

PHANTOM

of the Northern Marches

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



DANIEL B. HORNE
©86



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

Phantom of the Northern Marches tm

1.0 GUIDELINES	2
1.1 HANDLING PLAY	2
1.2 ADAPTING THE MODULE TO YOUR GAME	2
1.21 Converting Hits and Bonuses	2
1.22 Conversion Chart.....	2
2.0 PLAYER CHARACTERS	2
3.0 THE PHANTOM OF THE WOODS	4
3.1 THE TALE OF THE PHANTOM OF THE WOODS.....	4
3.2 THE NPC's.....	4
3.21 Witbert the Priest	5
3.22 Hannei the Witch	5
3.23 Odelard the Healer.....	6
3.24 Alfward the Ranger.....	6
3.25 Walvoric, Thegn of Nothva Rhaglaw.....	6
3.26 Theneleag.....	6
3.3 LAYOUTS OF NOTHVA RHAGLAW AND THE DREBIWYD?	7
3.31 Layout of the Town of Nothva Rhaglaw	7
3.32 Layout of Hannei's Retreat in the Drebiwyd	11
3.33 The Woods and the Vales.....	11
3.4 THE TASK.....	12
3.41 Starting the Players.....	12
3.42 Aids	12
3.43 Obstacles	12
3.44 Rewards.....	12
3.5 ENCOUNTERS	12
3.51 Standard Encounters	12
3.52 Hannei's Plays.....	14
4.0 THE RIDDLE OF RIDORTHU	15
4.1 THE TALE OF RIDORTHU	15
4.2 THE NPC's	16
4.21 Witbert and Odelard	16
4.22 Bessandis	16
4.23 Iovin & Alnoth	16
4.24 Dunheuet.....	16
4.25 Sibroc	17
4.26 Ridorthu of Brin Coch	18
4.3 LAYOUT OF RIDORTHU'S LAIR IN THE WITBEAMWYD	18
4.4 THE TASK	21
4.41 Starting the Players.....	21
4.42 Aids	21
4.43 Obstacles	22
4.44 Rewards.....	22
4.5 ENCOUNTERS ON THE TRAIL OF RIDORTHU.....	22
4.51 Standard Encounters	22
4.52 Ridorthu's Riddles.....	22

5.0 GERSE'S-BANE	23
5.1 THE TALE OF AIVNEK AND GELLIR	23
5.2 THE NPC's	24
5.21 Aivnek the Fire Drake.....	24
5.22 Gerse	25
5.3 LAYOUT OF GERSEBROC AND THE VALE OF TATESHALLA.....	26
5.31 Layout of the Village of Gersebroc	26
5.32 Layout after Aivnek's Passing	26
5.33 Layout of Tateshalla Vale.....	28
5.4 THE TASK	30
5.41 Starting the Players.....	30
5.42 Aids	30
5.43 Obstacles	30
5.44 Rewards.....	30
5.5 ENCOUNTERS	30
6.0 THE ENCOUNTER TABLE	31

CREDITS

Author/Designer: Graham Staplehurst

Dedicated to: Mike, Barbara, and Rose

Editors: Peter C. Fenlon, S. Coleman Charlton

Cover Art: Daniel R. Horne

Interior Art: Steven Peregrine

Maps and Layouts: Carolyn Shultz, Terry K. Amthor, Richard H. Britton, Pete Fenlon

Cover Graphics: Rick Britton

Production: Coleman Charlton, John D. Ruemmler, Pete Fenlon, Terry Amthor

Special Contributions: Terry "Spaced Master" Amthor, Deane "Traffic Master" Begiebing, Rick "Did anyone get the number of that Bambi" Britton, Coleman "Phanthom" Charlton, Chris "THE Phantom..." Christensen, Kathleen "The Summer Swede" Connor, Billy "The Graduate" Covert, Bill "The Karate Kid" Downs, Pete "Balloon-hand Yank" Fenlon, Kurt "I think I'll change apartments again" Fischer, Bruce "I didn't need that vent window anyway" Neidlinger, Kurt "How 'bout them Giants" Rasmussen, John "Cajun Animal" Ruemmler, Mike "The Dwarf King" Allen, James "Who needs screens?" Blevins, Swink, Randy "Rando" Hart, Karl Borg and the Herring-lappers

Typesetting: The Design Group, Lynchburg, VA; and Graphic Communications, Charlottesville, VA



1.0 GUIDELINES

The *Middle-earth Ready-to-Run (MERR)* series is designed for Gamemasters (GMs) who want adventures that can be set up in a few minutes and played in a few hours. These adventures require little or no preparation.

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

The third part contains Sections 3.0, 4.0, and 5.0, the adventures. Each adventure stands on its own, although a common theme and setting unite the stories. They can be set anywhere in Middle-earth where the story seems appropriate. Alternatively, the adventure locations can be used with ICE's *Hillmen of the Trollshaws*, adventure module where mention is made of the place names, flora, fauna, geography, and cultures found in the region.

The fourth part of the module (Section 6.0) contains the encounter chart. It is located at the end of the module, permitting easy reference during play.

1.1 HANDLING PLAY

Each adventure is geared for a different difficulty level. The one found in Section 3.0 is challenging for 1st or 2nd level characters, or inexperienced players. Section 4.0's adventure is aimed at 2nd or 3rd level adventurers, while the adventure in Section 5.0 is designed for 4th or 5th level characters.

The adventures are divided into five standard parts: (1) the tale, which describes the setting and covers the background and plot; (2) the NPCs, a person-by-person description of the prominent non-player characters, including their stats; (3) the layout, a level-by-level, room-by-room description of the adventure site, complete with numbered diagrams, floorplans, and illustrations; (4) the task, a discussion of how to start the adventure, along with the aids, clues, obstacles, and rewards awaiting the adventurers; and (5) encounters, which cover typical or probable meetings between the adventurers and the NPCs.

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

Once play ensues, the GM should refer to the Encounter Chart in Section 6.0, at the back of the module. It covers the probability of encounters for every spot in each adventure.

1.2 ADAPTING THE MODULE TO YOUR GAME

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

1.21 CONVERTING HITS AND BONUSES

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

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

1.22 CONVERSION CHART

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

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

2.0 PLAYER CHARACTERS

The following chart provides a sampling of pregenerated player characters of varying profession and levels. Statistics are given for both *MERP* and *Rolemaster*. The GM may wish to assign players a character or allow them to select from the list. Of course, the GM can utilize the unused PCs as non-player characters. After all, the players may design their own characters or employ characters already in use.

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

Codes: See the NPC stats on page 5 for an explanation of the basic codes. The following is a list of other codes and abbreviations which might be ambiguous.

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

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

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

Languages: Languages are abbreviated by using their first three letters (see *MERP*, ST-1, p. 19); exceptions: BS = Black Speech and Bet = Silvan (Bethteur). The rank for each language is given following the abbreviation.

