



ADVENTURES IN MIDDLE-EARTH™

BREE-LAND REGION GUIDE™



Explore Bree and the lands beyond in this combined resource guide and set of three ready to play adventures for the world's greatest fantasy setting.

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- CREDITS -

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- introduction -

If you're all going to meet in an inn, you may as well do it properly. Many a famous adventure has begun in *The Prancing Pony*, the legendary inn that stands in the middle of Bree. It was here that Gandalf the Grey met Thorin Oakenshield, and here too that Frodo first met Strider. Bree is a little island of civilisation out in the Wild, a town that survives only by the valour of those brave heroes who stand watch over it.

The *Bree-land Region Guide* takes *Adventures in Middle-earth* west of Rivendell, beyond the Trollshaws and on past the gaze of Weathertop to where the great East Road meets the Greenway. As well as describing the Bree-land and the folk who dwell there, the supplement also contains three complete adventures.

The first section, **A History of The Bree-land**, describes the surprisingly long history of Bree, as known to both local folk and the Wise.

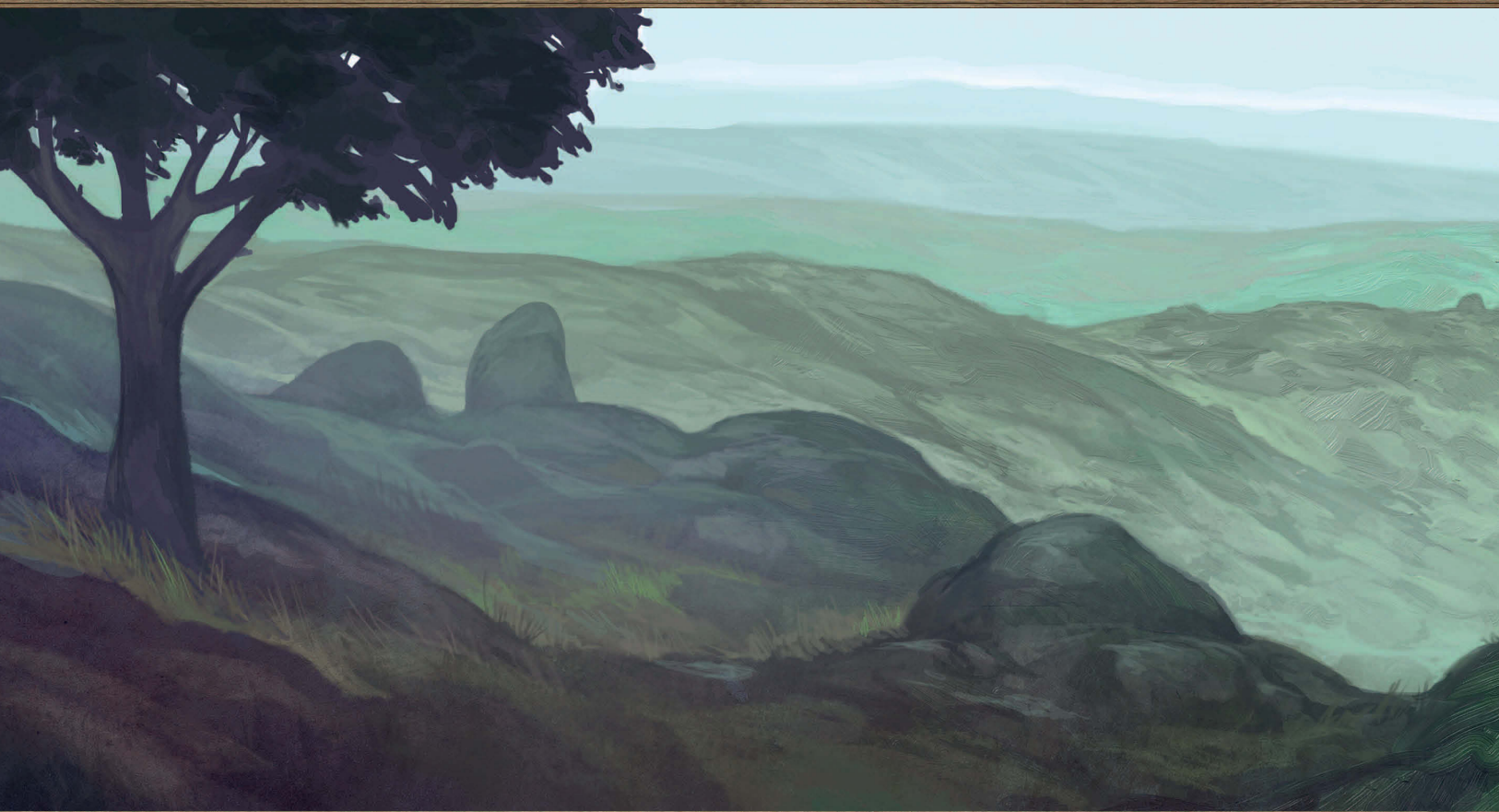
The following section describes **Bree-land and Around**, containing descriptions about the principal locations of the Bree-land and the characters who might be encountered there. It also provides new rules for combat scenery in urban environments.

The third section describes **The Prancing Pony**, Bree's most famous landmark, providing everything you need to know about the inn and its regulars.

Adventuring in Bree, the fourth section, includes some suggestions for what sort of adventures might occur in and around Bree. It also provides a list of new undertakings for the heroes to complete in the Fellowship phase.

The next section introduces the **Dwarves of the Blue Mountains** culture, as these traders are often seen passing through the Bree-land and might be convinced to have an adventure along the way.

The sixth section, **Foes to Freeze the Heart**, is a collection of new adversaries that lurk near to the Bree-land.



An Empty Land provides a series of customised Journey Events for the Bree-land and its borders. Finally, three complete adventures are included, set in and around the Bree. They are:

- **Old Bones and Skin** (Levels 1 or 2): Something's breaking into the graveyard of Bree and stealing corpses. The folk of Bree assume it's the undead, but it's actually a hungry Old Troll digging up old bones to eat. The Company must stake out the graveyard and find the real culprit, then track him to his lair in an old tomb and drive him away, but in doing so discover a far more insidious threat.
- **Strange Men, Strange Roads** (Levels 3 or 4): The Company set out to meet a Ranger at the *Forsaken Inn*, but they find him gone, murdered. A company of traders at the inn are the most likely suspects, but who amongst the travellers is guilty? The Company must track these travellers on the Road to Bree and spy on them, uncovering a nefarious scheme afoot that threatens all of the Bree-land.
- **Holed up in Staddle** (Levels 4 or 5): The companions join a Ranger on the hunt for a villain fleeing justice, following him into the Old Forest before they lose him. But the villain has snuck into the village of Staddle and holed up with a Hobbit family, taking them hostage and forcing them to help him bring his evil plans to fruition under the Harvest Moon.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This supplement is a guide to the places and peoples of this part of Middle-earth, and is an invaluable source of new gaming material that expands upon what has been presented in *Adventures in Middle-earth* and the *Rivendell Region Guide*. While the latter volume is not strictly necessary, a Loremaster's knowledge of the Bree-land will be greatly enhanced if both it and this guide are used together.

This supplement is primarily for Loremasters, but players — especially those playing Bree-folk or Dwarves of the Blue Mountains — may be allowed to read some of this guide, but others should generally refrain from doing so.



Certainly no player should read any of the adventures included.

The three adventures contained in this guide are designed to be run for a starting Company, perhaps one made up of Breefolk (and maybe a Dwarf and a Hobbit or two) off on their first quest, perhaps assisted by the presence of a Dúnedain or High Elf.

While **Old Bones and Skin** and **Strange Men, Strange Roads** can be run as standalone adventures, together with **Holed Up in Staddle** they form a short campaign. Heroes that complete the campaign will be ready to face the foes of *Eriador Adventures*, although Loremasters might wish to modify the first adventure of that volume and have it concern the Hill-men of Rhudaur instead of their cousins to the east.

EXPERIENCE AWARDS

Throughout the adventures you'll see symbols in the margin. These indicate a chance for the Loremaster to award Experience Points for overcoming challenges. These opportunities are optional, to be made at the Loremaster's discretion and in accordance with the method of levelling they have chosen. They might form a direct, numerical award or a silently observed instance that counts towards gaining a whole level if enough are checked off.

Every game will vary, but these Experience Awards have been calculated to offer a good chance for a typical Company to level up in accordance with the pace we suggest for this campaign.

The Bree-land adventures make use of the Companion and Challenge Rating Experience Award Table (provided on the right) for non-combat encounters. Just as a combat encounter should be scaled to reflect the size of your Company, so too should these Awards be scaled to match your group of adventurers.

The symbols in **red** represent an individual achievement and are awarded to a single hero. Those in **green** are intended to be divided amongst the party. Experience derived from battle is calculated according to the core rules — for the sake of simplicity and consistency there is no change there.

Challenge	XP	Challenge	XP
1/8	25	2	450
1/4	50	3	700
1/2	100	4	1,100
1	200	5	1,800

Individual
Award



Group
Award

THE TALE OF YEARS

If you want to follow the default pacing of gameplay suggested in *Adventures in Middle-earth*, playing all the adventures contained in the *Bree-land Region Guide* should take three or more years.

Every scenario offers plenty of opportunities to keep the companions busy for a year of game time, as the players can easily follow their Adventuring phase with a fruitful Fellowship phase, or even start a supplemental Adventuring phase building upon the consequences of the previous one. Both the first and final adventures are designed to be broken partway through with an additional Fellowship phase.

Even if you don't feel comfortable with playing one adventure per year, we suggest that you at least let one year pass for every two adventures. A tight pace of gameplay could be as follows:

Old Bones and Skin could be run in the autumn of 2971 (or any year, really). **Strange Men, Strange Roads** could then be run in the late spring of the following year. **Holed Up in Staddle** could then follow in the summer, ending in the autumn of 2972.

Once your Company has vanquished Gorlanc, they might like to set out on a quest beyond the Bree-land. *Eriador Adventures* contains six more adventures set nearby, including one on the Greenway and another around the Barrow-downs and Bree.

a history of the - BREE-land -

According to their own tales they were the original inhabitants and were the descendants of the First Men that ever wandered into the West of the middle-world...

Some will tell you that Bree is old.

Older than the Shire. Older than Minas Tirith. Older than Fornost. Older than the Havens. They tell that there has been a settlement here, on the Road, since the First Age of the World. And the Road passing through the Bree-land is ancient, for it was made by the Firstborn, long, long ago, when they passed this way heading West.

For others Bree is younger, as they say that the Men of Bree are cousins to the Dunlendings, a folk of Men that long ago dwelt in distant dales in the far south and that eventually moved north, to live in the foothills of the Misty Mountains.

Of course, if you ask a Bree-lander most of the above is just pointless chatter. Bree-hill has always been there, and if you want to know about history, you will be regaled with an infinitely detailed recounting of village gossip, marriages, births, deaths, things said in the taproom of *The Pony*, things not said when they should have been said, and so forth.

A HISTORY OF THE FOUR VILLAGES

The Bree-folk on the whole do not account for many scholars. History, and geography for that matter, are words that aren't much used in the Bree-dialect, and books are a rare sight around here, almost as much as oliphaunts. And so it is that a definitive history of Bree is hard to come by.

But while most are generally wary of "book learning", not every Bree-lander is quite so wilfully ignorant. Take the Hobbit scholar Lemuel Heathertoës, for example: in the

year 2921, Lemuel finished the compilation of his *History of the Four Villages*, a copy of which may be found in the Bree Counting House.



Any who can gain access to this book and have an interest to read it, will learn that Lemuel traces evidence of the existence of Bree back to the reign of the last king of Arnor. In the year 843 of the Third Age, the king ordered the construction of a 'fortress and stables' for the defence of travellers on the road. The text tells that nothing of

this ancient fortress survives; it was likely besieged and destroyed during the middle years of the Third Age, probably during the sack of Cardolan in 1409, if not earlier. The fall of Cardolan was followed by plague, and Lemuel recounts how recorded incidents tell of the waking of evil things in the oldest barrows west of Bree.

The book states that in the year 1300 or thereabouts, the first Hobbits came to this region from out of the East, and settled in the Bree-land. They chose to live mainly on the southeast slopes of the Hill, in the village of Staddle, and it is still a matter of debate today if that village was indeed founded by Hobbits, or if it was inhabited by the Big Folk before that.

In time, more and more Hobbits passed through Bree, until in the year 1601 the Fallohide brothers Marcho and Blanco obtained permission from the King of Arthedain to settle in the then-abandoned lands west of the Old Forest. Many of the Bree-hobbits followed them across the Brandywine to their new home, and so the Big Folk moved into the farms and gardens (and sometimes even the holes) vacated in their stead.

Among the historical facts that Heathertoës records as relevant to the history of Bree is the burning of the town in the year 1974, when armies of Orcs and Men attacked the kingdom of Arthedain. Bree-land was overrun, the Bree-folk fled and hid in the Chetwood, until the armies of the South Kingdom arrived and broke the power of Angmar.

The village was rebuilt in 1976, although some of those who survived the war chose to leave for the south instead of remaining behind in a ruined Eriador. Without a king in the North, the Bree-landers elected a Reeve to lead them

and to administer their affairs, and that arrangement has lasted to the present day. A learned reader may recognise that the recorded line of Reeves is older, in fact, than the line of Stewards in Gondor.

Bree prospered in the years that followed the defeat of Angmar, especially when Dwarves started to appear on the road in greater numbers. Serving their needs (and relieving them of their heavy gold) became one of the chief businesses of Bree, along with trade goods passing from the Shire through Bree and south to Tharbad.

The town survived the Long Winter thanks to its sheltered farmland, but other towns of the region did not. Plague and bad weather and Orc-invasions left the surrounding land empty and barren. Heathertoës notes that as recently as 2800, it was not unheard-of for Orcs to attack as far west as Bree, and the weapons of the Wardens – the town guards – were used in deadly earnest time and again.

In the conclusions of his work, Lemuel Heathertoës ventures to say that it has been the close kinship of Bree and the Shire that helped both settlements to endure, when many other towns and villages in Eriador were depopulated and abandoned.

Since Heathertoës completed his history, traffic between the Shire and Bree has fluctuated. In the first heady years after Bilbo's return to the Shire, many bold Hobbits (and their coin) made it as far east as *The Prancing Pony*, only for most to return having their fill of the Wide World already. Since then, Shire-Hobbits are scarcer and scarcer and a day may come when even a small party out of the West will be the talk of the town. But not yet: there is still coming and going between Buckland and Bree, at least.





- BREE-land - & around

Before them rose Bree-hill barring the way, a dark mass against misty stars; and under its western flank nestled a large village. Towards it they now hurried desiring only to find a fire, and a door between them and the night.

Bree is the last little island of civilisation and warmth in the midst of the empty wilderness of the North. Step out the gates, and you are on the Road that leads out into the wide world beyond. The Bree-folk are sensible, stay-at-home types; they leave wandering the Wild to adventurers and other strange types. They know what they already have, and they cherish it.

BREE-HILL

"Bree" means hill, in the tongue of the first men to live here. Bree-hill is not a remarkable hill by any means. It rises gently out of the rolling downs, carrying woods on its back to the east, but its south and west sides are cloaked in thick grasses. The hill is mostly chalky earth, but there is a small quarry on the south side, where the folk of Bree obtain good stone for building.

There was a watchtower atop the hill, long ago, but nothing remains of it now. Even without the tower, an observer on top of Bree-hill can see Weathertop in the distance to the east, and the Great Road with its gentle bend south to avoid the perils of the Midgewater Marshes. To the west, the lines of the Greenway can still be seen, graven onto the land, passing through the farms and pastures of the Breeland and out into the wild to the south.

North, too, runs the Greenway – the City Road, some in Bree still call it, although the city it once led to is gone now. Further west the East Road unfolds like a dark ribbon beyond the crossings where it meets the Greenway, bordering the perils of the haunted Barrow-downs and beyond, the choking thickets of the Old Forest.

Bree itself lies south-west of the hill, close to the Greenway-crossing. Staddle is on the far side of the hill, on its southeastern slope, and Combe beyond that to the north, in a deep dark valley. The Chetwood grows on the northeastern side of the valley, spreading out and turning wilder and more tangled as it runs north and east. Many paths lead through the woods to Archet.

Bree's farms are tightly clustered around the hill. The soil of the Bree-land is rich and dark, good for root vegetables and mushrooms in particular. Further from the town proper, sheep, cows and goats graze on the rolling hills and crop the grass that grows over ancient roads and tombs. There are a few outlying farmhouses studded across the



swathes of territory that make up the greater Bree-land, but the Bree-landers generally mistrust anyone who lives outside the villages, and consider them to be strange and a little dangerous.

Combat Scenery: Boulders, Lone Trees, Nettle Banks, Rock Edges, Varied Slopes

THE ROADS

The Greenway-crossing is where the East Road meets the North Road just outside the western boundaries of the

four villages. Referred to by the Bree-folk as The Road, singular, the East Road runs east to the High Pass and off to Wilderland, and west along the Old Forest, on through the Shire, and hence to the Blue Mountains and the Sea.

The other road, once known as the North Road, is no longer in regular use, and is so overgrown that Men now call it the Greenway. The Greenway runs south to the crossings of Tharbad, and from there through the Gap of Rohan where it twists east to reach Gondor. North, it runs to what the Bree-folk call Deadman's Dike, which was once Fornost Erain, the seat of the kings of Arthedain.

New Fellowship Phase Undertaking: Guard the East Road

The great East Road is often guarded by the Rangers of the North, as part of their guardianship over the Shire and Eriador in general. But they are few in numbers, and often seek trusted allies to help in their watch and gather information. Dúnedain companions and heroes who have earned their trust who are spending a Fellowship phase in Bree may help the Rangers in patrolling the Road. If a character chooses to guard the East Road on behalf of the Rangers, roll on the table below. During Spring and Summer, roll with Advantage; for Autumn and Winter roll with Disadvantage.

1: Scorned. For the length of your watch, travellers have given you the treatment they reserve for the Rangers: scowling looks, scornful names, and well-aimed stones. Dispirited and angry, you gain 1 Shadow point.

2-4: Wandering Folk. Long hours in the Wild have not improved your temperament or appearance. For the following Adventuring phase, if you're with the Company during an Audience the Introduction Check is made with Disadvantage.

5-7: A Duty Well-served. Nothing exciting happens, but the Rangers appreciate your dedication. During the next Adventuring phase, if the Company has an Audience with the Dúnedain you automatically grant Advantage on the Introduction Check.

8-10: Help Needed. You spy a group of travellers in difficulty (Dwarves weary and dispirited after a very long journey, local farmers whose horses were spooked apparently for no reason and ran away, Hobbits from the Shire heading for *The Prancing Pony* who expected a shorter trip, etc.). You offer your help and they reward you with their gratitude. Once during the next Adventuring phase you can remember this moment to grant yourself Inspiration.

11-13: Good Watch. The long hours sharpen your senses. You receive 2 Patrol dice. A Patrol die is a d4 and can be added to any roll during a journey in which the hero is serving as a Look-out or Scout. Unused Patrol dice are lost at the end of the Adventuring phase.

14-16: Very Good Watch. As above, but you receive 3 Patrol dice.

17-19: Rumours in the Wild. You gather news and rumours from travellers on the Road. You gain 3 Rumour dice. A Rumour die is a d4 and can be added to any Intelligence or Wisdom check. Unused Rumour dice are lost at the end of the Adventuring phase.

20: Time Well Spent. Choose any result other than *Rumours in the Wild* or roll again.

Combat Scenery: Birdsong (near Bree or hidden Dúnedain refuges), Dikes (at the edges of the Road), Foundations, Rubble, Steep Slopes (the Greenway south of Bree), Warm Sun.

THE EAST ROAD

The East Road is much more relevant to the Bree-land than the Greenway, in particular because Dwarves still pass through Bree regularly and thus can be encountered along the Road going east or west with packs on their backs.

Those coming from Wilderland are often travelling on some lawful business or on some errand for the King under the Mountain, but others are of a poorer sort, pedlars of iron-ware, tinkers, or road-menders going to Bree or the Shire to offer their services.

Farmers from the Bree-land can also be met, riding on large fat horses on their way to the east side of the Shire, to sell their produce to some well-to do Hobbit families. Inside Bree-land proper, the East Road runs south of the town and is kept in reasonable repair by the Bree-folk; within a few miles from the four villages it is kept clear of weeds and obstacles, and free from troublemakers (though the Rangers do much more than the Bree-folk know on that score).

Going east and approaching the Midgewater Marshes, the Road soon becomes very bad; for many long miles it is rutted and pitted, and almost lost in soft bog, so much that travellers journeying with ponies or on horseback often dismount to trudge along on foot. Side trails lead off the road to Staddle and Combe; the well-trod paths to Archet go through Combe valley.

There are trees growing along the Road for many leagues from the Greenway-crossing to the Brandywine Bridge, so ancient that the folk of Bree and the Shire say they were planted 'in the old days'. For more than half its course, the eaves of the Old Forest can be seen from the south side of the road, in places straying dangerously close to the line of trees bordering the road itself.

At times in the past, the forest had to be driven back with axes and fire by folk from the four villages, but this has not been required in living memory.

Ruby Boffin

Shirriffing in the Shire is a respectable job: you go around helping people and sorting out problems. But 'beating the bounds' (that is, keeping a watch on the Shire's borders) is a chore that few Hobbits welcome, as it involves a great deal of walking without many possibilities to stop at an inn for a drink. Ruby Boffin, therefore, is a rarity, for she likes very long walks, and can be encountered even along the Great Road on her way to Bree.



Born in a family of the Eastfarthing, Ruby makes it a point to spend at least a couple of nights every month at *The Pony*. She seems to enjoy meeting Outsiders on the Road, and even relishes those occasions when she has to "put a bit of stick about", as she terms it.

Her un-Hobbit-like taste for violence can be blamed on her younger days, when she went "Adventuring with a Wizard", and was never the same afterwards. Her fellow Bounders consider her rather cracked, of course, if not entirely mad.

Motivation: I've still got the stuff for a little bit of Adventure in me.

Expectations: *"The world is wider and wilder than the Shire knows"* +2 if the heroes are polite strangers; *"They may be dull but they're family"* -1 if the Company disparages her homeland or its occupants.

RUBY BOFFIN

Small Hobbit

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)

Armour Class 13 (Leather jerkin)

Hit Points 33 (6d6+12)

Speed 25 ft

Skills Insight +4, Riddle +5, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Westron

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Focused. Ruby's use of the staff in combat is unmatched. She may use her Dexterity modifier instead of her Strength to determine to-hit and damage. She has 3 Focus points, which she regains when she takes a short or long rest. She can use her bonus action and spend one Focus point on her turn to take the Dash, Disengage or Dodge action or to make another attack with her Staff.

Well-travelled. If Ruby is with the Company and they are travelling in the Bree-land then the Guide rolls 1d8+4 for the Embarkation Roll.

Actions

Staff: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) bludgeoning damage or 6 (1d8+2) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

WESTERN BREE-LAND

Western Bree-land – the region north of the East Road extending from the Greenway-crossing to the Brandywine Bridge, is a wide expanse, composed mostly of featureless flats broken by sparse woods and grey swellings, slowly rising as it fades into the deserted lone-lands to the North.

The area is mostly uninhabited and avoided by most folks, if it wasn't for a few adventurous Hobbits from Buckland to the west, who at times come here 'for the hunting' (mainly fowling), and a bunch of hardy shepherds from Bree to the east, bringing their herds beyond the Greenway when the season requires it.

In recent years though, Rangers have started to pass through the region in secret more and more often. They have been busy opening new trails allowing a traveller to go from Bree to the Brandywine Bridge and back without

being spied from the Road, and building a number of hidden refuges. Their goal is to reinforce their watch on the borders of the Shire, a task they have undertaken under orders from their chieftain, after a personal request from Gandalf, the Grey Wizard. The Rangers of the North operate in this area out of Bree, using *The Prancing Pony* as their meeting place, but they have planned to build and maintain a fortified refuge on Girdley Island, a wooded eyot on the Brandywine, about ten miles north of the Bridge of Stonebows (see below).

Combat Scenery: Briar Patches, Fences (treat as Root-covered Walls), Old Walls, Paths, Small Streams, Thickets

Hallas Dúnadan

Hallas is a captain of the Rangers of the North, sent to lead the men put on watch over the Shire. He is usually found in the company of his son, Halbarad, a tall, young man in his twenties.

HALLAS

Medium Human

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

Armour Class 17 (Scale hauberk, Shield)

Hit Points 66 (7d8+35)

Speed 30 ft

Skills Insight +5, Perception +5, Pipe +3, Survival +5, Traditions +3

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Westron, Sindarin

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Battle-wise. Hallas has Advantage on initiative checks.

Endurance of the Dúnedain. Hallas may continue to act normally for one round after being reduced to 0 hit points.

Long-pipe. Hallas can make a **DC 15 Intelligence (Pipe)** check as an action. On a success, he makes his next ability check with Advantage.

Unyielding (Recharge 5-6). Hallas can use his bonus action to gain 10 temporary hit points.

Actions

Multiattack. Hallas can make two attacks with his Long Sword or Short Bow.

Long Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) slashing damage or 8 (1d10+3) slashing damage if wielded with two hands.

Short Bow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft, one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6+1) piercing damage.

Once esquire to Talandil, the guardian of Fornost Erain (see *Rivendell Region Guide*, page 60), Hallas is wise in old lore and a shrewd tactician, a veteran of many battles fought in the Trollshaws.

But among his many talents is an unguessable one: Hallas often enters the Shire with his son from Sarn Ford, posing as a merchant visiting the Southfarthing to buy pipe-weed. This way Hallas keeps himself up to date with any Shire gossip, and fills the pipes of his men with the best leaf.

Motivation: Even the meekest and meanest are worthy of our protection.

Expectations: *"Fair words can hide foul intent"* -2 if the companions are not plain-spoken; *"Scorn and doubt are our lot"* +1 if the heroes are kind and respectful.

Building the Refuge at Girdley Island

Hallas Dúnadan's main task is to complete the construction of the refuge on the borders of the Shire. When the fastness will be complete, the Rangers will be able to move swiftly along the river on their light, flat-bottomed boats, to patrol the borders of the land of the Hobbits as far south as Sarn Ford, more than thirty leagues away from the Brandywine Bridge, or to paddle north, up to Lake Evendim and the ruins of Annúminas. If the companions are Dúnedain, or are presented with the

Temporary Fellowship Phase Undertaking: Build a Refuge

Each Fellowship phase following an invitation to join in the construction of the refuge, the Loremaster will offer the companions a chance to take part in one stage of the endeavour, in the order they are listed below.

At least one companion must take part in each one of the listed stages and succeed in the required roll (a DC 15 check of the indicated skill); If two or more heroes participate then the hero rolling gains Advantage. See also the rules for Specialities on page 121 of the *Player's Guide* as certain ones are likely to apply to various stages.

If the roll succeeds, then all companions that selected the undertaking begin the next Adventuring phase with Inspiration. If it fails, or no one selects the undertaking in a Fellowship phase, the same stage is used again at the next Fellowship phase. If the Company ignores the undertaking then Hallas completes the refuge after several years of hard work but the shirkers are not invited to the island.

- Stage 1. Scouting and clearing of the part of the island where the construction will take place. (*Investigation*)

- Stage 2. Opening trails allowing for the secret transportation of materials from the Bree-land to the river. (*Survival*)
- Stage 3. The transportation of the materials needed to build the secret fort. (*Athletics*)
- Stage 4. First part of the construction of the fort itself. (*Any appropriate tools*)
- Stage 5. Completion of the construction of the fort itself. (*Any appropriate tools*)

Should the fort at Girdley Island be completed with their help the companions will have access to it permanently (allowing them a safe place to take a long rest), and will have gained Gandalf the Grey as a Patron (or can expect a favour from him, if the Wizard is already a patron to the Company).

Additionally, close to the end of the construction, a hidden chamber is discovered under the ground of the island, and the burial site of a noble of Arthedain is brought to light, along with a rich hoard of treasure. If the companions assisted in the building of the refuge, treat their share as having a value of 10***, with the numerical rating multiplied by the number of stages they helped complete.

occasion to help the Rangers in their endeavour, maybe after a specific request of Gandalf or Elrond Halfelven, they can join Hallas in his undertaking.

Girdley island is presently a tangle of wild shrubs and low trees, covering a strip of land about two miles in length, formed where the Brandywine splits its course in two streams. Clearing the island and building a hidden refuge is a task that will take many months to complete, especially as secrecy is required. To help in the endeavour, the companions will have to spend a number of Fellowship phases, choosing the undertaking listed on page 13.

THE HALL OF ORGULAS

There is an abandoned mansion less than ten leagues due northeast from the Brandywine Bridge, a few miles north of the East Road. It was a large and sumptuous building, now slowly falling into ruin, its size made all the more impressive considering that it was built by a Hobbit.

The mansion was erected almost one hundred years ago by one Orgulas Brandybuck, the youngest son of Marmadoc, a Master of Buckland. Obsessed by the hunting of a particular creature that supposedly lived in the woods to the north of the East Road, Orgulas eventually resolved to dedicate most of his time in catching the creature and spent a considerable part of his family fortune to build a hunting lodge there, in the Outlands.

Orgulas laboured for several years with the help of Dwarven masons, eventually finding the time to get married and see the birth of a son. But evidently his family life in Buckland was not satisfactory enough to make Orgulas forget his obsession: during his sixtieth birthday party, Orgulas announced his intention to retire to his hunting lodge and leave his home once and for all.

No one remembers when news of Orgulas stopped reaching the Shire, but when his disaffected son Gorbulas finally resolved to go and see what happened to his father about twenty years ago, he found the lodge deserted. Since that day, the hall of Orgulas has been left to rot, together with the memory of its founder. Travellers that know of its existence shun it, but wanderers in search of shelter during stormy nights have spent a night or two under its roof, attracted by a faint light seen shining inside it, or at least so the gossips say.

Unbeknownst to everyone, including the Rangers patrolling the area, Orgulas is still alive, his wits completely gone. Several decades ago he convinced himself that his elusive quarry was not a surface dweller, but an underground creature, and he resolved to live under his hall, to delve deep into the nearby hills and seek out his prey. For years on end, Orgulas has quietly and patiently dug a complex of subterranean passages, following what he believes are the tracks left by the creature he now calls the 'deepdelver', in mocking tribute to his ancestor Gormadoc Brandybuck.

The 'Deepdelver'

What is the creature that Orgulas Brandybuck calls the 'deepdelver'? Does it exist at all, or is it a figment of his distorted mind? It doesn't make a difference for the hobbit, as he will spend every minute of what remains of his life to hunt it. Should a Loremaster be interested in exploring the fate of Orgulas Brandybuck, he should first make a choice about the nature of the 'deepdelver', possibly selecting an explanation among the two presented here.

- The 'deepdelver' does not exist. Or rather, it is Orgulas who has become the 'deepdelver' indulging in his obsession, a creature so ferociously territorial that will attack anyone appearing to threaten his safety. Knowing the mansion inside and out (and below!), Orgulas can set traps and ambushes, luring nosy companions into deep pits and crumbling tunnels...
- The creature is real! The focus of Orgulas' obsession is an undead creature - an ancient vampire who since many centuries has been recovering from an old wound suffered in a forgotten duel, and that at the time of Orgulas' youth prowled the land in the form of a giant rat. Hounded by Orgulas, the vampire has been able to elude him to this day, but soon his strength will be fully recovered and he will become the hunter, to first prey on Orgulas, then on the inhabitants of Buckland and the east side of the Shire. Take the Secret Shadow from the Loremaster's Guide and generously add abilities from 'Evils of the North' in the Rivendell Region Guide.

Having given body and soul to his quest, Orgulas rarely returns above ground, and only after nightfall, in order to enter his latest findings in a journal he keeps hidden in the library of his lodge. In the long years he has spent in the dark under his house, the hobbit has altered his habits drastically, including his diet, to adapt them to his subterranean existence. He has turned feral, as any intruder spending too much time in his house might discover.

THE CHETWOOD

The forest known as the Chetwood rises on the back of Bree-hill, extending for about thirty miles to the north and covering about the same distance from the Greenway to the west to the Midgewater Marshes to the east.

While to an outsider walking along its eaves the Chetwood may appear wholesome and full of light, its inner regions are as old as the Old Forest; both are remnants of the ancient woodland that once covered all the land. But no one living in the Bree-land ever ventures far into the woods, and no one dares to ask what lies deep beneath its green canopy. Why should they stray far into the woods, when they can gather their firewood and building materials close to home?

Moreover, the southern reaches of the Chetwood have always been a refuge for the folk of the four villages, in

times when their land was overrun with Orcs and Evil Men.

There are hidden cabins and caves in those parts of the wood where the Bree-landers once stored supplies in case they had to flee their homes. These days, few people bother care about those cabins and storehouses, but some of the older, more eccentric folk still hide a portion of every harvest in the wood, like squirrels. Of course, it is scavengers like squirrels and mice who benefit the most from the tradition — there are few large animals in the southern portion of the Chetwood, but plenty of birds and small game.

Despite the confidence of the Bree-landers and the pride they take for the quietness of their woods, the north-eastern Chetwood is a darker place. There, the ground slopes down slowly towards the boggy morass of the Midgewater Marshes (see *Rivendell Region Guide*, page 58), and unwary travellers can find themselves waist-deep in mud if they step off the wrong tree-root. Here, too, are old patches of the forest where the trees sleep uneasily, and remember the axes of Angmar and the evil of Men. Even the woodwise Rangers of the North know it is best to avoid such places in the spring and autumn, when the trees, and their guardians, are at their cruellest.

Combat Scenery: Bog, Bracken, Impenetrable Hedges, Low Boughs, Paths, Rotten Trees, Thick-trunked Trees



BREE

The village of Bree had some hundred stone houses of the Big Folk, mostly above the Road, nestling on the hillside with windows looking west.

A traveller approaching Bree from the west will see the columns of smoke from its many chimneys rising into the sky before the prominent local landmark of Bree-hill. As they draw closer they will see a tall dark barrier running in a deep curve out from the hill and back around to it: a deep ditch with a thick and thorny hedge with closely interwoven boughs on the inner side. The Road passes

over this dike by means of a causeway, and where the road cuts through the hedge it is barred by a large gate. Another gate sits at the southern corner of the tall barrier, where the Road runs out of the village. The gates are opened every morning, and closed at nightfall by gatekeepers who reside in small gate lodges next to each gate.

Five hundred folk, Big and Little, live within the thorny hedge of Bree; perhaps half that again live near Bree-hill or south of the Road, but are still close enough to the village to stumble home from an evening at *The Prancing Pony* without risking life and limb. The townsfolk divide the town into Old-town and New-town, although no one

Combat Scenery for Towns

Large towns like Bree or Dale (or their much larger cousins in the South) allow the Loremaster to present some additional challenges for a combat in town:

Ditches

During a combat in the streets, drainage-works can easily catch the unwary. Whenever a creature crosses this terrain feature, it must make a DC 8 Dexterity saving throw or become prone.

Doors

Most doors are made of wood, sometimes reinforced by metal strips (AC 15, 20 hp). An open door can provide three-quarters cover for someone ducking behind it, and a closed door blocks line of sight entirely.

Good Cheer

Heroes hunting a skulking assassin in the dark streets of a town can easily forget why they are risking life and limb. A sudden burst of song or laughter from a nearby tavern or inn can remind them that they protect the innocence of the common folk. Goodly creatures gain Inspiration.

Roofs

Thatched roofs are unlikely to support much weight, causing creatures to fall into the structure. Tiled or wooden shingled roofs count as steep slopes, giving

those higher up Advantage and lower combatants Disadvantage.

Tunnels

Larger townships (especially those of Dúnedain construction) might have complex sewer and drainage systems. Even the largest tunnels only allow one or two creatures to stand side-by-side, creatures wielding two-handed weapons have Disadvantage on attack rolls and only the foremost creature in an enemy group can be targeted by ranged weapons.

Walls

House walls are varied — sod (AC 10, 30 hp), wood (AC 15, 25 hp) or brick/stone (AC 17, 30 hp). A creature next to a wall can gain half-cover from it if their attacker does not have a clear line of sight.

Windows

Most have wooden shutters and some will have glass panes. A large open window between two combatants provides three-quarters cover while a smaller window offers full cover.

There are many other pieces of combat scenery that could be featured in a town combat: covered or open pits, foundations, lone trees, mud, rubble and statues to name a few.

living today has seen the construction of any of the newer buildings.

The Bree-folk have no ruler. They elect a Reeve of Bree, who holds office for seven years and seven days, but they have little power, and are mainly charged with resolving disputes over property and livestock. Each village, including Bree, sends a councillor each year to advise the Reeve. The method of choosing a councillor varies from village to village: Staddle elects theirs; Combe sends the oldest villager who is still able to travel and still has some measure of wit; Archet has its own strange ways. Bree, in recognition of its size and importance, has a councillor and a Reeve; by tradition, if one is Big, the other is Little.

Combat Scenery: Birdsong, Ditches, Doors, Good Cheer, Impenetrable Hedge, Lone Trees, Roofs, Walls, Windows

HEDGE & GATES

Bree's main defence is an ancient hedge that looks like it was woven at the time of the village's first inhabitants. Certainly the thorn bushes which make up this impenetrable barrier are so tall they must be many centuries old, and their gnarled limbs twist back and forth, weaving a pattern that must have taken great ages to grow to its current state. The causeways that carry the Road over the dike also date from those ancient times, and are still in good repair. A local legend tells that when Bree was abandoned during the war with Angmar, a lone Troll came down from the Trollshaws and took up residence in the lee of the southern causeway, hiding from the sun in its shadow and demanding a toll from passers-by.

A human-like skull of prodigious size is kept as a treasure in the Counting-house, giving some substance to the old tale.

The deep dike and thick thorny hedge protect Bree on three sides, with the steep slopes of Bree-hill guarding it from the North and East. The hedge is tallest and thickest near the gates, but presents an impressive barrier that would surely dissuade any wandering animals or troublesome Goblins. The two gates are made of sturdy wood, bound in iron. There is a gatekeeper at each gate night and day, and several other watchmen can be called to duty at the ringing of a bell kept in each lodge. There is also a modest watchtower, half-way along the hedge between the two

gates, built as the replacement for the toppled tower atop the hill. From the top of this tower, a good archer can strike at any foes clambering across the dike.

A well-hidden, smaller opening pierces the hedge to the north, where a small door of dark wood is reached by a path starting from *The Pony*. On the other side of the hedge, the track leads to the Greenway. The older Bree-hobbits call the opening the 'postern-gate', but every one else call it the 'Rangers' door', as only those stealthy wanderers use it nowadays.

The Bree-wardens

In addition to the keeper at each gate, Bree employs a small number of Wardens, who keep the peace and deal with problems around the villages. Like their counterparts in the Shire, the wardens spend more time dealing with straying animals than thieves or two-legged miscreants. The Wardens are called up only when needed – on market days, or when a large number of strangers pass through town. Most young men spend a season or two on the Warden's roster, especially if they hope to get work as a caravan guard, which is considered an acceptable adventure among the Bree-folk.

Being a Warden carries with it a degree of prestige – Wardens get to carry a big stick, and even wear a helmet sometimes – but little danger. The Reeve appoints the Chief Warden, who serves until they become too old or infirm to carry out their not-especially-onerous duties. The position comes with a stipend, and the right to wear a red feather in one's cap.

Most Wardens are Town Guards, but a few experienced ones are Warriors (see pages 68-72 in the *Loremaster's Guide*).

THE QUARRY

The old quarry is still in infrequent use, but was worked extensively in times past, as its stone was used to build the houses of Bree, and to keep the road and the bridges across the Brandywine in good repair. At times of heavy

rain, the quarry's excavations partially flood, and become extremely dangerous; Bree-children are warned not to trespass too close, for fear of drowning. Strange stories, discounted by all save the most credulous, insist that tunnels lead from the back of the quarry to the cellars of the older Hobbit-holes in Staddle; these same stories talk about Wights hiding in the darkness, or treasures buried in the last days of the kingdom.

The fanciest stonework of the buildings in Bree do not owe their origins to the quarry though, but to old Tharbad, as the many oddly carved and mismatched stones set into their walls will tell. Much of the dressed stone that makes up the buildings of the East Row of Bree was in fact recovered from the abandoned ruins of once-mighty buildings by the crafty Bree-landers, whose common sense could not suffer such quality material to be left among the growing grasses.

THE GREEN

This open space is the heart of Bree, where the townsfolk gather and where the chief business of the town takes place.

Markets are held four times a year here, when farmers and freeholders from the villages come in to sell their produce and livestock, and to buy from Dwarven merchants and the occasional enterprising Brandybuck. Merchants sometimes come up the Greenway to buy and sell at the market; Shire-grown pipeweed and other clever things made by the Hobbits are especially popular, as are sturdy ponies. Bree is always crowded to bursting on market-days, and the Wardens (see page 17) call up all their reserves to keep an eye on things.

The Inn of *The Prancing Pony* (see page 30) stands opposite the Green, on the other side of the Road, while on the other is the Counting-house and Reeve's Hall.

The Counting-house was once where the king's men collected the taxes and tariffs from the Bree-folk and from travellers on the road. Today, it is still used for council meetings and tax collection, and is as close as Bree has to a town hall or lord's palace. The building itself sits upon pillars of stone, of various designs. These were found long ago amid the ancient ruins scattered across the empty lands around Bree, and dragged back to the town as a

footing for the Counting-house. The pillars raise it up above the nearby buildings, and the Bree-folk think it most grand and clever. In reality, its elevated position, with no lower floor, makes the Counting-house rather draughty. This has the virtue of keeping council meetings brief and decisive, as even the most silver-tongued speakers find their eloquence to be most unhealthy in the long run.

The Counting-house is also home to Bree's treasury and mint (where suspect foreign coins are melted down and recast as good honest silver pennies), and to the Warden's Armoury, where spears and iron helmets are kept for times of need.

The Reeve's Hall is not the home of the Reeve: it is Bree's court-house. The Reeve's herald – usually, a young fellow who knows his letters – stands on the raised porch of the house and reads proclamations and by-laws made by the Reeve on market days. Documents and records are stored upstairs. Village legend claims that there is a vault in the basement that not only holds a fortune in silver, but also jewels and wonders from days of old, carried out of the ruins of the North-kingdom; in truth, the vault mainly contains bottles of Old Winyards and some cured hams.

