Medium, L=Large, and H=Huge. The last two letters indicate the type of attack: P=Pincher/Beak, Ba=Bash, Bi=Bite, Cl=Claw, Cr=Crush, Gr=Grapple, Ho=Horn, TS=Trample/Stamp, St=Stinger, and We=Weapon. Weapon codes follow: cb=composite bow, wh=whip, th=two-handed sword, da=dagger, ro=rock (use a S, M or L Cr attack, 50' range if no other range is given). These codes may differ slightly from the MERP or RM codes.

(Primary/Secondary/Tertiary): Each creature usually initiates combat using its "Primary" attack. Depending on the situation and the success of the "Primary" attack, it may later use its "Secondary" or "Tertiary" attacks (all in the same round if previous attacks are very successful).

6.3 SPECIAL HERB TABLE

The table below lists the special herbs which can be found in the Emyrn-nu-Fuin, Mirkwood, and the open area east of Mirkwood. The four regions are: Open — the plains east of Mirkwood; Forest, Coniferous — the forested areas of the Emyrn—nu—Fuin; Forest, Deciduous — the main body of Mirkwood and wooded areas east of Mirkwood; Mountains — the upper reaches of the Emyrn—nu—Fuin. The number code is the Difficulty of Finding such an herb: 1 - Routine (+30); 2 - Easy (+20); 3 - Light (+10); 4 - Medium (+0); 5 - Hard (-10); 6 - Very Hard (-20); 7 - Extremely Hard (-30); 8 - Sheer Folly (-50); 9 - Absurd (-70). When an "F" follows the number code that plant can be found only along freshwater coasts and banks (includes Marsh/Swamp) within the primary terrain.

The properties of most of these herbs are listed on the **MERP** Herbs, Poisons and Diseases Table (ST—5); the remainder are listed below. The **RM** tables list all the herbs below.

Herb	TERRAIN			
	Open	Coniferous	Deciduous	Mountains
Arfandas	—	—	—	5F
Arkasu	4	—	—	—
Arlan	2	—	—	—
Arlan's Slipper*	—	—	—	2
Arpsusar	5F	5F	5F	—
Aruminas	2	—	—	—
Arunya	3	—	—	—
Athelas	—	5	—	—
Attanar	4F	4F	4F	—
Bright Blue Eyes	7	—	—	—
Bursthelas	7	—	—	—
Darsurion	—	—	—	3
Edram	—	—	—	6F
Elben's Basket	7	—	—	—
Febfendu	—	—	—	4F
Grapeleaf Magnolia	—	—	6	—
Kelventari	3	—	—	—
Latha	—	—	—	4F
Mirrena	—	—	—	3
Mook	—	3	—	—
Rewk	—	—	3	—
Shen	6F	6F	6F	—
Splayfoot Goodwort	4F	4F	4F	—
Suranie	3F	3F	3F	—
Thurl	—	—	1	—
Yaran	2	—	—	—

* — Arlan's Slipper is listed as "Arlan" under "General Purpose Herbs" on **MERP** table ST—5.

HERB PROPERTIES

Herb	Form/Prep	Cost	Effect
Arunya	Root/brew	2bp	Causes sleep and quick unconsciousness. One hour's sleep equals 4.
Bright Blue Eyes	Flower/brew	15gp	Enhanced vision (x3 range) & mild infravision (50' range) for 3 hrs. 1/day.
Elban's Basket	Root/brew	10gp	Heart stimulant. x2 speed for 1 rnd, 1/hr.
Grapeleaf Magnolia	Nectar/ingest	7gp	Intoxication and dreams (-50 activity for 2 hrs) and one day nutrition.
Latha	Stem/brew	9sp	+10 disease RR, cures common cold. Heals 1-2.
Mook	Berry/ingest	30gp	Lvl 3 antidote for Respiratory Poisons.
Shem	Leaf/ingest	27gp	Lvl 4 antidote for Nerve Poisons.
Splayfoot Goodwort	Seeds/brew	23gp	For enemies of Sauron instills confidence and singleness of purpose (+25) for 1-4 hrs.