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

NAME	PC1	PC2	PC3	PC4	PC5	PC6	PC7	PC8	PC9	PC10	PC11	PC12	PC13	PC14	PC15	PC16	PC17	PC18
Race:	Lsr.Dúne.	Dwarf	Northman	Northman	Hobbit	Hillman	Northman	Umli	Lsr.Dúne.	Hillman	Northman	Sliv.Elf	Lsr.Dúne.	Northman	Dundlend.	Sinda	Eastlrl.	Dúndan
Ht./Wt:	6'4"/212	4'9"/144	6'0"/160	5'11"/133	3'7"/93	5'10"/163	6'0"/163	4'8"/141	6'2"/190	5'10"/122	5'10"/149	5'5"/102	5'5"/122	5'9"/147	5'9"/170	6'4"/139	5'5"/84	6'4"/186
Hair:	black	red	lt.brown	blond	fair	dk.brown	sandy	red	black	dk.brown	blond	tawny	dk.brown	blond	ginger	fair	dk.brown	white
Eyes:	azure	steely	lt.blue	dp.blue	grey	dk.brown	blue-grey	pale blue	dk.brown	dk.brown	blue	green	hazel	grey-blue	black-gold	turquoise	green	hazel
Profession:	Warrior	Warrior	Warrior	Scout	Scout	Scout	Scout	Ranger	Ranger	Animist	Animist	Animist	Animist	Bard	Bard	Mage	Mage	Mage
Level:	1	3	5	1	3	5	1	3	5	1	3	5	1	3	5	1	3	5
Hits:	47	81	68	31	46	51	31	67	101	22	55	52	37	33	62	21	43	68
AT(DB):	Ch(45)	Ch(35)	Ch(40)	No(30)	SL(25)	RL(40)	Ch(5)	SL(50)	Ch(50)	SL(15)	RL(30)	No(30)	Ch(30)	No(25)	No(10)	No(20)	No(5)	No(0)
Shield:	Y25	Y25	Y25	Y25	N	Y25	N	Y35	spell25	N	Y25	N	Y25	N	N	N	N	N
Power Points:	0	0	0	0	0	10	2	3	10(+2)	1(+2)	6	15(+2)	2(+1)	3(+2)	10	2(+1)	6(+2)	20
Base Sp. OB:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	6	10	1	3	5	2	6	10
STrength:	90	95	100	41	75	46	90	94	98	83	98	51	90	91	80	88	24	90
Agility:	98	88	91	96	90	92	82	96	94	90	76	51	90	100	82	92	83	45
CONstitution:	36	80	81	31	33	50	90	90	90	52	35	76	34	35	75	71	55	44
IntelliGence:	53	23	81	90	76	90	62	41	89	71	55	53	45	82	76	95	96	95
InTuition:	62	91	54	33	91	47	99	75	75	90	91	101	45	71	40	86	84	72
PResence:	31	63	58	87	86	63	50	54	63	65	85	90	97	90	98	70	68	73
APpearance:	23	78	38	95	43	06	81	39	47	19	37	87	59	57	111	58	48	96
NA Mov M:	25	10	20	25	35	20	10	20	5	20	15	35	5	35	20	25	10	10
SL Mov M:	x	x	x	x	25	0	x	15	x	10	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
RL Mov M:	-5	x	x	-10	x	5	x	0	x	x	-10	x	x	5	x	x	x	x
Ch Mov M:	-5	10	20	x	x	5	-10	x	15	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
IHE OB:	48bs	39da	100bs	21ha	3ss	60sc	32da	26da	55da	20da	60bs	10da	46bs	43bs	x	10da	5da	30da
IHC OB:	x	79wh	25ms	x	x	40cl	x	51ma	x	x	x	x	x	x	20ma	x	x	x
2H OB:	28th	39fl	75th	x	x	x	x	39qs	75th	x	x	x	31th	x	x	x	x	20qs
Thrown OB:	34wh	34wh	5da	21sp	63da	50cl	41da	x	x	15da	25cp	30da	11lcb	x	60sp	x	10da	x
Missile OB:	33hcb	x	75cp	46cp	53sb	25sl	17cp	45lb	45lb	30sl	25cp	65lb	11lcb	48cp	15sb	25cp	5lcb	5lcb
Polearm OB:	23sp	x	90sp	11sp	x	20sp	37hb	x	40ml	15sp	30sp	x	26sp	23sp	65sp	x	10sp	20sp
Climb:	26	23	20	21	63	40	13	44	x	16	18	65	x	53	70	31	16	10
Ride:	6	x	35	21	x	10	43	x	60	16	33	70	6	38	10	16	51	35
Swim:	26	x	30	21	x	20	21	x	20	21	3	45	6	3	20	31	16	10
Track:	16	13	35	21	13	40	23	39	70	x	x	x	26	x	35	31	46	40
Ambush:	x	x	x	5	5	20	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Stalk/Hide:	10	5	25	22	51	40	12	26	45	10	25	60	31	33	60	25	x	x
Pick Lock:	x	0	x	17	41	25	x	x	x	x	x	x	21	x	x	x	x	x
Disarm Trap:	x	40	x	7	26	35	x	x	x	x	x	45	x	x	x	x	x	x
Read Rune:	5	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8	20	26	18	x	27	41	55
Use Item:	5	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	20	16	28	65	6	13	x	22	31	40
Dir.Spell:	x	x	x	x	x	45	x	x	5	17	21	50	6	48	60	33	34	65
Perception:	15	35	30	13	49	45	22	31	50	16	48	80	6	23	35	30	41	25
2ndary Skill:	Mining45	Rowing80	Fletch40	Trick40	Carve50	Blarm 5	Forage45	Ropes55	Herbal35	P.S.30	Gamble85	Sing45	Pipes55	P.S.65	Maps40	StarG35	Medit55	
2ndary Skill:	Wes 5	Khu 5	Wes 5	Kud 5	Kud 5	Blarm 5	Sing25	Umi 5	Wes 5	Blarm 5	Tricks50	Wes 5	Wes 5	Wes 5	Dun 5	Sin 5	Log 5	Adi 5
Language:	Adi 3	Wes 5	Dun 2	Wes 5	Wes 5	Wes 4	Dun 2	Wes 5	Adi 3	Blarm 5	Bet 5	Adi 5	Wes 5	Dun 4	Wes 5	Wes 5	Wes 4	Sin 5
Language:	Sin 3	Sin 3	Ork 2	Sin 2	Adi 3	Wes 4	Blarm 2	Lab 2	Sin 3	Wes 4	Sin 5	Sin 5	Sin 5	Adi 4	Nah 4	Que 5	B.S 3	Wes 5
Language:	Ork 2	Umi 2	Troll 1						Roh 3	Que 3	Que 3	Dun 3	Dun 3	Puk 3	Sin 4	Adi 4	Adi 4	Que 3
Language:	Dun 2	Adi 2							Que 2		Atl 3	Ork 1	Ork 1	Bet 3	Log 4	Bet 4	Wai 2	
Language:	Que 1										Nah 2	Phys.Enh.	Phys.Enh.	Cont.S.	Cont.S.	Wind Law	Ice Law	
Spell List:						Ess Hand	Path M.	Nat.G.	Sp.Def.	Surf.W.	Bone W.	Surf.W.	Cont.S.	Cont.S.	Lore	Wind Law	Light L.	
Spell List:						Unbar. W		Det.M.	Path M.	Calm S.	Blood W.	Calm S.	Ess.Perc.	Ess.Perc.	Spirit M.	Lofty Br.	Earth L.	Spell W.
Spell List:											Dir.Ch.	S/L Ways	Ess.Ways	Ess.Ways	Illusion	Lofty Br.	Lofty Br.	Lofty Br.
Spell List:											Surf.W.	Anim.M.			Cont.S.	Lofty Br.	Lofty Br.	Lofty Br.
Spell List:											Purif.							Ess.Perc.
Spell List:											Dir.Ch.							Liv.Change