Matthew Mugwort

There is wisdom and lore such that Wizards and Elves might possess through long years of study. And there's the knowing of Bree, which Matthew Mugwort, a Hobbit, possesses in spades. Put any question to him – preferably, over a pint in *The Pony* – and he'll answer it for you with complete and utter certainty. Matthew Mugwort knows right from wrong, and sensible business from the foolishness of foreign lands. He may not be counted among the Wise, but in Bree his opinion counts for a great deal indeed.

From his barstool, Matthew Mugwort has pronounced judgements upon many topics, like the Rangers (*"troublesome outlaws, the lot of them"*), Orcs (*"they live far away in t' mountains, they do, and it's always them Dwerrves who're stirring 'em up"*), Outsiders (*"all right so long as they don't outstay their welcome"*), Barrow-wights (*"nonsense about ghosts – it's just fog and broken stones that look like men"*), and the future (*"pay it no mind and it'll attend to itself"*).

As long as the beer's flowing, Mugwort will argue about anything with the placid impenetrability of a man who is absolutely certain that there's nothing of any worth outside Bree-land. If he's present in the bar when adventurers arrive, he'll argue with them and undermine anything they say: "*you came from Rivendell? Ha! That's out of fairy stories, man! Did you fly here on a magic boat, too?*" (Any checks using **Intimidation**, **Persuasion** or **Riddle** automatically have Disadvantage. He is the living embodiment of the parochial attitude of most Bree-folk.)

Motivation: If I don't know it then it's not worth knowing.

Expectations: "*Ah, you're right to ask me, you are*" +1 if the Company's concerns are centered on the Bree-land; "*Ye must not have been listening, let me repeat myself...*" -1 if the heroes dispute his 'facts'.

MATTHEW MUGWORT *Small Hobbit*

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Armour Class 10

Hit Points 9 (2d6+2)

Speed 25 ft

Skills Insight +3, Intimidation +4, Perception +3, Pipe +4, Traditions +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Westron

Challenge 0 (0 XP)

Bolster. If Matthew is present for an Audience, his support can sway others. The spokesperson for the Company can make a **DC 15 Persuasion (Charisma)** check with Disadvantage to impress him, on a success the Company has Advantage on all other checks during the Audience.

Confound. If Matthew is present for an Audience, he can bluster a storm of opinions that can turn the tide against outsiders. The spokesperson for the Company must make a **DC 12 Charisma** saving throw or gain Disadvantage on all further checks during the Audience.

Actions

Hazel Rod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 1 bludgeoning damage.



OLD-TOWN

Old-town, as may already have been surmised, is the oldest part of Bree, rising above the Road on the lower slopes of the Hill. The houses here all have windows looking west and are made from stone. Some stand two or even three storeys tall. The tallest are the home of crafters – weavers, dyers, leather-workers – and have workshops on the ground floor. Others are owned by wealthy farmers who own large portions of the countryside around the village. The folk of Old-town are notoriously snobbish towards 'blow-ins' and 'rustics', so if you haven't lived in Bree since before the days of the kings, you're simply not 'quality'. They don't extend this prejudice to travellers on the road; Old-town has always prospered from traffic and trade.

The best-known landmark in Old-town is the town well, sunk deep into the hillside to bring up good water even when other streams run dry. It's considered lucky for a traveller departing Bree to take a drink from the well just before leaving; since the beer in *The Pony* is always brewed with water from this well, the luck surely holds if the traveller has one more for the road.

The town well is also where youths from Bree gather in the hopes of signing on as caravan-guards and hired hands with merchants heading off along the Road. A young Bree-lander can earn more on a single trip to the Blue Mountains than in a year of work on a farm; Dwarves drive a hard bargain, but they pay in gold and silver.

Another common sight in Old-town are the Cellar-hobbits. When Hobbits first settled in Bree, some of them rented the cellars of human homes to live in. This became a tradition, where two families, Big and Little, share the same building. Often, the two families share responsibilities and chores; for example, the Sheafwheat family grow the wheat and mill it into flour, while the Greenbanks in their cellar are the bakers who turn that flour into the best bread in Bree.

Opposite the well stands a notable house called the Dwarf-house — it was bought many years ago by a particular family of Dwarves. They do not live there year-round, but stay in it whenever they pass through Bree. The house is kept locked when empty, and there is endless speculation in the common-room of *The Pony* about exactly what is inside, with some favouring the theory that one of the fabled Dwarf-women lives there, and others assuming that it is full of gold. The Dwarves who own the Dwarf-house are strange and standoffish, even for Dwarves, and they go north along the Greenway as often as they go west to the Blue Mountains.

Twyc Greenleaf, Reeve of Bree

Old Twyc is in his third term as Reeve. He attributes his snowy-white hair and weariness to the demands of his high office; everyone else points out that he is well into his seventh decade, and that he spends more time snoozing than working in the Reeve's House. He entrusts virtually all business of managing Bree to his young (and ambitious) assistant, Cole.



The one thing that shakes him out of his lethargy is crime; as Reeve, he is the judge of Bree, and is infamously stern when it comes to the perpetrators of violence or cruelty.

Motivation: Justice will be done, in the name of Bree.

Expectations: *"Evil will out, in the end"* +2 if the heroes bring solid evidence of wrongdoing to him; *"This isn't the place for fairy stories"* -2 if the Company speaks of spirits, magic or other outlandish things.

NEW-TOWN

The houses of New-town stand on the higher slopes of the hill above Old-town. New-town is home to most of Bree's Hobbits. Some streets in New-town are Hobbit-sized and exceedingly narrow, especially where the Hobbits live in houses instead of holes. Houses are much more popular among Bree-hobbits than Shire-hobbits for several reasons. First, the Bree-hobbits learned stoneworking from the Men and the Dwarves, and so are better at building snug, warm, sensible homes above ground. Second, and perhaps greater, Bree-hill's south-eastern slope is already so riddled with bore-holes, cellars, Hobbit-homes and tunnels that it's impractical to dig any more holes in the slopes near Bree.

The Big Folk of New-town are, in the main, less wealthy than their neighbours around the hill. Most are farmers who labour in the fields outside the village.

Notable locations in New-town include the school and the smithy. The school is the pride of Bree. Children, Big and Little, attend it for a few years when their families can spare them, and are taught their letters, arithmetic and other useful vocational skills (little of pure scholarly worth is taught, as such pursuits are deemed unnecessary by most for a happy life in the Bree-land).

The other villages do not have schools, although some children come to Bree and board with relatives in order to attend lessons for a few years. The Schoolmistress of Bree is one of the most important people in the town, on a par with the Innkeeper or the Chief Warden.

The smithy in Bree makes horseshoes, nails, farm implements and other common goods. Adventurers seeking weapons or armour must wait until a market-day, or until there is a Dwarf-smith in town who can make such things.

Tad Tillfield

Young Tad is a newly commissioned Warden of Bree. Indeed, he is so excited about becoming a Warden that he has thrown himself wholeheartedly into his new role. He rushes around Bree-land on Important Missions and Warden Business, never stinting or shirking.

The other, more experienced Wardens have realised that they can get Tad to do all their work for them, so he gets lumbered with all the worst jobs (or, as they tell him, “entrusted with the most important tasks that only a true Warden can accomplish”), like watching the gate on cold rainy nights, looking for sheep that have strayed into the Old Forest – or dealing with adventuring-types who look like they might cause trouble.

TAO TILLFIELD Medium Human

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Armour Class 16 (Hide Armour, Shield)

Hit Points 13 (3d8)

Speed 30 ft

Skills Intimidation +2, Investigation +2, Perception +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Westron

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Defender of That Which He Loves (1/day). If Tad is fighting in defense of Bree, he can use his bonus action to gain 10 temporary hit points.

Shield-strike (Recharge 5-6). If Tad has just struck with his club, he can use his bonus action to slam his shield into his target. The creature takes 2 points of bludgeoning damage and must make a **DC 11 Strength** saving throw or become Prone.

Actions

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4+1) bludgeoning damage.

Tad takes the latter of these duties especially seriously; if the Company enter Bree on his watch, he'll dog their every footstep to make sure they keep the peace of the town.

Motivation: I'm going to be Chief Warden and Bree will be safe under my watch.

Expectations: “It's my business to be asking questions” +1 if the heroes answer quickly (even with riddling words); “We don't go in for trouble of any kind around here” -2 if the companions speak of dangers or threats beyond the fields that Tad knows.



EAST ROW

The East Row is the newest part of Bree, built on land that was once reserved for grazing by caravan-ponies. When refugees from lost Tharbad came north, they settled here and built the East Row. The houses here are built using stone taken from the abandoned city, and other ruins found within the Bree-land, and are more richly decorated than the rest of Bree.

Statues of old kings and heroes stand guard over doorways, and gargoyles and stone ships carry water down from gutters. The atmosphere in parts of the East Row is different to the rest of Bree: less welcoming, less trusting, less Hobbit-like.

Many of the East Row houses have gardens or orchards stretching back up the hillside behind them.

Anna Wintermoss, Schoolmistress

Anna runs the school in Bree, teaching the youths of Bree their letters and numbers. She's not a native of the North – she came up the Greenway five years ago, pursued by strange men who chased her right to the end of Bree-land. Anna never talks about her past, but from her accent and speech, she must come from the distant South. When not teaching, she sometimes wanders the Barrow-downs, as if looking for a particular tomb.

Motivation: I'm here to teach the children today, the past is of no consequence.

Expectations: “It is not worth the telling” -1 if the companions pry into her past; “We should not speak of such things here” -2 if a hero addresses her in any language other than Westron.



ANNA WINTERMOSS

Medium Human

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)

Armour Class 13

Hit Points 35 (7d8+7)

Speed 30 ft

Skills Deception +2, History +6, Performance +2, Riddle +6, Shadow-lore +6

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Westron, Adûnaic, Sindarin, Black Speech

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Cruel Stroke (Recharge 5-6). If Anna's attack has just hit, she may spend her bonus action to turn her attack into a critical hit.

Distraction Attack. Anna can use her bonus action to feint or otherwise distract her opponent. The target must make a **DC 13 Wisdom** saving throw or she gains Advantage on her attacks this round.

Wicked Cunning (1/day). Anna can use her bonus action to activate this ability. For the remainder of the combat, she has +4 to her AC.

Actions

Multiattack. She makes three melee attacks with her Dagger.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft or range 20/60 ft, one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage.

Reactions

Uncanny Dodge. If Anna can see an attacker that has struck her, she may use her reaction to halve that attack's damage.

THE FORSAKEN INN

The *Forsaken Inn* is a day's travel east of Bree, along the East Road, and is the last safe house west of the mountains for most travellers. Some fortunate souls know the way to the hidden valley of Rivendell, and can rest at the house of Master Elrond; others, like Dwarves or Rangers, can read the signs to secret camps or refuges prepared by their kinfolk. But for most the beds of the *Forsaken Inn* are the last comfort to be found along the East Road.

The *Forsaken Inn* is an ill-favoured, unfriendly place; most of the customers are hunters and trappers from the surrounding lone-lands who mistrust strangers. The inn is a ramshackle half-ruin in poor repair, the beer is stale and the food is dire, but it is a place to rest on the road if the innkeeper bothers opening up. Travellers on the road are charged extortionate prices for room and board. In Bree, they tell stories about the Innkeeper of the *Forsaken Inn*, claiming that he keeps wolves that prey on travellers on the road who don't stay in his inn, or that he practises sorcery and murders guests who do stay in the inn.

Rangers frequent the *Forsaken Inn*; if one seeks the Dúnedain, look for them among the wild men and surly brutes in the common room here.



Jack the Forsaken

The current owner of the *Forsaken Inn* inherited the place by being the only guest on the night when the previous owner – an old woman who believed she was the widow of the last king – died in her bed. Jack is more than a half a bandit, but owning an inn has awoken something in him. As long as his guests don't cheat him or cross him, he'll guard them as they sleep. Give him half an excuse, though, and you'll find your purse empty and your pony sold when the morning comes.

In appearance Jack is scruffy, with a wiry frame and a face that tells the story of a tough life, despite his apparent young years. His countenance is rough, and he lacks most

manners. However he is a survivor, eking out a meagre living, helping people as best as his bad habits and bitter experiences will allow.

Motivation: I've finally got a chance to make something of myself, but trouble seems to hang over me like a rain cloud.

Expectations: *"This ain't The Pony, and you can take it or leave it."* -1 if the companions complain – Jack knows his Inn doesn't measure up but doesn't like to be reminded of that; *"I can do a discount if you can do a chore or two"* +2 there's always a hundred or two things that need doing at the Inn and more when you're as lazy as Jack. If the Company looks like the crafty sort he might reduce his overinflated prices to take some payment in trade.

JACK THE FORSAKEN Medium Human

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Armour Class 13 (Leather corslet)

Hit Points 39 (6d8+12)

Speed 30 ft

Skills Deception +4, Perception +5, Stealth +3, Survival +3, Traditions +2

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Westron

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Expert. Jack doubles his Proficiency Bonus for Deception and Perception (included above).

Nimble Escape. Jack can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of his turns.

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, Jack deals an extra 3 (1d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has Advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of his ally that isn't Incapacitated and he doesn't have Disadvantage on the attack roll.

Actions

Short Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Short Bow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80/320 ft, one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Reactions

Parry. Jack adds 2 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, he must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

STADDLE

There are two ways to see smoke come out of a Hobbit's ears. Firstly, you could go and visit Adelard Took, the champion pipe-smoker of Tookborough and the only Hobbit ever to blow finer smoke-rings than a Wizard. The second, and easier, method is to call Staddle "East Bree" in front of any Hobbits of the Tunnely family. The insinuation that Staddle is a mere extension – or worse, suburb – of the larger town on the other side of the hill is absolute anathema to the proud Hobbits.

The village of Staddle is, with all honesty, very similar to Bree. There are some twenty stone houses of the Big Folk arranged along the crossing of two paths. One path runs south to the Road, and north to the pastures; the other path runs west along the slopes of the hill to Bree, passing the Windmill of Staddle. More than half the village is underground; Hobbit-holes dot the banks and hillside, and a path of crushed gravel leads up to the grand door of the Smial of Staddle.

Staddle has an inn, the Lamplighter, which is a modest but welcoming establishment. It sees more custom from local Hobbits than Big Folk or foreigners.

Combat Scenery: Ditches, Doors, Good Cheer, Impenetrable Hedge, Lone Trees, Walls, Warm Sun, Windows

Adelard Took

Of Adelard, it was said that he could expel smoke from one ear or both, and blow different shapes and colours with each ear. His preferred weed was Old Toby, but for such trick-smoking he favoured a zesty brand from the Eastfarthing called Willow's Wisp.

Accusations and allegations that he possessed a magic pipe made by the Dwarves dogged him all his life, even though it is a matter of public record in the Shire that he won the first pipe-smoking championship two years before his cousin Bilbo returned from his quest to the Lonely Mountain.



THE SMIAL OF STADDLE

More properly, the *Great Smial of Staddle*, although you could just say the Smial and everyone in Bree-land would know where you mean. The Smial of Staddle is the vast and labyrinthine underground mansion of the Tunnellies, the richest Hobbits in the region.

The Tunnellies consider themselves the equal of any of the great families of the Shire, of the Tooks or Brandybucks or any other one would care to name. If anything, the Tunnellies say, their name is more prestigious, for the first holes of the Smial of Staddle were dug before any Hobbit entered the Shire.

The Tunnellies are not the only family to live in the Smial; after the Fell Winter, parts of the Smial fell into disuse, so other Hobbit families moved in, although they have to put up with the infamous tempers of their hosts. The last war fought in Bree, the War of 2930 (also known as the War of Thursday Afternoon), after all, was started by

the Tunnellies. They have always objected to the authority of the Reeve of Bree, except when (as often happens), the Reeve is a Tunnelly. On that fateful Thursday in 2930, the Reeve was not a Tunnelly, and when he made a ruling against the Tunnellies, they marched back to the Smial in high dudgeon.

The chieftain of the Tunnellies declared that Staddle would no longer be subject to the Reeve's jurisdiction, and would henceforth stand alone. Some dozen Hobbits were sent out to seize the windmill and "secure the border"; some accounts insist that a pony-rider was dispatched cross-country to Buckland to rally support there.

As it turned out, the first council of war held in the Smial was accompanied by an exceedingly fine supper, and the newly commissioned thanes of Staddle took a long nap afterwards. On waking, they felt somewhat more reasonable, and hostilities ceased, with the only significant casualty being the Tunnelly wine cellar.

Every so often, a hot-blooded Hobbit of Staddle will threaten a "repeat of 2930" or to "send a pony to Buckland" over some imagined slight from Bree.

Grandmother Tunnelly

The ruler of the Tunnelly clan is a Hobbit matriarch in the ancient mode; fiercely protective of her family, and determined to pry into the smallest aspects of their lives.

Nothing happens in Staddle without her knowledge and permission, and nothing intimidates her. If a Dragon landed on the Smial of Staddle, she would try to drive it away by thumping it on the nose with her umbrella.

Motivation: For four-dozen generations, the Tunnellies have been a respectable family. I won't tolerate anyone who threatens our heritage.

Expectations: *"It's nice that someone from the Colony has decided to visit"* +1 if a Hobbit of the Shire is Speaker and does not object to Grandmother Tunnelly's condescension; *"No trouble at all dearie, we Tunnellies are always eager to help the less fortunate"* +2 if you can convince Grandmother Tunnelly that your idea is really her idea, she's more likely to agree with you.



GRANDMOTHER TUNNELLY

Small Hobbit

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

Armour Class 10

Hit Points 14 (4d6)

Speed 25 ft

Skills Intimidation +8, History +3, Persuasion +6, Traditions +5

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Westron

Challenge 0 (0 XP)

Expert. Grandmother Tunnelly doubles her Proficiency Bonus for Intimidation and Traditions (included above).

Lord of Her Domain. Grandmother Tunnelly only meets with visitors in the ancient and richly decorated halls of the Great Smial. She imposes Disadvantage on the Introduction Check for an Audience.

Stubborn Will. If a speaker in an Audience with Grandmother Tunnelly wishes to propose a course of action adverse to her wishes, the speaker must first make a **DC 14 Charisma** saving throw.

Actions

Umbrella. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 1 bludgeoning damage.

COMBE

Combe lies in a deep, dark valley between hill and wood. It is always gloomy in the valley, and even the noonday sun struggles to penetrate the mists. The folk of Combe are stereotypically glum and dour, as if the darkness of their valley has leeches into their spirits. The main road to Combe is via a path that joins the East Road. There is a short-cut that goes through Staddle and then onto Bree, but that requires climbing the steep southern slope of the valley by the Stile of Combe, a staircase of steps cut into the rock.

The Stile was once quite safe, but floods in the spring after the Fell Winter washed part of it away and weakened other sections, and now it is treacherous. The folk of Combe prophesy darkly that the rest of the Stile will soon collapse and bury some unlucky traveller, but that's just what a Combe-born fellow would say.

The village of Combe is the second-largest in terms of buildings, counting some thirty stone houses, but third in population. There is no inn or place for travellers to rest, other than begging shelter in a private house or barn. The folk are more Big than Little; perhaps if there were more Hobbits in Combe, it would be a brighter place. That said, the Hobbit family of Mudbanks come from Combe, and they are so direly dull they could make an Elf-child despair of life.

The valley of Combe is good farmland, and the high hillsides make for good grazing. If there is one thing that raises the spirits of the folk of Combe, it is their animals — they breed excellent sheep and cows, and keep a great many hounds. They have had need of these hounds in the past, as Trolls are drawn to the valley of Combe. To a Troll, Combe is a delight, with plenty of sheep to munch on and plenty of shadows and caves to hide in when the sun rises. The Rangers stop most of these Trolls, but still one or two creep down from the mountains every few years and must be driven off with fire and spears. If there are doughty warriors to be found in Bree-land, they live in Combe.

Combat Scenery: Briar Patches, Eerie Mist, Locked Doors, Small Windows, Steep Slopes, Stone Walls

Oswald Brecker, the Squire of Combe

Said to be the richest and most miserly man in all of Bree-land, Oswald Brecker lives in the big house at the edge of Combe. He rarely goes outside, but employs Little servants to fetch and carry for him. Brecker owns much of the land around Combe, and demands high rents from the tenant-farmers who live there. He is not a popular man among the Bree-folk.

OSWALD BRECKER *Medium Human*

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	8 (-1)

Armour Class 15 (Corslet of Mail, Shield)

Hit Points 52 (7d8+21)

Speed 30 ft

Skills Lore +5, Shadow-lore +5, Survival +6, Traditions +5

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Westron, Sindarin

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Duellist. Oswald is more skilled with a sword than most Bree-folk know, add +2 to his damage (included below).

Unyielding (Recharge 5-6). Oscar can use his bonus action to gain 6 temporary hit points.

Actions

Multiattack. Oscar makes two melee attacks with his Long Sword.

Long Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8+5) slashing damage or 10 (1d10+5) slashing damage if wielded with two hands.

Reactions

Great Might (Recharge 5-6). Oscar can use his reaction when struck to reduce the damage he takes by 3, to a minimum of 1.

His wife died nine years ago, and his daughter vanished some years before that; she ran off with a minstrel, or went adventuring, or went mad, or ran away, depending on which gossip you listen to. No doubt he would pay well for any news of her. Those few who have been guests at his table say that he has a room full of books and scrolls and old things, and that he spends long nights in study of the past. They say, too, that Rangers sometimes visit Oswald Brecker, and that they esteem him more than his neighbours, although why this is so they cannot fathom.

Motivation: I have lost all but my knowledge and if I do not keep my mind sharp, I will lose that too.

Expectations: *"My private affairs are no concern of yours"* -2 if the heroes are indiscreet in asking after his wife or daughter; *"Not many in Bree know the truth of the matter"* +1 if the Company proves themselves not to be provincial in their outlook or makeup, or if they can provide Oswald with news.

THE HIGH HOUSE

This old ruin stands at the end of Combe valley. It was once a large fortified house, perhaps even a castle, although it is mostly tumbled-down and overgrown now. The shepherds of the upper vales keep sheep there in winter, and shelter there on rainy nights. Many who have slept there report having strange dreams of elder days, of warriors in shining armour and great battles and kings both wild and foolish.

Those who are wise in old lore may have heard of Malbeth the Seer, and of his house, rising close to the tower of Amon Sûl, and wonder if his ghost whispers to the simple shepherds of Combe.

THE THIEVES' GLEN

A little coppice of woods near the entrance to the valley is commonly referred to as the Thieves' Glen. It is certainly ideally placed for ambushing travellers on the road to Bree, and offers plenty of places to hide or to stash stolen goods. There have been no bandit attacks this close to Bree in many years, but the name has stuck to the woods, as have stories of ghosts and buried treasure.

The Melancholy of Combe

The melancholy of Combe can be soothing to those who have suffered deeply. A hero who undertakes to Heal Corruption in Combe may choose to automatically succeed instead of making a check to remove Shadow.

This automatic success removes 2 points of temporary Shadow.

ARCHET

Tree-girdled Archet is the smallest and most insular of the villages of Bree. The folk there are strange and secretive, and rarely visit the other villages. Even for natives of the Bree-land, Archet is sometimes hard to find, as if the paths around it move sometimes. Of course, Archet is so small that a traveller could walk right by it without noticing; it's little more than a dozen buildings, mostly wooden ones, clustered around a clearing in the forest. Other houses in Archet are cleverly concealed; some are built atop the tree themselves, others are built Hobbit-fashion among the roots of old trees.



There is an inn in Archet, the Woodfellow, that's also the trading post and common hall for the village, where visitors can stay if they have nowhere else to go. Archet is mostly Big Folk, although there are a few Hobbits there too. The Hobbits fish and catch eels out in the Midgewater Marshes, and have a great knowledge of those swamps. They know certain medicinal herbs and mosses that grow there, as well as which places to avoid.

The folk of Archet are skilled bowmen, and provide hunting bows as well as timber and firewood to the other villages. By ancient custom dating back to the days of the kings, the Royal Forester is chosen by the Men of Archet. This is largely a ceremonial position, but it still carries great importance in town.

The Forester is charged with protecting the game in the forest should the king ever return unexpectedly and wish to go hunting, and with ensuring that no bandits make the wood into their hiding place. These days, the only one of the Forester's duties that is still of any consequence is his authority over animals in the woods; no one may hunt deer or boars near Archet without his permission.

Combat Scenery: Deer Tracks, Hedges of Tree Limbs, Low Boughs, Thickets, Wood Walls, Steep-sloped Roofs, Tunnels leading to Hobbit Holes

THE WOOD-CASTLE

The Wood-castle is a spot between Archet and the East Road, where a knoll of rough stone rises suddenly out of the forest. It is a naturally defensible place; a clan of Dwarves could toil for years and not improve it as a fortress.

From the top of the Wood-castle, an archer could command the forest as far south as the Road, and three warriors could hold the heights against a thousand. In the past, the Wood-castle has been both a bandit camp and a Troll lair; the folk of Archet now keep a close eye on it, and keep it ready in case danger threatens again.

THE ELF-DELL

Deep in the woods of Archet, where few mortals ever go, is a grassy dell where the Wandering Companies of the Elves sometimes make their camp. They are here most frequently in the summer, when the weather is fair and the stars blaze brightly at night. There are no Elf-friends in Archet, but some who live on the outskirts of the village have heard the Elves singing from afar.

Even when there are no Elves here, something of their presence lingers here, and the Elf-dell is always free from fear and care. The Elf-dell counts as a sheltered refuge, and a Company that camps there gains the benefit of a long rest.

Harry Talltree, the Forester of Archet

The current holder of the office of Royal Forester is Harry Talltree, a giant of a man. Despite his astounding size (seven feet if he's an inch) and prodigious girth, he is quiet as a mouse when moving through the forests. He carries a huge wood-chopping axe with him everywhere he goes, and knows how to use it on more than just trees.



There was a Troll's head on a spike outside his house until his neighbours complained about the smell and the flies buzzing around it, and Harry still gets asked to tell the story of how he cut the monster's head off whenever he goes to an inn.

In truth, Harry always leaves part of the story out. The Troll he fought was of the two-headed variety, and he only

chopped off one head. The Troll is still alive, and now bears an unsurprising but still vehement grudge against the Forester.

Motivation: To keep the forest as it is and as it was.

Expectations: *"There's trouble afoot when the wind blows from the North or the East"* +2 if the heroes volunteer to protect the Bree-land; *"I've never heard any good of folk who live in the Wild"* -1 if the Company seem to be aimless vagrants unconcerning with the four villages.

HARRY TALLTREE Medium Human

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Armour Class 16 (Leather Corslet)

Hit Points 48 (8d8+16)

Speed 30 ft

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +6, Survival +4

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Westron

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Battle-wise. Harry has Advantage on initiative checks.

Savage Assault. When Harry rolls a natural 18 or 19 on his attack roll, he may use his bonus action to make a single additional melee attack against the same opponent.

Warrior's Charge. Harry gains Advantage on all attacks made in the first round of combat.

Actions

Great Axe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12+3) slashing damage.



BREE



1. Gate
2. Rangers' door
3. Watch tower
4. Old quarry
5. The Green
6. The Inn of The Prancing Pony
7. The Counting-house
8. The Reeve's Hall
9. Old Town
10. The Well
11. New Town
12. School
13. Smithy
14. East Row

the - prancing pony -

Above the arch there was a lamp, and beneath it swung a large sideboard: a fat pony reared up on its hind legs. Over the door was painted in white letters: THE PRANCING PONY by BARLIMAN BUTTERBUR

There's been an inn close by the crossroads for many years in one form or another. The world outside the doors may whirl and change, but there'll always be good cheer and good beer in the common room of *The Prancing Pony*, in this age of the world (and the next, too, no doubt!).

From the front, the inn looks like a pleasant house, especially at the end of a long journey. It faces on to the road along one side of the Green in Bree, and two wings run back, cut in to the hillside, so at the rear the second-floor windows are level with the rising ground.

A wide archway leads off the road and into a courtyard, and from there several broad steps on the left lead up to a door in to common-room of *The Pony* where a visitor will be warmly greeted by the Innkeeper.

The Prancing Pony in the Tale of Years

The Pony has stood in its spot for time out of mind and the information presented herein is as relevant in 2946 or 3017 or any year in between.

Around the year 3000, Barnabas will hang up his apron and pass the running of the inn to his son Barliman. Luckily, the mould for the Butterbur line was cast long ago, and every one for generations has been a close variation on that original model. (Use the description given for Barnabas to describe Barliman.)

THE INNKEEPER

"I hope not, indeed," said Butterbur. "But spooks or no spooks, they won't get in The Pony so easy."

Barnabas Butterbur is one of the most important men in Bree, and cleverer than he seems. He may have a thousand things on his mind, nine hundred and ninety of which are errands and orders and shopping lists and gossip from Bree, but he knows that Bree is but a small place in a wide, wilder world - he knows something about Mordor for example, and has met Gandalf, and more besides.



Butterbur welcomes guests of all lands and places to his inn, so long as they do not cause trouble and pay their bills (and if there is trouble, he can call on a troupe of regulars at the inn who will throw troublemakers out). He is an excellent judge of both a traveller's character and immediate needs, and he is ready to offer lodging and services tailored to his clientele, knowing well the requirements of a hungry Hobbit, or the thirst of a travelling Dwarf, for example. He hears all sorts of gossip and rumour, and delights in sharing stories and telling tales, but knows when to keep his mouth shut too, which is a rare gift. More than anything else, he takes pride in his hospitality. He would stand between a Wraith and its prey, assuming its prey had paid for a room at *The Pony* that night.

Motivation: No matter where you came from or where you're going, if you're staying at *The Pony* then I'll look after you.



Expectations: “We like to hear news, or any story or song you may have in mind” +2 if the companions are talkative and friendly; “There’s no accounting for East or West” -1 if the heroes bring trouble or ill rumours to the Bree-land.

BARNABAS BUTTERBUR

Medium Human

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	9 (-1)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)

Armour Class 9

Hit Points 22 (4d8+4)

Speed 30 ft

Skills History +4, Insight +7, Perception +7, Performance +5, Riddle +4, Traditions +6

Senses passive Perception 17

Languages Westron

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Expert. Butterbur doubles his Proficiency Bonus for both Insight and Perception (included above).

Friendly and Inquisitive. Butterbur doubles his Proficiency Bonus for Traditions (included above) and counts as Friendly during any Audience.

Storehouse of Knowledge. Butterbur knows much about the Bree-land. A hero that spends a short rest talking to him can automatically begin a journey that starts from Bree on *Paths Both Swift and True*.

Actions

Staff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6+1) bludgeoning damage or 5 (1d8+1) bludgeoning damage if wielded with two hands.

An Audience with the Innkeeper

Travellers arriving at the inn must make a **DC 15 Intelligence (Traditions)** check when arriving to introduce themselves to the Innkeeper. There is no penalty for failure, other than the Innkeeper being too distracted or too suspicious to give the companions a proper welcome. However, failing with a natural 1 means Butterbur suspects, rightly or wrongly, that the Company are up to no good, and will try to find some excuse to turn them away. If no such excuse springs to mind, then he will simply charge them twice the usual rates and keep a close eye on them.

A normal success lets the companions ask one question of Butterbur about current events or rumours, which he

will answer as best he can. A success by 5 or more means Butterbur is especially solicitous, and spends some time chatting with the companions.

Again, the adventurers may ask a question of Butterbur about gossip or rumours in Bree, and get an accurate answer, but Butterbur will also volunteer a piece of information of benefit to the Company. A natural 20 gets two questions answered *and* Butterbur volunteers a piece of vital information.

The Innkeeper as a Patron

The Innkeeper of *The Prancing Pony* may not be a Wizard, or an Elf-lord, or a king, and the only skin he can change is a wine-skin. Still, for a Company of heroes just setting out in the world, Butterbur can serve as a fine patron. He knows everything that happens in Bree-land, and much of what’s going on Outside too, and is adept at putting a word in the right ear to nudge events for the better of all.

If a farmer’s beset by sheep-stealing wolves, or a Dwarf on the road sees an unquiet spirit, Butterbur might hear those tales of woe and send the companions off to deal with the problems.

THE STAFF

The Pony employs several young folk, Big and Little, to serve the guests and tend to their needs. At the very least, there’ll be a pot-boy to fetch drinks and food and a stableboy to take care of the animals there no matter what time visitors knock on the door. At busy times – in the evenings, or market-days, or Yuletide, or when a large number of thirsty travellers arrive – then the Innkeeper can call on half of Bree to work in the inn.

Like the Innkeeper, the pot-boys hear every bit of gossip in Bree, but are less discreet. A free drink or a coin or two can loosen tongues; although if Butterbur hears his staff speaking ill of a customer, he’ll beat them round the ears with a wooden spoon (Fell and Grievous!).

THE COMMON-ROOM

The heart of *The Prancing Pony* is the big common-room, where the company gathers nightly around the big log fire. Three lamps hang from the ceiling beams, although as the fire blazes and the smoke rises, their light becomes obscured by the murk.



The Prancing Pony

- 1: Common-room
- 2: Tap room
- 3: Private rooms
- 4: Rooms for the night
- 5: Bath house
- 6: Stables
- 7: Kitchens
- 8: Brewery
- 9: Private chambers: Innkeeper
- 10: Private chambers: Staff
- 11: Cellar
- 12: Pantry
- 13: Unused room/storage
- 14: Well
- 15: Communal sleeping rooms





First floor



Second floor

Benches, stools and low tables start out neatly lined up in rows, but as the night goes on, they become scattered and shifted to accommodate singers, performers, knots of gossiping and conspiring Bree-landers, or companies of Outsiders off the Road.

Smaller booths and shadowy corners allow for patrons to observe the company without joining in the merriment. Here, the Innkeeper and the other worthies of Bree hold court each night. More decisions are made here than in the Reeve's chambers.

If the inn is very crowded, guests may sleep on the rush-covered floor of the common-room, but that only happens on market-days in Bree, and then only if foul weather blows down off the mountains in the evening, and local visitors decide to spend the night instead of braving the rain.

PRICES AT *THE PONY*

Expenses in the Bree-land are somewhat different from the hustle and bustle of Dale:

ITEM	COST
Regular or Hobbit-sized Room, per night	9c
Company-sized Room, per night	2s
Fancy Room, per night	5s
Hot Bath	6c
Stabling, per animal, per night	2c
Ale, per tankard	1c
Wine, per glass	3c
Meal, per person	6c
Pipe-weed (Southlinch from Staddle), 10 uses	1s
Pipe-weed (Longbottom Leaf), 10 uses	2s
Pony for Hire, per day	6c
Pony for Sale (worn and dispirited)	4s
Pony for Sale (well-kept)	8s

THE TAPROOM

Off to the side of the common-room is a smaller drinking-hall, called the taproom, where the kegs of ale are stored. When the common-room is filled to overflowing, the

customers spill out into the taproom. It is also used during the day when the common-room is being cleaned, but customers or guests still want to quench their thirst.

PRIVATE ROOMS

The inn has a number of small parlours, ante-rooms, snugs and crannies where a party of guests can be seated for a private meal. Regulars in *The Pony* know the quirks of the building; for example, if you sit in the corner of the common-room nearest the door, and press your ear to the wall, you can hear the conversation in the private parlour adjacent to it clear as day. Secrets have a way of coming out in Bree, one way or another.

ROOMS FOR THE NIGHT

The Pony has plenty of space for guests, and is rarely full to capacity. Most of the rooms are much alike in terms of comfort; feather bolsters and thick blankets, mostly free of crawling things. It's not Rivendell, but it's better than most inns in the world.

Some of the rooms in the north wing were made especially for hobbits when the Inn was built, on the ground floor with round windows, and with Hobbit-sized furniture, but most are made Bree-fashion: sized for Big Folk, but low enough to the floor that Hobbits can use them too.

The first floor of the inn has four larger sleeping rooms that can accommodate up to a dozen members of a company, as well as "good rooms" that are "fit for a lord" (and priced accordingly). The good rooms are something of a legend among the staff of the inn, as they are opened so rarely that tales of their opulence have become hugely exaggerated.

BATHHOUSE

Basins of hot water can be provided in any of the rooms, but for a traveller who really wants to get the Road out of his beard, there is nothing like a good hot bath in the bathhouse. Fresh water from the inn's well, copper kettles bubbling atop a big warm fire, freshly laundered towels – and the ponies watching you from the stable next door.

STABLES

The stables in the courtyard of *The Prancing Pony* are warm and dry; the ostler there takes as good care of animals as the rest of the staff take of the paying guests.



There are usually one or two spare ponies in the stables who can be bought or borrowed for the right price by adventuring companies (see *Prices at The Pony*).

THE KITCHENS

The kitchens and pantries of the inn are never quiet; guests come and go at all hours of the day, and they are either hungry from long travel on the Road or eager to get a good breakfast before departing. The fare here is simple but hearty and pleasant; the stew pot, legend says, was started before the Fell Winter and has been bubbling away ever since.

BREWERY

The inn's ale is made here. Other drinks are imported from the Shire and further afield; the Innkeeper likes to keep a few bottles of Dwarven spirits on hand for guests from the Ered Luin, and has some bottles down in the cellars that come all the way from Dorwinion.

PRIVATE CHAMBERS

The Innkeeper and his family live on the top floor of the inn's main building. Most of the staff live elsewhere in Bree, but there are two small rooms on the ground floor for servants to sleep in.

A Night at the Prancing Pony (Audiences at the Inn)

The company was in the big common-room of the inn. The gathering was large and mixed, as Frodo discovered, when his eyes got used to the light.

Whenever the companions stay at *The Pony*, they will most certainly join the company of the inn guests in the common-room. The first time they do so, they are welcomed by the regulars, especially if they come from some exotic place (meaning, anywhere but the Bree-land): the innkeeper provides an individual introduction (providing Advantage on each of the following checks, unless the hero was discourteous to him).

The Company must then make a group Introduction check, with each hero rolling as she is introduced. (If a hero wishes to disguise his name, he may use Riddle instead of Traditions for his check.) If the group check is successful then any further checks that night are made as if the heroes are Friendly with the regulars. Bree-folk automatically succeed at their check and are treated as Favoured.

As soon as the companions' identities have been established to the satisfaction of the regulars, the heroes are free to mingle with the inn guests during the Interaction and trade stories about faraway lands with local gossip. As the drinks flow and pipes are lit, Riddle or Performance checks may be called on by the worthies of Bree.

As usual, Insight checks may be required if the companions wish to discover any secret motive hidden behind a guest's inquisitiveness, while Persuasion is needed to win a heated debate. A Final Audience check can be made if the companions have a definitive goal, or could also be used to get a sense of how well the heroes were received overall.

The Enemy is Listening

As a famous Ranger likes to say, 'drink, fire, and chance-meeting are pleasant enough, but Bree isn't the Shire', and the common-room of *The Pony* may at times see the presence of less savoury guests than a drunken Bucklander or two. In such cases, if you are using the Eye of Mordor rules from the *Rivendell Region Guide*, increase the Hunt score of the Company by 2 points for each natural 1 rolled during the audience (instead of 1).

GUESTS IN THE INN

When you want to populate the common room of *The Pony*, roll a few times on the following table: 1d3 times on a quiet night, 1d4+1 on an average night and 2d4 times on busy days (such as a market-day).

DIE RESULT (1d20)	COMMON-ROOM GUESTS
1	1-5: 2d4 strange looking wanderers (Merchants, Thugs, Outlaws); 6: Ill-favoured fellow, a spy from Isengard gathering information for his master (use the Eye of Mordor rules).
2-3	1-4: 1d6 folk from Combe; 5: an Outlaw Chief enjoying his stolen gold; 6: the Outlaw Chief has 1d4 Brigands (see page 51) with him and they're looking for a brawl
4-6	1-4: 1d4+1 talkative Bree-Hobbits; 5: Matthew Mugwort (page 18), already in his cups; 6: Both of the previous entries and make the next roll on this table with Advantage.
7-9	1-4: 1d6+1 inquisitive Men of Bree; 5-6: The Reeve or another notable of Bree (pages 18-21) celebrating an official achievement
10-11	1-4: 1d4 friendly Hobbits from Staddle; 5: 2d4 argumentative Staddle Hobbits; 6: Grandmother Tunnelly (page 24), incognito, watching over a nephew in search of adventure
12-13	1-5: 1d6 folk from Archet; 6: Harry Talltree (see page 28), looking for volunteers for a troll-hunt
14-15	1-3: 2d4 Bree-landers not from any village (Farmers); 4-5: A Dúnadan relaxing, not wanting to chat about anything adventurous-sounding; 6: A Ranger who's supposed to meet someone here – who might be late or missing
16	1-5: 1d4 Shire-Hobbits from Buckland or the East Farthing; 6: Bilbo Baggins, travelling under the name Inigo Grubb-Took, in Bree to meet a Dwarf friend.
17	1-3: 1d4+1 travellers from Wilderland; 4-5: 2d6 visitors from the South; 6: A Mountebank (see page 51), trying to cheat the companions of their gold, or at least have them pay for his drinks
18	1-5: 2d6 Dwarves from Erebor, heading west; 6: A messenger of King Dáin who lost his bodyguards in an ambush near Goblin-town (see page 35 of the <i>Rhovanion Region Guide</i>).
19	1-5: 2d4 Dwarves coming from the Blue Mountains, heading east; 6: A very old Dwarf, desiring to see the restored Kingdom under the Mountain before his death
20	1-5: Roll 2d8 on this table and use the first entry listed... those folk are especially friendly or helpful to the companions; 6: Gandalf the Grey or a disguised Elf from the Wandering Companies, in Bree to meet the Rangers



adventuring - IN BREE -

Were these people all in league against him? He began to suspect even old Butterbur's fat face of concealing dark designs.

Bree is not Dale, where King Bard calls for adventurers to help him tame the wild and restore the kingdom, nor is it Lake-town where there's always another merchant prince on the rise, willing to promise gold and silver for those with ready swords.

Bree is safe. Bree is homely. Bree is, to be honest, rather dull – and that is its charm. Bree is not a place of excitement and danger all of the time. Let Bree be the quiet place the companions return to, or where they meet their allies, or where they hear strange stories by the fire in *The Pony*. Adventures may start in Bree, but they happen elsewhere. Mostly.

That doesn't mean, by the way, that Bree is altogether wholesome. Bree is half-way between the innocence of the Shire and the cruelty of the Wild – there can be a sinister side to Bree, behind the rustic charm and simple folk. Sometimes exciting or terrible things will occur in Bree, and be all the more shocking because of its usually humdrum rustic nature. Some in the town are good folk, and some are not, and most just don't want to be bothered. There'll be no trouble in the common-room of the inn, but there'll be plenty of rumour, intrigue and foreboding.