6.4 NPC TABLE

NPCs IN "ATTERCOP ATTACK"

Name	lvl	Hits	AT	DB	Sh	Gr	Melee OB	Missile OB	MM	Notes
Ulgar	3	63	No/1	0	N	N	46ha	16lcb	10	Rural Man Warrior
Runnal	1	41	RL/9	25	Y	N	47bs	32cb	5	Rural Man Ranger
Currael	1	42	SL/6	25	N	N	26ra	36da	30	Rural Woman Scout
Sigmar	3	77	CH/14	15	Y	A/L	70wh*	40wh*	15	Rural Man Warrior
Guntar	1	33	No/1	35	Y	N	33ha	28lcb	20	Rural Man Warrior
Aescstan	1	35	No/1	30	Y	N	33bs	23lcb	15	Rural Man Warrior

NPCs IN "TROUBLE WITH TROLLS"

Name	lvl	Hits	AT	DB	Sh	Gr	Melee OB	Missile OB	MM	Notes
Eolson	3	38	No/1	20	N	N	25da	15da	15	Urban Man Warrior
Rothaar	7	115	Ch/16	35	Y	A/L	113wh*	79lb*	0	Woodman Ranger
Elisa	3	65	No/1	20	N	N	74bs	49lcb	15	Rural Woman Warrior
Mariuk	1	34	No/1	15	N	N	43bs	28lcb	15	Rural Man Warrior
Fradurag	15	170	RL/11	50	Y	N	160cl	140ro	15	Stone Troll Warrior
Tumag (both)	10	144	RL/11	20	N	N	140cl	120ro	10	Stone Troll Warrior
Urnik	7	120	RL/11	20	N	N	125cl	105ro	10	Stone Troll Warrior

NPCs IN "THE TITHING TRAIN"

Name	lvl	Hits	AT	DB	Sh	Gr	Melee OB	Missile OB	MM	Notes
Grimbold	6	167	Ch/14*	60	Y10	A/L	122fl*	58cb	15	Beorning Warrior
Kragashi	1	49	RL/10	35	Y	A/L	28ks	(18sb)	-10	Lesser Orc Warriors
Kragashi	2	62	RL/10	35	Y	A/L	41ks	26sb	-5	Lesser Orc Warriors
Kragashi	2	67	RL/10	40	Y	A/L	46ks	(31lb)	0	Uruk Warriors
Kragashi	3	80	RL/10	40	Y	A/L	59ks	49lb	0	Uruk Warriors
Bokdankh	3	75	Ch/14	35	Y	A/L	54ks	34kn	0	Lesser Orc Warrior
Skoralg	3	75	Ch/14	35	Y	A/L	54ks	34kn	0	Lesser Orc Warrior
Fektalgh	3	75	Ch/14	35	Y	A/L	54ks	34kn	0	Lesser Orc Warrior
Hagrakh	3	75	Ch/14	35	Y	A/L	54ks	44kn	0	Lesser Orc Warrior
Ukrish	4	93	Ch/14	40	Y	A/L	72ks	47kn	5	Uruk Warrior
Gormuk	4	93	Ch/14	40	Y	A/L	72ks	47kn	5	Uruk Warrior
Marlug	5	101	Ch/14*	45	Y5	A/L	90ks*	50kn	0	Lesser Orc Warrior
Yagrash	7	126	Ch/16*	55	Y10	A/L	110wh*/86ks*	86lb*	5	Uruk Warrior

* — Armor or weapon is magical or specially made. Bonus is included in the DB or OB.

Codes: The statistics describe each NPC; a more detailed description of some of the more important NPCs can be obtained from the main text. Some of the codes are self-explanatory: Lvl(level), Hits, Sh(shield), and MM(Movement and Maneuver bonus). The more complex codes are described below.

AT (Armor Type): The two-letter code gives the creature's *MERP* armor type (No = No Armor, SL = Soft Leather, RL = Rigid Leather, Ch = Chain, Pl = Plate); the number is the equivalent *Rolemaster* type.

DB (Defensive Bonus): Note defensive bonuses include stats and shield. The DB of normal shields is 25. Shield references include quality bonus (e.g., "Y5" means "yes, a +5 shield").

Gr (Greaves) - "A" and "L" are used to indicate arm and leg greaves, respectively.

OBs (Offensive Bonuses): Weapon abbreviations follow OBs: ba-battle axe, bs-broadsword, cl-club, da-dagger, fa-falchion, fl-flail, ha-hand axe, hb-halfberd, ja-javelin, ma-mace, mg-main gauche, ml-mounted lance, ms-morning star, pa-pole arm, qs-quarterstaff, ra-rapier, sc-scimitar, sp-spear, ss-short sword, th-two handed sword, wh-war hammer, wp-whip, wm-war mattock, bo-bola, cb-composite bow, lcb-ligh crossbow, hcb-heavy crossbow, lb-long bow, ks-kragasharsd, kn-kragnif, ro-rock (as club except base range = 15), sb-short bow, sl-sling, ts-throwing star. Animal and unarmed attacks are abbreviated using code from the Master Beast Table. Combatants untrained in a type of weaponry (e.g., Orcs untrained in missile combat) suffer a penalty of -25 when attacking. Melee and missile OBs include the bonus for the combatant's best weapon in that category.

NOTE: Weapons in () are the most common weapon of that type used, but are not commonly carried (e.g., a first level Lesser Orc Kragashi does not normally carry a short bow, but will use one if it becomes available).



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