MAGIC ITEMS & SPECIAL POSSESSIONS

- PC1: +10 broadsword; 2 Witam
 PC2: +15 Dwarven chainmail; Warhammer with *Light* (2x/day)
 PC3: +15 oaken spear; Helm with *Poison Resistance* (1x/day); 6 Arrows of *Stunning*
 PC4: Shield with *Protection I* (3x/day); +10 laminated composite bow
 PC5: +10 returning throwing knife (da); Boots with *Haste I* (1x/day); 2 Arkasu
 PC6: Cloak with *Shadow* (4x/day); pendant (x2 PP); +15 scimitar, ruby-set
 PC7: +10 Pole-axe (hb); 4 units waybread
 PC8: +10 Whalebone shield; Rope (+15 to MM); *Tracks Lore* (1x/day)
 PC9: Non-metallic chainmail; Brooch, *Shield* (3x/day), negates 20% neck crits; Two-handed sword set, opal (+2 spells)
 PC10: Greenstone statuette (+2 spells), +5 Base Spells OB; 3 Mirena, 1 Edram, 1 Kelventari, 1 Gylvir, 2 Witam
 PC11: Wristband (x2 PP); Cap, +15 Perception
 PC12: Ring (+1 Healing spells); Mantle, +5 DB, +10 Hide; Bow with *Aiming* (2x/day)
 PC13: +10 silversteel longsword; silversteel chainmail +10MM; amulet (+1 spell)
 PC14: Belt (+2 spells); Boots, +5 MM, +10 Climb; pet wolfhound (medium dog)
 PC15: Ring with *Stockbol* (3x/day); +15 yew spear; wand (x2 PP)
 PC16: Staff of ashwood (+1 spell), +10 Tracking, 1 Yavethalion
 PC17: 6 Arrows +10; Arrow with *Vacuum* (1 use, on impact); Staff (+2 spells) with *Fog Call* (2x/day)
 PC18: Black orb (x2 PP), Wand with *Utterdark* (2x/day); Circlet, +20 Influence

3.0 THE PHANTOM OF THE WOODS

The land known as the Northern Marches lies in northernmost Arnor (now simply Eriador), roughly incorporating the upper reaches of Arthedain and Rhudaur. Taken together, this wild, wind-swept region of cool plains and down-hills covers almost a third of the territory once claimed by the North-kingdom. Arthedain's North March covers all the land north of Lake Evendim (S. "Nenuial") and the central North Downs (S. "Tyren Formen"), while the North March of Rhudaur encompasses the area south of Angmar and above of the River Hoarwell (S. "Mitheithel").

The town of Nothva Rhaglaw sits on the southern edge of Rhudaur's North March. This rather large and charming village serves as the focal point of activity in the eastern half of the Northern Marches. Set in the valley of the River Rhaglaw, it is the starting point for the adventure called *The Phantom of the Woods*, and is a principal setting in both of the subsequent scenarios.

The players are now invited to meet the doughty townsfolk of Nothva Rhaglaw and help them thwart an evil plan to bring doom upon the region.

3.1 THE TALE OF THE PHANTOM OF THE WOODS

This tale begins, oddly enough, in the mind of a young woman named Hannei. She was the daughter of a poor farmer of Nothva Rhaglaw who worked the land to the east of the town. Her folk were good, honest people, but homely and not ones for seeking outside their immediate needs. Even as a child, Hannei was too bright and her mind too quick to be constrained by such a simple life. When it reached out, questing for answers, she felt the power of Darkness. Thus, Hannei went to Witbert, an Animist and Cleric whom she knew was trained in the ways of magic.

A Northman himself, Witbert was devoted to the memory of ancient heroes and kings from whom the Northmen were descended, and from his dedication he drew power. He instructed Hannei in all manner of rituals for worshipping, in the histories of the Northmen and in the restrained use of power granted a select few by serving the ancestors. As an assistant, Hannei was keen and dutiful, but the slowness of her teacher irked her, and she wanted more powerful knowledge, sooner. Hannei took to wandering off alone for long periods, neglecting Witbert who had come to rely on her to a large extent, and then returning to urge him to reveal more teachings. Witbert grew suspicious of her journeys and doubted her devotion to Gerse and the other heroes he revered.

On her travels, Hannei often went north, sensing the evil power and domination of the Witch-king of Angmar. It was, however, on a trip southeast into Rhudaur that she encountered Faelum, a *Mhaigh* (Du. "Sorcerer") of the Dunmen. He taught her darker arts and for her friendship and allegiance to him she was eventually rewarded with a talisman, its provenance unknown.

Witbert discovered this talisman months later and sensed its evil power. He challenged Hannei to renounce the Dark Lord, and when she haughtily refused, he banished her from Gersebroc and Nothva Rhaglaw. Declared an outlaw and with few, if any, friends remaining, she departed immediately. But when she returned to Rhudaur, she discovered that Faelum had died. Hannei was left with no one to turn to. She lived a solitary life in the wild, hunting and trapping, sleeping in Faelum's secluded cave, until one day she discovered his secret horde of Ogam stones. These stones were inscribed with writings in runes known only to the Dunmen and contained instructions for various evil magic rituals.

Hannei set about learning the meaning of the Ogam stones, slowly deciphering them from her hours shared with the Mhaigh. At the same time, she grew in survival experience and even tamed a pair of wild cat kittens who became her pets. Her hatred of the Northman town she grew up in, and Witbert its priest, festered and she ever sought some way of wreaking a terrible revenge upon them. Not knowing the full extent of the protection extended by the magic of Gerse, a greater ghost who yet guarded the town, she believed that she could actually accomplish this futile gesture.

At the time the characters join the story, Hannei has secretly moved to the northerly Drebiwyd and has built a tree-house of simple construction in the shadow of Pen-Drebi. She now plans to use a set of Ogam stones to obtain her revenge, as she can use them to cast a spell over the earth. These she has been decorating with pigments and etchings in imitation of the Ogam stones. When her preparations are complete, she will sacrifice two creatures over the rocks and recite the Ogam incantation. She thinks this ritual will cause the rocks to tear themselves out of the ground and go pounding off to destroy the village and homesteads. (However, the magical protection emanating from Gersebroc means that she will be unable to do significant harm, even if the characters do not stop her.)

Using magic, Hannei has remained mostly undiscovered in her exploits so far. No one saw who charmed the shepherds she abducted as they tended their sheep, and as there were no signs of a struggle the townsfolk have been scratching their heads a lot. A hunter named Beroth was found killed, slain by Hannei after discovering the marked rocks on Pen-Drebi, but she let him get a long way from the rocks and her tree-house home before dealing with him. Another trapper named Aski saw Hannei's sorcerous light one night and, believing it to be that of a ghost, fled back to Nothva Rhaglaw to spill his tale in the Limpid Pool, the town's only inn.