So, with that advice in mind, what sort of adventures might start in Bree? Here follows a selection of example story-hooks and some notes on implementing them for your games of *Adventures in Middle-earth*.

THE BODY IN THE MARSH

Eel-fishers in the marsh spot a body on a hillock amid the mud. It's early summer, so it could be an old corpse that was exposed by the retreating waters, or it might be a recent victim of murder. The one problem: when the eel-fishers returned the next day with the Forester of Archet to investigate, the body was gone. Did someone bury

the corpse again, or do the dead walk in the Midgewater Marshes?

For Level 1 or 2:

News of the mysteriously disappearing corpse could reach the ears of the heroes at *The Prancing Pony* or the *Woodfellow* or if they're local sorts then one of their relations wishes the heroes to look into it for whatever reason. A handful of Bog Soldiers (see page 84 of the *Rivendell Region Guide*) can provide an exciting challenge for new heroes. Or perhaps there really is a killer among the Bree-folk (an Outlaw, page 74 of the *Loremaster's Guide* or a Mountebank, see page 51). The heroes will need to follow clues (maybe the victim and the killer were seen arguing after a few too many at the *Woodfellow*) to call out the scoundrel and force a confrontation.

A THIEF IN THE NORTH FIELDS

A wealthy farmer of Bree, Robin Hayward, complains of a thief who keeps stealing chickens from his farm. He wants some brave adventurers to comb the countryside for this vile brigand.

Investigating, the companions discover that the 'thief' is in fact a young Ranger named Eraniel who has a very good reason for stealing the chickens. A blood-drinking Wight roams the lands north of Bree, and the Ranger is trying to lure the monster into a trap using the chickens as bait. So far, though, her efforts have been unsuccessful. The Wight is too wily to be tricked by chickens. Are any of the Company brave enough to be used as bait for an undead horror? And do the rest of the companions have the strength to slay the Wight when it looms out of the darkness?

For Level 1 or 2:

The foe is probably a stray Barrow-wight (see page 83 of the *Rivendell Region Guide*) or a Wood-wight (page 138 of the *Rhovanion Region Guide*). Either makes a dangerous foe for inexperienced heroes. Eraniel can aid in the combat, but she should not dominate the fight – she trusts her bow over her swordwork any day.

For Levels 3 or 4:

Companions with some more experience can face a stiffer challenge. The Wight might have gathered weaker allies to itself (such as Bog Soldiers), might be found in extremely

advantageous Combat Scenery (a series of caves with rotten Unstable Walls, Pits of ice cold water and an Unsettling Atmosphere) or possess additional abilities like **Spells of Despair** or **Unnatural Vitality** (see page 74 of the *Rivendell Region Guide*).

THE ELF & THE STAG

Guildor, an Elf from the Wandering Companies killed a stag within the borders of the Chetwood. A pair of enterprising folk out of Archet managed to catch the Elf – by their law, he has committed a crime. Do the laws of Men apply to the Fair Folk? How do the characters counsel the Forester or the Reeve of Bree?

For Any Level:

The heroes might become involved if they're known to Guildor, even if only by reputation (if they've been to Rivendell, or are well known by the Dúnedain). Otherwise chance, if chance you call it, can serve to make sure they're in the right place at the right time to observe his plight. The challenge is not guilt (Guildor does not deny slaying the stag) but degree of punishment meted out to someone who has hunted in the forests of the North since before their great-great-grandmothers were born.

As an additional twist, you might have a few Mortal poachers (Outlaws) also active in the area. Then Guildor can reveal he was not the only hunter that day, and he might lead the heroes in tracking down the poachers, leading to forest ambushes and running archery battles.

OUT OF THARBAD

Two families of the East Row, the Colwaters and the Cherryfords, both trace their ancestry back to the wealthier quarter of Tharbad. They both prize a statue of a white tree that was lost when the town was flooded, nearly fifty years ago. Now, a merchant who came up the Greenway spoke of seeing a stone tree in the river. Can the companions recover the statue from the ruined town – and which family will pay the higher price to own it?

For Level 2 or 3:

The trip to Tharbad is at least two-hundred miles along the Greenway (1d2+1 Journey Events, Peril Rating 2). Along the way, Journey Events can focus on conflict between those that should be friends... the heroes might camp in the ruins of a farmhouse destroyed not by time or Orcs but

by the jealousy of neighbours, witness animals fighting amidst themselves over a mate or face an obstacle that can only be conquered by teamwork.

The heroes will also want to have a plan (and equipment) for dealing with a heavy stone tree and getting it out of the water. There are also dangerous things in Tharbad: crebain, Orcs and Goblins and perhaps something like The Thing in the Well from *Wilderland Adventures*, except it's **Really Big** (see page 117 of the *Loremaster's Guide*), doesn't easily retreat and it's pulling heroes into the river instead of a well.

TO THE LONELY MOUNTAIN

A company of Dwarves, the sons of Bori, from the Blue Mountains arrives in Bree. They are, they say, kin to one of the fabled twelve companions of Thorin Oakenshield, and have decided to leave their halls in the West and travel all the way across Wilderland to Erebor. The Sons of Bori are miners, not traders or wandering smiths, so they have not travelled on the Road in many years. They have come to Bree to hire some experienced guides and escorts who are willing to make the journey back to the Blue Mountains, where they will collect the treasures and heirlooms of their mansion, and then make the vastly longer journey east across the Misty Mountains, the Great River, Mirkwood and thence to the Long Lake and the Lonely Mountain. Those who go with them will be rewarded handsomely, with a fortune in gold.

The journey, though, will take more than a year to go there and back again. For that matter, why do the Sons of Bori need help from the folk of Bree? Surely, if they have such gold to spare, they could hire their fellow Dwarves from Erebor to escort them through Wilderland? Is there some secret rivalry between the Sons of Bori and the folk of Erebor that will complicate matters when the Company arrives at the journey's end?

For Level 3 or higher:

If your heroes are wanting to explore distant horizons, this adventure is perfect for them. Depending on the route chosen, it's hundreds of miles to the Halls of the Dwarves in the West, then a return to Bree and a long hike to the Misty Mountains and beyond. Plotting out such a massive adventure is beyond the scope of these notes but it should be the ultimate road trip: prepare a number of people for

the companions to meet, dangers along the road (Trolls, bandits and worse — remember that Eriador is a land of restless dead!) and perhaps rivals. Other Dwarves might not wish the Sons of Bori to be successful in their trip and the Company might crack open a crate of supplies to find only bags of sand.

THINGS TO DO WHILE IN BREE

"The Inn of Bree was still there, however, and the innkeeper was an important person. His house was ... a resort of Rangers and other wanderers, and for such travellers (mostly dwarves) as still journeyed on the East Road, to and from the Mountains."

NEW FELLOWSHIP PHASE UNDERTAKINGS

The following undertakings are available for heroes spending a Fellowship phase in the Bree-land.

Open Bree as a Sanctuary

Not every town or village is necessarily a potential sanctuary. To qualify as such, there must be something in a place that makes it a bulwark against the Shadow, some protection above and beyond the rest of Middle-earth. In some cases, the protection is obvious and material: Dale has its walls and armies, Esgaroth is guarded by the Long Lake. In other cases, the sanctuary has a powerful guardian whom the Enemy dares not assail, at least not yet. Beorn's house has Beorn, for example.

Other sanctuaries are hidden, or blessed with some supernatural power. Rivendell or Lórien are triple-girdled against the Enemy: by secrecy, by the Elven-lords who dwell there, and by the power of the masters of those places.

Bree... has a hedge and a ditch and a few men with cudgels. They may be valorous, but they cannot hope to defend against the sort of foes that haunt the North. If it were not for the protection of the Dúnedain, Bree would be destroyed.

Therefore, in order to be able to open Bree as a sanctuary, the Company must be aware of the Rangers' watch on the town and be willing to aid in it. Furthermore, the Company must also have the blessing or patronage of one

of the important people in Bree-land. Bree's attitude to adventurers and heroes is a practical and sensible one. Adventurers are dangerous, unpredictable people, and do not make good neighbours. However, adventurers are sometimes wealthy (ill-gotten gains, no doubt, but silver looted from a tomb or Troll-hole jingles just the same as any other coin), and sometimes able to solve problems others cannot, usually with violence. Bree welcomes adventurers who are going to move on in a few days, not those who intend to stay for a whole Fellowship phase. This suspicion can be overcome if the Innkeeper or the Reeve or some other leader such as the Forester of Archet vouches for the Company.

In order to open Bree as a sanctuary a company of heroes must have accomplished the following:

- Found out about the watch of the Rangers, and earned their trust.
- Gained the trust of at least one important Bree personality (the Innkeeper, Reeve, Forester).
- Have become known at *The Prancing Pony* (see page 35), having spent enough to appear decent enough individuals in the eyes of the Bree-folk.

Guard Bree and the Shire (Dúnedain only)

"...foes that would freeze his heart, or lay his little town in ruin, if he were not guarded ceaselessly. Yet we would not have it otherwise."

The Rangers of the North have made it their duty to protect the simple folk from the threats that lie outside their borders, keeping the Shadow at bay since the fall of the North Kingdom. They act in secret, keeping their wards free from care and fear, getting nothing but scorn in return for their deeds.

A Ranger companion spending a Fellowship phase in the Bree-land, or in the surrounding area, lasting at least one entire season may choose this undertaking and make a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception or Survival)** check. On a basic success, you receive 1 Patrol die to use in the next Adventuring phase, 2 dice if you succeed by 5 or more and 3 dice if you get a natural 20. A Patrol die is a d4 and can be added to any roll during a journey in which the hero is serving as a Look-out or Scout. Unused Patrol dice are lost at the end of the Adventuring phase.

During the following Adventuring phase, if you're present during an Audience with Bree-folk or the Shire-folk then you impose Disadvantage on any checks made during the meeting.

Write a Letter

"Frodo read the letter to himself, and then passed it to Pippin and Sam."

Outside the Shire, or Gondor in the far South, few folks in Middle-earth can say they have a well-organised system of letter-carriers or messengers. However, places like *The Prancing Pony* see their fair share of traffic, and sooner or later there'll be someone heading the right way who can be trusted to bring a letter.



When spending a Fellowship phase in a well-frequented sanctuary, companions may choose this undertaking and write a letter. There are several types of letters, serving different purposes, but they all require a **Traditions** check

to be written, and then a roll on the Letter Delivery table (see page 42). The DC for the **Traditions** check depends on the letter type, see below.

Types of Letter

Choose one of the following types of letter (all describe the effects of a letter that arrived in time at destination):

- **"I write to notify you of our impending arrival..." (Letter of Introduction):** If a hero arrives at the home of someone who has received this letter then the recipient is more disposed to an audience with the writer. The letter requires a **DC 15** check (**DC 10** for patrons or leaders of a sanctuary the heroes have already opened). On a basic success, you have Advantage on your Introduction Check, if you succeed by 5 or more you automatically succeed on your Introduction Check, if you get a natural 20 then you automatically succeed on your Introduction Check and receive Advantage on your Final Audience Check.

For example, Trotter writes a letter to Elrond before setting off for Rivendell and is lucky enough to roll a natural 20... he will automatically succeed at introducing himself to the leader of Imladris and receives Advantage for the Final Audience Check as well.

- **"I write in search of aid..." (Letter of Supplication):** This letter makes the recipient more disposed to be generous to the writer. The letter requires a **DC 20** check (**DC 15** for patrons or leaders of a sanctuary the heroes have already opened). On a basic success, you have Advantage on your Final Audience Check, if you succeed by 5 or more you have Advantage on your Final Audience Check and you receive a reward one level higher than you earned, or some additional benefit if you earned the highest level.

For example, if a successful encounter would normally result in the Company being allowed to enter into the Halls of the Dwarves in the Blue Mountains, sending such a letter in advance might mean the Dwarves hold a feast to welcome the travellers, or have ponies and supplies waiting for them to speed their journey onwards.

- **"I write to ask you to meet us at..." (Letter of Appointment):** A letter of this type arranges a meeting with a patron or other ally at a specified location. It requires a **DC 10** check. On a basic success, the ally will send a representative or messenger to the appointed place, if you succeed by 5 or more the ally will show up in person.

For example, the Company could ask their patron Beorn to meet them at the eastern end of High Pass instead of at Beorn's house, as they intend to go south along the vales instead of pressing on to the river.

- **"I may not return..." (Letter of Farewell):** This letter is written to an heir (see **Heroic Heritage**, below). It requires a **DC 10** check. On a success, if the hero perishes in the Adventuring phase it counts as a heroic death no matter the circumstances. Furthermore, if the writing check succeeds by 5 or more, the recipient receives a bonus of 50 XP from the companion's final words.

Letter Delivery Check

Even in the best circumstances, a companion's letter may be inadvertently delayed. Unless the companion is writing from an Eagles' Eyrie (in which case consider the result to be a 20), they must roll on the following table, affected as indicated.

- If the recipient lives far away or somewhere perilous, roll with Disadvantage.
- If you're writing from an Elven sanctuary or able to spend 1 gold piece or more to arrange delivery, roll with Advantage.



Optional Rule: Heroic Heritage

It is rare that a companion quests ceaselessly, for most Mortals (and even Elves) it takes only a few years of hardship and sorrow for them to wish to pass the fight against the Shadow to younger, less wearied heroes. And, of course, when one goes forth to do battle with the Enemy, there is always a chance that one will not return.

A Player-hero can designate an heir (either of their blood or adopted from any Culture). When a hero retires or is slain, the player can designate, with the Loremaster's approval, one special piece of equipment to be received by the heir. Other equipment is lost, perhaps returned to the halls of the original hero's people, stolen by the enemy or buried with the dead.

The new hero will need to unlock any abilities contained within a Famous Weapon or Armour just as their forbear did, see page 134 of the Loremaster's Guide.

Also the older hero can pass on some of their knowledge and wisdom to the new hero, if they are not too tainted by darkness: take the old hero's Proficiency Bonus minus the total number of his Permanent Shadow points. If the total is a positive number, multiply it by 50 and award that amount as XP to the new hero.

If the old hero was slain making a heroic sacrifice, then do not subtract the Permanent Shadow score and simply multiply the old hero's Proficiency Bonus by 50 XP. This means the starting hero might begin higher than level 1.

1d20

LETTER DELIVERY RESULT

1

The letter is stolen by the Enemy. Depending on the contents of the letter, this might raise the Company's Hunt score (see *Rivendell Region Guide*, page 110), create more complications later in the adventure, or put the recipient of the letter in danger.

2-5

Lost! The letter has been lost, stolen or otherwise, and was never received; or, the letter arrives too late, either at some point AFTER the Company has reached a destination, or even after his inheritance has been disposed of (in the case of a Letter of Farewell). In any case, ignore the effects of the letter.

6-10

The letter arrived later than expected, there were problems with the delivery, or in some way might have raised suspicion on the recipient. Treat any success on the **Traditions** check as a basic success, even if you earned higher.

11-19

The letter arrived safely. Apply the effects of the letter as described.

20

The letter arrived in time, and the recipient was very impressed by the gesture: Treat any success on the **Traditions** check as if you got the best possible result.

unexpected encounter. Chance-meetings are not always beneficial or pleasant; Thorin Oakenshield may have met Gandalf the Grey in Bree, but he might equally have met some agent of the Enemy who might have tempted him with Thrór's Ring, and planned to trick the Dwarves into the service of Mordor.

Learn the Paths of the Chetwood

A companion who spends a Fellowship phase living in Archet and exploring the woods around the village gains Advantage for all **Survival** checks made in the Chetwood or the Old Forest for the length of the following Adventuring phase.

Receive Title (Regular at The Pony)

A companion who has gained the trust of the Innkeeper during an Adventuring phase may - with the Loremaster's permission - choose this undertaking and find their place among the regular guests of *The Prancing Pony*.

This undertaking grants lesser benefits in comparison to those bestowed upon a hero by other, more formal, titles, but is still useful to a wandering hero:

- In addition to Bree-folk treating the hero as at least Friendly (or better), the companion has a room set aside at *The Pony* and can often find someone in the common room willing to buy him a round or a warm meal. In game terms, the hero never has to pay for their stay at the inn but neither do they earn any income from their title either. The room is of the common variety, but the companion can spend the difference to be housed in one of the fine rooms for their stay if they like.

Chance-meeting in the Inn

There are queer folk about... and there have been even stranger travellers through Bree lately.

At some point during the Fellowship phase or the following Adventuring phase, the hero has a chance-meeting in Bree with some stranger who will play a significant role in their future fate. (The Loremaster may use the special guests on the **Common-room Guests** table on page 36 if they do not already have a Loremaster character in mind.) In effect, this undertaking is a request to the Loremaster to give that player an interesting and





- DWARVES of the Blue mountains -

"Then there's a travelling company of dwarves going West come in this evening."

TRADERS ON THE ROAD

There are almost always Dwarves on the Road and thus there are always Dwarves visiting the Bree-land. Most of them are coming to, or returning to, their ancestral halls in Ered Luin — the Blue Mountains.

The first Dwarves of the Ered Luin were the hardy warriors of Nogrod and Belegost, the two great mountain-cities of the First Age. Master craftsmen, and great haters of Orcs and Dragons, their power was ended when their mansions were drowned in the breaking of Beleriand. In the twilight of the Third Age, the Dwarves of the Ered Luin are loyal subjects of the King of Durin's Folk, as their halls were founded anew when Thráin the Second led his people to these mountains after the destruction of Erebor. His son, Thorin Oakenshield, ruled here for a time and the Blue Mountains became a realm of plenty and peace, drawing wayward Dwarves from as far south as Dunland.

Though many who dwelt in the Blue Mountains have now returned to Erebor, some remain there still. Those Dwarves who remain take special comfort and interest in restoring the relics of their past, be they ancient weapons or forgotten songs. They search the mountains for traces of their lost cities, probing deep into their roots and climbing their most remote peaks. For them, there is no greater joy than discovering runes engraved on a broken stone, or finding the entrance to a collapsed mine. And they would face any threat to wrest those jewels from the grasp of forgetfulness. For many others, the itinerant life of their forefathers calls to them: after the coming of Smaug, many Dwarves began to wander. Some became tinkers, working for room and board in the villages of Men, but others became merchants, selling the wares of their more settled kin for gold and silver — getting to see the world from the Road.



DESCRIPTION

Most Dwarves of the Blue Mountains live a secluded life in their holds, like other members of their folk. What makes them peculiar is their relative lack of interest in those activities that other Dwarves seem to obsess over – they eschew most martial practices, and do not dedicate much of their time in the furthering of their crafts, with the exception of those skills aimed to restore and preserve the work of their ancestors.

Their style of dress is fair and elegant by Dwarven standards, as they do not feel the necessity of being ever ready to arm or work the anvil. Detailed embroidery is common on their robes and fine etching adorns their metalwork. Judging their looks, other Dwarves are quick to dismiss them as ‘soft’, although never to their faces.

NAMES OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

The Dwarves of Ered Luin are close kin to those of Erebor and the Iron Hills and share many outer names with them. However there are some names that they have picked up as they journeyed west. See page 39 of the *Adventures in Middle-earth Player's Guide* for more information on Dwarven naming conventions.

Male Names: Anar, Beli, Bláin, Bruni, Dori, Dwalin, Farin, Flói, Frár, Ginar, Grór, Hanar, Hepti, Iari, Lófar, Lóni, Náli, Niping, Óin, Ónar, Regin, Svior, Thrór, Veig, Vidar.

Female Names: Ase, Astrid, Bergdis, Bodil, Dagna, Dís, Eir, Eydis, Frea, Fritha, Gard, Grid, Herja, Hón, Idúnn, Ingrid, Kára, Kóna, Már, Mist, Olrún, Onna, Ragni, Róta, Sigrún.

STANDARD OF LIVING

The Dwarves of the Blue Mountains have gradually grown wealthy over the years. Much of their gold comes from trade and from the ruins of abandoned holds or the reopened mines of their ancestors, patiently rediscovered and then hoarded within their vaults. As a result, their culture ranks as **Prosperous**.

Bonus Equipment: A fur-lined travelling cloak, travelling gear for the current season, a bedroll, fine clothes, a backpack, comfortable boots, 5d6 silver pennies, plus choose any two: another 2d6 silver pennies, artisan's tools of your choice, a musical instrument, a fine beard comb and mirror, a flask of dwarven spirits.

DWARF TRAITS

Your Player-hero has certain traits deriving from your Dwarven ancestry.

Ability Score Increase – Your Constitution score increases by 2.

Adventuring Age – 50 to 100. Dwarves generally start their life on the road in their fifties, and do not usually





consider retiring before their nineties. Around that time, they feel they can no longer stay away from their family, or want to dedicate themselves solely to the perfection of their crafts. But Dwarves can remain active until they are more than two hundred years old, and may return to adventuring if a great need arises, like the opportunity to avenge an old insult or injury, or to recover a treasure or reclaim a long-lost dwarf-hold. A healthy Dwarf who avoids a violent death can reach 250 years of age.



Size – Dwarves generally stand between 4 to 5 feet tall and can weigh upwards of 160 lbs. Your size is Medium.

Speed – Your base walking speed is 25 feet. Your speed is not reduced by wearing heavy armour.

Night Vision (Dwarf) – Accustomed to life underground, you have superior vision in dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, but you cannot see in the dark.

Dwarven Resilience – You have advantage on saving throws against poison, and you have resistance against poison damage.

Weapons of the Trade – You have proficiency with axes, hand-axes and mattocks.

Tool Proficiency – You gain proficiency with the artisan's tools of your choice: jeweller's tools, mason's tools, miner's tools, smith's tools, or woodcarver's tools. You also gain proficiency in one musical instrument of your choice.

Singer of the Old Songs – You have **proficiency** in the Performance skill.

Tales of Days Gone By – You have proficiency in either the **History** or **Lore** skill (your choice) and increase your **Intelligence** score by 1.

Languages – You can speak, read, and write Westron, the Common Tongue of Eriador. You can also speak, read and write the secret language of your people, which has never been shared with any others.

CULTURAL ATTITUDES

Those Dwarves of the Blue Mountains who travel the Road must necessarily hold forth with those communities that they visit. But they are rarely hosts – the famously secret Dwarves are loathe to invite almost anyone to visit them in their halls; when they do they treat their visitors as they themselves expect to be treated.

	MEN OF RHOVANION*	MEN OF THE SOUTH**	BREE-FOLK	DÚNEDAIN	OTHER DWARVES	HIGH ELVES	WOOD ELVES	HOBBITS OF THE SHIRE
DWARF OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS	Neutral	Unknown	Friendly	Neutral	Favoured	Neutral	Mistrust	Friendly

*This category includes Bardings, Beornings, Men of the Lake and Woodmen.

** This category includes Men of Minas Tirith and Riders of Rohan.



CULTURAL VIRTUES

Dwarves of the Blue Mountains may choose Deep Songs (described below), *Broken Spells*, *Durin's Way*, *Old Hatred* and *The Stiff Neck of Dwarves* (see the *Player's Guide*, pages 105-107).

DEEP SONGS

...the music began all at once, so sudden and sweet that Bilbo forgot everything else, and was swept away into dark lands under strange moons...

Strange as it might seem to others, music comes easily to your folk. You have practiced your instrument long enough that you now know how to bring out your innermost desires and aspirations.

During a Fellowship phase, if you choose the Heal Corruption undertaking you may make a **DC 13** musical instrument check with Advantage. If successful, you remove Shadow points as normal and any companions that undertake to Heal Corruption with you gain Advantage on their checks. Furthermore, during the following Adventuring phase you can remember such camaraderie to grant Inspiration one time to yourself and those heroes that shared your undertaking.

CULTURAL HEIRLOOMS

Few Dwarves of the Blue Mountains fought in the terrible battle before the gates of Moria. Instead, they can select a Harp of the Halls (see below), a Helm of Awe or an ancient set of heavy mail: a *Dwarf-wrought Hauberk* (see page 158 of the *Player's Guide*).

HARP OF THE HALLS

You have been rewarded with one of the finest harps crafted in the Blue Mountains. Their sweet music is beautiful to all ears, even those who do not normally hold the music of Dwarves in high regard.

You may use the Harp of the Halls to entertain the assembled folk during an Audience. Your performance automatically grants Advantage to both the Introduction check and the Final Audience check. You also have Advantage on performing Company songs (see page 26 of the *Rivendell Region Guide*).

foes to freeze - the heart -

*"For there's been worse than robbers about.
Wolves were howling round the fences last
winter. And there's dark shapes in the woods..."*

The quiet safety of the Bree-land is kept by the Dúnedain and their allies. If the Company strays from Town or Road they may face some of these threats as well. There are both evil creatures and evil Men about, though few great captains of the Enemy.

DANGERS OF THE WILD

The four villages and the fields around them are safe enough, but Bree-land is still an island of civilisation in the Wild and there are many dangerous foes within a day's march of the Hill.



Bluebell Wood Oakmen

These creatures hide in the depths of the Far Chetwood, amidst an ancient oakwood full of bluebells. They are small, wearing wide-brimmed soft hats deep red in colour. In their natural form, their skin is like oak and their eyes glint with a cold inhuman light above a red nose and slit mouth.

OAKMAN Small Nature Spirit

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)

Armour Class 12

Hit Points 14 (4d6)

Speed 25 ft

Condition Immunities Charmed, Frightened, Paralysed, Poisoned

Damage Resistances non-magical bludgeoning, piercing and slashing

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft, passive Perception 16

Languages understands Westron, does not speak

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Glamour. An Oakman can choose to appear more Hobbitish, though in this form they still appear unkempt and uncivilised. This illusion can be dispelled as a bonus action, and is automatically dispelled when the Oakman attacks.

Actions

Multiattack. The Oakman makes two attacks with either its **Short Sword** or its **Bow**.

Short Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Short Bow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft, one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Reactions

Ill-turn of Luck (Recharge 5-6). Strange fates befall those who attack the Oakmen. If an attack roll misses the Oakman, it may use this ability: the attacking creature must make another attack roll against its own AC. On a success, it does damage to itself.

Swamp Goblins

It's the rare Orc that doesn't chafe under the command of those Higher Up. Many would take the chance to set off with a few trusty lads and run things for themselves, and some do. Swamp Goblins are such deserters from the armies of the Dark Lord, made small, desperate and keen by their plight.

They live in fens and marshes, scrounging whatever they can eat from fetid pools and hoping to waylay travellers for fresh meat. But they have some cleverness about them – they've learnt the alchemy of using swamp gas to make lights with which to lure the unwary.

SWAMP GOBLIN *Small humanoid (Orc-kind)*

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	19 (+4)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)

Armour Class 15 (Leather jerkin)

Hit Points 18 (4d6+4)

Speed 30 ft, swim 30 ft

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft, passive Perception 14

Languages Orcish, Westron

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Corpse Light (Recharge 5-6). A Swamp Goblin can use its bonus action to cause a light to appear anywhere within 60 feet of it. Any hostile creature who is not Blinded must make a **DC 13 Wisdom** saving throw. On a failure, the creature must use its movement to approach the light, repeating the save at the end of its turn.

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, the Swamp Goblin deals an extra 3 (1d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has Advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the Goblin that isn't Incapacitated and the Goblin doesn't have Disadvantage on the attack roll.

Stealthy. The Swamp Goblin may use its bonus action each round to Hide.

Actions

Jagged Knife. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4+4) piercing damage.

Bow of Horn. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 80/320 ft, one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) piercing damage. The victim must also make a **DC 13 Constitution** saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute.

Two-headed Troll

Most examples of this ancient breed have returned to the stone from which they were born (see Ettins on page 76 of the *Rivendell Region Guide*) but a few are still active. They're rarely seen in the Bree-land, preferring the high fells further north. They are among the largest of their kind, with a cunning that comes from putting their two heads together.

TWO-HEADED TROLL *Huge Giant (Troll-kind)*

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26 (+8)	10 (+0)	23 (+6)	9 (-1)	13 (+1)	4 (-3)

Armour Class 14 (natural armour)

Hit Points 112 (9d12+54)

Speed 30 ft

Skills Riddle +2

Senses passive Perception 16 (see below)

Languages Westron

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Argumentative. A Two-headed Troll is prone to getting into fights with itself. A creature can make a **DC 13 Intelligence (Riddle)** or **Charisma (Persuasion)** check to distract the Troll. On a success, the Troll must make a **DC 10 Wisdom** saving throw at the start of its next turn or spend its turn arguing with itself. If the Troll is injured, it has Advantage on this saving throw.

Horrible Strength. If the Two-headed Troll makes a successful melee attack, it may use its bonus action to cause 8 additional damage of the same type to the target.

Two-headed. Trolls with two heads are much harder to catch unawares. Any attempts at **Stealth** are made with Disadvantage and the Troll gains Advantage on both active and passive Perception checks.

Actions

Multiattack. The Troll makes two attacks with its club.

Troll-club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 21 (2d12+8) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must make a **DC 18 Strength** saving throw or be knocked prone.

White Wolf of the North

These huge Wargs usually patrol the lands of the far north and only descend on civilised lands when the Enemy sends cold winds howling out of the North and the East.



WHITE WOLF OF THE NORTH

Large Monstrosity (Warg-kind)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	19 (+4)	20 (+5)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Armour Class 14

Hit Points 63 (6d10+30)

Speed 40 ft

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Wargspeech

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Craven. If the White Wolf starts its turn with 31 or less hit points, it must make a **DC 10 Wisdom** saving throw. On a failure, it becomes Frightened and must use its Dash or Disengage action to move away from any enemies. If movement is impossible, it will take the Dodge action instead.

Fear of Fire. The White Wolf is fearful of fire. If a torch or other flame comes within 10 feet of it, the wolf suffers Disadvantage on its attack rolls. In addition, the White Wolf is not able to use its Pack Tactics ability.

Pack Tactics. The White Wolf has Advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the White Wolf's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Multiattack. The White Wolf makes two attacks: one bite and one claw attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6+2) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must make a **DC 12 Strength** saving throw or be knocked prone.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12+4) slashing damage.

Reactions

Commanding Voice. The White Wolf can snarl in the language of its kind to issue commands. It may use its reaction when a non-hostile creature, that it can see within 30 feet, is about to make an attack roll or a saving throw. The target can add a d6 Command Die to that roll, provided it can hear and understand the message. A creature can benefit from only one Command Die at a time, and creatures that possess Commanding Voice cannot benefit from this effect.

The Ogre of Midgewater

When the storm-clouds gather overhead and half of Bree huddles in the common-room of *The Pony*, talk eventually turns to a creature that is said to haunt the pools and meres of the Midgewater. The tales tell of weapons bouncing off its blubbery hide and great grasping claws that can drown a man or tear him to pieces. As the night grows longer, the tales get taller and the townspeople laugh at the spooky stories. But observant folk will notice that any Rangers in the room only have a grim expression on their silent faces.

THE OGRE OF MIDGEWATER

Large Giant

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	10 (+0)	25 (+7)	5 (-3)	7 (-2)	7 (-2)

Armour Class 13 (natural armour)

Hit Points 150 (12d10+84)

Speed 30 ft, swim 30 ft

Skills Athletics +8

Damage Immunities bludgeoning

Senses darkvision 60 ft, passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Amphibious. The Ogre can hold its breath for such long periods that it is effectively a water-breather in combat situations.

Rubbery Skin. This creature's rubbery flesh is immune to bludgeoning damage.

Swimmer. This creature can move through aquatic environments without penalty.

Actions

Grasp. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft, one Medium or smaller target. *Hit:* The target becomes grappled (escape DC 17). As a bonus action, the Ogre may inflict 16 (2d10+5) bludgeoning damage on the grappled creature.

Shield Smasher (Recharge after a short or long rest). To destroy a shield, the Ogre makes a **Slam** attack, concentrating all its damage on the shield itself. If the Ogre deals 20 or more damage, the targeted shield is destroyed and worthless. A legendary shield might be salvageable but cannot be used for the remainder of the combat.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10+5) bludgeoning damage.

Reactions

Great Might (Recharge 5-6). The Ogre may use its reaction when it takes damage from a melee or ranged weapon attack: the damage amount is reduced by 5, to a minimum of 1 point of damage taken.

EMISSARIES OF THE ENEMY

The Bree-land has never loomed large in the war councils of the Enemy, but there may come a day when His greatest servants will walk the village streets. Until that day, there are only a few creatures of special power nearby.

The Old Troll

How old is the Old Troll? Not even he knows. The Trolls, it is said, were made in mockery of the Ents, and Ents live long indeed. Even the counterfeits of the Enemy might measure their lifespans in centuries or longer.

THE OLD TROLL *Large Giant (Troll-kind)*

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	8 (-1)

Armour Class 16 (heavy mail)

Hit Points 126 (12d10+60)

Speed 30 ft

Saving Throws Dexterity +4

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft, passive Perception 13

Languages Westron, Orcish

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Great Leap. The Old Troll is capable of jumping huge distances. He may make a special Dash action to go twice his normal movement in a single jump. Any opponents in melee combat with the Old Troll when he uses this ability get Opportunity Attacks as normal.

Reckless. The Old Troll may use his bonus action to gain Advantage on attack rolls until the start of his next turn but all attacks on him also have Advantage.

Sunlight Curse. Stone-trolls become Petrified and turn into stone if they are touched by the bright light of the sun. Once the sun rises, the Old Troll must make a **DC 10 Dexterity** saving throw at the beginning of his turn in order to find enough cover to avoid being turned to stone. On a failure, the Old Troll becomes Petrified.

Actions

Multiattack. The Old Troll makes two attacks: one with his troll-knife and one slam.

Troll-knife. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8+4) piercing damage.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10+4) bludgeoning damage.

Reactions

Deadly Misfortune (Lair Only, Recharge 5-6).

Trolls don't usually know any magic, but the Old Troll remembers a few tricks he learned in ancient Angmar. If a character attacks the Troll and misses, he may cause one of his piles of bones to suddenly slip and collapse on top of the character, crashing and clattering very loudly. The target must make a **DC 13 Strength** saving throw or be knocked Prone. The area within 10 feet of the target is now difficult terrain and the target makes all attack rolls at Disadvantage until it is outside the area of effect.

The Old Troll's heavy mail and knife come from the forges of long-vanished Angmar, and he vaguely recalls fighting in one war or another, but the details are as hazy and forgotten as his true name. He is, as far as he can recall, the oldest of the Stone-trolls of Eriador.



ILL-FAVOURED MEN

While most folk of Bree are simple farmers and crafters, a few persons of evil intent lurk waiting for an opportunity to make trouble.

Brigands

"Some were just poor bodies running away from trouble; but most were bad men, full o' thievery and mischief."

At the edge of the Bree-land can be found scoundrels who did not fit into civilisation, and not all of them are the noble Dúnedain. Brigands haunt both the East Road and the Greenway, looking to free some Dwarves or other travellers from their gold and silver. When times are bad, they poach the Chetwood, risk the dangers of Midgewater Marsh or content themselves with stealing livestock.

Brigands won't often challenge a well-arrayed Company unless they outnumber the heroes by a significant margin. But if the companions are travelling with merchants and not calling attention to themselves, they might find themselves in an impromptu Audience with a bandit leader.

Motivation: This is the only way I can get what I deserve.

Expectations: *"Cold coin warms the heart"* +2 if the heroes give the Brigand something of value; *"Don't give us any trouble"* -2 if the heroes draw weapons or resist.

BRIGAND Medium Human

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Armour Class 15 (Thick Hide, Shield)

Hit Points 45 (6d8+18)

Speed 30 ft

Skills Intimidation +2, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Westron

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Bulky Armour. The Brigand has Disadvantage on Dexterity checks

Actions

Battle Cry (1/day). The Brigand may use its action to activate this ability. Each Brigand within 30 feet of it gains Advantage on attack rolls until the start of the Brigand's next turn. The Brigand may then make one attack as a bonus action.

Multiattack. The Brigand makes two attacks with its axe.

Axe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) slashing damage.

MOUNTEBANK Medium Human

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	20 (+5)

Armour Class 15 (Leather Corslet)

Hit Points 71 (11d8+22)

Speed 30 ft

Skills Deception +11, Persuasion +8, Riddle +4, Sleight of Hand +11

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Westron

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Expert. The Mountebank doubles its Proficiency Bonus for Deception and Sleight of Hand (included above).

Nimble Escape. The Mountebank can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

Actions

Multiattack. The Mountebank makes two dagger attacks.

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage.

Prestidigitation. As long as the Mountebank has had time to prepare the area, it may spend its action to activate a series of distracting effects – clouds of smoke, loud noises, strange clatterings, objects moving seemingly of their own accord or the like. Each enemy within 60 feet of the Mountebank must make a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw or become Stunned until the beginning of the Mountebank's next turn. The Mountebank can then use its bonus action to make a single **Dagger** attack.

Voice of Command (Recharge 5-6). A Mountebank can bring all of its considerable force of personality to bear on a single creature. Its voice booms with authority or softly suggests wiser courses of action. The creature must make a **DC 15 Charisma** saving throw or become Charmed by the Mountebank for 1 minute. The creature will not attack its allies and realises that the Mountebank affected it only after the effect expires.

Reactions

Uncanny Dodge. If the Mountebank can see an attacker that has struck it, it may use its reaction to halve that attack's damage.

Mountebank

There are those who use the tales of Wizards and the magics of Elves, Dwarves and others to their own gain. Most Mountebanks are tricksters that rely on clever ruses to make the simple folk believe in their illusions, others are convincing charmers who happen to be down on their luck, but if you lend them a bit of coin they have a plan that will pay you back tenfold...

an - empty land -

"In those days no other Men had settled dwellings so far west, or within a hundred leagues of the Shire."

The emptiness of the lands about Bree can, at first glimpse, seem to pose a challenge to a Loremaster running a Bree-land adventure or to players heavily invested in assisting with creative descriptions of the sights and sounds around them. The wide, lonely spaces, filled with nothing more than the wind and the voice of a lone crow can provide a portentous and meaningful atmosphere. Or indeed one that contrasts strongly with the warmth and close cosiness of *The Prancing Pony*.

Comparing the rustic and homely appeal of Bree to the wide emptiness of the lands that surround it, can really give your adventures a new aspect. A journey from the gossiping streets of Bree, where folk are all too keenly interested in one another's business, out into the empty places where help is always too far away can make the basis of a great Bree-land story. To strangers, Bree-land is a quiet and empty place. But for the Bree-folk, it is their ancient homeland — a storied place though never recorded in the annals of the Mighty and the Wise. Heroes that travel these lands regularly will find challenges here — of a smaller and personal scale to be sure, but challenges all the same.

THE SMALL THINGS

Modest flora and fauna, described in more detail than one might choose to use in a more epic setting, also help impart a different feel to the Bree-land. Nettles, thistles and brambles, daisies and dandelions, dock leaves and celandines can impart a gentler, storybook feel. Similarly, there are no heroes here; just farmers dreaming of a good harvest, crafters trying to perfect their trade and peddlars happy to see familiar faces over and over again.

The Bree-land is less geographically dramatic than other places in Middle-earth, and the lack of immediate physical hazards in the landscape can allow these quieter aspects to come to the fore.

JOURNEY EVENT TABLES

The following tables provide examples for each Journey Event customised for the Bree-land. You can use them to create events that involve the people and places of this Guide, modified as needed by your current story and the Company's previous deeds. Memories are retentive in the Bree-land and words and actions of the heroes will be long remembered by the worthies of the four villages, for good or ill. Also consider the background of any heroes that are local to this land — Bree-folk, Hobbits of the Shire and Dúnedain might already have a history with those they've chanced across during a trip.

Several of the entries draw from the locations and Loremaster characters of the adventures contained in this supplement. In these cases, the connection is highlighted by an colour-coded icon representing the adventure, with a number in the centre indicating which Part of the adventure it is most suited for.

Icon Key:

Old Bones and Skin



Strange Men, Strange Roads



Holed Up in Staddle





JOURNEY EVENT TABLE ENTRY 1 (OR LESS)

A Chance Encounter

The Company meets a fellow traveller or group of travellers. The Scout must make a **Dexterity (Stealth)** check to avoid them, or any hero may make a **Charisma (Persuasion)** check to interact with them.

If the interaction is successful, the first roll of the next event is made with Advantage. Failure results in Disadvantage.

3 Albert Undertree

Albert Undertree is the heir apparent of one of the most prominent Hobbit families of Staddle. Kind and outgoing, he's the very model of well-to-do Hobbit civility. His family owns the largest apple-tree orchard in the Bree-land and their annual cider production is often the talk of the four villages. If you're playing through *Holed Up in Staddle*, Albert is not his usual cheery self, see page 118.

7 Grór the Dwarf

This surly Dwarf is a follower of Gorlanc the Sorcerer, and is a grave-robber, killer and thief. But he's also cautious. If he meets the Company in one of the villages or on the Road, he's most likely to pretend ignorance and innocence, until he's ready to get his revenge (see page 69).

If the Company encounters Grór after the events of *Old Bones and Skin*, then his reaction will be dependent on their treatment of him. He might begin to plot revenge or flee in terror.

Hob Nettles

Hobart is one of the crew of *The Pony*, and the most likely one that Butterbur will send out on errands. So the Company is most likely to see the big man roaming around the four villages collecting supplies or retrieving a hired-out pony. But sometimes the Innkeeper sends him on a longer trip, to deliver packages or letters to the Shire or the *Forsaken Inn*.

Old Marbo Middlebrock

Marbo is a cellar-Hobbit and perhaps the best potter in Bree. He's getting on in years and none of his daughters were interested in the family business (being more taken with other fields, and the Farmers in them). So he took Reed Thistledown from Upstairs on as his apprentice, to his great regret. Reed's a lackluster apprentice, though the young Man does try hard when Marbo can get him to focus on the work at hand.

If the duo is found outside of Bree, they're likely on the way to get more clay from the banks of the Brandywine or searching for special minerals to use in making glazes.

Primrose Tunnelly

The Tunnellies are known as a standoffish lot, full of Staddle-pride and not much for the other villages. Young Primrose is different, however. She still thinks there's no better Smial in the four corners of Bree-land (and, if you press her, she might even be bold enough to claim that the Shire has nothing like it either). But she has many friends, Big and Little, in Bree, Combe and even far-away Archet and always has a smile for a stranger or the latest news (perhaps gossip even) for her friends.