This tale will be repeated to any travellers stopping in Nothva Rhaglaw, possibly in many different versions. Locals may attribute the loss of the herders (Ceola and Buacail) and Beroth's death to the "thing" with the light in the Drebiwyd. Some say it is a sending from Angmar, a demon of evil powers come to slay them all in their beds, or catch them unawares at night. Others think it is an evil wight, an undead creature risen from a troubled grave, perhaps awakened by the Witch-king or some other necromancer. Still others hold that perhaps there is nothing in it at all, and that accidents claimed the hunter's life. Perhaps the light in the wood was just a natural woodland spirit — after all, they say, wouldn't the Sleeping King in the Tateshalla protect them from any evil or agent of Angmar?

Whatever the truth of the matter, few locals are keen to investigate...



3.2 THE NPCs

Rhudaur's people are a mixed lot collectively called Eriadorans. Most can be characterized as "Rural Men" of Dunlending, Northman, and Dúnadan ancestry. Those of the Northern Marches, however, are often of purer stock, with the Eriadoran Northmen predominate. The following folk provide an interesting selection.

3.23 ODELARD THE HEALER

Odelard, known locally as the “the Healer”, is a kindly young woman of around 30 or 35 years of age in appearance. With her bright smile, fair hair and hazel eyes, she originally hailed from a town in Arthedain but had relatives in Nothva Rhaglaw whom she visited when one was sick. She got friendly with the local wise woman, Muilphuigh, and returned to visit occasionally and to learn more about her healing arts.

Then, aged 29, her parents died leaving her a surprisingly large inheritance. She also heard about the death of Muilphuigh in the Plague in Nothva Rhaglaw, which she realized was now without a Healer (other than the busy Witbert). So Odelard sold her estate and took the money with her to the town, asking of Thegn (pronounced “Thane”) Walvoric (see Section 3.25) permission to build a place of healing. On the advice of Witbert, Odelard's house was erected in Gersebroc and now serves as a cottage hospital, where Odelard is helped by two assistants, young girls whom she trains in first aid and the use of herbs. (*For more details of the house, see 5.31 at #3.*)

Odelard herself can be found foraging in the countryside, in the town treating patients who are housebound, or tending to injured hunters and other sick folk in her house. She will freely give succour to needy characters where possible, but always appreciates gifts — of time or money, but especially of healing herbs or magic! She often carries a rowan staff topped with a silver leaf which is a x3 PP multiplier for Healing spells, gives a +25 bonus when seeking healing herbs and can cast a 3-day *Lifekeeping* spell once per week.

Notable Skills: *First Aid* 60, *Foraging* 60(+25), *Use Items* 49, *Perception* 49, *Read Runes* 34, *Disarm Trap* 25. **Languages:** *Westron* 5, *Adūnaic* 4, *Sindarin* 2. **Spell Lists:** *Blood Ways*, *Organ Ways*, *Bone/Muscle Ways*, *Purification*, *Plant Mastery*.



Odelard the Healer

3.24 ALFWARD THE RANGER

Alfward is, or rather was, a Ranger of Arthedain. Bored with the lack of interest in his career shown by his superiors (who, I fear, realized his lack of intelligence), he has struck out on his own and is seeking adventure, fame and fortune. He is willing to join any band and provide assistance as long as a fair profit or payment is offered.

A good swordsman and a fair archer, Alfward has little concept of strategy or cunning. Even worse, he is a bore! He has picked up many languages and has practically nothing interesting to say in any of them, although this doesn't stop him from almost continually chattering about this, that and the other. He is liable to mess up plans through thoughtlessness or incompetence, even if he means well. The Ranger has one redeeming feature — he is a folk singer and certainly knows how to play his lute, even if his voice is a bit rough. But few complain, for who would want to get into an argument with a 6' 8", 250 lbs., steely-grey-eyed, chainmailed Dúnadan with a hefty broadsword and a scar across his left jaw?

Notable Skills: *Music(Lute)* 45, *Climb* 39, *Swim* 39, *Track* 34, *Stalk/Hide* 26. **Languages:** *Adūnaic* 5, *Westron* 5, *Sindarin* 5, *Bethteur* 2, *Dunael* 2, *Quenya* 1.

3.25 WALVORIC, THEGN OF NOTHVA RHAGLAW

Walvoric is the middle-aged Thegn of Nothva Rhaglaw. A man of fair speech and fair dealings, he is well-liked by his people. His father Walesleag was also Thegn, and Walvoric intends that his eldest son Thenesleag should follow family tradition.

Walvoric is a lesser Dúnadan of Northman heritage. A fierce warrior when the mood takes him, he wields a mighty (+15) broc (or two-handed sword) named *Carelsbroc*. This sword was made for an earlier Chieftain of Nothva Rhaglaw when the town was, for a few short decades, center of a nomadic Northman empire. Nothing but the sword remains of those fleeting, fierce times. Walvoric is tall (6' 4") and strong but feels that his place is now as governor rather than battle-leader for his people. He rules by gentle persuasion and influence, and can almost always sway the Mot to his point of view. He exhibits a parochialism greatly appreciated by local folk, who consider themselves first, even though they respect the King in Fornost.

Notable Skills: *Public Speaking* 55, *Stalk/Hide* 40, *Ride* 30, *Leadership/Influence* 20, *Track* 25. **Languages:** *Weston* 5, *Adūnaic* 4.

3.26 THENESLEAG

Thenesleag (*Eriadoran*: “*Thegn's Pride*”) was born on the day Walvoric became Thegn at the invitation of the Mot, 21 years ago. He hopes one day to become Thegn too, but although he has his father's fair tongue and the kind of spirit others respect, he can rarely put substance behind his words. It is unlikely that one such as Thenesleag could effectively govern without someone very close and wise to advise him. Whilst Walvoric has a variety of friends and his wife Althora, Thenesleag is currently still obsessed with his own fighting prowess and has warrior comrades but few other close friends and no other interests — a number of amorous conquests aside.

Thenesleag also tends to get rather fixed ideas which he retains, and can easily be led once he starts seeking something. To divert him from a chosen course is much more difficult. He will not recognise any lack of intellect in himself, and becomes enraged if it is suggested that he is wrong, or if someone picks an argument with him. They are likely to end up arguing with his sword. He too wields a broc or a broadsword and shield, and if Walvoric dies will inherit the *Carelsbroc*.

Notable Skills: *Stalk/Hide* 35, *Perception* 25, *Leadership & Influence* 10. **Languages:** *Westron* 5, *Adūnaic* 4, *Atliduk* 2.



PRICES IN NOTHVA RHAGLAW

Arthedain currency is used: 1gp = 10, sp = 1000, cp = 2000, 1/2cp = 4000 1/4cp. Goods and services not mentioned here may not be available at all. Those marked n/s are not available from shops or artisans, but may be found second-hand and purchased from individuals. There are no actual traders or merchants in Nothva Rhaglaw any more. Occasionally one may stop off, having made the rather dangerous journey from Arthedain. Sometimes goods are left for sale at the Limpid Pool. Normally, purchases must be made direct from the workshop, so characters will have to locate the appropriate house first, and possibly wait for the goods to be made.