Violet Ferny

Young Violet may only have a dozen or so summers to her name, but she's well known through the Bree-land all the same. She's brash and impertinent, known to argue with Matthew Mugwort at the slightest provocation and often found in places she shouldn't be. Violet is tired of life in the four villages and will likely latch onto any Outlanders that happen to be nice to her. She dreams of one day leaving the Bree-land and going on adventures herself. Violet doesn't have very many friends, though Anna Wintermoss has often stood up for the girl when she gets in trouble with the Wardens or the Reeve.

JOURNEY EVENT TABLE ENTRY 2

Of Herbs and Stewed Rabbit

The Hunter has an opportunity to gather food. They must make a **Wisdom (Survival)** check. You have Advantage if the Company won *Feasts Fit for the Kings of Ancient Times*, or Disadvantage if you face Meagre Supplies and Poor Meals.

If successful, you either gather food (restore a level of Exhaustion or 1 Hit Die to each hero) or collect herbs (Loremaster's choice of herbs found). If you fail then the Arrival roll gains a -1 penalty.

Bree-hill

The Prancing Pony sets a mighty fine table, and it's hard to find any game on the Hill itself that isn't part of someone else's larder. But a determined hunter might catch a vole or rabbit in the long grass on the north edge or a brace of rats closer to town. On the eastern edge of the Hill, a kind of pipe-weed peculiar to Staddle grows, harvested from time immemorial by the Southlinch clan.

Bree-land

The farmlands around the four villages are full of food, though whether on the hoof or in the ground it surely belongs to someone else. Farmers here keep sheep, pigs and chicken with a few families keeping goats or cattle instead. Fields are full of various grains: wheat, barley and oat with smaller plots holding beans, peas, cabbages and beets. Some families have orchards of apple, apricot or plum trees. Few herbs of special note can be found here, as the Bree-folk consider them undesirable weeds.

2 Chetwood

Long ago, the Chetwood was the King's private hunting grounds and the forest still teems with game. Deer and a great many wild pigs roam the northern reaches of the wood with badgers, hedgehogs, rabbits and voles throughout the area. Woodcocks and small owls roost amid the trees as well. Mushrooms and root vegetables grow in the woodland shade.

Kindler's Lace, Kingcups and the occasional patch of Shadow-thorn can be found in the forest.

3 East Road

It's unlikely for the heroes to come across large game near the road, though the Hunter might be lucky enough to come across a pheasant or grouse nesting in the scrub nearby. Hares also like the open land and you must be very quick to catch one. Sheep sorrel, common sorrel and nettles often grow along the road as well.

A Hunter searching for herbs can sometimes find Kindler's Lace or Athelas.

The Greenway

The North Road is wilder and less travelled than the East Road. Rabbits hide in burrows in the shallow dikes near the road, and hares in the high grass beyond, along with black and red grouse.

Sometimes Athelas, Kingcups and Kindler's Lace can be found here, especially as you get closer to Fornost Erain.

The Outlands

There are few Farmers in these lands and thus fewer fields as well. Hobbits out of Buckland come here for the fowling and the Hunter might find some success at catching a meal on the wing as well. If the Company is close enough to the Baranduin, then the fishing is good along the entire length of the slow-moving river. There are herds of sheep here towards the end of summer when their usual grazing fields have grown short, but they're always accompanied by shepherds who won't take kindly to the companions hunting amidst their flocks.

Reedmace and Water Lilies can be found along the riverbanks and streams, Kindler's Lace and Kingcups can be in the drier hillocks. The Dúnedain travel these lands (especially of late since the work at Girdley Island has begun) and it might be possible to find Athelas here.

JOURNEY EVENT TABLE ENTRY 3

An Obstacle

Something blocks the path ahead. The Guide must make a **Wisdom (Survival)** check and each other companion must make either **Wisdom (Survival)** or **Strength (Athletics)**. If the Company has horses or ponies, one hero must make a **Wisdom (Animal Handling)** check. All checks have Advantage if they are on *Paths both Swift and True*, or Disadvantage if they face *The Wearisome Toil of Many Leagues*. If all are successful, the Arrival roll gains +1. If half or more are successful, there is no penalty. If more than half failed then each hero gains a level of Exhaustion. If all fail add a -1 penalty to the Arrival roll to the Exhaustion.

Dogs who Know Their Business

The Company's path to their destination cuts near to a Farmer's land if not through the fields themselves. Unfortunately, the farm's guard-dogs are tenacious and it seems like the heroes might not be able to cross the field after all. They can either wait patiently and hope to use **Traditions** with the Farmer to get an escort across his land, or use **Animal Handling** to let the dogs know that the Company means well and will soon be on their way.

2 Many Paths in the Chetwood

The companions are travelling along or inside the Chetwood when they realise that they no longer have a clear sense of which way to go. Many trails in the forest twist and turn around hills, large trees or thick copses, or suddenly follow the furrow in which a small woodland stream flows. Thus it easy to let the pleasant weather and cool shade underneath the eaves distract you from your chosen destination. Now, suddenly, the Guide knows that she must make a choice to set things right, but there were many turnings and side-trails. An **Investigation** check can reveal some small clue that will point the way ahead, or she can instead attempt a **Survival** check with Disadvantage due to the twisting paths.

7 No Way Forward, No Way Back

The companions find themselves in an awkward position: they can see no immediate way forward and backtracking is difficult. Perhaps it is growing dark, or they have realised that they were trespassing on someone's land and don't wish to chance a confrontation by returning the way they

came. Or it may just be that they have gotten turned about and cannot find their own tracks amid the broken lands. In any case, they must find another route since the way that they were taking has ended suddenly (a trail disappears into high grass, a thicket of trees, a sucking bog or other impediment).

The Stile of Combe

If the Company is coming or going to the Combe valley, the Stile of Combe is a tempting shortcut. But the carven stones are slippery and the reinforcements aren't as strong as they used to be, and great care must be taken so that the Player-heroes don't find an even quicker way to reach the bottom of the vale. Alternatively, if the heroes have pack animals with them, they might find that the Stile won't suit them and must instead plod up the shallower side of the valley, going hours out of their way.

4 Troll-path

The trail that the Company is following has become something that only a Troll could traverse safely: going up a steep cliff, through thick brambles or across marshy ground. The Guide has a choice: do they lead the Company on the same Troll-path, or risk delay by finding a safer alternative route? If the Guide looks for another route, they must make an **Wisdom (Survival)** check. With a success, the journey continues unabated. With a failure, the companions each gain a level of Exhaustion and have to cross the Troll-path as above, as there's no other way to follow the trail.

7 Wet Underfoot

The Company is either travelling near to the Midgewater Marshes when a sudden thunderstorm blows in from the north and the dirt trail the companions have been following turns to mud. While the storm is overhead, the sky is dark and the rain obscures landmarks. Soon enough, the clouds are gone, but the wet muck remains. The Guide can either look for an alternate path that has less mud with a **Survival** check or continue to plod along the known way. This causes every member of the Company to gain a level of Exhaustion but staying on the current route does give some benefits: the next check for a Journey Event is made with Advantage.

JOURNEY EVENT TABLE ENTRY 4

In Need of Help

The Company meets someone who needs aid. If they choose not to assist each hero must make a **Wisdom** saving throw to avoid 1 Shadow Point. If they do help, they make three checks, usually from **Animal Handling**, **Insight**, **Medicine**, **Nature**, **Persuasion**, **Survival** or **Traditions**. If all checks are successful then all heroes gain Inspiration and +1 to the Arrival Roll. If two checks are successful then one hero gains Inspiration and +1 to the Arrival Roll. If one check is successful then +1 to Arrival Roll. If all rolls fail then a -1 modifier is applied to the Arrival Roll.

Iari the Harper

An extraordinarily venerable Dwarf of the Blue Mountains, Iari has decided that he wishes to see the restored Kingdom Under the Mountain before he dies. Many, many leagues lie between Ered Luin and Erebor and Bree-land is just one small stop along the way. The assistance that Iari needs depends heavily on the Company: a group from Wilderland might simply pass the time informing the old Dwarf about what to expect on the road ahead, while more local companions might be hired as guards or porters. Iari isn't in any hurry at all, and companions on a mission might become frustrated by his patient ways. But if they treat him well, he'll play his silver harp for them and even the hardest heart will be moved: all the Player-heroes gain Inspiration, even if they failed their checks.

The Mudbanks and the Broken Axle

Ahead, the companions spy a group of Hobbits clustered around a cart that seems stranded: one or more wheels are missing from the back of the wagon and it's clear that the axle itself is broken. Stout backs (**Athletics** checks), good tools and a can-do attitude will fix the cart axle and get the Hobbits back on their way. Unfortunately, the Mudbanks hail from Combe and they are intractably glum and pessimistic. The heroes will find themselves subject to such a barrage of negativity that anyone who fails a check gains a point of Shadow from dourness of those they are trying to assist.

3 Stormclouds Overhead

The weather is threatening to take an ugly turn and the Company is near to folks who are ill-prepared for such an

event. If they're travelling with others, the caravan master might insist upon pushing through the storm, hoping to reach Bree or another village before the worst of it comes down. Or perhaps there are workers in the nearby fields and all the tools, carts, bushels, barrels and people need to be put away before the sky breaks open. **Animal Handling**, **Nature** and **Survival** are the only skills that will apply to this event.

Lost Child

The Company either comes across a child who has become separated from their caregivers, or comes across those caregivers frantically looking for the child. Depending on the situation, checks of **Investigation**, **Survival** or **Traditions** may be appropriate. But the reason why the child is missing can also be important – if they ran away then **Insight** or **Persuasion** might be needed to learn the true situation, and further actions might be needed to set things right.

The Terror of Staddle

Dark tales come from the village on the east side of Bree-hill: eggs stolen from chicken coops, fruit disappearing from baskets, empty milk jugs left on the doorsteps of the wealthier Hobbits. Staddle believes itself to be haunted, and the Company will likely be asked to investigate if they're in the area (or, depending on their reputation in the Bree-land, they may be blamed for the strange activities). In the end, the mystery proves to be nothing more than the pranks of teenagers but the companions might easily waste several hours discovering the truth.

Trouble with the Livestock

The companions are travelling a trail that follows a fence-line when they discover a break in the fence where livestock have pushed their way through. Or, perhaps, they are further into the wild and can hear the calls of the shepherds trying to collect their scattered herd. In either case, checks of **Animal Handling** and **Survival** are necessary to collect the animals, along with **Athletics** to temporarily repair the broken fence. The shepherds or farmers will be appreciative of the Company's assistance, perhaps feeding them or giving them a safe place to rest at the end of the day.



JOURNEY EVENT TABLE ENTRY 5

Agents of the Enemy

The Company approaches a hostile force. The Look-out must make a **Wisdom (Perception)** check to spot the enemy early. The Look-out has Advantage if the Company is *Hidden from the Shadow* or Disadvantage if they face *The Keen Eyes of the Enemy*. These modifiers apply to any rolls made outside of combat.

If successful, they may either sneak away or ambush them (in which case the enemy is Surprised). If failed, the enemy sets an ambush and the Player-heroes are Surprised.

Deadman Outriders

The Company has stumbled across the trail of some of the Deadman Gang, named after Deadman's Dike. The bandits will try to avoid an armed and armoured group of adventurers, but a clever Company that poses as merchants (or a group more dedicated to scholarly pursuits) might face them down. There's one Thug for each hero, and a single Outlaw leading them. The meeting counts as **Challenge 3** if it comes to combat.

The Lone Wolf

A solitary White Wolf of the North (see page 49) has strayed into the Bree-land, driven by hunger or curiosity. The Company might come across signs of its presence before catching sight of it directly: half-eaten livestock, broken fence-gates, a chilling howl in the night. When they do finally see the huge beast, they'll recognise that it is no ordinary wolf. The White Wolf is **Challenge 2** or can be given an **Unclean Stench** (see page 121 of the *Loremaster's Guide*) and be considered **Challenge 3**.

Oakmen Playing Tricks

The creatures known as the Bluebell Wood Oakmen (page 47) are fey and strange. The Company is somewhere near the Chetwood when the Look-out spies Hobbit-like figures nearby. They caper and dance, humming what sounds like a drinking song without any words. If the heroes reveal themselves, the Oakmen gesture enthusiastically for the companions to dance, sing or play a song. As long as the Company keeps the Oakmen entertained, they do not

attack. However, despite their appearance, they are not Hobbits and all their antics may be a prelude to further trickery and violence. There are three Oakmen for every two heroes, counting as a **Challenge 3** encounter.

Scoundrels Abroad

The Company has attracted the attention of a group of scoundrels looking for easy marks along the Road. The total number of bandits is equal to the companions, most are Thugs (see page 74 of the *Loremaster's Guide*) but at least one is a Brigand (see page 50) and the encounter is ranked as **Challenge 2**.

Unless the Company chooses to Surprise the scoundrels, this meeting can first be resolved as an Audience, with combat only beginning if negotiations break down.



The Thief in the Night

Someone is sneaking about, with ill-intent on his or her mind. But if the **Perception** check is failed, the Company is not attacked. Instead, a thief takes the opportunity of a snoozing or distracted Lookout and steals something small and valuable from the heroes. If you're playing this as part of an adventure, it will be something important to its completion (such as Timeas' map from *Old Bones and Skin* — having the map stolen from them gives the companions Disadvantage on all checks to find the Black Barrow).

If the **Perception** check succeeds, the Lookout notices the approach of the thief, who is wily enough to get away. Nothing is stolen, at least.

Two Heads are Better Than One

A Two-Headed Troll (page 48) has wandered into the Outlands, the Chetwood or crept into the caves of Combe valley. The heroes might learn about the troll from fleeing farmers, a Ranger looking for stout assistants or by hearing it talk to itself. The Troll is **Challenge 5** but against a Company of experienced fighters you might add a **Club Sweep** (page 120 of the *Loremaster's Guide*) without raising the Challenge rating.

JOURNEY EVENT TABLE ENTRY 6

The Wonders of Middle-earth

The Company is presented with a spectacular sight. Each hero must make either a **Wisdom** check or an **Intelligence (Investigation)** check. These checks are made with Advantage in *Fair Weather* and Disadvantage under *Foul Weather*.

If successful, the hero recovers one level of Exhaustion or gains one if they fail. If all heroes succeed, gain a +1 to the Arrival Roll or if all fail then the Arrival Roll gains a -1 penalty.

3 The Fields We Know

If the heroes are from the Bree-land, they have wandered into familiar territory. Memories of childhood come to mind unexpectedly as the companions remember lazy summer days of play, hard chores in the fields or the once terrifying grip of winter on the land. For those who are not from the area, they might get the same sense from the tales of their companions, or by seeing young folk about. Do the heroes regret their losses or do those memories stir their resolve to go forth and face danger once again?

Gentle Rain or Light Snow

Clouds roll through the sky overhead, and the Company must make a choice: they can stop somewhere and let the weather come and go or they can make a go of tramping through it.

Heroes that choose to watch the rain or snow from the comfort of a campsite or house automatically recover a level of Exhaustion. Those who feel they must press on regardless automatically gain a level instead.

Scudding Clouds and Pale Sunlight

The sun rises on a day when the clouds race overhead, coming from the west and tumbling towards the distant mountains in the east. Pale light casts long shadows as the Company strikes camp and it's not likely that you'll see the bright eye of the Sun at all today.

Some folks will take heart at the promise of an easier time, others might wish for clear skies and a hot, bright day. The heroes have Advantage on their checks to appreciate the gentle weather.

Small Struggles

The companions see a hawk circling in the sky and then, with a rush of wings, she descends to the ground, a field mouse caught in her talons. Or as they rest quietly along the road, they spy a bold vole creeping through the grass. A green form suddenly strikes, an adder now has had his lunch. This is everyday life and death in the Bree-land, but what does the Company think of it? Are they comfortable with the changes of fortune, thinking that it means that good things are surely coming their way? Or do they sympathise more with the mice and voles and think the Enemy is waiting to get them?

4 Thick Mists

Deep fog pours in from the Brandywine or over the Downs and it becomes impossible to see more than a few feet ahead of you. Heroes that decide to press on risk being scattered and lost. They must make the check above with Disadvantage. On a failure, the companions spend many hours making scant progress. If they're following the Troll from *Old Bones and Skin*, he gains 3 Lead from their stumbling about. On a success, the heroes still don't make much progress but they're more philosophical about the delay. After all, it's better to sit down on the cool grass and let your feet rest than it is to try and make headway in the obscuring vapours.

Wildflowers in Bloom

It is bright spring day and a cool and gentle breeze blows from the west. Amidst and around the Company is a riot of colour for all the wildflowers of the Bree-land are in bloom. For most heroes this should be an encouraging sign of life and hope. But for some, the bright blooms signify itchy eyes and runny noses. Do the companions appreciate the scenery or come to dread it?



JOURNEY EVENT TABLE ENTRY 7

A Hunt

The Hunter has a particularly excellent chance to catch a good meal. The Hunter must make a **Wisdom (Survival)** check. These checks are made with Advantage with *Feasts Fit for the Kings of Ancient Times*, and Disadvantage if the *Company has Meagre Supplies and Poor Meals*.

If successful by 5 or more, all heroes recover a level of Exhaustion and the Company gains +1 to the Arrival Roll. Other successes recover a level of Exhaustion only. If the check fails then the Company gains a level of Exhaustion. If the Hunter fails by 5 or more add a -1 penalty to the Arrival Roll.

7 Caught in the Bog

The Company is travelling near the Midgewater Marshes or another wetland when the Hunter spots a wild boar crashing through the swamp. If they choose not to hunt the beast, the Company goes hungry tonight, and everyone gains a level of Exhaustion (as if the check failed, see above). If the Hunter pursues the quarry, the animal blunders into a pool of sucking mud and starts to drown. Recovering the beast from the mud requires an **Athletics** check. Fail, and the Hunter gains a level of Exhaustion from the effort of trying to rescue the animal. Succeed, and the companions eat well tonight!

Escaped Livestock

The Hunter comes across the tracks of some larger animal, but soon realises that it is no wild beast. Instead, it is a stray animal that certainly belongs to some nearby Farmer. Once the animal is found, the Hunter must make a choice: to slay the animal is a Misdeed worth 1 Shadow point but the Company will no longer be hungry. Capturing the beast, finding the farmstead and returning it is a wearying affair (the Hunter gains a level of Exhaustion) but is likely to end with an appreciative Farmer who might feed the Company and perhaps even give them a safe place to sleep this night.

Lonely Apple Tree

The Company comes across a singular apple tree, well away from any fields or orchards. If it's early or late in the season, there are just a few apples worth eating on the tree — enough to stay the heroes' appetite for sure. If they

chance across the apple tree at just the right time, then its boughs are weighed down heavily with apples. They can eat their fill and still have plenty to put in their pockets, satchels and saddlebags. If so, the Hunter makes their next Journey Event check with Advantage.

The Old Pier

The Hunter comes across an old stone pier built long ago. Perhaps it is on the Brandywine, one of its tributaries or perhaps even in the Midgewater Marshes — that land used to be more wholesome in the time of the kings. In any case, spending some time fishing there will prove very fruitful. The Hunter has Advantage on their **Survival** check as long as they're willing to wait a few hours for the fish to start biting.

2 Poachers in the Chetwood

While it's traditionally required to get the Royal Forester's permission to go hunting in the Chetwood, not everyone goes through the trouble of doing so. If the Company is not local to the Bree-land then the Hunter might not know that pursuing a deer in the woods is illegal and a witness might cause trouble for them later on. Heroes that do know better might be looking for smaller game and come across evidence of poaching. Is it a straightforward affair of an Outlaw about? Or is the poacher instead a good person, made destitute and homeless by circumstances beyond their control? And, of course, the difference between an Outlaw and an Unfortunate might only be mercy and pity.

Ranger's Storehouse

For whatever reason (the season, weather or foul things lurking about) game is scarce and the Company has grown very hungry when the Hunter finds a strange cache hidden in a thicket or small cave. Inside are jars containing honey, flatbreads, jam, salted meats, dried fruits and other delicious things. Dúnedain will recognise it as a secret reserve of their folk, but the Company will be in bad shape if they don't get something to eat soon.

Heroes that steal from the storehouse gain a point of Shadow. This can be prevented if they have a Ranger with them who dedicates their next Undertaking to restocking the cache.

JOURNEY EVENT TABLE ENTRY 8

A Fine Spot for a Camp

The Scout has spotted a location that might make an excellent campsite. Make an **Intelligence (Investigation)** check.

If the check succeeds by 5 or more then the Company recovers a level of Exhaustion and gains +1 to the Arrival Roll. On a basic success the Company recovers a level of Exhaustion. On a failure the Company gains a level of Exhaustion. On a failure of 5 or more the Company is in danger and might face enemies. They also gain Exhaustion and a -1 penalty to the Arrival Roll

The Barn-loft

If the Company is travelling in the Bree-land itself, they're more likely to find a suitable outbuilding to stay in than an actual campsite. Most Farmers don't mind putting up strangers in the barn as long as they're respectful and pass such news as they have along. The Scout must make a **Traditions** check instead of **Investigation**.

Clearing in the Chetwood

The Chetwood is an ancient forest and the Company has chanced across one of the mysterious clearings found in the wood. It's small, a few dozen feet across at most, and seems a perfect place to camp. Perhaps a fallen tree lies nearby for firewood on a cold night, or a bubbling forest stream is nearby. As darkness falls, the trees nearby creak and sway in a gentle breeze. The companions may wonder at their good fortune. There may be a mundane explanation for the clearing — a Ranger wayspot, or a (hopefully abandoned) camp of outlaws or poachers. But perhaps bluebells grow at the edge of the clearing and the Company will have visitors before the night is out...

Fallow Fields

An idle plot of land might well look like the ideal campsite to a travelling Company but not every Farmer will appreciate the heroes stopping by. On a failure of 5 or more, he and his dogs find the companions and might chase them off. Generous Loremasters might allow a **Traditions** check or a few coins to pass hands in order to avoid trouble and allow the Company to use the site after all.

Girdley Island

For a Company exploring the Brandywine, Girdley Island may seem like an ideal refuge before continuing on. But the Dúnedain are already here. If one or more of the companions are Rangers then they can vouch for their friends and the Company can rest near to the shore — only Dúnedain, High Elves and those already sworn to secrecy (see page 13) will be allowed to inspect the construction project itself.

However, if the heroes are more common folk, then strange things will happen once they land on the island. The birds seems to chatter loudly and they may get a sense of large beasts moving through the trees. If that doesn't scare off the Company, then the Rangers might pretend to be bandits or smugglers and try to force the companions to leave, with words if possible and at swordpoint if necessary.

4 A Glen amidst the Downs

The Company has strayed close to either the Barrow-downs or the South Downs. These are dangerous lands, and the Scout is hard-pressed to find a safe place. But the heroes finally, as the twilight comes, find an open clearing nestled between the hills. Surely, if anywhere will be safe, it will be here. And if danger approaches in the night, there is nothing to prevent the Look-out from seeing it from a distance.

The Stone-ring

The companions are travelling in the Outlands, along the edge of the fields of the Bree-land or near to the Chetwood when they see a ring of stones. The practical sort of hero will surmise that once, in the days of the King, a fort stood here and these are its only remains. But more fanciful folk call it a Fairy-ring and refuse to believe that stonecraft, better than any now known in the Bree-land, could have been made by mortals. Folk from nearby will be reminded of stories of Men who went to sleep in a Fairy-ring only to never wake up, or find that a dozen years had passed in a single night, or who had their dreams troubled by impossible memories of the wars against the Witch-king long ago.



JOURNEY EVENT TABLE ENTRY 9

A Lingering Memory of Times Long Past

The Company discovers a relic of past ages. Each companion must make a **Wisdom** check. If successful, the hero gains Inspiration. If you succeed by 5 or more, you may remove a level of Exhaustion. If the hero fails, you must make a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw or gain 2 points of Shadow. If you fail the initial check by 5 or more, you must make the saving throw and gain a level of Exhaustion. If at least half the Company succeed at the check, add +1 to the Arrival Roll. Otherwise apply a -1 modifier instead.

Cardolan's Walls

Long ago, when the kingdom was divided, Bree stood close to the border between Arthedain and Cardolan. One of the princes caused a great dike to be dug, with a wall on one side and a hedge on the other. These days, much of the ancient construction is gone — the cut stones of the wall stolen to raise a house or barn or make a fence elsewhere or tumbled into the dike and forgotten about. But the Company has come across a stretch that still remains intact. It might serve as an obstacle for them, or it might remain those with deeper **Lore** of tragedies that set brother against brother many centuries ago.

Convenient Resting Place

The companions have found a fine place to rest, a small clearing or hollow in the side of a hill. Everything is peaceful and quiet and the heroes take their ease amidst many small boulders and stones. Only with a bit on inspection do they realise that their resting place is not natural. The boulders are statuary, worn down by the long years and covered by creeping moss and lichen. The stones bear faint markings, which tell the tales of ancient heroes and leaders and lost kingdoms that are now faded and jumbled memories in the Bree-land.

The First Smial

Though the Tunnelly family disputes it (claiming that the Great Smial of Staddle is the oldest in the Bree-land), there are persistent rumours of a long-lost Smial that was built by the first Hobbit refugees. The legend says that it was larger than Brandy Hall and stuffed ceiling to floor with treasures and mathoms taken from the Hobbit homelands but it was lost to a terrible earthquake only a hundred years or so after its founding. And so, when some ancient Hobbit hole

(or anything that looks like it could have been a Hobbit hole once) is found in the Bree-land, young and excitable folk remind each other of the old legend. The Company has chanced across something that stirs these memories. Whether or not they've found a legendarily large and ancient Smial (and whatever lurks in its darkened halls now) or the simple hiding hole of an Outsider is up to the Loremaster.

The High House

The Company is near Combe and the ruins of the High House beckon. If the companions choose to explore the ruins, they will gain a sense of its ancientry and those folks sensitive to such things (Dúnedain, High Elves and others with relevant Virtues) may get a sense that some sort of power or enchantment still lurks here. Heroes that fail their **Wisdom** check have Disadvantage on the saving throw for the Corruption check, for the ancient place seems to amplify the sorrows that each companion carries within.



King's Crossing

Scattered near to the Great East Road and also along the Greenway are occasional standing stones. Most are only a foot or two high and are too weatherworn for any but the keenest Elf-eyes to read the runes that were once engraved on them. The Bree-folk call these stones a King's crossing, and some of them do indeed mark the start of a trail, such as the path that leads to Combe from the East Road. Otherwise, they pay them no mind. More learned companions might take either hope or sorrow for knowing that once, long ago, a King did watch over these lands, until the Shadow destroyed him and his people.

The Sheep Trail

The heroes are walking along a sheep-trail that conveniently heads their direction when suddenly the trail widens and the companions see finely crafted interlocking paving stones under their feet. A thousand years or more ago, this was part of a grand road. Two-hundred paces away, the roadway disappears and the path is again nothing more than a sheep-trail. Heroes that chance to look about are likely to find ruins nearby. Perhaps what used to be a waystation long ago, although the roof and most of the walls are long gone. There's a quietness to the ruins, a mixture of grandness and sorrow that seems to hang in the very air.

JOURNEY EVENT TABLE ENTRY 10

A Place Touched by the Shadow

The essence of something dark and terrible lingers here. The Scout must make an **Intelligence (Investigation)** check to avoid the area. If successful, the Company gains a +1 to their Arrival Roll. If the Scout succeeds by 5 or more, each hero gains Inspiration and may remove 1 temporary Shadow point. If the Scout fails, each hero must make a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw against Corruption or gain 1 point of Shadow. If the Scout fails by 5 or more, some dark thing still lurks here, ancient and evil...

The Cottage of the Lost

There are rumours of a witch's hut in the Chetwood. Where it can be found changes with who's telling the story – sometimes it's even in the Old Forest instead – but it's always a dangerous place that lost folks stumble across. The witch isn't home at first, but then she comes back and finds the visitors trespassing. The Company has stumbled across the ramshackle remains of a cottage in the forest and it's likely that this story is in their minds. Of course, it might just belong to a hermit or was once the home of a poacher or outlaw. Heroes that investigate deeper might find more disturbing things here: a pile of animal bones, rotten hides, perhaps a shallow grave with human remains.

The Cold Passage

At the northerly entrance to the valley where Combe lies is a particular spot where one can feel a cold chill upon the back of one's neck no matter the season or time of day. Local legend says that an unquiet spirit haunts the entrance to the valley, forever searching for its mortal remains which were scattered or destroyed long ago. Heroes that voluntarily seek out the site automatically gain a point of Shadow but also might gain a clue as the darkness that lies there.

The Empty Campsite

Late in the day, the heroes come across a campsite. The ground is clean and clear of debris, there's a stone-lined firepit with kindling in the pit and a stack of dry firewood nearby. It's about as perfect a place to rest as the Company is likely to find outside the walls of the *The Prancing Pony*. And, yet, there are no signs of anyone nearby: no tracks in the dirt, no one gone to fetch water from a nearby pond, no scouts making sure that there are no bear or troll tracks

in the vicinity. The Company is alone. The exact meaning of the campsite is up to the Loremaster. You might ask for a Corruption check only because the companions have inadvertently inconvenienced a very stealthy group of Rangers. Or the entire campsite might be a trick of the Shadow or the sorcerer Gorlanc, a peaceful memory designed to make the heroes unwary in preparation for an attack in the night.

7 Ghosts in the Fog

The Company is travelling in the Midgewater or along the banks of the Baranduin when vapours from the East roll in. The Scout sees the mists hanging over the water twist and coil, and suddenly they seem to take on the form of ghostly soldiers marching in serried ranks. The Scout has Disadvantage on the **Investigation** check due to the speed with which the fog takes on its unearthly guise.

Maggie's Lookout

There are few steep rock-faces in the Bree-land and about the only that could be called a cliff proper is where the Quarry (see page 17) cuts into the Hill itself. Above it, is a spot called Maggie's Lookout. Local legend tells of a young girl forbidden to marry her love by her cruel father, who instead intended his daughter to marry a rival's son and end a long-standing feud. Instead, Magnolia Droverwind threw herself into the Quarry from this spot and her body was never found. It's hard to say how much of the legend is true. But the Droverwinds and the Goatleaf clan are still at odds today.

3 The Thieves' Glen

The heroes have ventured into the coppice of trees near Combe known as the Thieves' Glen (see page 26). The wood seems very close – the air is still and the foliage high above casts long shadows on the ground, dappled here and there by a bright beam of sunlight that has managed to make its way through. Dead leaves and debris crunch underfoot as the companions manoeuvre through many tiny twisting trails that double back on themselves and reveal hidden spots to persistent seekers. The Company can sense the terrible history of the place: evil and murder was done here and it does not seem like a safe place to linger.

JOURNEY EVENT TABLE ENTRY 11

The Enemy is Abroad

Evil Men, Orcs, Goblins or other servants of the Enemy are moving through the area. If the Company is subject to *The Keen Eyes of the Enemy*, the confrontation is unavoidable, if the Look-out makes a **Wisdom (Perception)** check, the enemy is Surprised on the first round of combat.

If the Company is *Hidden from the Shadow*, the Look-out can use **Perception** or **Stealth** to avoid the enemy. If the check fails, the enemy is still Surprised on the first round of combat.

If neither applies, then each member of the Company must make a **Dexterity (Stealth)** check. If the Company has horses or ponies then one companion must make a **Wisdom (Animal Handling)** check as well. If any of these rolls fails, they have spotted and battle is engaged with no advantage to either side.

The Deadman Gang

Taking their name from the Bree-folk's name for Fornost Erain, the Deadman don't actually dare to go too close to the ancient city (since doing so would alert Talandil and other Rangers). Instead, they lurk along the roads, trying to stay far enough away from the four villages to avoid capture. The Company has found their leader (Little Ned, a huge Man and an Outlaw Chief) and as many Outlaws as there are heroes. They're used to threatening merchants and will prove to be an Easily Unnerved troupe (see page 70 of the *Rivendell Region Guide*) when they have to face the cold steel of the heroes. The gang is a **Challenge 6** encounter, or **Challenge 7** if you decide that they are a **Vengeful Band** (page 119 of the *Loremaster's Guide*) instead.

Harvestmath Wights

The final days of Harvestmath signal a transition between the bright warm pleasantness of Summer and the coming cold darkness of Autumn. Folk say that the dead rest uneasily at this time of year, feeling the change in their bones as well. On the last night of the month, the people of the Bree-land lock their doors tightly, light tall candles that will burn all night long to keep the darkness away and listen to the cold wind blowing outside.

Of course, if the Company is on a journey then they won't be safely indoors. In the deepest and darkest part of night, a group of Barrow-wights and Bog Soldiers attack the heroes (one of each per companion, **Challenge 9**).

Munaith Greycloak

This old crebain (see page 75 of the *Rivendell Region Guide*) is cleverer and more scheming than his fellows (Munaith's **Intelligence** and **Charisma** are both 12 and he has **Deception** +5). He can communicate in a harsh, croaking version of the Common speech but is an excellent mimic. His preferred technique is to ally himself with other evil creatures and lead his victims into their ambush by pretending to be a hurt person or animal calling out in pain or fear. He might ally with: a small flock of younger Crebain (two per hero, **Challenge 3**), some swamp goblins (one per hero, **Challenge 4**) or hungry stone trolls (one per hero, **Challenge 8**).



Night Terrors

The Look-out's eyes seem to be playing tricks on them. Every hillock and rock looks like a Troll. As the moonlight plays over the land, it is as though the Troll is everywhere. Ask the player how attentive they intend to be – are they going to stay on-edge and fully alert all night, fraying their nerves, or will they put aside their worries and just make sure that no foes trouble the sleeping companions?

A hero that strains themselves makes the Perception check with Advantage but gains a level of Exhaustion. If you use this Journey Event during *Old Bones and Skin*, the Old Troll doesn't attack but instead uses the opportunity to get away, causing the Company to lose his trail and adding 3 to his Lead (see page 75).

Out of the Marshes

From time to time, the Swamp Goblins leave the safety of the Midgewater and venture further abroad in search of fresh meat. Such a troupe counts as **Bloodthirsty** (see page 119 of the *Loremaster's Guide*). The Company might face as many Goblins as there are heroes (a **Challenge 3** encounter) or twice as many Swamp Goblins as companions for a **Challenge 5** meeting. Due to the Goblins' stealth, the Look-out makes their Perception check at Disadvantage.

JOURNEY EVENT TABLE ENTRY 11 (CONTINUED)

Trolls on the Border

A group of Hill Trolls has ventured out of the Lone Lands to the north and now stalks at the borders of the Bree-land. The heroes are lucky enough to notice them before they've had a chance to cause too much trouble. There is one Hill Troll for every companion and they are led by a Hill Troll Chief. The encounter is rated at **Challenge 8**, for exceptionally martial Companies you can give each of the Trolls a **Thick Hide** without affecting the Challenge rating.

Wolves on the Hunt

A pack of Wild Wolves (page 111 of the *Loremaster's Guide*) that are both **Blood Driven** and possessing **Evil Maws** (see page 121 of the *Loremaster's Guide*) has come into the Bree-land from the Lone-lands to the north or south. There are three Wolves for every two heroes and the encounter counts as **Challenge 4**.

JOURNEY EVENT TABLE ENTRY 12

Many Meetings? Fly you Fools!

The companions have encountered a traveller upon the road, but all may not be as it at first appears. If the Company began the journey under *Dark Signs and Evil Portents*, it is a servant of the Enemy. If they started *From Auspicious Beginnings* then it is one of the great powers for good. Otherwise, the Look-out must make a **Wisdom (Perception)** check.

If the Look-out succeeds by 5 or more, they recognise the traveller for someone of great standing and may immediately remove 1 Shadow point, gain +1 to their Arrival Roll and may seek an Audience with the traveller. On a basic success, the traveller's identity is shielded from them and the meeting should use the rules for *A Chance Encounter*. **Insight** checks may reveal their true identity.

If the check fails, each hero must make a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw against Corruption or gain 2 Shadow points. They must then hide from the enemy (using the rules in *The Enemy is Abroad*) but also gain a level of Exhaustion and -1 penalty to their Arrival Roll. If the Look-out fails by 5 or more then the Company is automatically spotted and they must flee. Each hero gains 2 Shadow points, a level of Exhaustion and a -1 to the Arrival Roll.

Bilbo Baggins

A portly Hobbit greets you on the Road. He seems cheery, whistling a bit of a song and not too much in a hurry to get

where he's going. He leans on a well-worn walking stick and has a stained cloak that looks just a little too big for him.

This is Bilbo, on one of his extended walking trips. He's likely making for *The Pony* and a comfortable bed, but perhaps instead he's further afield and hoping to come across a Wandering Company of Elves or other interesting folk (such as the adventurers!).

Gorlanc

Once, long ago, a man thirsty for knowledge and uncaring of which wells he visited, discovered all he could in the lands of Eriador and then went South. There he studied under those who had learned much lore of the Enemy and learnt much. But it is perilous to study the arts of the Shadow too much, and his greatest ambitions became twisted and cruel.

Heroes that meet Gorlanc on the Road will see an old man wearing tattered clothing. Despite this, there is an air of power and authority about him, one he often uses to get his way. He often has a group of his men nearby, Brigands and Thugs for the most part. The ambitions and fall of Gorlanc are the subject of the Bree-land adventures provided in this volume and it's likely that the Company will somehow be swept into them if they chance across the sorcerer. See page 124 for more information.

JOURNEY EVENT TABLE ENTRY 12 (CONTINUED)

Larkspur

A haphazard figure with patchwork clothing trundles alongside a well-worn pony that pulls a cart laden with goods of every description. The cart creaks as it trundles forward and with a gentle touch, the peddler stops the pony and the entire ramshackle affair comes to a stop. *"Looking to buy anything in particular?"*

Larkspur is a Merchant (page 69 of the *Loremaster's Guide*) that carries a little bit of everything. Ask the Player-heroes what they're looking for — remarkably, the old fellow will have at least one of the first thing they ask for, and for a low price as well. Heroes that spend time with the Merchant will soon realise that they're under careful observation. Who Larkspur reports to is up to the Loremaster, but it's certain that there's more happening here than a simple pedlar wandering the Bree-land alone.

The Reeve

An old man with long white hair shuffles along ahead, accompanied by the taller figure of a younger energetic associate. He is quick to ask you about your business in the Bree-land and the young man has a sharp look in his eyes as he listens to your answer.

While Twyc would rather rest in the Reeve's House, he does feel obligated to go out every once in a while and 'take the air' of the four villages so that he gets a sense of the people's feelings and to remind them of his watchful eye. The Company have chanced to meet him on one of these occasions. See page 20 for more information on Twyc Greenleaf.

The Forester of Archet

As the companions explore the Chetwood, they are suddenly surprised by a huge Man who quietly emerges from the forest. His eyes are grim and he holds a huge axe that rests on his shoulder.

This is Harry Talltree (see page 28), of course. If the heroes are local folk, he'll greet them by name but if they're strangers then he is more gruff with them. Harry is hunting poachers and outlaws today and it might take some quick talk from the Company to make sure that Harry knows they are goodly people.

Isleen

Isleen is a wandering Mountebank (page 51) who often passes through the Bree-land in her travels. A master of disguise, she sometimes appears as a lost or frightened young woman (using the kindness of strangers to filch things from their pockets as they comfort her), or one of middle years who is a merchant, a healer or a guide (selling the Company useless baubles or leading them into the trap of her Outlaw friends), or an old wise-woman who reads the past and the future in a person's hands or by reading the flights of birds or the scattering of leaves on the ground.

Heroes that grow suspicious of her must make an opposed roll — their **Perception** versus her **Deception** to realise her true nature.



- old bones - and skin

*"Troll sat alone on his seat of stone,
And munched and mumbled a bare old bone;"*

for heroes of level 1 or 2

- **When:** The Company may undertake this quest at any time.
- **Where:** The adventure begins in Bree and is set in the lands around it.
- **What:** The Company battles a corpse-eating Troll that scavenges bones from the graveyard at Bree, and in doing so has inadvertently stolen the key to a greater treasure.
- **Why:** The companions are intrigued by rumours heard in the common-room of *The Prancing Pony*, and alarmed when Tomas Heatherton bursts in.
- **Who:** The key characters in this tale are the recently deceased Timeas Heatherton, his nephew Tomas Heatherton and the Old Troll.
- **Themes:** This adventure alludes to Sam Gamgee's Troll-song and ideally takes place so many years before the War of the Ring that the events described herein might have passed into Hobbit folklore. But this concern is purely a conceit of the writer, and has no material bearing on the tale.

ADVENTURING PHASE

This adventure can be used as the beginning of a campaign set in Eriador and works especially well if the Company consists primarily of Bree-folk, Hobbits of the Shire and the occasional travelling Dwarf. However, the Dúnedain and High Elves of Rivendell can also serve as heroes, albeit ones who are more likely to take a direct approach to the problem of the Old Troll.

As written, the Company is unlikely to defeat the Old Troll in combat and must instead rely on negotiation or stealth. If your players favour swordplay over wordplay, you might

wish them to gain the assistance of Haleth (see page 76) or have more chances to attack the Old Troll at range before meeting him in his lair.

This adventure is divided into eight parts. The last few parts are optional; the Company may choose not to risk further danger by disturbing yet more graves, in which case the treasure of the so-called 'Black Barrow' will remain buried in the darkness.

PART ONE - STORIES BY THE FIRE

In the inn at Bree, the companions learn the latest gossip about the shameful behaviour of the late Timeas Heatherton's youngest nephew, Tomas. They are interrupted when young Tom himself comes running into the inn, scared white as a sheet by the horrors he beheld in the graveyard.

PART TWO - THE NEPHEW'S TALE

Questioned by the Company, the panicked Tomas tells all he knows, and more.

PART THREE - AS SHOULD BE A-LYING IN GRAVEYARD

Investigating Bree's graveyard, the Company discover that a Troll has been raiding the graves for food.

PART FOUR - OVER THE MISTY MOUNDS

Pursuing the Troll, the Company enters the cold lands of the South Downs, where the Troll makes its lair. Before they can find it, however, they are scattered by a thick fog.

PART FIVE - UP CAME TOM WITH HIS BIG BOOTS ON

Reunited, the companions find the Troll's lair; but Tom Heatherton has found his way there too, and his attempts to steal his uncle's map meet result in added peril for the adventurers! The Company must somehow defeat the Troll, through strength of arms or deception or a little of both.

PART SIX - OLD SKINS AND SINS

The Company discovers old Timeas' map is of Dwarf-make, and find the secret of the smoke-letters.

PART SEVEN - FINDING THE BARROW

The heroes follow the map through the Midgewater Marshes to find the Black Barrow and its lost treasures.