ACCESSORIES

Boots	90cp
Cloak (light)	10cp
Coat (heavy)	20cp
Coat, quilted	55cp
Pants	25cp
Shirt	12cp
Backpack	20cp
Bedroll	15cp
Pole	4cp
Rope, standard	40cp
Rope, excellent	2sp
Sack	7cp
Tent material	15cp
Tent	5sp
Fire bow	1cp
Flint & steel	13cp
Lantern	18cp
Oil flask	30cp
Torch	1cp

FOOD AND LODGING

Beer (pint)	1/2cp
Fine beer	3/4cp
Wine (pint)	12cp
Carsalan (1/4pt)	8cp
Light meal	1/4cp
Normal meal	3/4cp
Heavy meal	1&1/2cp
Rations (1 wk)	4cp
Rations, preserved (1 wk)	8cp
Lodging (shared)	2cp
Room at inn	4cp
Stabling	1/2cp
Pipeweed	12cp

WEAPONS/ARMOR

Battle-axe	n/s
Broadsword	10sp
Crossbow	n/s
Dagger/knife	4sp
Halbard	n/s
Handaxe	6sp
Longbow	11sp
Quarterstaff	5-20cp
Shortbow	6-8sp
Slingshot	70-90cp
Spear	20-30cp
Two-hand sword	n/s
Shield, oval	8sp
Leather helm	2sp
Leather greaves	2sp
Leather armor(soft)	4sp
20 arrows	45cp
20 crossbow bolts	n/s
Quiver	8cp
Scabbard	30cp
Weapon belt	75cp

TRANSPORT

Mature pony	20-30sp
Light horse	35-45sp
Medium horse	55-65sp
Heavy horse	70-80sp
Wagon (8')	5-6gp

3.3 LAYOUTS OF NOTHVA RHAGLAW AND THE DREBIWYD

Nothva Rhaglaw (*Er. "Regent's Refuge"*) is a small town lying just southeast of the Witbeamwyd, at the head of the Rhaglaw Gorge (*Er. "Safin Rhaglaw"*). The peculiar history of the town has given it a special character unlike any other northern town. It was being used as a settlement even back into the Second Age, when as now its site provided shelter, water and a plentiful supply of both wood and stone for building. The land around is also rather more fertile than much of Rhudaur or the Lonely Lands (*S: En Enedorath*). When the Kingdom of Arnor was established at the beginning of the Third Age, Nothva Rhaglaw was a prosperous town well situated for communication and trade with the northern provinces and eastern settlements. It lay on an old road which ran from Amon Sûl (*S: "Weathertop"*) to the Ettendales and then north to the region now occupied by Angmar (but then farmed and mined by Dúnedain and Northmen). The road eventually led to Dwarvish delvings in the far north of the Misty Mountains.

The Dúnedain brought much to the town but the Tateshalla in the nearby Witbeamwyd was already there. Most of the buildings are now built of a combination of styles, utilizing the stonework of the Dúnedain and the woodcraft of the Northmen. The town is built on the northeast side of the river, up the slopes of the ridge called Scandric Edge. The houses are huddled together but, on the whole, neat. An unfinished Arthadan wall in two sections partially encompasses the town to the south and north. Gatehouses guard the road across the ford and through the north wall, although they are little used in these times.

Later in the Third Age, when Sauron first began stirring in the East, trouble caused by his messengers began to brew. In the northern Misty Mountains fell creatures emerged: Trolls, Orcs and Wargs. Some were undoubtedly sent by the Dark Lord to prepare the way for the invasion by Angmar. Around 500 years ago, a champion of Northman descent named *Gerse* won great renown as a fighter for slaying scores of Orcs and other beasts of the Darkness. He led bands of local men and women in defense of the region and single-handedly slew the cold drake Corostal. A shrine dedicated to his memory may be found to the north of the town.

Most of the inhabitants of Nothva Rhaglaw are now frontiersmen. There is no trade through the town now and little enough to it, as it is so divorced from the peoples both to the north and to the south. The reason for this is perhaps Nothva Rhaglaw's strangest attribute. When Arnor divided into the three Kingdoms of Arthedain, Cardolan and Rhudaur, Nothva Rhaglaw elected to owe fealty to the Kings of Arthedain rather than the men of Rhudaur, within whose realm they should have fallen. Despite the rise in might of the Witch-king's realm in Angmar and the fall of Rhudaur and then Cardolan to his evil might, the town has survived without even being attacked once by the armies which have left Arthedain the last Kingdom of the Dúnedain in the north. No one can quite explain the Witch-king's avoidance of this outpost of good and homely civilization, but most locals put it down to the Tateshalla and the threat of the King Who Sleeps: King Gotshelm and his supernatural knights who have rested since the Second Age, and legend has it, will awaken in their people's time of greatest need.

3.31 LAYOUT OF THE TOWN OF NOTHVA RHAGLAW

1. Gatehouses. Each pair of gatehouses is identical. Two 25' square towers sit 20' apart straddling the road. There is no proper gate, but each tower stores a number of large, solid hurdles which are moved across the road at night and anchored with stones. The towers have 2 stories and are 30' tall overall, roofed with slates and built of local stone. On the ground floor there is just a single door 7'x4' opening onto the road, and no windows. On the upper floor are numerous narrow slits for defensive operations. Local men take turns



at keeping the towers, living and sleeping in them for two weeks a year. Four to six men man each tower at any time. The northern gatehouse also has access onto the wall walks so that guards can man defensive positions on the battlements. The gatehouse beside the ford also stores two rowing boats.

2. Town Walls. The town walls are 15' high and have crenellations. The walls are about 5' thick and built of mortared stone blocks. About every 100' or so there is a supporting stone buttress. Projecting wooden wall walks run along the tops of the walls. Those of the north wall are accessed from the Gatehouses. Those of the south wall are reached by a stair in the Levy Training House.

3. Watchtower. The watchtower was built in the first alarm at the corruption of Rhudaur and the growth of Angmar. It is now disused. The tower is of sturdy stone construction, having four stories and a lookout post at the top 45' above the ground. The tower itself sits on a small rise beside the river. Each of the bare circular floors is now empty apart from dirt and litter that has blown in and a few birds' nests. A spiral stair runs up the center.

4. The Mothalla. The Mothalla is a huge building 140' long and 70' wide. It is built something like a mediaeval church with three long chambers side by side. The central section (30' wide) rises to about 25' in height, the side chambers to 20'. It is built with stone pillars supporting a timber frame roof. The outer walls are whole tree trunks cut to size and set vertically, plastered on the inside. There are no interior walls, the building being essentially one large room divided into three by two rows of pillars. The Mothalla was built on traditional Northman lines by the Dúnedain and is thus extremely sturdy. A stone foundation makes the floors firm and level despite being built on a slope.

There are no windows, but 3 doors open onto the town side (west end). These are all about 7' off the ground and have to be accessed by flanking stone steps. The end of the hall thus forms a natural balcony from which the Thegn can address the townsfolk assembled on the Green. There is also a double-door at the east end of the hall, but this is rarely used — the main occasion being the annual horse race which starts inside the hall in May.

Inside, the Mothalla is hung with tapestries and drapes to keep out the cold. There are small firepits for warmth in the smaller, side chambers and two large ones for cooking in the central section. Overhead, holes in the roof open amid the smoky rafters. The side chambers are roofed with wooden shingles, the center is thatched, the thatching replaced every three years to keep it in the best possible condition. Around the side chambers are many simple wooden benches and a few tables. In the center there is also a special dark oak table and 12 stools for the Witanmot, or town officials. The Thegn has a large chair carved and decorated with inlaid wood.

5. Levy Training House. This building is of all stone construction with a slate roof. It has but one story and consists of a large room with a number of storerooms off it. The Training House is used for the training of local men and women to serve in the levy. The Thegn is nominally in charge of all military matters but, depending on his age and enthusiasm, may appoint a captain to look after training, leading raids and so on. In the stores, arms and armor are kept, including a good supply of arrows and spears. At the rear of the House is a covered stone stairway which leads up the side of the wall to the walk atop it. There are also bare cooking facilities in the House, and some food in the form of preserved rations.

6. Town Houses. Most of the townsfolk live in these stone-and-timber built houses of 2 or 3 stories. The bottom half is stone and contains a large doorway and possibly a number of small window openings. The use it is put to depends on the occupation of the families the house belongs to. For a farmer or herder it serves as a barn and shophouse (byre), with haylofts, bins of grain and root vegetables, stalls for animals, coops for fowl and so on. For an artisan it would be a series of workshops with large working areas partitioned off with thin wooden walls. Large stone pillars and massive wooden beams support the floor or floors above, which are of timber. Upper floors are divided into many rooms for the household members, together with kitchen, toilet facilities and a communal day room. Windows are larger and more airy, and can be closed with decorated wooden shutters. The outside of the upper story will be plastered and whitewashed. The plaster may well be decorated, the beams carved and the walls painted.

The houses vary considerably in size. The smallest are perhaps 20' x 40' and serve as home for a family of 6-8. Larger houses are up to 70' square and can accommodate an entire "extended family" of 6-8 couples, all their children and assorted old folk. Sons tend to stay living at home with their father's family even after marriage, and follow the same (or a similar) occupation. The lower floor workshops are therefore often lively places with 6 or more men and women working at potters' wheels, forges, tanning racks or whatever.

Some houses have small kitchen gardens surrounded by low stone walls. Here herbs are cultivated and special plants grown. Houses may also have other special features, such as dovescotes (or other bird-harbors), hives or vines.

7. Cottages. Less wealthy (and poor) folk live in these much simpler dwellings beside the river. Wholly timber (although some have stone foundations), the cottages are made from a frame to which boards are nailed, then plaster daub put over the boards seals them. The whole is topped with a thick thatch. Each has only one floor, divided into a number of rooms used communally: e.g., a sleeping room, a kitchen, a living room and a store. These cottages are 30'x50' long, about 15'x20' wide, and often overcrowded. Families living in them are typically herders, farm workers, servants, poor hunters and trappers and other unskilled or non-land-owning occupations. The herders' cottages are generally the largest and best kept of the lot.

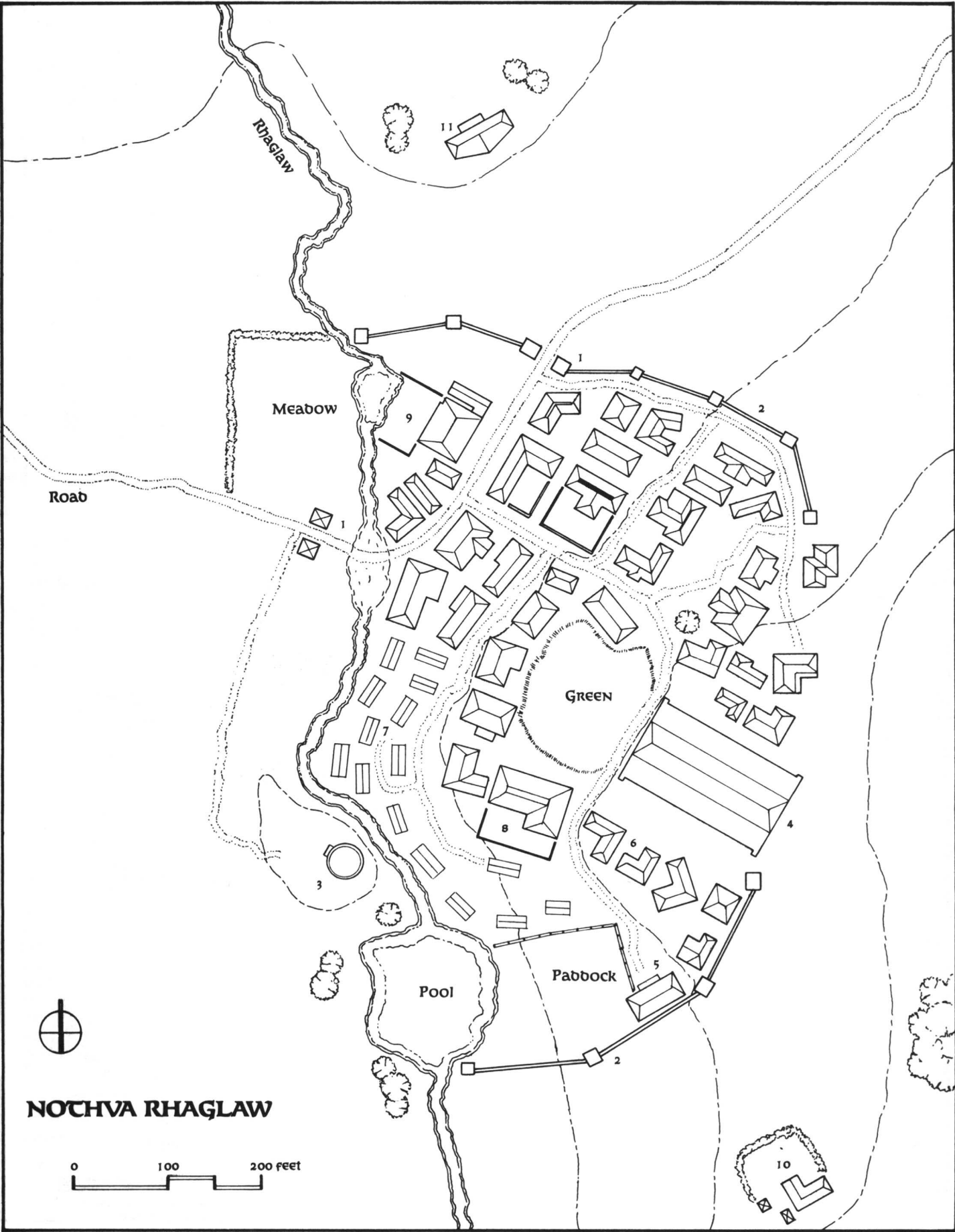
Two of the herding families have painted their doors white, a local sign of mourning which signifies the loss or death of a loved one. These are the homes of Ceola and Buacail, the missing shepherds.