PART EIGHT - THOUGH DEAD HE BE, IT BELONGS TO ME

Grór the Dwarf arrives, possibly in the company of one of the Heathertons, and definitely with armed followers in train. He attempts to claim the barrow for his own, and take revenge for the death of his brother Grón.

EPILOGUE - OF BLOOD AND BONE, OF WATER AND EARTH

The companions reflect on the events of the adventure, and gather what rewards they can from the ruin.

The Eye of Mordor

Companies using the optional rules presented in the *Rivendell Region Guide* should find that any revelation episodes centre on secrets and betrayals.

The Company might find old grievances with each other flaring up, otherwise Tomas can be the source of the tension. He might regret an earlier generous offer to the heroes or become suspicious of them, thinking that they know more than they let on regarding his uncle's treasure.

- PART ONE - STORIES BY THE FIRE

The adventure begins at *The Prancing Pony*. The common-room of inn is the heart of Bree, and as anyone knows (anyone in Bree, that is), that means it's the heart of the world, the fixed point around which Sun and Moon and Stars all spin on their merry courses. It was here that Thorin Oakenshield met Gandalf the Grey and so set the Quest of Erebor in motion.

Tonight, the talk is of matters closer to home than the Lonely Mountain – the scandal of the Heathertons. As anyone, and therefore everyone, in Bree knows, Timeas Heatherton was a fine fellow in his old age; always ready to stand his round in *The Pony*, always with a smile on his face and a kind word to passers-by. Only the older souls in Bree remembered a time when Timeas was not

so upstanding a citizen of the town. While it's true that Timeas was once an odd sort who went off, they say, travelling away East, he put all that behind him when he came home to Bree, and lived a proper unexciting life from the day he came home until last month, when he died.

The scandal of the hour is Timeas' youngest nephew Tomas. The young man missed his own uncle's funeral; when he should have been helping carry his uncle's body to the graveyard outside Bree, he was nowhere to be seen – a matter of great scandal and general comment among the worthies of Bree! Have you ever heard a more shameful thing, for a nephew to miss his own uncle's burial?

Some in the room hint darkly that there is even more to the tale, deeds so foul and terrible they can only be spoken of over another pint of beer (for no man would dare speak of them wholly sober).

The Scandal of the Heathertons

A successful **TN 15 Intelligence (Riddle)** check (or using a couple of silver pennies to buy a round for the whole inn) garners the following added information:

- In his day, old Timeas wasn't merely travelling – it's said he was *adventuring*, with strange and unwholesome fellows. From his adventures, he brought back a fair amount of coin, enough to keep him in comfort for many years, and he shared little enough of it with his family.
- They found young Tomas after the funeral searching his late uncle's house. He'd torn the place apart, no doubt looking for buried treasure. Tomas' father threw the boy out onto the street, and he hasn't been seen since!
- Timeas died a week ago, and was buried two days ago.
- One fellow claims that Timeas was *murdered*, and that the murderer might not have been *human*. He claims that he saw strange lights and maybe even Wights lurking outside Timeas' house a few days ago.

Who's in the Common-room?

If you're wondering exactly how much money the Company needs to spend to buy a round or who is listening to the tale of young Tom and his dead uncle Tim, use the *Guests in the Inn* table on page 36.

Otherwise, it is a smattering of locals slaking their thirst before stumbling home, a few Road-weary Dwarves of the Blue Mountains and a couple of Rangers, in town to eavesdrop on gossip and rest in a bed for once.

1/4

Old Timeas' Shady Past

Asking about Timeas' travels when he was younger means talking to one old fellow whose combination of age and drunkenness demands a **DC 13 Intelligence (Traditions)** check to have the patience to extract anything useful out of his ramblings.

If successful, the greybeard recalls that once Timeas returned to Bree in the company of a Ranger, of all people, but that wasn't who he used to leave Bree with. Indeed, the old man recalls having the impression that the Ranger had rescued Timeas from his former companions.

Other Rumours

Despite a few wild stories about how much Timeas brought back from his travels, it's clear (from a **DC 13 Wisdom (Insight)** or **Intelligence (Riddle)** check) that the Heathertons were never especially rich. On a few occasions – when harvests were especially bad, or when there was another mouth to feed in the house – Timeas would vanish for a few days, and return with a bag of old coins, always just enough to tide the family over the bad times. He never revealed where he got this treasure, and each time claimed that this was the last of it.

Other tales that the Company might hear mention:

- One farmer, Ernest Mugwort, complains that his hens have stopped laying. He thinks that one of them Rangers crept into his barn a few nights and scared the hens. The straw in the barn smelled very bad for days afterwards, which is how he knows it must have been a Ranger, what with all the time they spend tromping around the Midgewater Marshes and other foul places.

Any character making a **DC 13 Intelligence (Nature or Shadow-lore)** check or those with a suitable trait (Troll-lore, Eriador-lore) can guess from the description that the culprit might have been a Troll. Such monsters often take shelter in barns and other outbuildings to hide from the light of the sun.



- One of the Bree-folk complains that Timeas Heatherton died owing him six copper coins, which was very inconsiderate of him, because it's clear that the old man knew he was dying. Why, he made his own funeral arrangements and paid for the undertaker in advance!

A companion making a **DC 13 Intelligence (Riddle)** check or those who are Suspicious, Clever or Secretive might guess that Timeas had specific instructions relating to the disposal of his remains.

The Sullen Dwarf

Sitting in a corner of the inn is a sullen-faced Dwarf, his face hidden in the shadows of his cowl and the curls of his beard. He gives the impression that his entire attention is focused on the stein of beer in front of him, but his ears prick up whenever Timeas' name is mentioned. This Dwarf's name is Grór, and he is part of the company of treasure hunters and brigands that Timeas once travelled with. He just listens to the conversation. If any of the companions try speak to Grór, he drains his cup, belches rudely and hurries upstairs to his room. Otherwise, he vanishes in the uproar that accompanies Tomas' arrival (see *Alarums and Incursions*, below).

Grór follows the Company once they leave Bree. He is sufficiently cautious and stealthy to avoid detection, and the Company's headlong pursuit of the Troll ensures there is no time to set an ambush for him. See *The Footpad* on page 75.

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ALARUMS AND INCURSIONS

Suddenly, the door of *The Pony* bursts open, and in rushes a young Bree-lander. The mutterings of the common-room make it clear that this young man is the infamous Tomas Heatherton. He's white as a sheet, and starts jabbering about ghosts and monsters in the graveyard. From his babbling, it's clear that he witnessed something horrible.

If the Player-heroes rush to the graveyard immediately, then they'll be accompanied by half the patrons of the inn, eager to witness the latest instalment in the ongoing saga of the Heathertons. Skip on to *Part Three – As Should Be A-lying in the Graveyard*, and run *Part Two – The Nephew's Tale* if the Company returns to question Tomas.

However, if the companions take Tomas aside, calm him down and question him quietly, the patrons in the common room lose interest once it becomes clear that Tomas isn't going to do anything else shocking in the near future, and the characters can slip out unseen later on.

The Shadow of the Past

In his youth, Timeas was part of a band of treasure hunters led by a villain named Gorlanc, who roved around Eriador and the North looking for buried treasures and relics of the lost kingdoms. On one such expedition, Timeas accompanied two other members of the company, a man named Egri and a Dwarf named Grón, on a search for a place that Gorlanc called the Black Barrow.

They found the hidden barrow, and Grón made a map of the tomb's location, but the company fell to quarrelling over the treasure. Grón killed Egri, and Timeas killed Grón and fled the barrow in terror. He nearly died in the Midgewater Marshes, but was found and rescued by the Rangers. Ashamed, he confessed everything he knew about Gorlanc's company to the Rangers. They returned him to Bree, then drove Gorlanc's followers out of Eriador.

Secretly, Timeas kept the map showing the location of the buried tomb. He never dared loot this tomb completely, fearing both the curses of the dead and the enmity of the living, especially the surviving members of his company or the Rangers, who kept an eye on him when they could spare it. It is this map that both young Tomas and Grór seek, and the Old Troll now possesses. Now, Gorlanc has returned to the North, and he has not forgotten Timeas though more than thirty winters have passed. He is still searching for the treasure of the Black Barrow and has sent one of his agents, the Dwarf Grór (brother of Grón) to Bree to spy on Timeas and learn what the old man remembered of the hidden barrow. The shock of seeing the face of the Dwarf he murdered (for Grór and Grón look very much alike) hastened Timeas' death, as surely as if some ghost had visited him in the night...

- PART TWO - THE NEPHEW'S TALE

The ensuing scene, in which the Company speak to Tomas, is played out as an audience. The Company need to win his trust if they are to find out as much as they can about events in the graveyard. Just how far Tomas will work with them is determined by the outcome of the meeting. There's also the possibility that Tomas' father, Nick Heatherton may also become involved in events.

1 THE GHOST OF THE GRAVEYARD

Young Tomas is in quite a state — he's just snuck out into a graveyard at night and confronted a nightmarish apparition. The heroes will first have to calm him down and then they might get some useful information out of him.

Motivation: In his panicked state, Tom doesn't have any goals for the audience. He only wanted to get away from the ghost. The heroes might learn that he was in the graveyard to dig up his uncle's body, however.

Expectations: *"I'm tired of being teased"* +2 if half or more of the heroes are not from Bree-land: Tomas would rather deal with those who aren't likely to talk behind his back; *"It's still there, you could go get it if you had a mind to"* +1 if the heroes readily agree to go to the graveyard and fight the ghost; *"You don't believe me! You're worse than all the rest!"* -2 if the heroes try to convince Tom that he's overreacting to some mundane event.

Introduction

Instead of the regular introductions the companions need to allay the fears of the panicked young man. A **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** check will easily do this.

Interaction

Once the Company has calmed Tomas down somewhat, the following bits of information will come out in a jumble as the heroes ask questions.

- Tomas saw a ghost in the graveyard. It looked right at him! He was so scared he nearly fainted! The next thing he knew, he was running in the door of the inn!
- The ghost was huge! Grey-skinned, nine or ten feet tall despite being all hunched over, and it smelled

like rotten meat. (The heroes might guess that he's describing a Troll, not an unquiet spirit.)

- He thinks it was scrabbling around in the dirt, as if looking for something. It didn't chase him — it must still be in the graveyard!
- He was in the graveyard to dig up the body of his uncle, Timeas.

This last admission will doubtless prompt other questions, questions that young Tom would rather not answer. If the heroes press, they earn themselves a -1 modifier to the final roll but can learn the following points:

- Tomas' late Uncle Timeas was a former treasure hunter and always had money when he needed it.
- Timeas had a map that pointed the way to a buried fortune. It's hidden somewhere in Bree-land; Timeas would go to the buried hoard when he needed coin.
- The map wasn't among Timeas' belongings, or in the house. Tomas thinks his uncle must have arranged to be buried with the map.
- He doesn't know why Timeas didn't leave the map to his family, but suspects that his uncle was trying to protect his kin; the hoard may be located somewhere perilous.

The companions likely see where this is going, but to get Tomas to open up requires a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** or **Intelligence (Riddle)** check. On a failure, they get Disadvantage on the Final Audience check; on a success they receive the following information:

- He brought a shovel and intended to dig up his uncle's grave to find the map.
- He fears that the ghost manifested to punish him for grave robbing.
- The adventurers, though, they look like courageous souls who do not fear any ghosts. If they help him get the map, he'll split Timeas' treasure with them! He claims that only he knows how to interpret his uncle's marks and codes — the map is useless without him (a hero that is Cunning, Suspicious, Just or Wary might sense Tomas is lying on this point).

The Final Audience Check

Once he regains his composure, Tomas is once again determined to recover his uncle's treasure map.

However, he likely thinks that a temporary alliance with the Company is the best way of dealing with any more trouble. The outcome of the final roll determines what arrangements he makes.

Failure: Tomas doesn't trust the adventurers — he promises them a fair share of the treasure, but he'll betray them at any opportunity and steal the map for himself.

Success by 0-3: Tomas offers them a quarter-share of the treasure. It's his inheritance, he says, and a quarter-share is generous beyond measure.

Success by 4-5: An even share: half for the Company, half for himself.

Success by 6+: Take it all! No... take three-quarters of it. Just save him from the burning red eyes of the ghost!

TOMAS HEATHERTON

Young Tom Heatherton is a strapping youth, with a mop of dark hair and the start of what might be a beard one day. Like most young men, he fancies himself to be wiser, cleverer and more dangerous than his elders.



For a Bree-lander, he's impatient and ambitious, and dreams of travelling over the mountains to distant lands like Dale, and using his uncle's fortune to set himself up as a merchant prince. When playing Tomas, talk big and bold when you're feeling safe, then scream and run away when danger threatens. He's not completely cowardly, but he is unseasoned and impetuous.

TOMAS HEATHERTON Medium Human

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)

Armour Class 14 (Shield)

Hit Points 11 (2d8+2)

Speed 30 ft

Skills Survival +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Westron

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Reckless. Tomas may use his bonus action to gain Advantage on attack rolls until the start of his next turn but all attacks on him also have Advantage.

Actions

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

A FATHER'S WISDOM

Depending on where the Company speak with Tom Heatherton, they may be interrupted by the arrival of his father, Nick Heatherton, a Farmer of Bree. Nick wears a black cloak as a mark of mourning for his late brother Timeas.

"Boy," he calls to Tom, "enough of this foolishness. You've brought enough shame on my house without dragging these good folk into our affairs."

"It's not your house, dad," spits back Tom. "Uncle Tim paid for it, as well you know. You might be too scared to claim what's ours now that Tim's gone, but I'm not."

"You don't know what you're talking about, boy. Stay silent." To the Company, Nick says "This matter ain't any concern of yours. I don't know what nonsense my

son's been saying, but 'tis better to leave well enough alone. Here, for your troubles, a few coins." He offers the Company coins worth 1g to abandon the adventure.

Tom begs the Company to ignore his father. *"I know what I saw, and I know such things won't leave well enough alone. We must return to the graveyard and put it right."*

Questioning Nick Heatherton

The farmer has little interest in bandying words with strangers about his troublesome son or his recently deceased brother. A **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight)** check suggests he's ashamed or even scared of his brother's legacy, and worried that his hot-headed son is about to get into trouble.

Nick Heatherton's not in the mood for an audience but a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** or **Intelligence (Traditions)** check can get some half-answers out of him:

- His brother Timeas was wealthy – or, more precisely, knew where to get money. Timeas always hinted that there was a lot more wealth available, but that obtaining it would be somehow perilous.
- Timeas travelled with strange and dangerous folk, but he put that part of his life behind him long ago. Nick wants to ensure that young Tom does not go down a similar road.
- He begs the Company to keep Tom safe. He just buried his brother; he hopes he doesn't have to bury his son too.

Nick actually knows a great deal more than he is willing to say; he is the one who buried the map with his brother, and he knows about Tim's travels with Gorlanc's company. However, only a **DC 20 Wisdom (Insight)** check will reveal this and he's loathe to talk about such things in any case.



- PART THREE - AS SHOULD BE A-LYING IN GRAVEYARD

The people of Bree bury their dead on a hillside south of the Great East Road. As they have done since time immemorial, they raise mounds of earth over the corpses, and let the grass be their shroud. Those steeped in ancient lore can tell you that the oldest mounds are oriented to the north, towards Bree-hill and points beyond, and the newer mounds look back towards the West, towards the setting sun and the Undying Lands.

The mounds are not like the great barrows of the kings; they are little earthen piles covered in green grass, just long enough to house a corpse.

The graveyard is within sight of the lights of Bree, but is about ten minutes' walk outside the town's gates. A well-worn path, lined with flowers, runs between the Southgate of Bree and the little cemetery.

OLD TIMEAS' GRAVE

The newest mound, a spot of brown among the sea of green, is that of Timeas Heatherton. Examining it, it's clear that the mound has been recently opened and then closed up again. If the companions open the grave (committing a Misdeed worth a point of Shadow!) they find it empty. The body is gone. Something opened up the mound, stole the corpse, and sealed it up again so expertly that the earth looks undisturbed at a casual glance.

If present, Tomas insists on making a careful search of the barrow, to no avail – there's no sign of any map.

Searching the Graveyard

A successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation)** check turns up a spade (which Tomas apologetically claims as his) and little else. Only if the hero succeeds by 5 or more do they spy the traces of the Troll: a few trampled blades of grass and mostly erased footprints. For a Troll, this one must be exceedingly canny and stealthy. Still, it's enough to track: a successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Survival)** check puts the Company on the trail leading to *Part Four – Over The Misty Mounds*.

If the heroes fail to spot the traces, they have two other ways to find the trail. First, if they think of it, they could visit the nearby barn mentioned by the farmer in *The Prancing Pony* for another chance to find the trail – a **DC 15 Wisdom (Survival)** check due to the age of the tracks.

The second option is to stake out the graveyard and wait for the Troll to return. Anyone with the Troll-lore trait can guess that the creature will return for more well-aged meat. Some Trolls prefer corpses that have had some time to rot, so it's unlikely to eat all of Uncle Timeas right away.

Many Onlookers

If a crowd from *The Prancing Pony* followed the Player-heroes to the graveyard, then the **Investigation** check automatically fails as drunken onlookers trample any possible tracks, accuse young Tom of grave robbing and shout in alarm when they mistake a passing goat for a ghost, or a Troll, or whatever monster they imagine stalks this graveyard at night.

1/2

STAKING OUT THE GRAVEYARD

"My lad," said Troll, "this bone I stole.

But what be bones that lie in a hole?

Thy nuncle was as a lump o' lead,

Afore I found his shin-bone."

The Troll is gone for the night, and won't return for several more. The only thing to do is stake out the graveyard, which means maintaining a series of watches over the coming days. Tomas will suggest this course of action if the players don't think of it. If the Company are on good terms with Tomas, he offers to pay for their lodgings at *The Pony* with his share of the treasure if they promise to help him track down the Troll that took his uncle's body.

The most reasonable way to stake out the graveyard is to take watches, where one adventurer stands vigil over the mounds for a few hours before rousing a companion. If the whole Company wishes to spend several cold, sleepless nights sitting on a wet hillside in Bree, they can do so, but each companion gains 2 levels of Exhaustion.

At this time of year, thick fogs are common across the Downs. The fog rolls around the graveyard, turning the mounds into little islands of green in a sea of white before

swallowing them entirely. It's hard to see any distance, so any watchers must rely on their hearing, listening for the bellows-breath of the Troll, for the soft scraping of spadelike paws in the earth, for the crunch of bones. On the fifth night, call for a **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** check from whomever's on watch.

Failure: The stealthy Old Troll manages to sneak up on the watcher, and attacks. The hero is Surprised. A single Player-hero versus a Troll is likely to be a very one-sided battle; the character is advised to flee, knowing the Troll will not pursue them into Bree. If there's more than one watcher, pick the tastiest one.

Success: The character spots that the Troll has returned when the Troll is nearly on top of them! They may hide from the Troll with a **DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth)** check. If the **Stealth** check is successful, the Troll sniffs the air, growls, mutters something about a strange smell and then heads into the graveyard to dig up another juicy body. The Player-hero may then sound the alarm, as described below. If the **Stealth** check fails, then the Troll spots the hiding watchers and attacks (as above, but the hero is not Surprised).

Success by 5 or more: The watcher spies the Troll at a distance and can sound the alarm, summoning the whole Company. The Troll flees, with the companions in hot pursuit. Alternatively, the Company can try to ambush the Troll with a group **DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth)** check to get into position. If successful, the Company can force a battle with the Troll here and now.

Success with a natural 20: Keen indeed are the eyes of the watch! The watcher spots the Troll at such a distance that there's time to sneak back to Bree, summon the rest of the Company, and return to encircle it without needing to make **Stealth** checks. Not only is the Troll Surprised but they gain Advantage on their attack rolls for the first round as he wasn't expecting any trouble at all.

If the Old Troll is allowed to go about his grisly business without interruption, then he digs out one of the other mounds, removes the half-rotten body inside (*"just about ripe,"* he mutters, *"ain't nothing like nicely aged meat"*) and stuffs it into a sack before vanishing into the mists.

Battling the Old Troll

Depending on how the stake-out went, this battle may involve:

- One or two unlucky watchers ambushed by the Troll.
- The whole Company charging into battle with the Troll.
- The Company ambushing the Troll.

In any case, it's clear that this is an old and dangerous Stone-troll, cunning and fast beyond the common measure of his kind. The Old Troll's pale hide is marked by many scars; beneath his goat-skin jerkin he wears an old coat of ring-mail, rusty and tattered but still proof against blows, and he carries a knife (in the hands of a man it would be a sword). Learn more about the Old Troll on page 50.

Play him as a sort of monstrous parody of Tom Bombadil, if Tom were a corpse-eating monstrosity. He cares for nothing except for mastery of his own little domain and his own appetites, and entertains himself by gurgling grim little ditties about crunching bones and smashing skulls.

The Old Troll fights until he takes 40 points of damage or until he fears being surrounded and brought down by weight of numbers. Remember, from his perspective, the graveyard at Bree is just a convenient source of tasty food. To him, the body in the bag is like a sweet honeycomb, but he's not going to risk his life poking a beehive if the bees are swarming. You don't get to be an Old Troll by staying in a losing fight.

So, at a suitable moment, the Old Troll attempts to use his **Great Leap** ability to escape the combat at the start of the next round. He leaps over the head of one of his foes and scrambles away into the fog. Note down the Old Troll's remaining hit points when he flees the fight – he regains 10 hit points between now and Part Five of the adventure.

Pursuing the Old Troll

The Old Troll runs on all fours, loping along at terrible speed, faster than any Man or Elf could run. A horse might be able to keep pace, but the Old Troll knows the land around Bree very well, and so takes a route that leaps up sheer cliffs, over dense thickets and through clinging marshes. He flees away south, running for the South Downs.

The Company may not be able to keep the Troll in sight, but now that they know roughly in which direction his lair might be found, they can pursue him across the countryside. They also have one key advantage – they can travel by day or night, but the Troll must find shelter to avoid the light of the Sun, or be turned to stone. The Old Troll knows every barn, gully, cave and hole from Deadman's Dike to Tharbad; he knows where to hide from the killing light.

A Foe Beyond Any of You

Setting the Old Troll against a Company of 1st level heroes might seem overly harsh. However, the heroes have several things in their favour, if they are careful and cunning. Firstly, the Old Troll isn't seeking a fight: their first couple of encounters with him are likely to see him leaving the scene fairly quickly. If they can do a little bit of damage to him each time they meet him, he'll be easier to fight in the end. Secondly, defeating the Old Troll doesn't have to mean his death. After all, recovering the map is the goal. Haleth (see page 76) and other Dúnedain can deal with the monster itself. If your players do insist on confronting the Old Troll head on, perhaps have Tomas, Grór or Haleth join the fight. Use the Dwarf stats on page 78 of the *Lothemaster's Guide* for Grór. He'll claim that only good fortune brought him to the fight and then he'll disappear again, only to be seen later in the adventure, once again shadowing the Company. Haleth is a Ranger (page 75 of the *Lothemaster's Guide*).

- PART FOUR - OVER THE MISTY MOUNDS

The Old Troll's lair is hidden some 50 miles south of Bree; three or four days' travel for a Man, but only two night's hard running for a Troll, for the stone-bred do not tire or tarry as mortals do. Trolls are by nature very lazy and territorial, which makes them slow, but when they have to run, they run as though the dawn were behind them.

This stage of the adventure is a journey from Bree to the Old Troll's lair, but it is possible that the Company might catch the Old Troll before he reaches his home. As the Company need to move as fast as possible to catch the Troll, the Peril Rating of the trip is raised to 4. They will face up to 1d2+1 Journey Events (see *An Empty Land* on page 52).

The first part of the journey is easy; the lands just south of the Road are still farmland, or at least the stones remember being tilled when the region was more populous; many paths still criss-cross the countryside.

- 20 miles of travel from Bree south of the Road takes the Company to the edge of the South Downs. It takes them 1 day.

By noon on the second day, however, the Company find themselves climbing into the stony hills of the South Downs; a monotonous, rolling landscape where each pile of shale and scanty grass hides another dozen hills, all alike. The paths in this part of the world are treacherous; valleys end suddenly in box canyons, and the loose stones are always eager to twist an ankle or trap a foot. This is Troll country, and you need to be made of stone to be at home here.

- It's another 20 miles of travel into the South Downs to the area around where the Troll lairs. This takes them 2 days.

If Tomas is with the Company, he acquits himself surprisingly well. The young Bree-lander is not an

experienced traveller, but he is young and tough, and as long as there are no sudden dangers, he keeps pace with the Player-heroes.

THE TRAIL OF THE TROLL

At the start of the chase, the Old Troll has bounded away, but the Company have a clear path to follow. The Troll's head-start is measured by its Lead, which begins at 1d4+1. Each day, the companions have at a chance to affect the Lead. The Company can only take up to two of these actions each day.

- The Hunter can search for the Troll's tracks directly, which requires a **DC 13 Wisdom (Survival)** check. On a success, reduce the Lead by 1. There's no change on a failure.
- The Scout can investigate potential hiding spots for the Troll. Make a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** check. If successful and the Lead is 1 or lower, the Old Troll's hiding spot has been found and the heroes can attack during the day. See *Catching the Troll*, below.
- The Guide can take a chance to plot a course that doesn't follow the Troll directly, but cuts off his attempts at misdirection. This takes a **DC 15 Wisdom (Survival)** check — on a success the Lead is reduced by 2 but on a failure it increased by 2 as the Company must double-back to regain the trail.
- The Lookout can stay up during the hours before the dawn, straining eyes and ears for any sign of the Troll

The Footpad

At various points in this adventure, the Company may be followed by either Tomas Heatherton or Grór the Dwarf, depending on the circumstances of their departure from Bree. In either case, the pursuer stays clear of the Company and cannot easily be ambushed. If the Look-out or Hunter rolls a natural 20 on a Journey Event roll, then they find signs of the pursuer, alerting the Company to their shadow.

It's up to the Loremaster as to whether you wish to allow the Player-heroes to catch their footpad. The simplest approach is to say that the pursuer always evades capture, or to counter the Company's attempts by some external calamity like an attack by the Old Troll. On the other hand, if you feel comfortable improvising the later sections, you could allow the Company to capture their pursuer with a successful group Stealth check (DC 12 for Tomas, DC 16 for the wily Grór).

going to ground. Make a **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception)** check. On a success, the Lead is reduced to 1 as the heroes know exactly where the Troll is camped and must simply reach that spot. On a failure, the Scout gains a level of Exhaustion from the tiresome vigil.

Catching the Troll

If the Company catch up with the Old Troll, then they come to some noisome cave or lightless gully in the Downs where he has taken refuge. The Company still have a few minutes of daylight left, so they can either enter the Troll's hiding place and attack, or else wait outside and set an ambush.

If they enter into the hiding place, then the Troll has to survive for three rounds of combat before it can flee into the twilight. If they wait outside, then the Company may make a **DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth)** group check. If successful, the Troll is Surprised when the heroes ambush him. He will flee as soon as he is able to do so. Keep track of the Troll's hit points; when the Company finally corner the Old Troll in his lair, any hit points he loses here stay lost.

1/2

THE RANGER

This is an optional additional journey event. The audience here might have limited impact in this adventure, but it will foreshadow events in future tales.

As the companions march across the Downs, they spot a figure in a grey cloak, walking west. It's unusual to meet anyone in this wilderness; anyone travelling in this part of Eriador would take the great East Road or the Greenway, unless they had a specific and doubtless sinister reason to stay out of sight. One lone traveller is unlikely to be a bandit, though, so the Company may greet this stranger without undue fear.

Any Dúnedain recognise the woman by her gait; she is Haleth, a fellow ranger, famed for her skill with the sword. Her usual haunts are far to the east, where she guards Rivendell and the valley of the Greyflood from Orcs and Trolls.

Today, she is on an errand for the Dúnedain that cannot wait, and so she cannot stop to accompany the companions unless they are in very dire need. (She might

help the characters find the trail of the Troll again, or show up to rescue a Player-hero who got ambushed by the Troll or wandered away from the rest of the Company). If the heroes insist on fighting the Old Troll in his lair, she might return from her business just in the nick of time.

If there are any Dúnedain or Elves present, then Haleth stops to speak with the Company. Otherwise, she stays to talk only if the Company's speaker makes a **DC 15 Intelligence (Traditions)** check to convince her that they are worth talking to. She shares the following:

- Haleth has encountered the Old Troll before – the brute trespassed close to Rivendell some twenty years ago, and she was part of the hunting party that drove him away (*"I'm older than I look"*, she says wryly). She recalls that the Troll was especially dangerous near his lair. He marks the territory around his lair with some foul spells.
- She's also heard of Timeas, and recalls his trouble with bad company. Any treasure map he had may be more perilous than any Troll. She suggests that the Company should give any such map to someone they can trust (like Gandalf or Elrond, if the Company know such exalted figures; another Ranger, if they don't), or that they destroy it. Some treasures are best left unfound.

If anyone thinks to observe Tomas during the conversation, a **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight)** check reveals that he is angered by Haleth's words of caution, but has enough sense not to insult a the ranger to her face.

FOG ON THE SOUTH DOWNS

At the end of the third day, the heroes have reached the Troll's lair. A bank of thick fog rolls in. This fog has an unwholesome, unnatural feel to it. As it approaches, it looms and lopes like the Old Troll, as though an army of misty monsters were advancing upon the Company. The fog is so thick that the companions risk being scattered.

If Tomas is with the Company, then he is automatically lost in the fog. Other characters must make a **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation)** check to find one another in the fog. A character who fails is lost and alone as they enter the area around the Old Troll's lair. A character who

1/2

succeeds finds one of his companions, chosen at random, before entering into the Old Troll's demesne; succeeding by 5 or more indicates they have found two companions; a natural 20, three.

- PART FIVE - UP CAME TOM WITH HIS BIG BOOTS ON

The Old Troll's lair is a deep cave in the lee of one of the mounds of the South Downs. For a furlong or more around the cave, he's stacked piles of bones and skulls as warding totems against intruders. Closer to the cave, these piles grow in size; the teetering bone-piles near the cave entrance are taller than a tall man. The wind whistles through these grisly landmarks, keening like a banshee. This is a dark place, a place of shadow. All those who enter the Old Troll's demesne must make a Corruption check (a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw) or gain a point of Shadow.

There are several ways this scene might begin, and several ways it might play out. (If the Company have already killed the Old Troll, then his older brother the Older Troll takes his place in this scene).

The Company see the Troll when they arrive. He's slumped on a seat of stone at the entrance to the cave, breathing heavily, exhausted by the long chase. There's a skin of wine and most of a roasted goat by his side.



TOM'S FOLLY

The first problem is that young Tomas Heatherton has arrived ahead of the Company and is currently trying to sneak into the Troll's lair to search for his uncle's bones and the map. Tomas is not especially stealthy, but how hard can it be to sneak past a sleeping Troll?

A successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight or Perception)** check from a companion reveals that the Troll is only pretending to sleep. His red eyes glitter beneath their heavy lids. He's dozing, but not asleep. However, the Troll hasn't spotted Tomas yet. (If, by some quirk of your game, Tomas isn't here, then the Company don't need to worry about the boy and can instead focus on the Troll.)

What do the Company do?

- **Do Nothing:** If the Company choose not to act and see what happens, here's how things play out. Tomas tries to sneak past the 'sleeping' Troll, but as he enters the cave, one of the piles of skulls topples in the wind and falls on top of him. Quick as a snake, the Troll springs up and grabs him. Tomas bravely demands that the Troll hand over his uncle's bones. *"Why, if thou craves thy nuncle so, then surely ye should find him!"* cries the Troll. He pulls Tomas taut, holding the boy by wrists and ankles, and then he twists.

The sound of breaking bones echoes across the grim valley. All the companions gain 2 Shadow points for standing idly by. The Troll tosses the hobbled Tomas into the back of the cave and returns to napping.

- **Rescue Tomas from his Folly:** The challenge is to sneak faster than Tomas, and grab the boy before he gets too close to the Troll. This requires a **DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth)** check. If the companion fails, offer the choice of staying hidden and not reaching Tomas in time, or grabbing Tomas but being spotted by the Troll out in the open.
- **Use the Boy as a Distraction:** If the Company wishes, they could use Tomas as a distraction when trying to steal from or ambush the Troll. Poor Tomas gets mangled and thrown into the back of the cave, as above; the Player-heroes (heroes might no longer be the right word here...) gain Advantage on any **Stealth** checks made in this scene, and they gain 3 Shadow points instead of 2.
- **Confront the Old Troll:** Stepping out bravely into full view and hailing the Troll requires a **DC 13 Charisma (Intimidation)** check. If the check fails, then the Old Troll grabs Tomas as a hostage before parleying with the Company. If successful, then the Old Troll is so surprised by the hero's bold challenge that he doesn't spot Tomas.
- **Charge!** Battle is joined! Have the Old Troll make a **DC 10 Dexterity** saving throw. On a failure, the Troll is Surprised and Tomas will use his first turn to scramble away. Otherwise, he Grapples Tomas for his

first turn and uses the boy as a shield (see *I've a Mind to Dine on thee Now*, below).

1/4

STEALING FROM THE TROLL

A companion can sneak by the Troll by making a **DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth)** check. If the check fails, the Old Troll spots the intruder and attacks.

If successful, the character may pilfer one item from the Troll's lair (see *Old Troll's Treasure* on page 79). If the hero succeeds by 5 or more, they may roll twice on the table to see what they found and can take both items if they wish. A natural 20 allows them to roll three times.

AMBUSHING THE OLD TROLL

The Company might choose to get as close as possible to the Troll before attacking. Have them make a group **DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth)** check. On a success, the Old Troll is Surprised during the first round of combat. If they fail, he continues to pretend to sleep and then springs up at the last moment!

2

PARLEYING WITH A TROLL

The Old Troll is no fool. If the adventurers have tracked him back to his lair and already hurt him, then they're a danger to him. One lucky arrow, one blade that finds purchase in his stony skin, and he might die here. Treat this as unusual Audience.

Motivation

"What was this man to thou? Why should thee care where his bones lie?" The Old Troll is suspicious of the Company, especially if they ask for the return of Uncle Tim's body without explaining their reasons.

Expectations

The Old Troll is canny and has his own priorities:

- *"Ai! That smarts, it does."* +1 if the Old Troll has 63 or less hit points.
- *"Trusty foes you be."* +2 if there are Dúnedain or Elf-folk in the Company. The Old Troll expects them to keep their promises, even to a Troll.
- *"A tasty morsel, the boy."* -1 if the heroes insist that the Old Troll not eat Tomas.
- *"What's this? A map? A map to what, I ask thee?"* +2 to -2, depending on what the companions say: a promised

share of the treasure is a positive Expectation but if the heroes taunt the Old Troll with only news of a map then he becomes angry (a negative Expectation).

Introduction and Interaction

The Old Troll can be polite enough when he wants to be. The Company's speaker can make the regular **Traditions** check, or they might wish to stall with a **Riddle** game or offer a bargain with **Persuasion** (a share of the treasure in exchange for Tomas and the map).

Once they get him talking, The Old Troll will become chatty enough. He's in his lair and he figures he'll be gnawing on their bones sooner or later, so he won't rush this talk of gold and treasure maps.

Outcomes

The Old Troll's response depends on the Final Audience Check:

Failure. *"For a couple of pins, I'll eat thee too, and gnaw thy shins!"* The Troll breaks Tomas' bones and attacks!

Success by 0-3. The Old Troll offers to let Tomas go and not to return to the graveyard at Bree – as long as the Company depart his lair (without the map) and never return. As a creature of shadow, the Troll has no intention of keeping his vow forever, but the Company can buy Bree a year or two of peace.

Success by 4-5. The Old Troll agrees to hand over the map, as long as the Company bring him a third of the treasure as tribute. If the Company agree, and then break their vow, that's a Misdeed worth 3 Shadow points (breaking an oath is normally worth 4 points, but it is a promise to a Troll!).

Success by 6+. The Old Troll is so impressed – or cowed – by the Company that he offers them Timeas' bones and the choice of any other item from his hoard (including the map) if they leave him be.

I'VE A MIND TO DINE ON THEE NOW

The Old Troll attacks! He moves with terrifying speed and ferocity, hurling bones and rocks as he charges, roaring loud enough to make the dead quail. This is the final battle with the Troll – he won't flee from this fight.

If the Troll has Tomas, he wields the boy like a shield, increasing his Armour Class by 2. A hero can spend her action to wrestle Tomas from the Old Troll's grasp by making an opposed **Strength (Athletics)** check. On a failure, Tomas takes 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage from the tug of war.

Remember to take advantage of the Old Troll's Deadly Misfortune – any mistakes the Company make can be exploited to their fullest in his lair. If slain, the Old Troll collapses amidst the bone-piles of his victims.

A companion could take the distraction bought by the battle to run into the cave and search for the map. Alternatively, if you need some hope unlooked-for to rescue the companions, then Haleth could join the Company in battling the Old Troll.

– they can gather all the treasure stuffed into cracks and odd corners in the cave, and pile it high before dividing it. They find everything listed on the table in addition to a hoard rated as 40*. However, any Worthless Trinkets found are guaranteed to have sentimental value (for each, the Loremaster should secretly assign a value equal to 3d6+2 silver pennies for their safe return to their owner in Bree). On the other hand, if the Company steal from the lair piecemeal, roll on the table to see what they find.

Coin-counting players may object, and argue that a Troll's hoard usually contains much more wealth. Remind such players that they just found a treasure map.



1 OLD TROLL'S TREASURE

The treasures of the cave, such as they are, are described in the table below. If the Company have killed or otherwise defeated the Troll, then there's no need to roll on the table

1d12	TREASURE FOUND
1	A pile of skulls, which collapses and alerts the Old Troll!
2	Nothing but a few well-gnawed bones.
3	A few skins of wine and a brace of stolen chickens – no treasure, but a good meal in the offing.
4	A scattering of coins from Bree, used as toothpicks by the Troll (total of 1g value).
5	A merchant's purse. It contains 4d6+8 real silver pennies and a 5d6+95 tin coins painted to look like silver pennies (a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check can spot the differences between the two).
6	The bones of a Dwarf. Hidden beneath these remains are 1d4 gold pieces.
7	A woman's ring (2g or 4g if returned to the Thistlebrook family) and a woman's finger (0c).
8	A necklace of gold, crudely made (2g inherent value, no sentimental value).
9	A cunning puzzle-box of Dwarven make. Opening it requires a DC 10 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check; inside are 2d6 gold pieces and a letter which, if delivered to the Blue Mountains, carries with it a reward of 100 silver pennies.
10	A box containing cheap but well-wrought jewels and rings made by the Dwarves of the Blue Mountains (10g total value).
11	A coffin from Bree. The deceased was a notorious miser and his worldly wealth (5d20+200 silver pennies) is stitched into the lining of the casket. Taking money from the dead in this fashion is a Misdeed worth 1 Shadow point.
12	Timeas' Map

- PART SIX - OLD SKINS AND SINS

The map was entombed with Timeas Heatherton, wrapped around one shin and stuffed down the boot he was buried in. Now, it's in the hands of the Company (and Tomas Heatherton, if he's still alive). But the gloom of a Troll-hole is no place to examine a treasure map! If the heroes return to Bree or another safe place, you might allow them to take an abbreviated Fellowship phase as they spend some time puzzling over the map. Heroes who began the adventure at 1st level should have sufficient XP to become 2nd level, giving them an edge before the final conflict.



Wherever the heroes are, when they examine the map they find it is written on goatskin parchment, and depicts the area around Bree. There are no place-names on the map itself, just a few circles for towns and little pictures of trees and hills. Four lines converge at a cross-roads, and an arrow points towards the top of the map.

Around the borders of the map are runes, the Angerthas Moria, a mode of writing common to the Dwarves of the North.

Along the left edge of the map, they read HERE OF OLD WAS ARTHEDAIN LAST-KING.

Along the bottom, they read HERE ARE HALFLINGS IN MULTITUDE.

At the top of the map, the runes read HERE OF OLD WAS THE ROAD TO DURIN'S GATES.

And finally, to the right, HENCE CAME THE COMPANY TO SEEK TREASURE.

From the nature of the runes, the Company can easily guess it was made by a Dwarf, not by Timeas. That suggests that Timeas did not find the treasure himself; one of his erstwhile travelling companions found it, and he stole the map.

A successful **DC 10 Intelligence (History) or Wisdom (Survival)** check suggests it was made relatively recently, within the last twenty years or so. Timeas may have obtained it shortly before he returned to Bree from his mysterious travels.

If the map is Dwarf-made, then the arrow must point east as is traditional for Dwarven-drawn charts. Turning the map on its side makes the geography plain – the map centres on Bree-land, which makes sense. Timeas used the map to bring home treasure again and again, and he was never gone from Bree for long.

A close examination of the map – a **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation)** check – suggests that it was in a fire, or deliberately burnt in places by being held too close to a candle or torch.

HIDDEN INFORMATION

If Tomas is still with the Company, then he scours the map, looking for a mark or a clue. He believed that there would be a clear sign on the map, like a nice big X marking the spot where his uncle's treasure lies, but there's no such mark. He desperately peers at the burnt marks, scraping them with a finger in the hopes that the ash will peel away and reveal more runes.

Questioning him prompts him to recall a memory. He remembers that his uncle always kept a candle in the box

with the map, and took the candle with him whenever he went out to fetch money. It was a cheap, greasy, smoky candle too.

Unlocking the Map's Secrets

If neither Tomas nor a Dwarf is in the Company, the Player-heroes may attempt to seek outside assistance. If they have time and a suitable ally or patron, they could visit someone more learned to ask about the map. Rivendell is a long way from Bree, but Elrond is something of an expert in these matters.

The Company might visit the Shire, in the hopes that Gandalf (or even Bilbo Baggins, who is after all a famous burglar with considerable experience in Dwarven cartography) could help them. Any such patron can point out the existence of smoke-letters (although in Bilbo's case, the discovery is purely accidental; while examining the map, the gentle-hobbit chokes on his pipe and coughs smoke over the map, revealing the letters).

Investigations in Bree

There are two possible lines of inquiry in Bree. First, if the Company met Grór the Dwarf, they could ask him for advice on reading the map. Grór is only too happy to assist the Company – it simplifies his task in finding Tíneas' treasure immeasurably.

Alternatively, the Company could talk to Nick Heatherton, Tíneas' brother. The farmer is none too happy to hear from the adventurers again, but if they kept Tom alive despite his foolishness, he agrees to talk to them.