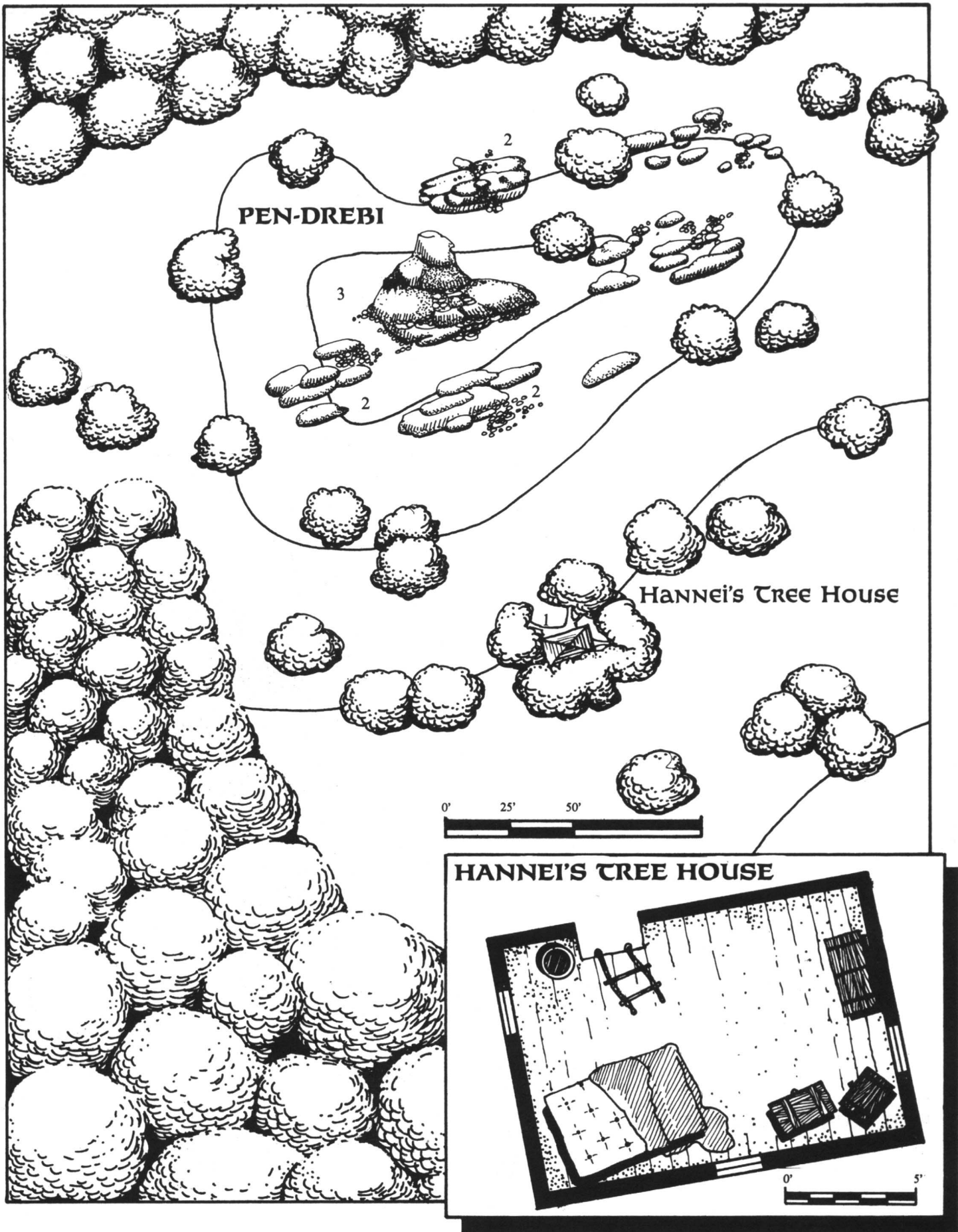
8. Thegn's House. This town house is even more lavishly decorated than many of the others, and is the residence of Thegn Walvoric and his wife Althora. He has a large family: two grandmothers, three brothers with their sisters-in-law, his youngest sister, his ten nephews and nieces and his own five children, the oldest of whom is Thenesleag, now 21. Althora runs a dairy in the lower floor with help from her sisters-in-law, making cheese, butter, cream and sweet fermented cheesecakes, a local delicacy. Walvoric's brothers are carpenters and their workshop is adjacent to the dairy. His sister Volnâw tends the herb garden.

9. The Limpid Pool. Nothva Rhaglaw's only inn offers good local beer, supplies of rare trade goods such as pipeweed and wine and splendidly comfortable accommodation at very reasonable prices. The front of the ground floor is a snug barroom, the rear a kitchen and brewery. The Pool's specialty is a distilled liquor known as *carsalan*, which is delicately flavoured with heathers and sweet berries. It is very potent, but only rarely gives a hangover. The inn is run by Gadhordag and his wife Helda. Her brother was Beroth, the hunter killed by Hannei, and she will be keen to persuade characters to take a hand in the matter.

10. Farm. There are many farms outside the town in the vales to the north and west. Their construction is very similar to the townhouses, but they are unlikely to be decorated and their occupants may be fewer in number. Some are built on a rectangular pattern with an open courtyard in the middle. Only a few farms grow crops because of the difficult cold climate, most herding sheep, goats or cattle, along with the usual chickens, ducks, and pigs. Some breed horses, like their Northman cousins in Rhovanion.

11. Hunters' Lodge. This building is also similar to the town houses. Young men and women who wish to learn hunting skills, or who are practitioners before they start raising families, are welcome to stay at the Hunters' Lodge and ply their trade. Most hunters are single and young, although there are a few old bachelors and a few couples. Around 15-25 hunters live here, and form the core of the Levy, Nothva Rhaglaw's fighting force in times of trouble. Most will be out during the day, either in small groups or singly, but all get together at night for a good meal, some drink and usually some form of rough Northman entertainment, such as brawling, singing, dancing, or knife-throwing. Those staying at home during the day are fully occupied helping with household chores, maintaining their weapons, traps and hunting gear, and preparing their catches for the tanner, furrier or butcher. The hunters elect a Master (or Mistress) of the Lodge each year. Currently the Master is Geof Bairhid (Bearskin), a hugh Northman who wears the pelt of one of the great black bears native to the area. Aski is also a member of the Hunters' Lodge.





3.32 LAYOUT OF HANNEI'S RETREAT IN THE DREBIWYD

1. Hannei's Tree House. The young witch has built herself a rather shaky hut in the branches of a spreading whitebeam. The foliage of the tree will conceal the structure in spring through to autumn (a medium, +0, Perception roll to spot), but in winter it will be rather more obvious. It is a single room about 12' by 15', built from planks, boards and wooden shingles. In it are old chests containing clothes, a mattress and blankets, some kitchenware and a large bucket for fetching water. A ladder hangs down from the hut while Hannei is out, but it is trapped two ways.

— **Trap #1:** One of the rungs is made of a hollow bark tube containing many exceedingly sharp (and rusty) blades. Anyone grasping it takes one to four +20 Slash attacks, ignoring any critical results not connected with hands; for each wound, there is a 15% chance of blood poisoning (victim loses 1-50 off temporary Constitution stat). They must also make a very hard (-20) MM (Moving Maneuver) roll or fall 15' to the ground. Anyone falling takes a +15MCr attack and if no critical results, a roll on the MM Failure Table (*MERP*, Table FT-4).

— **Trap #2:** This trap is some *Lawrim* poison smeared on the left-hand rope. Failure to make a successful RR (attack level 3, see layout description #2) results in stinging pain and also the very hard MM described above (to avoid falling).

The base of the tree has been cunningly hollowed out by Hannei to make a concealed hole behind the bark. Finding this hiding place without some sort of clue, information, or spell requires a successful sheer folly (-50) Perception roll. The hole contains several copper nuggets (7 worth 1-10gp each), 35sp, 18gp and the Ogam stones (35 weighing .5-1.5 lbs. each).