He recalls that he once saw his brother wave a smoky candle over the map, and that letters magically appeared on it. Why, that's why he buried the map with Tim instead of burning it: he feared releasing some evil fire-spirit if the map burned. He urges the characters to hand over the map, or to weigh it down with stones and cast it into the river.

A Dwarf in the Company

A Dwarf Player-hero may make a **DC 10 Intelligence (Lore)** check to recall the various forms of concealed writing that the Dwarves use: moon-letters, gem-letters, bloodletters, hearth-letters and so forth. Characters with a suitable trait like Rhymes of Lore may also roll. A Dwarf who possesses the *Broken Spells* Virtue automatically succeeds.

One such form of hidden writing is called smoke-letters. These invisible runes cause smoke to magically adhere to them, allowing them to be read briefly before a breeze carries the smoky shapes away.

The Smoke-letters

If the map is exposed to a source of smoke (even a pipe will do), then letters appear, marking a site in the Midgewater Marshes. The runes say "HERE LIES THE BLACK BARROW", and nearby "HERE IS THE KING'S CHAIR". The spot is only a few days' travel outside Bree.

A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (History or Lore)** recalls nothing of the 'Black Barrow', but the 'King's Chair' might be a reference to a stone chair in the midst of a ruin that lies half-sunk in the swamp. There was a mansion of some prince of one of the North-Kingdoms there once, long ago, and now all that remains is a weathered stone seat.

Tomas the Treacherous

If Tomas feels ill-done by the Company – if they've stolen the map, or ignored him, or left him for dead in a Troll-hole, or just traded away too much of 'his' treasure hoard – then he may betray them by striking off on his own once again.

This time, he returns to Bree and falls in with Grór the Dwarf, who is only too glad to listen to the young man's tale of woe. Tomas then shows up in *Part Eight – Though Dead He Be, It Belongs to Me!* when Grór tries to claim the barrow.

- PART SEVEN - FINDING THE BARROW

The map tells the Company to head to the Midgewater Marshes. From Bree, the easiest way is to follow the Road and then cut north to find this 'Black Barrow'. If the heroes investigated the map amidst the South Downs then they'll want to strike west until they reach the Greenway, head north to the crossroads and then follow the above directions.

1/4

Trouble in Bree

If the Company is in Bree, or passes through on their way to the 'Black Barrow', they may meet Grór or Nick Heatherton again. If they come across Grór, have the most Suspicious or Wary companion make a **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception)** check. On a success, they spot the Dwarf meeting in an alleyway with a local troublemaker, a brute of a Brigand called Ham Granger.

2

INTO THE MARSHES

According to Timeas' map, the Black Barrow is near the 'King's Chair', around 50 miles north-west of Weathertop. If the Company knew exactly where they were going, then they could head straight for the spot and find the barrow quickly, but even with the King's Chair as a guide, finding one particular mound in a morass is going to take time.

- The expedition into the Marshes involves 40 miles of travel across daunting terrain. It takes the Company 8 days of hard slog through the swamps, producing 1d2+2 Journey Events with a Peril Rating of 5.

1

FINDING THE KING'S CHAIR

At the end of the journey, the Company come to the region around the 'King's Chair'. They may make an Arrival Roll, although there is nothing to greet them other than the swamp. Here it is a particularly ugly mire of mud, thorny bushes, low-lying islands amid the slime, and pestilent clouds of tiny, tiny insects that swarm into the Player-heroes' mouths and noses. It's a vile, doleful place – the heroes are unable to take a long rest here, even if they have an ability that would grant them such a benefit.

Finding the King's Chair requires a successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation)** check. If this check fails,

the character gains a level of Exhaustion from slogging around in the mud. If all the companions fail the roll, they can try again the following day. Eventually, the explorers find a few jagged fingers of worked stone rising from the mud. There, a cracked and weathered marble floor can be found, half-sunk in the swamp. Here, the remains of a fallen wall. This was once a town, perhaps, or a great palace in some past age.

At twilight, the Company finally come upon the King's Chair. In the gloaming, it seems as though a figure sits on the broken seat, but as the companions come closer, they discover it is not a man – it is a huge nest of stinging insects! Disturbed, the insects swarm into the evening sky, and for an instant the companions have the disconcerting impression that the insect-swarm takes on the shape of a huge man-like figure, crowned with the dying sun. As the swarm flits away, the silence of the marsh is suddenly filled with the neek-breek sound of other insects.

SEARCH FOR THE BLACK BARROW

To find the Black Barrow, the Company have two options.

- If a character sits in the King's Chair, they find that one particular mound in the distance somehow seems more significant than all the rest. The character has the strong intuition that their father lies buried in that mound. A terrible feeling of sorrow and loss floods the hero's soul (the hero must make a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw or gain 2 Shadow points).
- If the Company searches for it, each hero may attempt a **DC 18 (Intelligence) Investigation** check. On a failure, the companion gains a level of Exhaustion. On a success, the hero finds the Black Barrow. If the companion succeeds by 5 or more they also spot some bones in the bog. Two bodies lie here, although all that can be said of them is that one was once a man, and the other set are the bones of a Dwarf. These were the members of Gorlanc's company; Egri, murdered by Grón, and Grón, murdered by Timeas, many years ago.

The Black Barrow is a steep-sided mound lined with stones. Climbing up, the characters discover a large flat stone that's clearly been moved several times in the past, judging by the scratch marks on its underside.



Pushing the stone aside lets out a waft of foul air that makes the companions' torches flicker blue and green, followed by another swarm of flies. The way into the Barrow lies open...

- PART EIGHT - THOUGH DEAD HE BE, IT BELONGS TO ME!

The Black Barrow consists of at least two chambers, upper and lower. The entrance from above leads into the upper chamber. The drop from the entrance hole to the floor of the upper chamber is some ten or twelve feet, so getting down requires a rope or some **Acrobatics**. Ask the players if the entire Company are descending into the barrow – the question as to who's in the barrow and who's still up top will shortly become very relevant.

1 THE UPPER BARROW

Climbing down, the characters find that the upper chamber is lined with four stone coffins, each containing the remains of some lordling of the North from ages past.

There are several small jars and chests that once held treasures, but these have mostly been looted by Timeas over the years. Some coins remain, worth a total of 30g.

The Company also find two bundles of moth-eaten personal effects – travelling gear, some Dwarf-made tools for tomb-robbing including a crowbar and a portable block-and-tackle, weapons and a few other trinkets. These belonged to Egri and Grón, two of Timeas' former companions.

The only thing of note among these items is a partially legible letter that seems like it might once have been instructions on finding the barrow; the words 'Barrow', 'Weathertop' and 'unearth' can be made out, as can the name 'Gorlanc' and the seal of a black bird.



THE LOWER BARROW

Another trapdoor leads down into the lower barrow. Slimy moss grows around this stone, and should the Company lever it up, they see that the lower barrow is flooded. They can make out vague shapes through the murky water – are those swords? Is that another, grander, tomb? Could that shine there be gold, lost beneath the mud and cold water of the rising marshes?

Retrieving anything from the lower barrow requires a **DC 13 Strength (Athletics)** check. On a success, the diver grabs a random item from the Lower Barrow Treasure Table, on the following page.

If the diver succeeds by 5 or more they can retrieve two items (roll twice on the table) and on a natural 20 they get three. On a failure, the character must choose between returning empty-handed, or finding one item and gaining a level of Exhaustion.

With results of 13-19, mark items off the table as they are found. Rolling a result a second time means the character comes up empty-handed.

1d20 TREASURE FOUND

1	A spectral hand grabs the treasure-seeker, pulling its victim down into the darkness. The hero must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw or gain a level of Exhaustion. On a success, the diver can swim to the surface. If they spend Inspiration they can wrest a Wondrous Artefact (page 127 of the <i>Loremaster's Guide</i>) from the spirit. A companion that fails the saving throw can attempt it again, gaining a level of Exhaustion on each failure.
2-7	1d6 gold pieces
8-10	4d6 x 10 silver pennies
11-12	2d6 gold pieces, 10d6 silver pennies
13	A small gold ring, worth 5g.
14	A casket of coins (4d6 gold pieces, 6d6 silver pennies, 6d20 copper coins). To carry the casket to the surface, the diver must gain a level of Exhaustion.
15	A ring of silver, studded with a fine emerald (total value 10g).
16	A jewelled sword-hilt, worth 20g or more.
17	Pearls of great worth, total value 20g.
18	A lordly chain of gold, bearing the emblem of Arthedain. Worth 20g or more.
19	A golden crown, bearing seven shining sapphires, worth 50g.
20	If the hero receives this result and spends Inspiration, they recover a Legendary Weapon or Armour from the muck. See page 132 of the <i>Loremaster's Guide</i> .

If you want to use the rules for hoards found in the *Rivendell Region Guide*, the total value is 150*, if the companions are able to take the time to properly empty the barrow.

1

GRÓR'S TREACHERY

Grór the Dwarf came to Bree looking for old Timeas' map. He was responsible, to a degree, for Timeas' unexpected death. When he realised that the Player-heroes were

already on the trail of the map, he conceived a plan to let them brave the Troll-den and the other dangers; he would follow them all the while, and then murder them as Timeas murdered his brother Grón.

He arrives at the barrow accompanied by a number of Brigands and hired Thugs from Bree. Depending on how your adventure unfolded, he might also be accompanied by one of the Heathertons.

- If the Company maligned or insulted Tomas, then Tomas fell in with Grór and told him everything.
- If Tomas is with the Company, then Grór is accompanied by Nick Heatherton, Tom's father (a Farmer). Grór fooled the older man by pretending to be concerned for Tom's safety, and Nick told Grór enough about his brother's travels for the Dwarf to guess the location of the Black Barrow.

If one or more of the companions are outside the barrow, then call for a **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception)** check. If successful, they spot Grór and his allies approaching in time to shout a warning to those below. If the Company are taken unawares, then they're in a sticky situation – Grór's plan is to quickly defeat any characters outside the Barrow, and then close the entrance, leaving those inside to starve. A few days without food or water or light should be enough to soften up the hardest adventurer.

If he gets the opportunity for a villainous speech, Grór says: *"my master sent me to fetch the map, but I've found a far richer prize. Timeas murdered my brother Grón on this very hill, and if there was any justice, 'twould be his bones that lie below and not my brothers'. Still, he shall not sleep alone."*

If he's accompanied by one of the Heathertons, then at this point he spins around, stabs his companion, and kicks the Heatherton into the barrow. A successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine)** check can save the life of the wounded man, but it takes several rounds to staunch the flow of blood. If Tom's the one pushed into the barrow, then he breaks his leg in the fall and is forever lame. To the companions, Grór says *"I have little quarrel with ye. Hand over your weapons and any of my treasure that you've stolen, and I might let you live."*



Entombed!

If the Company do get buried alive in the Black Barrow, they're in trouble! Each member of the Company must make a Corruption check (a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw) each day to avoid gaining 2 points of Shadow. Once the food runs out, each day the heroes must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain a level of Exhaustion.

There are ways to escape, however. The Company could try digging their way out of the barrow; doing so is a prolonged action requiring a total of 10 successes on DC 10 Strength (Athletics or Miner's Tools) checks. Each player may make one check each day. They are at Disadvantage without tools, roll normally with improvised tools such as mattocks, or with Advantage if the Company were clever enough to bring spades. Failing a check with a natural 1 means a cave-in.

They could try parleying with the Dwarf. As Grór said, if they surrender everything, he might let them live. It's unlikely that the players will be willing to humble themselves so, but it is a way out – and they can always return in the future for revenge on Grór.

Alternatively, clever Player-heroes could lure Grór down into the barrow by playing on the notorious Dwarven love of treasure; by describing the treasure of the lower barrow with a DC 20 Charisma (Performance or Persuasion) check, they could overcome his resolve and convince him that if he doesn't claim the treasure right now, the adventurers will hide it or somehow make off with it. Alternatively, they could trick Grór by pretending to surrender. Depending on the Company's plan, it may be appropriate to award them Shadow points.

Another option might be to swim into the murk of the lower barrow. The water got in somehow – maybe the adventurers could escape the same way. There is, indeed, a crack in the foundations through which the mire leaked in, and a Hobbit or other Small character could squeeze through the water and mud with a DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check; failing the check means the character gains a level of Exhaustion while escaping.

The Battle of the Black Barrow

Grór's brought one brute for every companion, half (rounding down) are Brigands, the remainder are Thugs. So, if you have five Player-heroes, they face two Brigands and three Thugs.

Grór stays back (*"watching for sneaks and ranger-sorts"* he says to the hired men) and does not join into the combat unless he feels it's the only way to defeat the Company.

- **Climbing out of the Barrow.** If there is a rope, or someone helping a character climb up, it is easy to climb out of the barrow, and does not require a check. If there is no rope and no help, then climbing out requires a **DC 10 Strength (Athletics)** check. Attempting a climb requires the character's action for

the round, and only one character can enter or exit the barrow at a time.

- **Jumping or Falling into the Barrow.** The drop down is 10 feet or more, so the creature takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage. A successful **DC 10 Strength** or **Dexterity** saving throw prevents this damage.
- **The Shades of Men.** If you need to give the Player-heroes an edge, remember this is a barrow of the North-Kingdom, and within sight of a spot associated with the kings of old. It would not be unfitting for the earth to suddenly shift beneath Grór's feet, or some of his brutes quail as the mists close in and they suddenly fear the presence of ghosts.

- EPILOGUE - OF EARTH AND WATER, BLOOD AND BONE

How many bodies now lie in the tomb of the Black Barrow? Has the Company saved the Heathertons from the sins of Uncle Tim, or is sorrow compounded on sorrow? Now neither Tom nor Nick have any desire for a share of the treasure from the Black Barrow, so the companions may claim it all if they have the stomach for it (unless, of course, they owe the Old Troll some money...).

If Tom survives, he returns chastened to Bree, and puts aside any thoughts of treasure or adventure.

And if the Old Troll survives, he returns to his Troll-hole all alone, gnawing on old bones.

*Tom's leg is game, since home he came,
And his bootless foot is lasting lame;
But Troll don't care, and he's still there
With the bone he boned from its owner.*



- strange men, - strange roads

for heroes of level 3 or 4

- **When:** This quest could be set in the late spring or early summer of any year, but is designed to be run after the events of *Old Bones and Skin*.
- **Where:** The adventure is mostly set on the Road west of the *Forsaken Inn*, travelling to both the Chetwood and Bree.
- **What:** A Ranger of the North has been murdered. The companions must stalk a band of travellers to identify the killers hiding amongst them.
- **Why:** The Company is assumed to be allied with the Rangers of the North, or at least friendly enough with the Rangers that they would investigate the murder of one. If the Company isn't known to the Rangers, Haleth (see page 76) may be a useful way to introduce them or may ask them to investigate directly.
- **Who:** Two of the travellers are followers of Gorlanc (see page 124) travelling into the west. The key figure is Berelas, a healer from Mirkwood who secretly carries a magical treasure bound for Gorlanc.
- **Themes:** Everyone has secrets and even the best of intentions can be led astray by the Shadow into doing great evil. But mercy may turn the blade of the enemy before the end.

ADVENTURING PHASE

This adventure is divided into eight parts, and begins at the *Forsaken Inn* and ends in Bree.

PART ONE - AT THE FORSAKEN INN

The Company travel to the *Forsaken Inn*, a day's ride east of Bree, to meet with a Ranger. When their contact fails to arrive, they must discover what happened to him.

PART TWO - THE BODY IN THE WELL

Their investigations reveal that the Ranger was murdered and thrown down a well. Circumstantial evidence points to the identity of his killers.

PART THREE - THE TRADERS' CARAVAN

The Company spies upon the group of travellers and traders who just departed the *Forsaken Inn*. Among them are the murderers.

PART FOUR - THE STRANGERS IN THE WOODS

The companions encounter Elves in the Chetwood, and learn something of the stakes.

PART FIVE - NOT TO STRIKE WITHOUT NEED

Beregal turns aside from her errand to heal a sick family.

PART SIX - KNIVES IN BREE

When the travellers stop in Bree, another crime is committed in the night.

PART SEVEN - BEFORE THE REEVE

Having identified (or, at the very least, believing they have identified) the Ranger's killer, the companions must meet with the Reeve of Bree.

PART EIGHT - THE CHOICES OF MISTRESS BEREGAL

Guided by the wisdom of the Player-heroes, Beregal chooses her fate.

EPILOGUE - THE ASSAULT ON GORLANC'S FORT

The sorcerer Gorlanc has not reckoned on the might of Rivendell. The companions either hear about, or witness for themselves, the destruction of Gorlanc's fortress by the Elves.

- PART ONE - AT THE FORSAKEN INN

The Company have come to the *Forsaken Inn* (see page 22) to meet a contact of theirs, the Ranger Mallor, called Tarry-Mack by the folk of Bree.

Mallor might have promised to bring news from the East or South to the Company, or have agreed to join the Player-heroes on an Orc-hunt or some other errand. Characters who know Haleth (see page 76) might be sent to meet Mallor on her behalf.

The Size of the Caravan

The nine key members of the caravan are described in Part Three – The Traders' Caravan. You can add more guards and travellers to the caravan as needed; for this adventure to work, there need to be enough travellers in the group that the Player-heroes cannot challenge the caravan openly and interrogate them to find out what happened to Mallor the Ranger.

If you only have three or four Player-heroes, then Edoric's company of eight should be big enough to dissuade all but the most foolhardy from trying a direct approach. On the other hand, if you're lucky enough to have six or seven players, then add a few more guards to make battling the caravan less appealing.

If the Company are primarily Bree-landers or wandering adventurers from Wilderland, then they might have been sent to meet Mallor by a patron like Gandalf, Elrond or Beorn – Tarry-Mack has travelled east of the mountains in his time.

Even if the Company have never met Tarry-Mack, they will know his reputation: he is argumentative, uncommonly ugly and has very few friends, but is loyal and stalwart to those he likes. He travels alone, walking from shore to mountains and back again.

Whatever reason the Loremaster selects, the reasons for the meeting should be introduced as part of a previous Adventuring or Fellowship phase. As our story opens, the Company has come to the *Forsaken Inn* on a warm summer's evening.

1/2

STRANGERS AT THE INN

Even the rosy last light of a pleasant spring or summer day cannot make the *Forsaken Inn* look welcoming. The tumbledown building looks like the corpse of an inn, and it's only the ponies and carts outside that suggest the inn is still in business.

Inside, the small common room is crowded with members of a trading caravan that's heading west (these traders are discussed in detail in *Part Three*). The Company see several Dwarves, and a few grim-looking dangerous Men. They can try talking to the travellers with a **DC 10 Intelligence (Riddle)** check, but any conversations are cut short by the Caravan-master, Edoric.

"I want to make Bree before the week's out. I've a crick in my neck from sleeping rough, and I ain't going to get much rest in this festering pit. To bed, sluggards! We march before the break of dawn."

Grumbling, the Men of the caravan finish their drinks and head to the communal sleeping-room at the back of the inn. The Dwarves ignore Edoric and continue drinking and talking amongst themselves in low whispers. It doesn't take an **Insight** check to see that the traders don't care much for one another.

Should anyone try to eavesdrop on the Dwarves, they switch to their own strange tongue, or stop talking altogether.

THE INNKEEPER

The current owner of the *Forsaken Inn* – or, at least, the only one willing to lay claim to the place – is Jack. He's the owner, bartender, brewer, cook and clerk too, although he only does one of those jobs with any degree of enthusiasm. Eventually, he returns to the common room and acknowledges the Company's presence. *"We're full tonight," he says with a grin. "I can squeeze you in, but it'll cost double."*

(If anyone points out that it's a warm night and they can just sleep outside, then Jack happily describes, in loving and gleeful detail, all the bugs that swarm out of the nearby Midgewater Marshes on nights like this, and exactly what sorts of bites and boils they inflict on tasty travellers.)

When asked about the Ranger, Jack shrugs. *"Tarry-Mack? He was in early, with a face on him that'd sour beer. Sit yourself down there and order a drink; he'll be back soon, no doubt."*

Mallor's Pack

A hero with a passive Perception of 15 or higher (or a more Keen-eyed or Suspicious companion who makes a **DC 15** check) spots a weathered backpack and bedroll stashed

1/4

behind the bar; a Ranger's gear. If challenged, Jack admits the pack belongs to Tarry-Mack; the Ranger left it behind when he left earlier in the evening. See *The Pack*, page 91.

1 THE MISSING RANGER

The night draws in. The fire in the grate dwindles. The Dwarves rise and retire to bed. Soon, Jack's snoring by the embers (sleeping, as he always does, with a naked short-sword across his legs, in case anyone tries to rob him in the night). Still, there is no sign of Mallor. If roused (carefully), Jack snorts at the idea of worrying about a Ranger. *"They're like stray dogs; you don't see 'em for days, and then they come snuffling at your door demanding food. He'll show up. He always does."*

Questioning the traders is equally fruitless at this point. Edoric has no love for Rangers, thinking them nothing more than thieves and troublemakers, and has a special dislike of Tarry-Mack. *"He was snooping around earlier, no doubt planning to rob me or mine. Now, be off with you!"*

If the Player-heroes try searching for Mallor in the darkness, it's challenging — a **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation)** check.

A successful roll finds a broken knife thrown in an outbuilding at the back of the inn; the hilt is marked with an M-rune, suggesting it is Mallor's blade. The blade is unnaturally cold, icy even, to the touch. Success by 5 or more finds some spilled blood nearby; a natural 20 finds the body in the well (see *Part Two – The Body in the Well*).

If the companions fail, then they must wait until daybreak to conduct a more thorough search.

DEPARTURE OF THE TRADING CARAVAN

As Edoric promised, the caravan departs before dawn, leaving in the ghostly grey light that presages the rising of the sun. In the gloom, the travellers look like ghosts assembling for some dread purpose, and it is oddly hard to get a count of their number.

The trading caravan sets off west, heading for Bree. The *Forsaken Inn* is a day's ride away from Bree, but the caravan sets a much slower pace; they'll be lucky to reach Bree in three or four days.

SEARCHING BY DAYLIGHT

With the help of the sun, searching for signs of Mallor is much easier. The Company can find the spilled blood at the back of the inn automatically. Bloodshed implies a sinister reason behind Mallor's absence, and prompts a further search.

Another Shadow of the Past

The events of the previous evening were set in motion long, long ago. Many years previously, a scholar of ill-repute named Gorlanc led a company of treasure-hunters and thieves. He defiled the tombs of the Dúnedain, and was driven out of the North by the Rangers (see page 69 for the first part of this tale). Now, Gorlanc has returned to the North after many years' devilry and knavery in the South. Mallor was one of the Rangers who fought against Gorlanc, and remembers well his battle against the scholar's servants. Two of the members of the caravan, the mountebank Hirlinon and the healer Berelas, are servants of Gorlanc, and they carry with them a treasure that belongs to the scholar — a Ring of Power, recovered from a ruined vault in Eregion.

Some foresight or intuition caused Mallor to spy on Berelas. When the members of the trading caravan were eating in the inn last evening, he crept into their sleeping quarters and searched her baggage. There, he found an amulet bearing the symbol of Gorlanc. Suspecting Berelas of being in league with the scholar, he tried to follow her when she slipped out to meet with Hirlinon, but he was discovered by a Shade sent by Gorlanc. The Shade wounded him, and Hirlinon cut his throat and threw Mallor down the well while the Ranger was stunned. Now, Hirlinon and Berelas are once more safe and concealed within the traders' caravan, and each step down the Road brings them closer to Gorlanc.

Gorlanc himself has occupied a ruined fort south of Fornost, where he is gathering all sorts of Evil Men to his banner.

- PART TWO - THE BODY IN THE WELL

Searching around brings the companions to an old well near the Road.

1/2

RECOVERING TARRY-MACK

Mallor's body floats face down in the dark waters below. The body would have been completely invisible by night; it's only visible as a black shape against blacker water by day. Recovering the Ranger's corpse requires a companion to climb down the narrow, slime-slick shaft and tie a rope around Mallor's waist.

The body is weirdly, impossibly cold to the touch. His right hand is so frozen that it's covered in a layer of ice. His throat has also been cut, but the wound is relatively clean and free from gore; it is as though his blood was so cold and thick that it oozed out instead of spurting from a mortal wound. His face bears an expression of pure horror, and his eyes are both frozen and covered in ice.

His coin-purse and some other belongings are still with him. His sword and travelling pack are missing (the pack Tarry-Mack lacks is back at the inn; his sword sank down into the mud at the bottom of the well and is lost).

A character with proficient with **Shadow-lore** or a Dúnadan with the *Dauntless Guardians* Virtue, can guess

that something supernatural was involved in Mallor's death. Icy cold and death-by-terror are horrors associated with wraiths – but what undead monster would pause to slit a victim's throat, and why would a wraith hide the body?

Other Clues

A successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation)** check finds the still-icy dagger in the outbuilding; success by 5 or more finds footprints and scuff marks that let the Company recreate Mallor's last movements.

It appears that the Ranger was hiding by the wall, as if eavesdropping on someone, when he spun around abruptly as if surprised. Someone then dragged his unconscious or dead form and threw him down the old well.

QUESTIONING THE INNKEEPER

A successful **DC 10 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion)** check when questioning Jack the Innkeeper reveals the following information about Tarry-Mack and the events of the previous day:

- Tarry-Mack turned up around noon. He was the only customer at the inn for a few hours. He always annoyed Jack: the Ranger had this talent for breathing in a way that would turn the gentlest Hobbit into a remorseless killer. Whenever Jack did anything in the inn, Tarry-Mack would snort as if to say "you're going



to mess that up, you idiot, and I'm going to sit here and drink your beer and watch you suffer".

- When Edoric's caravan showed up, Tarry-Mack made himself scarce. He did the Ranger thing of hiding in a corner, smoking and listening to everyone. Jack had the impression that Tarry-Mack was expecting the caravan, but the travellers didn't seem to know him and didn't talk much to him (not that Jack can blame them – who'd want to talk to that Ranger).
- At one point, when the newcomers were eating, Tarry-Mack left the common room. He returned a few minutes later.
- One of the Dwarves in the travelling company demanded to know where Tarry-Mack had gone, and all but accused the Ranger of stealing from the caravan. Edoric talked the Dwarf down, and then threatened Tarry-Mack, telling the Ranger to beat it and begone. Jack doesn't recall which Dwarf it was.
- Later on, Tarry-Mack went out again, and that's the last Jack saw of him until the companions brought word of the Ranger's death.
- He doesn't know what happened to Tarry-Mack; maybe the Ranger got into a fight with Edoric or a Dwarf. Jack won't shed any tears for Tarry-Mack.

If the companions fail the check, then Jack claims to remember nothing of use. The inn was very busy last night, after all.

A second successful check, or generosity on the part of the Player-heroes, prompts Jack to remember that Tarry-Mack left his pack behind the bar. Alternatively, a **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight or Perception)** check allows the players discover the pack for themselves (Jack intends to loot the pack and sell the dead man's belongings once the Company are gone).

1/2

THE PACK

Mallor's pack contains well-made travelling gear, as one would expect of a Ranger. Down at the bottom, underneath blankets and other supplies, is a flask of silver containing

a tonic made in Rivendell; drinking from it restores 2d4+2 hit points. There's a single draught left in the flask. There's also a little bundle of cloth, and wrapped in that bundle is a small amulet made of greenish glass, held on a golden chain. There's a strange symbol on the amulet.

- A character that makes a **DC 15 Intelligence (Shadow-lore)** check, or who might plausibly know about Gorlanc, recognises the symbol as Gorlanc's rune.
- Jack can guess that the amulet doesn't belong to the Ranger, and crows that Tarry-Mack has finally been exposed as a robber. He only wishes the Ranger was still alive so he could rub it in his face.



FINDING THE MURDERER

It's clear that Mallor's death is somehow connected to the traders' caravan. However, the Player-heroes aren't likely to possess the authority to question the members of the caravan, and based on Edoric's behaviour last night, they might guess that if they accused a member of the caravan without solid proof, Edoric would turn on them and they'd have to fight all the travellers. The best option is to follow the caravan, eavesdrop on it, and try to find out more.

The Ring of Seven Jewels

This Ring of Power was forged by the folk of the Whispering Halls (see *Rivendell Region Guide*, page 37) in the middle days of the Second Age. It was one of their last essays in Ring-lore, before they turned their hands towards the forging of the Great Rings, and as such it is extremely powerful.

Unfortunately, the ring was tainted in the destruction of Eregion, for the Elf-lord who wore it last was captured and tortured by the Enemy, and her suffering stained the Seven Jewels. Now, while the Ring greatly enhances the spirit and might of anyone who wears it, it twists the wearer's soul towards darkness.

The Ring grants Advantage on all saving throws made while it is worn. The ring also has a most peculiar Greater Blessing, affecting whatever skill the wearer most desires to use when appealing to its powers. But the Ring is doubly cursed, increasing the wearer's Shadow total by 5 points (Shadow Taint) and attracting the attention of the Enemy (Hunted). (For details about the effects of Blessings and the Ring's Curses, see the *Lothemaster's Guide*, page 127 and the *Rivendell Region Guide*, page 101, respectively.)

- PART THREE - THE TRADER'S CARAVAN

"I have quick ears", he went on, lowering his voice, "and though I cannot disappear, I have hunted many wild and wary things and I can usually avoid being seen, if I wish. Now, I was behind the hedge this evening on the Road west of Bree, when four Hobbits came out of the Downlands..."

The caravan left the *Forsaken Inn* ahead of the Player-heroes, but it's easy to catch up with it, especially when the heavy carts get stuck in the mud. It's summer and the Player-heroes are on or near the Road, so running this as a journey is optional. A Company that reliably shadows the

caravan will have quite enough to occupy their attention in any case.

SPYING & EAVESDROPPING

The safest approach, assuming the Player-heroes are relatively stealthy, is to hide in the hedgerows and small copses along the Road and eavesdrop on the caravan as it travels. Close observation and keen ears give clues as to who plotted against Tarry-Mack.

It takes the caravan four days to get to Bree. Each day, any of the companions may try their hand at spying. Doing so requires a **Stealth** check; it's **DC 13** on the first day, **DC 10** on days two and three as the Road passes the eaves of the Chetwood, and **DC 13** again on the last day as the caravan draws near Bree.

- Before they spy on the caravan, give the players the **surface details** (see opposite) of all the members of the caravan, so they can pick their targets.
- On a normal success, the companion may watch one of the people in the caravan. Watching a target means the companion gets the **first impressions** and **close associates** of that target.
- If the hero succeeds by 5 or more, the companion may watch an additional person or grant Advantage to another Player-hero's **Stealth** check.
- If the **Stealth** check fails, the companion can't get close enough to the caravan to glean any useful information. If the companion fails with a natural 1, the caravan guards spot the intruder and give chase. This may lead to *Confronting the Caravan* (on page 99) if the hero cannot escape.

Companions who don't attempt a **Stealth** check are assumed to be shadowing the caravan from a safe distance; they don't get to observe anyone, but can speculate about motives and offer suggestions to the spies.

Deeper Secrets

Each of the key characters in the caravan has a **digging deeper** entry, and some have **secrets**. Once the players have decided which members of the caravan to investigate, they can try to discover this additional information. This



Observation & Investigation

Much of this part of the adventure assumes that the Player-heroes are stealthily gathering information and observing the suspects. Therefore, several scenes may simply play out with the companions lurking and not getting involved.

Don't just passively read the text out to the players; make gathering that information interesting and challenging. Call for Stealth, Perception, Investigation and Insight checks when needed (assign Difficulty Classes as appropriate to keep dramatic tension but allow the heroes a good chance of success). Give them only fragments of a scene, and force them to sneak closer to learn more. Listen to their speculation about what's going on, and drop clues to disrupt their theories. If they settle on Hirlinon early on as the prime suspect, then have Eoin talk about how he's secretly in love with Mistress Berelas and he'd do anything to be with her, and let them wonder if the poor boy was the perpetrator of a crime of passion.

If the players do reveal their presence, then their interactions with the various Loremaster characters should primarily reveal information instead of altering the plot prematurely. If they suggest that Narvi and Narvig should come adventuring to earn money, then Narvi could hint that they've got an easier method of getting rich and repaying their father's debts. If the characters start prodding Berelas' conscience, then have Hirlinon threaten her to keep her in line.

A Direct Approach

If Berelas suspects she's in danger, then she calls upon the Cold Shade (see page 100) to harry any eavesdroppers. An encounter with the Cold Shade is a good way to lead in to Part Four – Strangers in the Woods. Optionally, you can run Wild Beasts (see page 101) to break up the journey, especially if it seems that the players are determined to force a confrontation with Eodric before the caravan reaches Bree.

Other Approaches

The players might try other methods of investigation, like infiltrating the caravan (*"Hail! I am an Elf of Rivendell, one of the High Elves of the West, who crossed the Sea in the First Age of the World to make war on the Enemy and take back the Silmarils from the Iron Crown. Now I am a simple caravan-guard looking for work..."*) or secretly questioning members of the caravan if they wander away from the Road. As long as the Player-heroes don't commit any deeds that would incur Shadow gain, any approach to investigation should work. Be flexible – this adventure describes the likeliest path taken by the players, but your group may find their own path. You may need to skip onto Part Eight – The Choices of Mistress Berelas early, or improvise your own events based on the plans of the various Loremaster characters and the actions of your players.

may require more eavesdropping, or sneaking into the caravan camp at night to steal items or ask questions.

THE CARAVAN

The caravan consists of nine (or more!) travellers, two heavy, horse-drawn carts, and ten ponies laden with baggage. It's split roughly between Men and Dwarves.

For each member of the caravan, the description includes:

Background: The first section provides a brief description of the character for the Loremaster.

Game Rules: Each traveller is provided relevant game statistics, including full entries for those who are not easily represented by another entry.

Surface Details: What an observer sees immediately, without needing to spy.

First Impressions: What the observer learns after a day of spying and eavesdropping.

Close Associates: Who the target associates with on the journey.

Digging Deeper: What the Player-heroes need to do to learn more.

Secrets: The dark secrets, if any, concealed by the caravan member.



Edoric, the Guide

Edoric is of the Enedwaith, kin to the Dunlendings, who dwell far to the south of Eriador along the coast, near where the Greyflood empties into the sea. Edoric is not the name he was given by his mother, but the name he uses when travelling in the North.

His is a restless soul; he has not seen the land of his birth in twenty years, and he knows he shall die on the Road. He is an experienced caravan guide; he has led traders from the Blue Mountains to the Great Ford, but he has never gone east of the Anduin.

He's fiercely protective of those in his care; all he has in his life is his professional reputation.

EDORIC *Medium Human*

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)

Armour Class 14 (Ring-mail)

Hit Points 45 (6d8+18)

Speed 30 ft

Skills Athletics +6, Perception +4, Survival +4

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Dunlending, Westron

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Leadership. As a bonus action, Edoric can command a nearby ally that has not yet acted this round. That creature takes its turn immediately after Edoric.

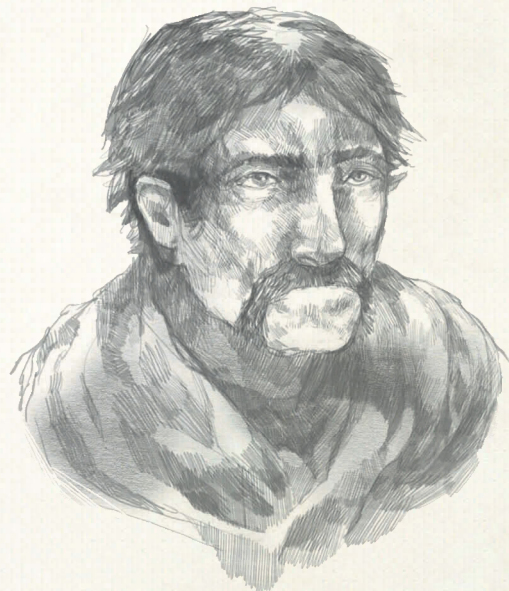
Unyielding (Recharge 5-6). Edoric can use his bonus action to gain 6 temporary hit points.

Actions

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft or range 20/60 ft, one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) piercing damage or 8 (1d8+4) if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Reactions

Defend Ally (Recharge 5-6). If an ally is within 5 feet of Edoric, he may use his reaction to impose Disadvantage on an attack roll against that ally.



Surface Details: A big man with weathered skin and a well-worn cloak, leaning heavily on his spear. He walks with a rangy pace, eating up the miles.

First Impressions: Edoric seems to be in charge; he's the one barking orders, getting the animals moving, tending to everything. He seems constantly impatient.

Close Associates: Berelas, Eoin, Narvig, Mirabar.

Digging Deeper: With a successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight)** check, it's clear that Edoric isn't in charge; he's employed as a guide as far as Bree. If the characters wait until Bree before intervening, or if they can prove that one of Edoric's employers acted treacherously at the *Forsaken Inn*, they might be able to avoid facing the big man in battle.

Secrets: None. He's an honest man.

Eoin, the Bree-lander

Eoin is a young man of Bree. This is his first journey outside Bree-land; he travelled from Bree as far as the High Pass, and now believes he has seen all the world. He's a simple, honest fellow, hired by Edoric because he has a strong back and follows orders.

Game Rules: Eoin uses the Town Guard statistics on page 69 of the *Loremaster's Guide*.

Surface Details: Fresh-faced, wide-eyed.

First Impressions: A young man of no more than fifteen summers, all of them gentle. He seems to be the caravan's scout and errand boy. He knows these roads well – he must be from the Breeland.

Close Associates: Edoric, Berelas.

Digging Deeper: If a companion eavesdrops on him in the woods, they'll discover that, alone, Eoin talks to himself. He believes himself to be in love with Berelas (he only met her a few weeks ago, but to him she's sophisticated and exotic, an enchantress from across the mountains) and declares passionately that he would die to defend her. He's less fond of her 'brother' Hirlinon.

Secrets: A **DC 10 Charisma (Intimidation)** check forces Eoin to admit that he saw Berelas and Hirlinon leaving the common-room of the *Forsaken Inn* together after the meal, and that they went out "looking for healing herbs". That was around the time that the Ranger was murdered.

Vig, Brother of Vogar

Old Vig is the eldest of the four Dwarves in the caravan, and their leader. He is a smith, and if he once dreamed of forging swords and shields for some King under the Mountain, he has long since put those dreams aside. He is a tinker, fixing pots and pans.



Game Rules: Use the Dwarf statistics on page 78 of the *Loremaster's Guide* for Vig.

Surface Details: An old white-bearded Dwarf, carrying the tools of a smith.

First Impressions: Vig is very protective of his brother Vogar. He speaks for him, watches over him as they travel, and is always by his side.

Close Associates: Vogar, Narvig, Narvi.

Digging Deeper: If a companion eavesdrops by night, they hear Vig in conversation with Berelas. She says that there are healing salves and herbs that can cure almost any injury, but such treatments are not cheap. Vig tears at his beard and confesses that he has no money to spare. He casts a venomous glare at Mirabar as he says this.

Secrets: Vig is deeply indebted to Mirabar, and owes him a fortune. He ran into debt when his brother Vogar was wounded by an Orc, and Vig had to stop working in the forge to care for him. The forge burnt down, and Vig had to borrow money from Mirabar to survive. Now, he

is a homeless wandering tinker-smith, trying to scrape together enough coin to repay the money-lender. In game terms, Vig owes around 50 gold pieces to Mirabar.

Vogar, Brother of Vig

Vogar was once a Dwarf-warrior of some renown, a champion of the Blue Mountains. Indeed, he was among those who volunteered to accompany Thorin Oakenshield on the Quest of Erebor. Tragedy struck before Vogar could depart; he met a band of Orcs in the Wild, and one of them struck him a blow so terrible that it sundered both Vogar's helm and the skull beneath. He survived, but his wits were addled by the injury, and now he suffers from both agonising headaches and blinding fits of rage.

VOGAR *Medium Dwarf*

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Armour Class 14 (Corslet of Mail)

Hit Points 37 (5d8+15)

Speed 30 ft

Skills Survival +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Westron

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Berserk Rage. Whenever Vogar takes damage, he must make a **Wisdom** saving throw against **DC 10** or half the damage, whichever is higher. On a failure he flies into a berserk rage. He gains Advantage on his attack rolls, Disadvantage on ability checks and saving throws and all attacks against him are at Advantage. At the start of his turn if there are no enemies within his movement, he must make another saving throw (with Disadvantage) to end this effect. On a failure, he attacks an ally within range.

Horrible Strength. If Vogar makes a successful melee attack, he may use his bonus action to cause 4 additional of the same type to the target.

Actions

Mattock. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6+4) slashing damage.

Surface Details: A burly Dwarf with a hideously scarred face.

First Impressions: He may be simple-minded; he slurs when he speaks, and often just stares at the ground

instead of walking. If his brother were not there to take care of him, he might wander off the Road and perish in the Wild.

Close Associates: Vig.

Digging Deeper: A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine)** check reveals that Vogar suffered a terrible wound in battle that makes it hard for him to think clearly. He cannot remember what happened at the *Forsaken Inn*; eavesdropping characters hear him asking his nephews in low tones about that evening.



Secrets: At night, Vogar mutters and moans about murdering Mirabar. His brother always sleeps close by, and rouses instantly if Vogar tries to rise from his bedroll.

Narvig, Son of Vig

The elder son of Vig, Narvig feels his father's shame very keenly. He would do anything to relieve Vig's suffering and restore his pride.

Surface Details: Young, tall for a Dwarf.

First Impressions: Narvig is clearly the liaison between the Dwarves and the other travellers. He's the only one who speaks to Edoric or Eoin.

Close Associates: Vig, Narvi, Edoric.

Digging Deeper: A companion who sneaks into the camp discovers that Narvig and Narvi connive privately

by night. If the companion eavesdrops on them, they will hear the pair plotting to steal valuables from Berelas.

Secrets: Narvig intends to give the stolen items to Mirabar, freeing his father Vig from the debt he owes.



Narvi the Young

The youngest of the Dwarves, Narvi is something of a scoundrel. He dreams of going to Erebor and becoming as wealthy as the kings of old, and is frustrated by his father's debts and his uncle's illness. Narvi always wants the quick fix, the easy answer.

Surface Details: Young, light on his feet.

First Impressions: The merriest, least dour Dwarf you ever laid eyes on.

Close Associates: Narvig, Hirlinon.

Digging Deeper: A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check will reveal that Narvi is trying to befriend Hirlinon. The Dwarf has a seemingly inexhaustible flask of some Dwarven spirits, and gets the Mountebank tipsy each evening. Also, Narvi is remarkably stealthy for a Dwarf; he can step as lightly as a cat when he wants to.

Secrets: Narvi's the mastermind of the 'plan' to steal from Berelas. He's getting Hirlinon drunk every night so the mountebank won't be able to wake up when they attempt to steal the Ring of Seven Jewels from Berelas.

NARVIG OR NARVI Medium Dwarf

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)

Armour Class 14 (Corslet of Mail)

Hit Points 22 (4d8+4)

Speed 25 ft

Skills Persuasion +3 (Narvig), Stealth +5 (Narvi)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Westron

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Reckless. The young Dwarf may choose to gain Advantage on all attacks he makes in a round, but all attacks on him gain Advantage until the start of his next turn.

Actions

Broad Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) slashing damage.

Hirlinon of Gondor, Follower of Gorlanc

Hirlinon comes from the land of Gondor, far to the South. He is one of Gorlanc's followers, a secret worshipper of the Enemy. He has seen the power of Mordor; he knows the gathering strength of the Enemy, and he knows that the Free Peoples cannot hope to stand against it. He has succumbed to despair, and come out the other side filled with malice and secret loathing for the common folk.

He now delights in tricking people out of their money and causing suffering, because what else is there to do? The Enemy will soon rule all of Middle-earth, so why should Hirlinon not have some merriment at the expense of others before the day is done?

Game Rules: Hirlinon is a Mountebank, see page 51 for his statistics.

Surface Details: Bright clothes, ready smile. The soft hands of a scholar.

First Impressions: He seems to be something of a merchant or carnival-barker. His pony is laden down with boxes of medicines, cure-alls, potions, fireworks and other wonders. Hirlinon claims to be Berelas' brother, but the two look nothing alike.



Close Associates: Berelas, Edoric, Narvi.

Digging Deeper: A companion who sneaks into the camp can find an amulet identical to the one found on Mallor's body amongst Hirlinon's belongings (see page 91). Hirlinon keeps a very close watch on Berelas, following her like a shadow.

Secrets: Like Berelas, Hirlinon is a follower of Gorlanc. He's much more devoted to Gorlanc than she is, and his role is to remind her of her oaths to the sorcerer – and to make sure that the Ring gets to Gorlanc, no matter what.

Berelas, the Ringbearer

Berelas is older than she looks. She was one of the Woodmen captives taken into Dol Guldur, and there she learned terrible secrets of the Enemy. Released, she fell into the service of a lesser evil, Gorlanc the Sorcerer. Despite all these horrors, she has not entirely fallen to the Shadow, and is still capable of mercy and even kindness.

She serves Gorlanc because she fears the Enemy, and believes that only a strong hero can hope to stand against Sauron when he returns. She sees Gorlanc like a younger, more forceful Radagast, and hopes that if she brings him the Ring and helps him grow in power, he will be able to drive away the Shadow.

Berelas is deluding herself in this – Gorlanc is a servant of Sauron, or at best a rival like Saruman the White, not a hero – but she has no other hope to cling to.

BERELAS *Medium Human*

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Armour Class 17 (Leather Corslet)

Hit Points 58 (9d8+18)

Speed 30 ft

Skills Performance +4, Shadow-lore +3

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Westron

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Cold be Hand and Heart. If Berelas has just successfully made a melee attack, she can use her bonus action to channel some of the Cold Shade's power. The target takes 1d8 necrotic damage and can't regain hit points until the start of her next turn.

Shade-caller. As a bonus action, Berelas can summon the Cold Shade. It arrives at the end of her next turn.

Actions

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d4+5) piercing damage.

Great Bow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 150/600 ft, one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8+5) piercing damage.

Surface Details: A woman from Mirkwood, dressed in simple travelling clothes and a heavy green cloak. She wears a scarf, even in summer.

First Impressions: She seems to be Hirlinon's assistant. Sometimes, she wanders into the woods alone or with Eoin to search for herbs.

Close Associates: Hirlinon, Edoric, Eoin.

Digging Deeper: A successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Insight)** check reveals that Berelas and Edoric seem to have some sort of a bond – or an understanding. Certainly, she spends a lot of time talking to the caravan captain, and he smiles when she sings.

She's a talented healer, much more so than Hirlinon. Anything of actual potency that he sells from his wagon of cure-alls was made by her.

Secrets: Berelas carries a Wondrous Artefact, the Ring of Seven Jewels, on a chain around her neck. She won't wear

the Ring herself, but if she or the Ring are threatened, she calls a Shade from Gorlanc (see *The Cold Shade*, page 101).

If the caravan is attacked by night, or if Berelas or Hirlinon are ambushed, then the Cold Shade automatically appears to protect them. During the day, the Shade is less powerful and less supernaturally aware of danger, so Berelas must consciously summon the creature.

She might also summon the Shade if she suspects the caravan is being spied upon, and send it out to hunt for nearby Player-heroes.

Mirabar of Dorwinion

Mirabar is a merchant from the Land of Vineyards; he brings cloth from the East and trades it for gems and crafted items from the Blue Mountains. Most of the baggage ponies in the caravan belong to him, and he's the one who hired Edoric. Some years ago, he loaned a large sum of money to the dwarf-smith Vig, and he wants that debt repaid. When Vig protested that he didn't have the coin to repay Mirabar, the merchant decided to accompany the caravan himself (he normally dwells in the Vales of Anduin, across the mountains).



Surface Details: An old man, with a face like an aged crow, all beak and dark wary eyes. He's bundled in furs despite the warm weather; he has many rings of gold on his old fingers. He's the only member of the caravan to ride instead of walking.

First Impressions: If he makes it as far as Bree, it'll be something of a miracle. He seems half-dead from the journey.

Close Associates: No one. Edoric and Eoin obey his commands, but he doesn't welcome their company. He tolerates Berelas, glares at Hirlinon, and has little time for the Dwarves, who seem subdued in his presence.

Digging Deeper: Mirabar keeps a ledger of accounts with him, and there's a column of red ink with Vig's name on it. The Player-heroes could learn this by sneaking into the camp and reading the journal, or by eavesdropping on Mirabar when he makes snide comments about Vig's indebtedness.

He hates the Rangers, believing them to be nothing more than bandits. He blames them for the loss of several of his trade caravans en route to the Blue Mountains (in truth, the Dúnedain have saved far more of Mirabar's caravans from meeting grisly ends, but there's no reasoning with such prejudice).

Secrets: Mirabar believes he nearly died at the *Forsaken Inn*. He's sure that he glimpsed Death come to claim him and carry him away beyond the circles of the world. What he actually saw was the Shade sent by Gorlanc, the one that killed Mallor, but Mirabar's convinced that he's going to die on his journey. He's debating whether to forgive Vig his debt as a last kindness, or write up a letter to his business partners transferring the lien on the loan to them.

CONFRONTING THE CARAVAN

If the Player-heroes decide to confront the caravan directly before it reaches Bree, treat it as an audience. Edoric does most of the talking for the caravan, although he looks to Mirabar for guidance at times.

Motivations

Edoric has little patience for accusations and interruptions. He wants to get the caravan to Bree and then their problems won't be his anymore.

Expectations

The following response may be appropriate during the course of the audience:

- **Mirabar:** "*Rangers and Brigands are not to be trusted*" -2 modifier if the Company identifies the victim as a Dúnedain and a -1 modifier if there are Rangers among them.

- **Edoric:** *"The word of a stranger is an uncertain thing"* -1 if the Company make unfounded accusations or demand immediate action; *"The Reeve of Bree is the Law-giver here"* +2 if the companions produce evidence and agree to present it to the Reeve.

Introduction

Barging onto the Road and declaring that one of the caravan murdered a Ranger at the *Forsaken Inn* and the Company is here to bring a reckoning in the name of justice is not a typical introductory approach. If the companions try something like this, it requires a **DC 20 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion)** check instead.

If they try a more diplomatic approach (perhaps asking to speak privately with Etoric, Mirabar or someone else) then they can make a **DC 15 Intelligence (Traditions)** as normal.

Interaction

Firstly, Etoric wants reassurance that the companions are not bandits planning to rob his caravan. Failing to provide proof of the Player-heroes' good intentions brings an early end to the audience, without a chance for them to fulfill any positive expectations.

Heroes that are indelicate with the matter will likely trigger several negative expectations, as above. The best approach is to present evidence that one of the caravan members was involved in Mallor's death, and letting Etoric come to the conclusion that the matter deserves investigation.

Final Audience Check

Etoric's preference is to wait until Bree before coming to any conclusions. He's wary of any suggestions that justice be carried out on the Road. Once the heroes have said their piece, they can make a final check. If they've been courteous then it's a normal check, but if they've only hinted at the crime it's a **DC 20 Intelligence (Riddle)** check. If they've tried to cow Etoric into allowing them to pass sentence on one of his charges, that requires a **DC 20 Charisma (Intimidation)** check.

Evaluate the result compared to the following entries:

Failure. The Company are brigands! To arms! It's a pitched battle between the members of the caravan and the

Player-heroes. Remember, most of the caravan-travellers are mostly innocent, and killing them is a terrible Misdeed worthy of Shadow.

Success by 0-2. Etoric agrees that the matter warrants investigation, and suggests that the caravan meet the Company in Bree. The caravan shall be there in a few days; the Company, being less encumbered, may travel faster (in other words, he doesn't want the companions travelling with the caravan). The Reeve of Bree is as close as this part of the world comes to a leader of Men – let the strangers present their concerns to the Reeve, and let him deal with it.

Success by 3-5. As above, but Etoric agrees to let the Player-heroes accompany the caravan as far as Bree.

Success by 6+. Etoric is convinced that the matter deserves immediate investigation, and stands aside. Only the close associates of the suspect will fight back if the Player-heroes press the matter. (For example, if the players accuse one of the Dwarves, then all the Dwarves will band together to protect their relative. If they accuse Eoin, the lad is on his own.)

THE COLD SHADE

This creature might be an undead spirit, or it could be the malign expression of Gorlanc's will – or perhaps both? Maybe the sorcerer called a wraith out of some ancient tomb in the north, and now uses it like a mask to project his mind across the leagues.

Whatever the Cold Shade's nature, its purpose is to defend the Ring that Gorlanc craves. The Player-heroes encounter the Shade if:

- Berelas or Hirlinon are attacked at night.
- Berelas feels threatened by day and summons the Shade.
- Berelas calls the Shade to hunt for spies and eavesdroppers.

The Cold Shade appears as swiftly as the wind blows if the Ring-bearer is threatened by night. During the day, the Shade prefers to hide from the light of the sun and easily goes astray, so it takes longer to arrive and must be consciously summoned by Berelas or Hirlinon by

speaking Gorlanc's name coupled with an invocation in the Black Speech of Mordor.

The Cold Shade resembles a cloud of icy mist, as though someone had exhaled heavily on a cold night. When the moonlight catches it at certain angles, a face and the suggestion of a Man-like form can be seen in the swirling tendrils of mist.



The Shade brings a bitter chill with it, as if it somehow carries darkest midwinter wherever it goes. Ideally, run *Part Four – Strangers in the Woods* during or just after a Cold Shade attack.

If Berelas is the subject of the attack then she defends herself while the Shade fights. If Hirlinon is the target, he'll let the spirit fight on his behalf, only risking his neck if it seems like the heroes will capture Berelas or the Ring.

If the heroes engage in battle against all three, they may find themselves outmatched. It may be time for an unlikely stroke of good fortune — see *Strangers in the Woods*, overleaf. Hirlinon will use the Elves' arrival to disappear along with Berelas.

THE COLD SHADE

Medium Undead

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Armour Class 13

Hit Points 65 (10d8+20)

Speed 0 ft, fly 50 ft (hover)

Damage Resistances Acid, fire, lightning, thunder; non-magical bludgeoning, piercing and slashing

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Grappled, Paralysed, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained

Senses blindsight 30 ft, passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Fear of Fire. The Cold Shade is repulsed by the heat of fire. If a torch or other flame comes within 10 feet of it, it suffers Disadvantage on its attack rolls.

Ghost-form. The Cold Shade is insubstantial and cannot be easily hurt by normal means. See the damage and condition resistances and immunities above.

Incorporeal Movement. The Cold Shade can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Thing of Terror (1/day, at night only). The Cold Shade can use its bonus action to bring a cold chill to the heart of any hero. Any companion within 60 feet must make a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw or be Frightened of the ghost. At the end of the creature's turn it may repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success.

Actions

Icy Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6+3) necrotic damage and the target must make a **DC 13 Constitution** saving throw or become Paralysed by the cold. A target can repeat the save at the end of its turn to end the effect.

WILD BEASTS

This is an optional scene that can be inserted instead of, or some night after, meeting the Elves (see overleaf).

The presence of the Ring of Seven Jewels does not pass unnoticed to the eyes of the servants of the Enemy. Normally, wolves stay far away from Bree, but tonight the curse laid upon the treasure stolen from the Elves draws them in. The wolf pack is a large one, led by a white beast

that must have come down from the frozen wastes of the far North.

The whole caravan is in grave danger. More importantly, if any Player-heroes are sneaking about this night, they're at risk of being discovered.

Hiding from the Wolves

Staying hidden from the Wolves requires a group **DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth)** check. If near the Chetwood, the best thing to do is climb a tree; otherwise, the characters must hide amid the underbrush and hope the wolves pass by.

Battling the Wolves

There is one Wild Wolf (page 111 of the *Loremaster's Guide*) for every companion, plus more attacking the caravan, plus the White Wolf of the North (page 48).

The Caravan and the Wolves

If the wolves make it past the Company, then Edoric efficiently rallies his defences. Eoin, Edoric and all the Dwarves except Vogar form a defensive line, hewing at the wolves or trying to drive them away with fire. Mirabar, Hirlindon, Berelas and Vogar hide behind this line, trying to keep the pack animals calm. At one point, a wolf leaps past the defensive line and lands in the middle of the caravan, snarling and biting. There's a sudden shriek, and a cloud of mist (the Cold Shade) flashes past. The Wolf

falls over, stone dead, but the ponies are spooked and try to scatter. By the time the remaining wolves are driven away and the pack animals gathered back together, no one recalls the strange blast of icy air that shot through the camp (and Hirlinon is careful to plant a dagger in the wolf's flank to explain the creature's death).

- PART FOUR - STRANGERS IN THE WOODS

In this part of the adventure, the Player-heroes meet a Wandering Company of the Elves in the Chetwood near Bree. There are two ways to introduce this scene. The most dramatic and thematic way is to have the Elves show up to drive away the fell presence of the Cold Shade. The High Elves have great spiritual power, and a company of them blazes in the wraith-world like a forest fire or the rising sun. The Cold Shade hisses and melts away like mist before the dawn. *"What was that?"* asks the leader of the Elves. *"It fled before our presence, and the name of Elbereth. Were you foolish enough to call up some evil spirit?"*

If you can't engineer such a dramatic entrance, then the Elves might encounter the Company as they spy on the trade caravan. The Elves, being wood-wise and stealthy, are amused by their attempts at eavesdropping.





The Elves might even play tricks on the Company, like dropping apples on their heads or whispering in their ears as they lie hidden. Once they tire of such mockery, the Elves reveal themselves and greet the companions.

The leader of the Elves is Cenedrilriel.

3

AN AUDIENCE WITH THE ELVES

Run this scene as an extended audience. Once the Elves tire of talking with the Company, they vanish. If the companions have managed to impress the Elves, they leave gifts for the Company to discover in the morning.

Motivations and Expectations

As Cenedrilriel and most of her companions are departing into the Uttermost West, their goals are enigmatic at best to Mortal minds. But they still take delight in the joy of simple folk (add a +2 modifier if there are any Hobbits in the Company) and heed those who have chosen to guard Eriador against the enemy (apply a +1 modifier if there are any Dúnedain or High Elves among the heroes).

Introduction

Cenedrilriel introduces herself and her fellow High Elves, explaining that she and most of her company are travelling West, towards the Havens, and intend to depart Middle-earth. Some of their number, though, are Elves of the Grey Havens, who came to Rivendell to guide them across Eriador.

The companions can either attempt the standard **DC 15 Intelligence (Traditions)** check or make a **Performance** or musical instrument check against the same DC with Advantage if they choose to greet the Elves with song. Any other skills automatically fail.

Assuming the Company do not fail this first hurdle, Cenedrilriel leads them a little deeper into the Chetwood, to a clearing where there are a number of white cloths laden with food spread out on the ground. Lamps hanging from the trees burn brightly but don't seem to illuminate the glade.

The characters have the strange impression that the light is coming from the stars overhead, as if the stars burn brighter here. The companions are invited to join the feast.

Interaction

Possible topics of conversation are given below; the Elves stop talking to the companions in favour of singing and merriment when the conversation bores them.

- **The Death of the Ranger:** *"We knew Mallor, although he rarely joined in our merriment. His heart was true, and it grieves us to hear that he has died. It would be a worthy deed to bring justice to his murderers – but Mallor would have been the first to remind you that justice is a fleeting shadow, and there is more woe and weeping in Middle-earth than there are triumphs. Long have we contended against the Enemy, and all too often in vain. We feast tonight, then, because we are here and it is summer in the Chetwood, and for no more glorious reason. Perhaps your quest will be successful, and if it is, we shall rejoice. But Mallor is still dead. Remember, mortality is the gift of Men; his passing may be part of a greater design, one not intended by the murderer."*
- **Helping find the Killer:** *"This is your task, not ours. We are travelling, travelling West and West again, and shall not tarry here. Look for us again when you need us, not when you desire an easier road."*
- **The Caravan:** *"There is a treasure there, a power that is familiar to some in my company. We knew it came out of Eregion some time ago. But it is a trap, a snare that would hold us here, tying us to a past we gave up long ago. I can speak no more of it, save this: malice takes many forms, and some are better hidden than others."*
- **The Cold Shade:** *"I have bent my thought upon the creature, and it shall not trouble you again this night. It dwells far away, but came when it was called. There was a living will behind it, friend, as shadowed a soul as can be imagined."*

The Final Audience Check

As the conversation winds down, make an final **Traditions** check as normal to see what the wandering High Elves think of the Company:

Failure. The feast ends abruptly; the Elf-lights suddenly snuff out and the Player-heroes fall instantly asleep. The

next day, the Company will have to hurry to catch up with the caravan.

Success by 0-2. The next morning, the companions find the left-over food from the feast all wrapped up and waiting for them; this meal either reduces Exhaustion by one level or removes a point of temporary Shadow (companion's choice).

Success by 3-5. The Company sleeps soundly under the watchful eyes of the Elves and are able to benefit from a long rest. Additionally, one of the companions has a prophetic dream, giving a clue about some member of the caravan, or about Gorlanc.

Success by 6+. As above, but Cenedrilie stays up all night talking with the companion with the highest **Wisdom** (use **Intelligence** as a tie-breaker), and reveals that someone in the caravan is carrying a lesser Ring of Power, and that Cenedrilie suspects that the Cold Shade is somehow guarding or watching over this ring.

- PART FIVE - NOT TO STRIKE WITHOUT NEED

A day out from Bree, the caravan comes upon a small by-road leading to Combe. A young girl named Daisy flags the caravan down as they pass, and begs for Hirlinon's help. Her mother Violet is sick, she says, and she begs the healer to come quick to help her. She lives in a cottage not far down the side road.

A debate ensues. Mirabar (and, hence, Edoric) wants to continue on to Bree immediately. Hirlinon tries to sell the girl a cure-all, but Berelas insists that they should go to the cottage and examine the girl's mother in person (Berelas is a better healer than Hirlinon, but maintains the fiction that he's the brilliant apothecary and she's just an assistant).

The Dwarves don't care, until it becomes clear that Berelas and Hirlinon are going to the cottage, whereupon Narvi and Narvig volunteer to 'escort' the healer (to ensure they don't let her gold ring out of their sight). Vig objects at that, as he can't mind Vogar on his own.

In the end (assuming the companions don't intervene), the agreed plan is that Berelas, Hirlinon, Eoin and Narvi will take the side road to Combe, while the rest of the caravan waits for them at the fork in the road.

A Caravan Divided

The split in the caravan offers an excellent opportunity for the Company to spy on or question Loremaster characters. It's especially easy to question Eoin, as he's off his guard now that the caravan is back in the familiar lands around Bree-hill.

THE COTTAGE

Violet Rushlight lives with her two daughters in a cottage on the road to Combe; they farm chickens and cows, and weave cloth. Ever-industrious are the Rushlights. The cottage is a large one, built by the late Mr Rushlight (dead four years ago; if the players played through *Old Bones and Skin*, then they likely saved his burial mound from being despoiled by the Old Troll), and there's a handsome window facing out to the south. The companions can easily spy on events inside the house through this window. Now, Violet Rushlight has come down with a fever, and her younger daughter Rose is also growing ill as she tends to her mother.

Healing the Rushlights

If the companions get involved, then anyone with proficient in Medicine (or having an appropriate trait, like Leechcraft) recognises that Violet and Rose are dying and are unlikely to recover without aid.

The intercession of someone with great healing powers is needed (a Master Healer, a Woodman with *Herbal Remedies*, an Elf of Rivendell with *Skill of the Eldar*, or a suitable trait plus a **DC 20 Wisdom (Medicine)** check).

If a player character can heal the Rushlights, then Berelas may be spared using the Ring of Seven Jewels.

Using the Ring

Berelas comes to the same conclusion about the prospects of the patients: their illness is beyond any ordinary skill to heal. While Hirlinon tries to sell potions and herbal remedies to the dying women, Berelas examines her patients – and then realises that the only way to save them is to use the power of the Ring of Seven Jewels.

She orders the fires lit and stoked, even though it is the height of summer. She has blankets placed on the bed, because she knows that putting on the Ring will attract the attention of Gorlanc's Cold Shade. She then orders everyone, including young Daisy, to return to the caravan. Eoin, however, circles back to keep an eye on his "beloved" Berelas. The Player-heroes may also be in a position to observe what happens next.



Berelas puts on the Ring of Seven Jewels and uses its power to heal the sick. As soon as she puts on the Ring, she draws Gorlanc's attention; the Cold Shade flies as fast as the wind, howling down from the empty lands north of the Shire to investigate. It rushes into the cottage through the chimney, freezing the fire in the hearth in an instant. It whirls around Berelas, looking for signs of danger, then races out of the cottage again and circles around.

If the companions are nearby, it attacks them; otherwise, it spots Eoin and decides that he must be a threat – why else would Berelas have touched the Ring? The Shade does not kill him, but terrifies him half to death; he's left shivering and whimpering in the undergrowth.

Inside the cottage, Berelas attends to Daisy and Violet; their sickness is gone, but they are half-frozen to death from the presence of the Cold Shade. Berelas hastily relights the fire and warms them with blankets until they revive. Both mutter and moan about "seven shining jewels". (If a hero overhears that, a successful **DC 17 Intelligence (History or Lore)** check might dig up a memory of the Ring of Seven Jewels.)

TO BREE!

Mirabar refuses to squander any more time on this affair; he orders Edoric to move on to Bree as soon as Berelas and Narvi are back. "*The moon-calf can catch up,*" he says, "*we're only a short walk to the Cross-Roads.*" They leave without Eoin, assuming that he's wandered off to greet friends or family now that he's back in Bree-land. Once the caravan arrives in Bree, run *Knives in Bree* or *The Matter Before the Reeve* depending on the current situation.

Forcing a Confrontation

If the Player-heroes ambush Berelas or confront the caravan at this point (perhaps prompted by the unnatural events witnessed at the cottage), then Edoric insists that since they are less than a day's travel from Bree, they all continue onto the town and let the Reeve there resolve any accusations of witchcraft or murder.

- PART SIX - KNIVES IN BREE

This part of the adventure assumes that the Player-heroes have not accused Berelas of Mallor's murder.

The caravan stops at *The Prancing Pony* for the night. In fact, declares Mirabar, they're going to stay here for two or three nights. Even the old man's greed and impatience cannot overcome the ache in his frail old bones, and he needs to rest. If Eoin's still missing, then *The Pony's* potboys help unload the caravan instead.

Hirlinon and Berelas share a room; Edoric and Mirabar a second; and the Dwarves take a third.

WHISPERS IN THE COMMONS

Hirlinon meets with other agents of Gorlanc in the common-room of the inn. If you played through *Old Bones and Skin*, and by some astounding confluence of unlikely circumstances, the Dwarf Grór **isn't** lying dead somewhere in the Midgewater Marshes, then use

him. Otherwise, it's an ill-favoured vagabond who the companions vaguely recall sitting near Grór when they last saw the Dwarf.

If the Company eavesdrops on this conversation, they hear Hirlinon promising his companion that he and Berelas will be on their way to "the fort" first thing in the morning, and that while there have been a few problems on the Road, the treasure is still kept secret and safe.

Afterwards, Narvi comes over and tells Hirlinon that behind the bar is a bottle of the same Dwarven spirits that they shared on the road. Hirlinon proceeds to get quite drunk.

THE DWARVES

The arrival of Dwarven traders attracts the attention of the worthies of Bree; before the Dwarves can even have a sip of beer, they're busy selling ironmongery and arranging to repair farmtools and other metalwork the next day.

Hirlinon, seeing an opportunity, starts hawking his curealls, declaiming loudly that he rescued the Rushlights of Combe from the brink of death with his herbal remedies.

In the common-room, Mirabar demands that Vig hand over all the money the Dwarves earned that afternoon as part-payment of the family debt. Grudgingly, Vig gives him what he earned; the Dwarves nurse a single half-pint each and eat nothing but bread and cheese, because that is all they can afford.

That humiliation is the last the Dwarves can bear. That night, Narvi and Narvig plan to break into Berelas' room and steal her jewelled ring. They intend to sell it to their kin in the Blue Mountains, and use the money to pay Mirabar back in full.

If the Player-Heroes...

...have rooms at the inn, then they overhear the Dwarves moving around at night, or spot them leaving the common-room.

...are watching Berelas or the Dwarves, then they can spot the Dwarves sneaking into Berelas' room.

...are near *The Pony*, then they can get involved in the altercation when Berelas and Hirlinon try to flee.

... are nowhere nearby, then their involvement in the final scenes of this adventure may hang on Virtues like *Foresight of their Kindred*, *Night-Goer* or *Woeful Foresight* to give the players forewarning of what is about to happen.

UPROAR IN BREE

Should the players not intercede, this is what happens: Narvi and Narvig sneak into Berelas' room. Hirlinon snores in one bed, drunk on Dwarven spirits. Berelas lies sleeping in the other. It's a warm summer's night. On the nightstand by the bed, the Ring of Seven Jewels gleams invitingly in the moonlight. Narvig guards the door while Narvi creeps closer and closer. He's got a dagger in one hand, just in case, but surely he's light fingered enough to grab the Ring without anyone noticing...

As soon as the Dwarf touches the Ring, it calls the Cold Shade. The Shade comes shrieking over the walls and rooftops of the town, bursting in the open window seconds after it left Gorlanc's fort. It strikes Narvi down where he stands, and wakes Hirlinon and Berelas.

The two attempt to flee while Narvig grapples with the Shade. His shouts of alarm wake his uncle Vogar, who comes crashing down the hallway, a berserker in a nightshirt, waving his mattock and shouting about Orcs and Dragons.

If the companions fail to intercede, then the adventure ends here. Hirlinon and Berelas scramble down over the stable roof, steal horses, and ride out of Bree like the wind. The gatekeeper of the North-gate is struck down by Hirlinon, and the pair vanish up the Greenway, never to be seen again in Bree. Everyone in the inn is distracted by Vogar's deranged rampage.

However, if the Player-heroes are present, they have a chance to capture Berelas alive. Unlike Hirlinon, the healer's loyalty to Gorlanc is wavering; she won't kill unless her own life is threatened.

If the players haven't followed the clues, then a last-minute **DC 13 Wisdom (Insight)** check might avert catastrophe. The companions still need to drive the Cold



Berelas' Confession

If questioned, Berelas describes how she fell under the influence of Gorlanc and obtained the Ring of Seven Jewels. She met the sorcerer after she escaped the dungeons of Dol Guldur; he began by questioning her about her experiences in the Necromancer's fortress, and over time she became convinced that he was as wise as Radagast, but much braver and more active – the Enemy's enemy.

While travelling in the South, Gorlanc learned of a ring made by Elven-smiths of old. He searched for it for years, but other business drew him back to the North. He told Berelas that "cruel men and outlaws" drove him out of Eriador long ago, but that he intended to return to continue his investigations into the power of the fallen North-kingdom. In his absence, she was to continue the search for the Ring, and he taught her a spell that she should lay upon the artefact when she found it, "to free it from any curse", Gorlanc said.

After more years of searching, Berelas found the Ring of Seven Jewels, buried in a plot of earth that had once been a mass grave, and she cast the spell Gorlanc taught her as instructed. The action seemed to unburden her mind and allowed her to think clearly for the first time in many years – and she began to have doubts about her allegiance to Gorlanc. However, the spell also bound Gorlanc's Cold Shade to the Ring, cursing it.

Some time later, Berelas joined Hirlinon – another one of Gorlanc's men, and they came north to bring the Ring to the sorcerer. At the *Forsaken Inn*, someone eavesdropped on one of their conversations. Alarmed, Berelas caused the Cold Shade to intervene, and the evil spirit killed the Ranger Carry-Mack.

Sympathetic roleplaying or, failing that, a well-timed DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check can convince Berelas that she was wrong to follow Gorlanc, and can atone by ensuring the sorcerer doesn't get his hands on the Ring of Seven Jewels, which might further increase his power. Reminding her of her role in Eoin's disappearance (assuming the boy was left behind in *Part Five – Not to Strike Without Need*) will be especially effective.

Further questions can elicit the following:

- Gorlanc has a fortress somewhere north of the Bree-land, and a fair number of followers. She doesn't know where the fort is, or how many men serve him. Hirlinon was to guide her to Gorlanc.
- If anyone else touches the Ring, the Cold Shade will attack. Only she can bear the Ring safely.
- She fears that she cannot stay in Bree, even if arrested. Sooner or later, Gorlanc will come for his prize. He may attack Bree, or send some plague or curse down upon the town if he does not get his Ring.

Shade away in order to capture Berelas; she'll advise them to use torches and fire to dismay the Shade.

The Wardens of Bree finally arrive only after Berelas is in custody, and insist that she must be brought before the Reeve for judgement.

Hirlinon won't be taken alive; he'll either fight to the death or escape. He counts as Poisoned due to his intoxicated state. Against a group of combat-focused heroes, perhaps the Dwarven spirits have worn off already. If captured, he will swallow the contents of a small vial he keeps secreted on himself and dies within a minute.

– PART SEVEN – BEFORE THE REEVE

There are two possible ways to enter this scene. One possibility is that the players accused some member of Edoric's caravan on the Road, and Edoric agreed to put the case before the Reeve. The other option is that the companions captured Berelas after the events of *Part Six – Knives in the Dark*, and have now brought her before the Reeve for justice.

The Reeve is Bree's mayor, magistrate and lawmaker; in days when there was a king, he was the king's man and

ruled in his name. Now, the Reeve is an elected position, advised by councillors from the four villages of Bree-land.

The current Reeve is old Twyc Greenleaf, a man in his seventy-fifth year with hair like snow and skin like cracked parchment. He spends most of his time in office napping in the Reeve's House, while his young factotum Cole does all the day-to-day work. The one thing that gets Twyc's blood flowing is sitting in judgement over an actual criminal; he holds the peace of Bree to be a sacred thing, and punishes lawbreakers harshly. Most lawbreaking in Bree involves sheep-stealing or arguments over hedgerows; it's been many, many years since Twyc sat in judgement over a potential murderer.

And even longer since there was a hanging at the Crossroads.

THE JAIL AT BREE

Prisoners in the custody of the Reeve are held in a locked room in the Reeve's house, and guarded by one of Bree's Wardens (probably Tad Tillfield – see page 21). As Bree is under the protection of the Rangers, these Wardens usually have little to do other than deal with stray animals; actually guarding a prisoner is a novelty for them.

If Berelas is the prisoner, and she has not already admitted her guilt to the companions, run Berelas' Confession now before the trial. If someone has been held to blame, she will be plagued by guilt and similarly confide in private to one or more heroes.

THE ACCUSED

If it is Berelas in the dock, then the adventure is almost over. The Reeve's decision will determine what options are open to her in *Part Eight – The Choices of Mistress Berelas*.

If it is some other suspect in the dock, like one of the Dwarves, then the events of *Part Six – Knives in Bree* may yet come to pass. In that case, don't run a second court case – go straight on to *Part Eight*. If the players insist on bringing a second case before the Reeve, summarise the events based on the outcome of the first trial. (For example, if the companions failed the Final Audience Check in the first trial, they're not going to get a good outcome in the second.)

MEETING THE REEVE

The court case with the Reeve is resolved as an Audience. Instead of a fixed set of outcomes, there are two possible situations – the adventurers may be arguing for guilt (*"Berelas murdered Mallor, known in Bree as Tarry-Mack! We want justice for our comrade!"*) or clemency (*"Yes, technically Berelas killed Tarry-Mack, but really it was the ghost in her ring. And if you keep her imprisoned in Bree, then Gorlanc's going to attack the town."*) If the Company fails the final check, then they get a bad outcome. If they argue their case convincingly, the Reeve's decision goes their way.



Motivation and Expectations

Twyc is old, cranky and close-minded. But he is not so fond of justice that he wishes to punish the innocent. The following expectations are in place:

- *"This is Bree, and Bree is nothing if not sensible."* Any talk of sorcery or the supernatural is simply dismissed as *"Elf-nonsense"* and earns a -2 modifier.



- *“Ah, you I know — why, when your father was but a lad I took him fishing along the Brandywine...”* If the speaker for the Company is a Hobbit of the Shire or from Bree they gain a +1 modifier.

Introduction

The companions must introduce themselves with a **DC 15 Intelligence (Traditions)** check but they must also introduce the accused. If they stand for the prosecution, this is a **DC 10 Charisma (Intimidation)** check or if they are for the defence they must make a **DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion)** check instead. If either check fails, this counts as a failed introduction.

Interaction

The companions must either prove the suspect is guilty, or plead for clemency. The following skills might be used. The first time a skill check succeeds the Company gains a +1 modifier to the Final Audience Check. The second time they gain a +2 modifier and the third success signals it is time to make the Final Audience Check. Conversely the first failure gains a -1 modifier, the second failure a -2 modifier and on the third failure it is time to make the Final Audience Check.

The Difficulty for the first check is **DC 11** and it increases by 2 for each additional roll. Each skill can be used once — it represents the hero's best effort at convincing Twyc in that matter.

The available skills:

- **History**, to quote obscure aspects of Bree-law.
- **Insight**, to intuit that Twyc Greenleaf despises law-breakers and has no patience for talk of the supernatural but fears for Bree's safety.
- **Intimidation**, to demand the truth out of the accused or a witness. Here, in the Reeve's House with life and death on the line, a success will reveal the secrets of the target (see pages 93-99). It might also be used on the judge directly, in order to convince Twyc that Gorlanc and his sorcerous minions are a threat beyond him and the Wardens of Bree.
- **Investigation**, to present physical evidence of the crime or insist that without such that the accused must be granted mercy.
- **Medicine**, to relate the suspicious nature of Tarry-Mack's death. The companions must be careful here,

as going too far in their suppositions will trigger Twyc's negative expectations of the unnatural.

- **Persuasion**, to make speeches before the judge.
- **Riddle**, to ask clever questions of the suspect.
- **Traditions**, to remind the judge about Bree's reputation as a place of both law and order but also of fair justice.

Outcome

Once all arguments are concluded, make a Final Audience check and compare the result to the table below, using whichever column matches the Company's argument.

RESULT	ARGUING FOR CONVICTION	ARGUING FOR CLEMENCY
Failure	Prisoner is Freed Unconditionally	Condemned to Death
Success by 0-1	“Not Within My Purview”	Imprisoned Indefinitely
Success by 2-3	Custody of the Rangers	Custody of the Rangers
Success by 4-5	Imprisoned Indefinitely	“Not Within My Purview”
Success by 6+	Condemned to Death	Prisoner is Freed Unconditionally

Prisoner is Freed Unconditionally: Twyc dismisses the case. Either the adventurers have utterly failed to prove that the prisoner was involved in the death of the Ranger, or they have convinced Twyc that he should free Berelas immediately.

“Not within my purview”: Twyc washes his hands of the case. Maybe the prisoner is guilty, maybe not. It's not a matter for Bree; what happens on the Road can stay on the Road. The prisoner is freed but banished from Bree; any companions other than Bree-folk or Shire-hobbits are likewise encouraged to leave.

Custody of the Rangers: Tarry-Mack was one of them Rangers; let them decide what's to be done. Twyc decides to keep the prisoner in custody until a Ranger shows up in Bree. If there's a Ranger in the Company, so much the

better; Twyc releases the prisoner into the Ranger's care, and suggests that both prisoner and Ranger leave Bree immediately. Otherwise, the Company must go fetch one of the Dúndan if they want to get Berelas out of Bree's jail.

Imprisoned Indefinitely: Twyc needs to consult with the councillors of Bree, and consult the books of law and precedent, and think about the matter deeply. There'll be no decision before year's end at the earliest. Until then, the prisoner will remain in Bree's jail.

Condemned to Death: Not a living soul in Bree can remember the last time the ancient punishment was used; no doubt there were crimes committed in the dark days of the Fell Winter and other bad times, but they are long past. Still, there is a place near the Cross-roads where a gallows might be built, and cold steel enough in the mind of Twyc Greenleaf to order such a punishment.

Using the Ring of Seven Jewels

All of Twyc's doubts about the supernatural can be dismissed in an instant if the heroes compel Berelas to call the Cold Shade. Of course, summoning up a murderous undead horror in the middle of Bree is the fastest way to get forever banished from the town short of burning down *The Prancing Pony*. Still, if the Company's chief concern is the security of the North and not their standing in town, it is an option.

- PART EIGHT - THE CHOICES OF MISTRESS BERELAS

By this point in the adventure, Berelas should be in the custody of either the Reeve of Bree, or the Company. She has repented of her allegiance to Gorlanc, but needs to decide what to do with the Ring.

She looks to the companions for guidance: what should she do? If the Player-heroes are low-ranking adventurers from Bree, then all they can do is advise, for the final fate of the Ring of Seven Jewels is out of their hands. However,

if the companions are more experienced adventurers or Dúnedain, then they can aid Berelas in finding her destiny.

What is to be done with the Ring of Seven Jewels?

- **Surrender the Ring of Seven Jewels:** Gorlanc's spell ensures that if anyone other than Berelas touches the Ring of Seven Jewels, the Cold Shade will be summoned. Only Berelas' death can break this spell, and allow someone else to safely bear the Ring. If the Company feels that her murder of Tarry-Mack warrants death, she will yield to their judgement.
- **Hide the Ring:** If the Ring goes untouched, the Cold Shade won't be able to find it. It took Gorlanc many, many years to find the Ring of Seven Jewels in the first place; if the Company helps Berelas hide it with sufficient cunning, he might not be able to find it again before he dies of old age. (For double irony, the adventurers could hide the treasure in the Black Barrow – see page 82.)
- **Destroy the Ring of Seven Jewels:** The Great Rings of Power are hard to destroy, save by Dragon-fire or the fires of the Cracks of Doom, but lesser rings can be unmade. A hero or ally capable of *Elven-smithing* is best (they have Advantage on the following checks) but even a mortal can make an effort. The smith must make a series of **DC 20 Strength (smith's tools)** checks, accruing a total of 7 successes. As soon as the Ring is cast into the flames of the forge, the Cold Shade appears to defend the treasure. The other heroes must protect their companion as the smith destroys the masterwork.
- **Flee into the Wild:** Berelas came from Mirkwood originally; if she runs, and never stops running, then maybe she can stay ahead of Gorlanc's minions long enough to stop the sorcerer from ever getting the Ring he so desires.
- **Flee to Rivendell:** If the companions know about the hidden valley of Imladris, they could bring Berelas there and seek the protection of Master Elrond.
- **Go to the Elves:** If the companions are on good terms with Cenedrilie and her Elves, they could seek them



out and ask them for help. She herself can serve as smith if need be, and her escort certainly knows the way to Rivendell.

Dwarves, or Edoric and Eoin, join the fray if the Company are ambushed on the Road or attacked in Bree.

2

THE REST OF THE CARAVAN

Depending on the players' actions, the rest of the caravan may be dead, bitterly hateful of one another, or even redeemed and won over as allies. Here's how the Company might solve problems with the other Loremaster characters:

Edoric

Protecting the caravan members, especially Eoin and Mirabar, is all it takes to convince Edoric that the Company are worthy allies.

Eoin

Saving Eoin's life in *Part Five – Not to Strike Without Need* wins him over; doubly so if he can help Berelas escape her fate.

The Dwarves

Not killing Narvi and Narvig is a good start. The characters will be Dwarf-friends for life if they help Vig pay off his debt to Mirabar.

GORLANC'S LAST STROKE

Gorlanc will not leave his Ring slip through his fingers so easily. He sends a few of his best and swiftest warriors to reclaim the Ring now that Berelas has betrayed him. Hirlinon joins this troupe of killers if he is still alive.

The band travels to Bree (or to the last place where Gorlanc knows Berelas was) with orders to abduct Berelas and recover the Ring of Seven Jewels. If Berelas is on the Road with the Player-heroes, they'll try to take her by force. If she's in the Reeve's jail in Bree, then they'll break into the jail and grab her in the dead of night – they are not above slitting the throat of a Warden to do so.

There is one of Gorlanc's warriors (Brigands, see page 50) for every companion (plus Hirlinon, if he's still alive). At night, the Cold Shade (if it was not destroyed) joins the battle once a Brigand falls.

If it's dramatically fitting (and the combat is going poorly for the heroes), have Vig, Vogar and the two younger

- EPILOGUE - THE ASSAULT ON GORLANC'S FORT

Gorlanc believes he can claim all the secrets and treasures of Eriador. He thinks that the Dúnedain are nothing but outlaws and wanderers, stumbling blindly through the ruins of their former kingdoms. He believes that the North is empty of any who might stand against him, that the forces of Arnor and Angmar smashed one another to pieces and left no power of consequence in the North, just as Gondor and Mordor seem, in his eyes, bound to destroy one another.

He reckons without the strength of Rivendell.

If the companions are simple Hobbits of the Shire or Bree-folk, then they need take no part in the war on Gorlanc. In the coming year, they hear rumours. Wild tales of flashing lights in the sky to the north, of a host of Elves passing through the woods, armed for war.

Gandalf is seen in the Shire and Bree several times that autumn, hastening back and forth as if on some important errand. The Bounders are especially busy that winter, as some especially nasty and aggressive Men trespass over the borders as they flee south.

Dúnedain, High Elves of Rivendell, or other heroes of great renown, may play a part of the assault on Gorlanc's fort. Loremasters may expand this into a full adventure if desired, but with Glorfindel, Elladan and Elrohir in the vanguard of the attacking forces, Gorlanc's motley crew of thieves and tomb robbers never have any hope of victory, especially without the Ring of Seven Jewels.

If Gorlanc has the Ring of Seven Jewels then the battle is far more costly for the forces of Rivendell: The sorcerer is still defeated, but Glorfindel and his followers must lay siege to the fort instead of overwhelming it. (For the ultimate fate of Gorlanc the sorcerer, see *Holed Up in Staddle*, overleaf.)

- holed up - in staddle

for heroes of level 4 or 5

- **When:** This quest could be set at in the later summer or autumn of any year, and spans a number of months. It is designed to be run after the events of *Strange Men, Strange Roads*.
- **Where:** The adventure begins on the Greenway before heading into the Chetwood, and ending in and around Bree itself.
- **What:** The Company must hunt down the last fugitives of a band of evil Men that once troubled the North.
- **Why:** Gorlanc has been defeated, but these last criminals must be defeated for the safety of Bree.
- **Who:** Gorlanc, the broken sorcerer, and the Undertrees of Staddle.
- **Themes:** The pettiness of evil, and the need to look below the surface in order to see the movements of the Shadow.

ADVENTURING PHASE

This adventure is divided into five parts, and begins at the Greenway and ends in Bree.

PART ONE - DOWN RODE THE HUNTRESS

The Player-heroes meet a messenger from the Rangers, and help her chase some fugitives from Gorlanc's band who have escaped down the Greenway.

PART TWO - INTO THE CHETWOOD

The chase brings the companions into the dangerous eastern reaches of Chetwood, where they have several unusual encounters (but there's no sign of the sorcerer himself).

PART THREE - THINGS OUT OF PLACE

Back in Bree, the companions look for signs that something is amiss, and discover strange behaviour in one Hobbit family out of Staddle.

PART FOUR - WATCHING & WAITING

The Company learns more about the threat in Staddle, and make contact with the Undertree family.

PART FIVE - DEATH UNDER THE APPLE TREES

Armed with this knowledge, the Company can sneak into the Undertree Smial and battle Gorlanc's followers.

EPILOGUE - A HARVEST MOON

The Company consider their adventures and may decide to explore beyond the familiar fields they know.



Gorlanc's Dead!

If the Player-heroes take part in the siege of Gorlanc's fort (see previous page), then it's possible they kill Gorlanc before the sorcerer can escape. (Players are usually utterly determined to hunt down and kill their foes, after all – had a player been present at the Battle of Fornost, when the Witch-king fled and Glorfindel prophesied "not by the hand of Man shall he fall", then doubtless that player would have immediately tried drawing back a bowstring with his teeth, arguing that an arrow loosed in that fashion wouldn't count as "the hand of Man").

If necessary, you can replace Gorlanc with another villain in this adventure – Eirlinon, perhaps, or some hitherto hidden apprentice of the sorcerer, or even some other evil-doer unrelated to Gorlanc. The villain needs a little knowledge of herb-lore and vile sorcery to put the main plot into motion.

- PART ONE - DOWN RODE THE HUNTRESS

Haleth, a Dúnadan the Company has met before if they played through the previous adventures presented in this supplement, is riding down the Greenway from the North, carrying important tidings.

If the companions reside in Bree, then they might meet her at the crossroads outside the town; alternatively, if she already knows and trusts the Company, she might show up on their doorstep in the dead of night.

2

A WEARY TRAVELLER

When the Player-heroes meet Haleth, they immediately see that she is exhausted and bloodied from long strife. Instead of her customary travelling gear, she wears a helm and war-mail beneath her green cloak. She carries a spear as well as her sword.

"I have ridden far in haste" she says, "And I have need of your assistance. Gather what weapons ye have, and come quick! There are foes to hunt!"

While the companions gather their gear, Haleth explains what's going on. The forces of the Rangers and Rivendell destroyed the servants of the upstart sorcerer Gorlanc in battle near Fornost, and laid waste to his fort. However, the sorcerer and a few of his bodyguards escaped through a secret passage, and vanished into the wilderness. The chieftain of the Dúnedain sent Rangers out in all directions to find Gorlanc and put an end to his evil, and Haleth was among those sent south down the Greenway.

She found the trail of Gorlanc's followers on the road a few miles north of Bree. She wants the Company to help her catch the sorcerer and his servants.

She believes that Gorlanc is likely trying to flee back to his old haunts beyond the Greyflood, in the land of Enedwaith, and that the best hope is to catch him before he gets too far south. She's sent word to the other Rangers, telling them that their quarry is fleeing south on the Greenway, but they may not arrive in time. So, she's turned to the companions. In the unlikely event that your players refuse to aid Haleth, then skip to *Part Three – Things out of Place* and continue the adventure from there.

Heroes Like in the Old Stories

If the companions are Dúnedain, High Elves of Rivendell or other experienced heroes, they might have participated in the siege of Gorlanc's fort and you can skip this scene altogether – instead of Haleth asking the Player-heroes to aid in her finding Gorlanc, make the chase for Gorlanc part of the aftermath of the siege (see page 111).

THE CHASE

Haleth leads the Company north of the crossroads along the Greenway. Midway through the morning, the Look-out spots something strange dead ahead – a roiling, seething black shape on the path. Haleth spurs her horse and charges towards the shape, which explodes into thousands of birds.

4



The companions can now see it for what it was – a huge flock of crows had landed on the road. *“One of the sorcerer’s tricks”,* warns Haleth, *“see, he has muddled the trail!”*

It’s true – the ground ahead has been torn up by thousands of peck-marks and claw tracks, disguising any trail that Gorlanc might have left. Haleth orders the Company to stop and wait while she surveys the surrounding ground. The Hunter may attempt a **DC 20 Wisdom (Survival)** check to read the signs as well.

Haleth guesses that Gorlanc’s company has divided. Most have turned off the Greenway and gone east, while a smaller number have continued south, on down the road. She thinks that Gorlanc’s gone south-west towards the open fields between Bree-hill and the Brandywine (*“He would want to get as far away from the Rangers as he can. Maybe there was a disagreement over pay – the sorcerer’s stolen gold was all lost with his fortress, and the greater part of his men followed him out of greed and fear, not loyalty.”*) She declares that she’ll pursue Gorlanc herself, and sends the player characters to follow the other group east.

If the Player-hero succeeded at the **Survival** check by 5 or more, then they get an uneasy feeling about Haleth’s decision; the sorcerer’s bootprints on the Greenway going south are very slightly different, a little lighter, compared to those the Company saw earlier – maybe Gorlanc is trying to trick his pursuers, and he’s actually fled eastward.

1/2

Persuading Haleth Otherwise

And that’s exactly what happened. The Player-heroes can convince Haleth to accompany them on the chase east with a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** check, if the Loremaster doesn’t mind them being accompanied by a skilled and extremely talented Ranger. If Haleth does accompany the Player-heroes, let them take the lead in any encounters – you might like to skip the combat scenes in Part Two, or stiffen the opponents with additional abilities or greater numbers, as Haleth’s swift blade will aid the Company greatly there.

DUE EAST

Having parted with Haleth, the Company pursue their quarries east, heading towards the woodland on the back of Bree-hill. It appears Gorlanc’s minions are making

straight for the Chetwood. The characters arrive on the edge of the wood at twilight. In the encroaching darkness, the Chetwood feels like an ancient, lonely place, beyond the comforts of the Bree-land. The trees mutter and creak as their branches wave in the wind; shafts and shards of moonlight flicker on the path, as if the wood is trying to lure the adventurers inwards...

- PART TWO - INTO THE CHETWOOD

There are many crossing paths leading across the Chetwood, but the tracks the Company start to follow the next morning soon take a north-east course, leading them towards the older patches of the forest. In the first hours of the day they wander between green hillocks and dells, in a wood that by daylight appears leafy and full of colour, the true image of quiet and peacefulness...

THE BLUEBELL WOOD

It is almost dark when the companions find themselves walking across a strange, eerie part of the wood that’s full of bluebells. It is an ancient oakwood, and the violet-blue flowers cover its whole surface, like a carpet, their heavy heads gently swaying to the breeze. A faint honey smell is carried by the wind, bringing back memories of spring (regardless of the season the adventure is being run).

A few hundred yards into the Bluebell Wood, the companions spot a small clearing opening by the path. Three squat, dwarfish figures sit round a small fire. They are busy cooking some tasty-looking meat on long spits of wood, and a fine toothsome smell hits the companions as they approach.

The creatures are small as children and wear wide-brimmed soft hats, a deep red in colour. They do indeed look like Hobbits, but of a scruffier, wilder sort than most, including even those few loners that wander the more remote parts of the Bree-land. As the companions get nearer, one of them silently stands up, then bows in a welcoming gesture.

AN AUDIENCE

Should the heroes want to interact with the three denizens of the Bluebell Wood, the Loremaster should let them

introduce themselves as usual. The trio remains silent for the whole length of the encounter, but otherwise act in a very friendly manner, often repeating the companions' gestures in what may seem an exceedingly obsequious manner. If a hero tries to divine information from them, a **DC 13 Intelligence (Riddle)** check interprets their attempts at communicating at meaning that the creatures live in the Bluebell Wood, and that they have never travelled beyond the boundaries of the Far Chetwood. Could they be some sort of Hobbitish Woodwoses?

When all introductions are made away with, the creatures eventually sit down to continue their meal, inviting the companions to join them. Any urgent query from the heroes (like if the creatures have witnessed anyone else passing through the wood) is waved off, to be answered after the meal.

If the adventurers partake in the meal, they are of course in for a surprise: the meat is not venison or from any animal, but poisonous mushrooms disguised by the magic of the Bluebell Wood.

The Oakmen

Heroes eating from the Oakmen's food are automatically Poisoned (no saving throw allowed). As soon as any one of the heroes is Poisoned, or if they all refuse to take part in the meal, the Oakmen make their move: All around

the small fire more dwarfish creatures emerge from the shadows of the oak trees; in the darkness their hats look eerily like little blood-red toadstool caps. They have lost any Hobbitish features, a pale light gleams from their unnatural eyes and their faces now look more like counterfeits of human expressions.

The little creatures move in deathly silence. There are two Oakmen for each companion (see page 47). If at least half of them are defeated, the remaining Oakmen flee back into the forest, with strange hissing sounds that might be taken as laughing and giggling.

Gorlanc's Man

If one or more suspicious heroes scout the nearby area, a **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation)** check discovers the corpse of one of Gorlanc's men, lying hidden among the bluebells a few yards away from the Oakmen's fire. The side of his face is covered in blood that gushed from a head-wound, and scattered about him are the half-eaten remains of large mushrooms. Should the adventurers discover the body before the Oakmen spring their trap, the creatures abandon all caution and attack.



THE TROUBLE WITH BADGERS

"Tom was telling an absurd story about badgers and their queer ways..."

On the second day of their journey into the Chetwood, the companions encounter one of the various nameless streams that cross the forest. The land has been falling steadily for some time now, as the wood gets nearer to the Midgewater Marshes, and the water of the creek splashes noisily among mossy rocks. By sunset, the breeze whispering among the trees begins to be tainted by the reek of the marshes to the east.

As the heroes scramble down a treacherous slope, at its bottom they see a pond of dark water, fed by the swift-running stream. A large patch of terrain close to the nearest shore looks like it was freshly turned. Dimly, the companions can hear voices crying and shouting, as if from deep underground. Gorlanc's men have been trapped in the tunnels of the Badger-folk of the Midgewater Marshes!

As the heroes draw closer, they spot several pieces of travelling equipment and war gear lying about. They can also make out voices coming from below the earth, and can even speak to Gorlanc's followers if they kneel by the pond and shout at the top of their lungs.

Through this unlikely conversation, the Player-heroes may discern the following:

- Gorlanc's men are all stuck under the earth in dark tunnels, so dark they can't even see each other, or anything else.
- Gorlanc isn't here – their Master led them into the Chetwood, but when they lit up a fire by the pool and the ground opened, swallowing them up, he must have managed somehow to escape.
- They feel that there are creatures burrowing around them. They hear them sniffing and raking the earth with claws. One man even claims to have seen their blinking eyes.
- They don't know where Gorlanc went. One of them insists that the Master will return to free them, another that the Master has betrayed them, and the third is terrified that Gorlanc is there in under the ground

with them, only he's keeping perfectly silent and still, and listening to them betray him. The Master delights in cruel tricks like that, he says.

The followers of the sorcerer beg the Player-heroes to do something and free them. If the Player-heroes try to dig the buried men up, the soft ground above them starts to collapse, and the three Brigands in the tunnels scream and beg them to stop.

Rings of Smoke

As the companions are busy thinking about what to do next, they suddenly smell the fragrance of pipe-weed that has been recently lit, and looking about them they discover that a grey-cloaked figure has apparently been among them for a while now, sitting on a tree stump.

"Well met, my friends." says the stranger, puffing at his pipe. "It seems that Butterbur knew what he was saying, for once!"

The stranger is Gandalf the Grey, of course. When the companions recover from the surprise, the Wizard explains that he was in Bree looking for news about the escape of Gorlanc, when Barnabas Butterbur, the innkeeper of *The Prancing Pony*, informed him about the companions and their mission. (Should the heroes wonder about how Butterbur could know about their task, Gandalf says that there isn't much happening in the Bree-land that Barnabas doesn't know about – he is much wiser than he looks). Unfortunately for the companions, Gandalf is quick to confirm that Gorlanc is indeed not trapped underground with his men:

"I found tracks before I came here, leading out from where the wood ends and the marshes begin. It seems he fled east from here, reached the borders of the marshes, and then turned south. You need to take it from here and find out where he went. I can deal with the badgers and the sorcerer's clueless minions here, so you won't need to tarry any longer."

THE FATE OF THE PRISONERS

Before they leave to continue their hunting, Gandalf asks the companions what should be done with Gorlanc's men. He intends to frighten the prisoners out of their wits and then set them free with an oath not to trouble anyone ever again, but the Wizard wants to test the heroes first...

If the companions urge Gandalf to kill or torture the prisoners, or suggest that he free them so the Player-heroes can fight them, then the Wizard is visibly displeased, and without saying what he will actually do with them, he lets the companions go with a frown.

If the Player-heroes propose anything similar to Gandalf's own decision, for example suggesting to bring them into the custody of the Reeve of Bree, or anyway adopt a different solution that doesn't involve plans to make the prisoners suffer or die, the Wizard is impressed by the companions' capability for pity and considers them worthy of a reward:

"I owe a big debt to the Badger-folk for the little trick they played on Gorlanc, blessed be their grimy paws! The sorcerer was fleeing with such haste that he left something behind. I found this at the borders of the marshes."

From a fold in his cloak Gandalf draws a silver sickle. After looking at it for one long moment as if lost in thought, he hands it to the companions. *"This is not of the sorcerer's own making – he must have dug it out of some barrow in the North. Maybe you'll find it useful. Now, don't delay any further!"* (Gorlanc has used the magical properties of this silver sickle as a dowsing rod, to locate a particular root he knew to grow along the borders of the Midgewater Marshes – see *The Coming Harvest*, page 121).

The Gardener's Sickle

The Gardener's Sickle has a silver blade that never dulls. It was made by the Elves, long ago, and seems to quiver in the hand when one is hunting for the wild herbs of Eriador. It is considered a Wondrous Artefact with a Blessing to Nature.



BACK TO BREE

Following the directions given by Gandalf, it doesn't take much time for the companions to find the tracks of the sorcerer, and they are soon back on Gorlanc's trail as he heads southwest. The next morning, they pursue him back across the Bree-land, but to no avail. They find a few more tracks, enough to convince them that Gorlanc passed this way, but the sorcerer himself cannot be found.

Once back in Bree, the Company may search further, but there is no sign of the sorcerer on the Road or in the Wild. It is as though the sorcerer vanished.

The next part of this adventure takes place weeks or even months later. The Loremaster may choose to skip over the time, give the Company a short Fellowship phase, or even run another adventure in the gap before continuing to *Part Three – Things out of Place*.

- PART THREE - THINGS OUT OF PLACE

And what became of Gorlanc, after he fled the Chetwood? The sorcerer had lost much of his power and influence, but none of his cruelty and cunning. He knew that if he fled along the Road, or cross country, the pursuing Rangers would surely find him. He had to hide – and where better to hide than a Hobbit-hole?

Just outside the village of Staddle, there is a large old Hobbit-hole, so big and so ancient that polite Hobbits call it a Smial. Since time immemorial (or at least since the time of the kings), it has been home to the Undertree family, named because a huge old apple tree grows atop the Smial, and the hole's many tunnels and cellars wriggle and squirm around its labyrinthine roots. The Undertrees own large apple orchards in the farmland around Staddle.

In the dead of night, knife in hand, Gorlanc came to the great round front door of the Undertree Smial. When the Hobbit-porter opened the door, Gorlanc pressed the knife to the poor boy's throat and demanded he show him to the master's rooms.

Now, the master of the Undertree Smial and head of the family is old Alphonsus Undertree, and the apple of his

eye is his granddaughter Blossom. Gorlanc crept into Blossom's rooms and poisoned the young Hobbit-maiden with a secret venom, and told Alphonsus that the girl would most certainly die unless Gorlanc regularly treated her with an antidote. If the Undertrees told anyone about their new house guest, or tried to murder Gorlanc while he slept, then Blossom would perish.

So, for the weeks or months between the night Haleth the Ranger called for the Company's help and the start of this part of the adventure, Gorlanc's been squatting in the Undertree Smial, an unwanted house guest who's long outstayed his welcome. Worse, he has invited several of his other surviving followers to join him in his new hiding-place.

The sorcerer's current plan is to graft a malicious root he dug out from the ground on the borders of the Midgewater Marshes to the great apple tree growing atop the Smial. This way he hopes to corrupt the spirit of the apple tree, placing it under his command.

All he needs to do is wait for the harvest, for the darkening of the year...

2

GOSSIP IN BREE

The companions might get hints of the presence of Gorlanc in any of the following ways. Intersperse these rumours with red herrings and regular gossip about trivial matters:

- The Undertrees of Staddle didn't invite anyone to their midsummer feast! They usually invite half the village. This is quite an unforgivable snub.
- Matt Woolfoot, one of the serving boys at the Undertree Smial, has developed a crippling fear of both Big Folk and trees – and, presumably, big trees. The Woolfoots have sent him to stay with cousins in the Shire until his nerves are fixed.
- This year's apple-harvest looks to be a bumper one, make no mistake. Why, all you have to do is look at the old apple tree atop Undertree Smial, with its overloaded branches and big blossoms.
- Hear about the ghost of Staddle? According to Big Bob the Swine-Herd (that's Big Bob who's a Hobbit, not Small Bob who's a Man, mind you), he saw a pale

figure sneaking 'round the trees, and then it vanished into thin air! And he says that one of his piglets went missing too, round the same time. Do ghosts eat piglets?

ALBERT UNDERTREE

Young Albert Undertree is Blossom's brother, the prince of the Undertree family. In the past, he was a dashing young gentle-hobbit, always with a kind word for everyone he met. Of late, though, he's been strangely quiet and distant.

It's enough of a personality change to be noticeable, even to the most unobservant Player-hero.



2

Watching Albert

The companions spot Albert buying some unusual supplies in the market at Bree; lots of food (not unexpected for a Hobbit family), but also cutlery and plates for Big Folk, odd roots and herbs not usually used in cooking, and strange copper pots custom-made by a passing Dwarven tinker.

With a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** check, the companions spot an ill-favoured Man keeping an eye on Albert. This stranger isn't a resident in Bree; he came up the East Road, and goes back that way when Albert goes back to Staddle. If the observer succeeds by 5 or more, the characters spot Albert giving a purse of coin to the stranger.

Following Albert

If the characters follow Albert, they discover that he rides out of Staddle every few weeks. On these strange errands, he goes down the East Road to the edge of the Chetwood,

or even as far as the *Forsaken Inn*, and there he meets with suspicious Men who remind the companions of Gorlanc's followers. Sometimes, he delivers a note to them, written in a cipher neither he nor they can read (Gorlanc's men bring the note to one of his surviving lieutenants; these messages keep Gorlanc apprised of how many of his followers escaped the battle at the fort).

Some of these Men make arrangements to meet Albert in the Chetwood; from there, Albert guides them to a secret entrance into the Smial.

4

CONFRONTING ALBERT

Albert is terrified to speak to the Player-heroes about anything other than the most trivial matters. He'll pass the time-of-day with them, or exchange a word or two about the apple harvest, but as soon as the heroes ask him any questions about his family or his business, he immediately claims that he has an urgent appointment, producing a pocket-watch from his waistcoat and exclaiming that he's late, he's late to underline his haste. A **DC 10 Intelligence (Riddle)** or **Wisdom (Insight)** check confirms that he's lying, and that he's terrified of being seen talking to anyone.

If the Player-heroes force Albert to talk to them, run it as an audience. Unlike a regular audience, where the Player-heroes are petitioning a lord or householder for a favour like assistance or lodgings for the night, here the challenge is quelling Albert's fears for long enough to get some answers out of him.

Motivation and Expectations

Albert desperately wants to save his sister and free his family from Gorlanc's evil. But he sees no way forward. The following expectations are in play:

- *"Don't you know I'm being watched? Gorlanc has eyes everywhere!"* — Apply a **-2** modifier if the heroes confront Albert in public or are otherwise indiscreet in their conversation with him.
- *"You're all in terrible danger!"* — If the heroes acknowledge the danger the Undertrees are in and indicate they're willing to place themselves into jeopardy as well this earns a **+1** modifier. But if they instead make light of Albert's predicament or brag about their own abilities, they receive a **-1** modifier instead.

- *"Blossom's sick and she needs her medicine."* — A hero that can convince Albert that they can heal his sister (perhaps by showing him the Gardner's Sickle) earns a **+2** modifier. If they don't have an answer for what happens to Blossom after Gorlanc is defeated, apply a **-2** modifier.

Introduction

The normal approach using Traditions will not work here. The Company spokesperson can either make a heartfelt plea to Albert to trust the characters — a **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** check; or grab the Hobbit by his waistcoat and tell him to shut up and listen — a **DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation)** check.

Interaction

Heroes that succeed at the Introduction check can get two pieces of information out of Albert before triggering his fears; heroes that fail only get one. If the Company presses him, they can get one additional tidbit out of him, but they then must make the Final Audience check to see if there's anything else he will tell them.

- There's a horrible man named Gorlanc hiding in the cellars of the Undertree Smial. He's poisoned Blossom, and says that if the Hobbits don't obey him, she'll die!
- Gorlanc's not alone. He sent Albert out to fetch several other Men, and they're almost as horrible. Now they're all hiding in the cellars of Undertree Smial, drinking Alphonsus' good cider and plotting some terrible villainy.
- Gorlanc put a purple crystal under Blossom's tongue, and now she gets horribly sick if she doesn't get a dose of antidote every few days. Only Gorlanc knows how to make the antidote.
- The Men are hiding from the Rangers; if any more Rangers show up in Staddle, he'll kill everyone in the Smial.
- They're doing something else in the cellar, something that smells foul and terrible. Albert has bad dreams every night he sleeps at home now. They've defiled his family halls.

Final Audience Check

By now, Albert is near panic, frantically twisting his handkerchief into knots and sweating visibly. The result of the final check determines his next action:

Failure. He either runs off or starts screaming for help and telling anyone who'll listen that the Company is trying to rob him.

Success by 0-2. He doesn't know what to do. He's scared that if he acts against Gorlanc and the other Men, he'll doom his sister and the rest of his family. He doesn't volunteer any more information but he doesn't oppose the Company trying to save him.

Success by 3-5. If the characters question Albert about the layout of the Smial, he will reveal the existence of the Side Door and the Secret Cellar (see page 123). Otherwise, he provides an additional piece of information from the list above.

Success by 6+. As the entry above, and Albert gives the Company a key to the Front Door.

- PART FOUR - WATCHING & WAITING

Foolhardy players may wish to rush straight off to the Undertree Smial to drive Gorlanc out with sword and fire, but, as Albert warned, an open attack on the sorcerer's refuge will doubtless end in disaster. Gorlanc has hostages, and even if the Company could somehow safely free them all, there's still the matter of Blossom Undertree and the

sorcerer's poison. The Player-heroes must come up with a plan before assaulting the Smial.

Alternatively, if the Company never confront Albert, and instead take a stealthier approach, this part of the adventure covers information gathering and reconnaissance.

WATCHING THE SMIAL

Keeping the Undertree Smial under observation (either by hiding in the surrounding woods – a **DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth)** check, or by asking for gossip and rumours – a **DC 13 Intelligence (Riddle)** check) yields the following information – one fact for a success, two tidbits if the hero succeeds by 5 or more.

Hostages

If the players don't already know, they can work out that the Undertrees are being held hostage by watching them. On the rare occasions they're allowed out of their Hobbit-hole, the Undertrees cast furtive, nervous glances back towards their home, as if there's some darkness lurking there. Gossips in Staddle talk about how the Undertrees have always been snooty, but lately they've been especially standoffish and private, and how some of them – like young Blossom – seem to have locked themselves away in the Smial altogether.

Watchers

There are three (or possibly four) sets of sentries keeping watch at the Undertree Smial. Sneaking into the Smial

Alerting Gorlanc

From this point onwards, once the Player-heroes know that the Undertree Hobbits are being held hostage, they must be especially cautious. You should warn them that if they draw too much attention to themselves, they'll alert Gorlanc and things will end very badly.

From now on, if a player fails any roll with a natural 1, you should pick one of the following consequences:

- **More Guards!** Gorlanc recruits some Thugs for hire from the *Forsaken Inn*, or sends word to other

surviving followers to come join him in his new hiding place. Add either 1d4+2 Thugs or 1d3 Brigands to Gorlanc's retinue.

- **Murder Most Foul:** Gorlanc kills one of the Hobbits to keep the rest in check. This death weighs heavily on the souls of the Player-heroes; each of them gains 1 Shadow point.

If you're using the optional *Eye of Mordor* rules, these consequences can take the place of raising the Hunt score (unless you wish to very seriously challenge your players).

in *Part Six* will require bypassing some or all of these watchful eyes.

- **The Hobbits:** The Undertree Hobbits have been told that if they see anything out of the ordinary, they are to report it to Gorlanc. The Undertrees rarely leave their Smial, but that doesn't mean they sit around underground all the time. There's much too much to do: cows to be milked, orchards to be tended, lawns to be mowed, elevenses to be had out on the patio. It's a miserable, sullen elevenses, of course – they have to have tea because Gorlanc told them not to do anything that might arouse suspicion, so the poor Undertrees dutifully march out and choke back cakes that taste of tears and bitterness so no one suspects they're under the control of an evil sorcerer.

If the companions have made contact with Albert, or convince the other Undertrees that they can save the day – a **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** check – the Hobbits won't alert Gorlanc when the time comes. See *Rallying the Undertrees*, on page 124.

- **The Dogs:** The Undertrees keep several large but harmless wolfhounds to see off scrumping Hobbit-children. They'll start barking if anyone comes close to the Smial. A successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Animal Handling)** check, possibly assisted by an appropriate trait like Beast-lore, can calm the hounds long enough to get past them.
- **The Men:** Gorlanc keeps his followers well out of sight, but he has them guard the Back Door of the Smial by night (see page 123), and they sometimes stretch their legs by wandering around the orchard. Sneaking around the orchard at night requires a **DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth)** check; getting through the Back Door without being seen would take a Ring of Invisibility – or a clever distraction.
- **The Tree:** If the Company waits too long, then Gorlanc is able to put his evil plan into action and awaken an evil spirit in the apple tree, turning every root and branch into his spies. See *The Coming Harvest*, below.

atop the Smial and taint it. Based on some old lore that the sorcerer studied, this bog root is the living remnant of a gigantic tree that once grew in the area and that was cursed during the wars against Angmar. In the autumn, when the apple tree bears fruit, all the fruit will be tainted, and all those who eat of them will be vulnerable to Gorlanc's trickery.

Gorlanc has already grafted the root to the tree, and slowly, the tree is waking up, like the wicked, rotten trees of the Old Forest. It's most active at night. A successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Lore or Nature)** check, perhaps assisted by the Gardener trait, spots there's something strange about the tree.

- The apples this year are especially large, but taste oddly bitter if eaten.
- The big tree atop the Smial rustles oddly, and not always when the wind blows.
- The roots on the surface seem to twist and writhe as if in pain.

The tree can alert Gorlanc to the presence of intruders if they cross any of its roots (say, to get through the Back Door or down the chimney). The only way to avoid this is to temporarily lull the tree – a **DC 13 Charisma (Performance)** or musical instrument check. The results of this roll determine how long the tree is put to sleep:

- Success means the tree sleeps for a roughly a minute
- Success by 5 or more means the tree sleeps for roughly two minutes
- Success with a natural 20 means the tree sleeps for half an hour

THE ANTIDOTE

In order to be sure of curing Blossom, the Player-heroes need to learn about the poison Gorlanc used on her. They could find this out by:

- Questioning Albert, and discovering that Gorlanc used a 'purple crystal'.
- Sneaking into Blossom's room and examining her – requiring a **DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine)** check, perhaps aided by the Leechcraft trait.
- Examining the herbs and tinctures that Albert purchases in the market – a **DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine)** check and mayhap assisted by the Herb-lore trait.

THE COMING HARVEST

Gorlanc brought a malicious root out of the Midgewater Marshes, to graft it on to the old apple tree that grows

- If Berelas (page 98) is still in Bree (perhaps in its jail...), she can easily identify the poison and suggest an antidote.

Armed with this knowledge, a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine)** check allows the characters to guess that Gorlanc is using an ancient poison called *saewesgal* – a concoction of several lesser poisons blended so that any one cure is insufficient. A Scholar can use a Healing Die to keep Blossom alive another day, but only the actual antidote can remove all traces of the poison from her system. The cure is a much stronger, more concentrated brew of the weak tea that Gorlanc has been using to treat the symptoms. It requires a **DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine)** check and several hours uninterrupted to prepare.

THE UNDERTREE SMIAL

The Undertrees have a magnificent Hobbit hole. They're one of the wealthier families in Bree-land, so while their home cannot match say, Brandy Hall or the Great Smials of Tookborough, it compares favourably to Bag End, and is much, much larger. Tunnels run and spiral in many different directions, often following the root network of the tree above.

There are storerooms and presses for making cider, cellars and pantries that hold enough food to feed an army, attics crammed with mathoms, a library of several dozen books, apartments for five generations of Undertree Hobbits, guest rooms, breakfasting rooms, dining rooms, kitchens, night kitchens (which contain only those supplies needed for a midnight snack) and nurseries.

The main living area is a two-level affair, running along the south and west side of the hill. Two rows of windows look out over the lawns and the tree-lined driveway that runs down to the road to Staddle.

Behind the Smial are the extensive apple-orchards of the Undertrees.

Upper Level

- **1. Blossom's Room:** The unfortunate Hobbit girl is now too ill to leave her bed, thanks to Gorlanc's poison. If the Player-heroes slay Gorlanc without first finding a way to save Blossom, then their victory will be blighted by her death. Any character proficient in

Medicine can tell instantly that Blossom has been poisoned and is on the brink of death.

- **2. Alphonsus' Rooms:** Old Alphonsus, the head of the family, has had his will broken by Gorlanc. He won't dare resist the sorcerer unless the Player-heroes rally him with a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** check. See page 124 for more on turning the Undertrees against Gorlanc.
- **3. Sun Room:** This large room boasts three huge and expensive windows that let in the summer sunshine. It's a lovely spot to snooze on a warm afternoon, or for aged Hobbit grandparents to sit and watch the children playing on the lawn below. For the Player-heroes, it's important for another reason: these are the only windows in the whole Hobbit-hole big enough for a Man or Dwarf to climb through.
- **4. Main Chimney:** Even the cosiest Hobbit-hole needs a warming fire in winter-time, but this Smial is built under and around and even in a huge apple-tree, so a normal chimney was not an option. A particularly brilliant and eccentric ancestor of the family designed this special crooked chimney. All the fireplaces in the Smial feed into one central shaft, and then that shaft runs off at a steep angle to a little folly in the orchard, made to resemble a tumble-down ruined tower, modelled (it is said) on the watchtower at Weathertop. Especially brave (and small) characters could try clambering down the chimney, as long as it is a warm night and no fires are burning below. The chimney-flue network gives access to most of the rooms in the hole via their fireplaces, but it is a perilous climb, requiring a successful **DC 13 Strength (Athletics)** or **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** to avoid getting stuck and a **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation)** check to emerge in the right room.

Ground Level

- **5. Front Door:** The great Front Door of Undertree Smial is rarely opened, except for weddings, funerals and birthday parties. Everyone goes in and out the Side Door. It is ceremonially opened once a year when the first bottles of cider are brought out and distributed to the villagers of Staddle. Albert Undertree has a key to the Front Door, and can give it to the Player-heroes if they want to attempt an unexpected frontal assault.

- **6. Side Door:** The main door into the Hobbit-hole. It's always watched (by one of the Hobbits by day, and by at least two of Gorlanc's Brigands by night).
- **7. Great Hall:** This long tunnel runs all through the ground floor of the Smial. Its ceilings are tall enough for a Man to stand upright.
- **8. Spiralling Tunnel:** Instead of a stair, this steep spiral runs up and down between the levels of the hole. It's a tight fit for a big Man to wriggle through.
- **9. Dumb Waiter:** Another innovation, this hand-cranked lift is used to deliver food down and bring cider up. It goes all the way down to the secret cellar. The shaft could be used by stealthy heroes as a way to creep into the lower levels of the Smial.
- **13. Converted Laboratory:** Here's where Gorlanc brews up his potions and poisons. The air is foul-smelling; the brews are caustic and vile. However, all the ingredients for a cure for the poison can be found amid Gorlanc's jars and bottles.
- **14. Common-room:** This large cellar room has been adopted by Gorlanc's followers as their main living quarters. Half of his Gorlanc's followers are Brigands, half are simple Thugs; there's at least one follower for each companion. Any of the Men not on guard remain here, drinking and gambling.
- **15. Root Chamber:** Originally, this chamber contained a well, but the tree-roots found the water and choked the well-shaft. So, now it's a curiosity, a room full of tree-roots. Gorlanc took advantage of it to graft the root dug from the Midgewater Marshes to the apple tree.

Lower Level

- **10. Back Door:** The Back Door of the Smial is hard to find if you're not looking for it – it's in the middle of the orchard, hidden by rows of apple trees. It's usually guarded by one of Gorlanc's men, although he's under instructions to hide if any Hobbits wander by.
- **11. Cellars & Storerooms**
- **12. Cider Press**

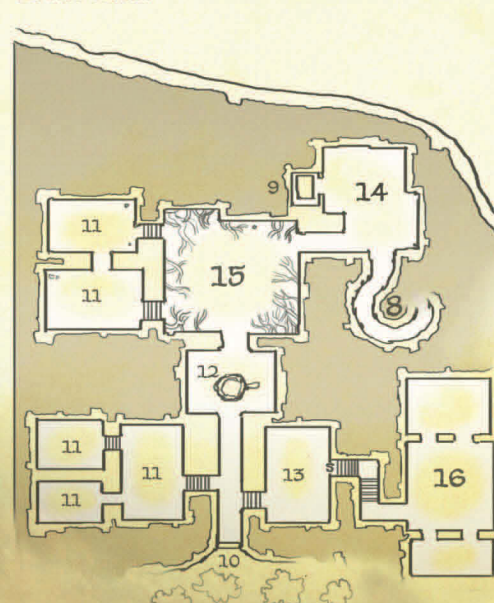
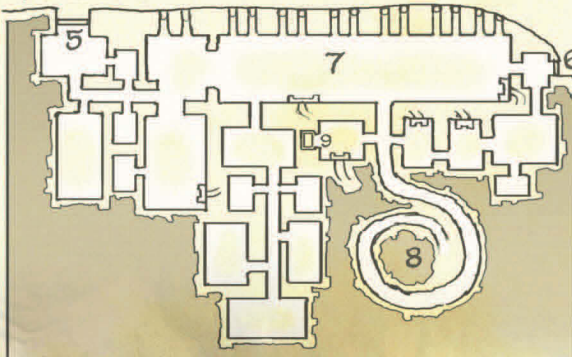
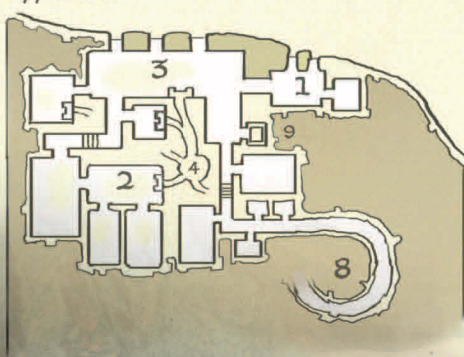
Secret Cellar

- **16. Gorlanc's Room:** This older cellar was prone to flooding, and so the Undertrees sealed it off. Finding the entrance requires a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** check. Gorlanc's taken over this cellar and outfitted it with furnishings and luxuries looted from the upper levels. If Alphonsus is consulted, his recollections of the old room provide Advantage on checks to find the secret door.

Upper level

Ground level

Lower Level



The Undertree Smial

- | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1: Blossom's Room | 7: Great Hall | 13: Converted Laboratory |
| 2: Alphonsus' Room | 8: Spiralling Tunnel | 14: Common-room |
| 3: Sun Room | 9: Dumb Waiter | 15: Root Chamber |
| 4: Main Chimney | 10: Back Door | 16: Gorlanc's Room |
| 5: Front Door | 11: Cellars & Storerooms | |
| 6: Side Door | 12: Cider Press | |

- PART FIVE - DEATH UNDER THE APPLE TREES

When the Player-heroes finally move against Gorlanc, they must do so with stealth, speed or both. There are too many innocents at risk for them to treat the attack on the Undertree Smial as a siege or dungeon expedition, for Gorlanc will use the hostages against them.

To successfully storm the Hobbit-hole, the characters need to overcome the following challenges:

Getting In

How are the heroes getting into the Smial? The obvious entrances are watched; other ways in are more covert, but harder to use.

If suspicions are aroused — say, an intruder is spotted, or something seems to be amiss — then one or two of Gorlanc's men climb out of the common-room on the lower level of the Smial and head towards the disturbance. If the alarm is raised, half of them investigate while the others guard Gorlanc.

4 Rallying the Undertrees

The Undertree family hate and fear Gorlanc, but believe they're helpless to resist him. If they act, he will murder them. Even if by some miracle they were able to catch him by surprise, or poison his food, then Blossom Undertree would still die without the antidote the sorcerer provides for her. That means that the Hobbits living in the Smial will raise the alarm (but not fight) if they see the Player-heroes.

The Company can get the Undertrees on their side by:

- Curing Blossom first, then going after Gorlanc.
- Convincing Alphonsus Undertree to trust them — a **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** check.
- Persuading Albert Undertree to secretly inform his family to be ready for rescue (see page 119).

If the Company gets the Hobbits on their side, then the Undertrees will reveal the layout and hiding places of the Smial. The other great advantage of rallying the Undertrees is that it stops Gorlanc's men from using them as hostages, as the Undertrees can hide; the only thing

more stealthy than a Hobbit hiding in the Wild is a Hobbit hiding in a mansion full of nooks and crannies where he played hide-and-seek for years as a child.

Battling Gorlanc's Men

In the cramped, narrow corridors of the Hobbit-hole, there's little room to swing a sword or thrust a spear. Most spaces count as sized for Small creatures and a Medium creature squeezing into the hallway or room has Disadvantage on attack rolls and Dexterity saving throws. Only the Sun Room (3), Great Hall (7) and Common Room (14) are big enough for this penalty to not apply. The men fight to the death as long as Gorlanc is alive. If the sorcerer is defeated, they become **Craven**.



Evil Roots

The added danger of the Smial is the tree itself. Thanks to Gorlanc's evil doings, the tree is half-awake and angry. As described on page 121, the companions can try to lull the tree to sleep, but it wakes up again when the alarm is raised. The tree-roots cannot attack the Player-heroes directly, but they can still grab and trip intruders.

If any of the companions roll a natural 1 on an ability check within the Smial, a hidden root either raises the alarm or reaches out and grabs them. The Grappled companion can escape with a **DC 10 Strength (Athletics)** check.

THE FINAL CONFRONTATION

When the Player-heroes finally confront Gorlanc — the sorcerer, the tomb robber, the self-proclaimed lord of the North and enemy of the Enemy — they find a foul-smelling old man with a ragged beard. He is wearing a mixture of

tattered robes and fine but Hobbit-sized clothing (a comfy Hobbit dressing-gown makes a tight jacket for a Man). He rants and raves at the Company, claiming that he holds life and death in his hands. Touch him, he warns, and the Hobbit-girl will perish. Oppose him, and all of Bree-land will turn on the Company. Attack him, and he will destroy them with his sorcery.

Gorlanc is lying; he has nothing left but his bluster, scant magic, and a poisoned knife.

GORLANC

Medium Human (Evil Men)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	19 (+4)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)

Armour Class 12

Hit Points 65 (10d8+20)

Speed 25 ft

Skills Intimidation +5, Persuasion +5

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Westron, Sindarin, Black Speech

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Actions

Bewilder (1/day). Gorlanc still has enough magic to temporarily distract his foes. He can use his action to make all creatures within 30 feet make a **DC 13 Wisdom** saving throw or become Stunned for 1d4+1 rounds. While the effect lasts, he may use his bonus action to make a melee attack against a Stunned creature.

Enervation (Recharge 5-6). Gorlanc points at a creature and snarls in a dark tongue some sorcerous malediction. The target must make a **DC 13 Strength** saving throw. On a failure, the target is weakened: it may only move or take an action (not both) on its turn and has Disadvantage on attack rolls. And the end of its turn, the target may repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success.

Poisoned Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage and the target must make a **DC 13 Constitution** saving throw or become Poisoned until they take a long rest.



- EPILOGUE - A HARVEST MOON

It is perhaps fitting that a man who dedicated his mortal span to looting the buried treasures of a past age should perish deep underground. Gorlanc's defeat ends this adventure. Any surviving followers of his surrender or flee.

The characters have proven themselves more than able to tackle mortal perils – but there are worse foes out there, in the wilder world. When they meet Gandalf again, the Grey Wanderer might show any worthy hero the secret paths to Rivendell...

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