NOTE ON OGAM STONES: An Ogam stone allows one to cast a spell without consuming PP. Instead, the stone is consumed. The wielder can use a number of stones per day equal to his inherent PP.

Occupants of the tree house include Hannei during some of the day, the two captive herders and possibly, Hannei's two pet wildcats.

2. Outcroppings. These are large boulders and outcrops of the granite-type rock that underlies the region. They are lichen covered on their north-facing sides but otherwise unremarkable. The boulders vary from 2' to 12' across and the same in height. Vegetation around them is sparse: wiry grass, heather and bilberries. There is a 10% chance that any lichen contacted will be *Lawrim* which is poisonous.

— **Poison, Lawrim:** In its natural state *Lawrim* exudes a level 2 poison causing stinging rashes for 1-5 days; these make the victim -25 to activity. When prepared by pressing and boiling (as found on the ladder in #1), it is a level 3 poison causing pain (1-2 hits/rnd) for 1-10 rounds and -20 to activity, then variable paralysis for 1-10 hours with a -1 to -100 penalty to activity (roll once each hour).

3. The Tor. On the summit of Pen-Drebi is the Tor, a tall rock outcropping about 12' wide and 26' tall. It is surrounded by great boulders and other rocks. Although of dark, granitic stone, the lower portion of the Tor has now been painted a whitish color and runic inscriptions have been added, together with strange designs. These are marked in red clay, black charcoal and ochre paint, applied with brushes and sticks. All this work is Hannei's doing, the runes and designs being copied from the Dunnish Ogam stones she has. The runes are unlike those of any other language and run vertically upwards in columns. If anyone uses spells to determine the meaning of the runes, the following can be read:

"COMMANDS-HANNEI, TO DESTROY (these) STONES THE VILLAGE AND ALL PEOPLE OF THE VILLAGE, BY THE OGAM."

Almost any of the townsfolk will know of Hannei if asked, although it might take them some time to remember. Examples of the designs and runes are shown in the illustration.

3.33 THE WOODS AND THE VALES

Most of the land around Nothva Rhaglaw was once heavily wooded. The forests were removed by the first wave of Mannish settlers back in the First Age, starting in the vales where they desired well-watered pastureland for their beasts, and then on the hills as pressure grew for more land. In those ancient times the climate was far superior and all manner of crops could be grown in this area. Although the region is now much less heavily populated than it was a few thousand years ago, the trees have, for the most part, not returned. It is now colder and windier, for the Witch-king dwells in Angmar and strange sorceries affect even the weather.

The woods of Witbeamwyd and Drebiwyd are remnants of the original forests, left on the steepest and rockiest slopes, areas not suited to any form of agriculture or pastoral activity. The woods have not remained unchanged, of course. Local people have utilized them for hunting, cutting timber, collecting scrub and so on. Nevertheless, they still have a feeling of ancient splendour.

The trees of the woods are mostly upland hardwoods — a few oaks, plus whitebeam and rowan in profusion. There are also water chestnuts, ash and birch. They do not grow densely, making the woods light and airy in summer and spring, and giving rise to a lush (for the region) undergrowth of bracken, brambles, nettles and hardier seasonal flowers such as bluebells and trefoil. Many herbs and fungi also grow in the woods, making them popular with local healers and goodwives.

The open countryside around the town is short-grassed pastureland dotted with farms. The cool climate inhibits the growth of shrubs other than in the most sheltered areas but there are occasional stands of trees such as ash, conifers and birch. On more exposed sites heather, gorse, juniper, broom, stonecrop and petty whin grow, providing flowers, roots and berries to complement the diet of sinblas enjoyed by herd animals such as the Caru, Feithan, Saiga and Tiara.

There are many streams and pools in the environs of Nothva Rhaglaw, most of which will freeze over or dry up in winter. These give rise to numerous marshy and boggy areas, especially where they over-lie impervious rocks, such as the granites which form outcroppings. Many Hillmen and local inhabitants avoid these areas as they believe them inhabited by unwholesome and malicious spirits. The truth of these stories is dubious, and probably founded in the eerie calls of whimbrels, night-jars and curlews.

Other birds found in the area include grouse, pheasant, harriers, owls, falcons and herons as well as the less welcome gorcrows and crebain. A peculiar creature worth noting is the *desman*. It is very rare and restricted to this area. The *desman* measures 18" to 24" (including its tail and prehensile snout) and resembles a large vole or mole. Its teeth carry a vicious venom inducing spasmodic relaxing and tightening of the muscles in the walls of blood vessels. The *desman* lives in streams and marshes and is a blackish-brown in color. Its poison is particularly fatal to the huge Caru (*Du. "Elk"*), whose rotten flesh the *desmans* love.

— **Poison, Desman Venom:** Each hour (for 2-20 hours), a RR must be made against this level 2 poison or the blood supply to some part of the victim's body will be cut off. Depending on the severity of the RR failure this might be a finger, a patch of skin, a muscle, arm, leg or even the brain. This can lead to discomfort (- to activity), loss of use, gangrene or even death.



3.4 THE TASK

The task in this adventure is quite simple: to scour the woods and find out what is causing the good people of Nothva Rhaglaw this trouble. Hopefully any soul brave enough to try this will also be ready to face and defeat the danger so that the townsfolk will be left in peace. It is also hoped that the shepherds who disappeared might be found and returned to their families.

3.41 STARTING THE PLAYERS

Nothva Rhaglaw lies sheltered between Scandric Edge and the Witbeamwyd about 145 miles from Weathertop in a north-easterly direction. The stream or river it sits beside, the Rhaglaw ("*Regent*"), flows southeast to join the river Greyflood between Cameth Brin and the Last Bridge. The town is fair-sized for the lands of Northern Eriador, with about 750 men, women and children making up its population within the walls, and another 500 or so settled in scattered farmsteads nearby. The adventure starts for the characters when they encounter some folk of Nothva Rhaglaw (either in the town or by chance in the countryside) and learn of the "Phantom of the Woods" that troubles them.

If the players are not motivated of their own idea to seek out this inimical force and threat to the peace of the area, they may be approached by relatives of the missing herders or the slain hunter. They might also be approached by Thegn Walvoric or Witbert the Priest.

Starting Pre-Generated Characters

If your players have selected pregenerated characters from the list supplied, it is suggested that they start by traveling through the Nothva Rhaglaw and hearing of an impassioned plea from Thegn Walvoric for someone to find the dreadful thing that stalks the Wyd and threatens everyone's safety. Many of the townsfolk have gathered to listen and are demanding action, but most are too afraid to volunteer. When the Thegn offers a reward and describes all the nasty incidents, the PCs each step forward and meet each other. All will be cheered by the crowd and offered every encouragement. Any character of lesser Dúndan or Northman origin can choose to be a local with a general knowledge of the surrounding areas. (In such a case, establish where they lived and who their family is.)

3.42 AIDS

The characters may include someone with local knowledge. At the very least, the members of the Hunters' Lodge could tell them a great deal about the land hereabouts. The Hunters will also tell characters that it is customary to visit the Shrine of Gersebroc for a blessing from Witbert the Priest, particularly when undertaking a special task. (Gersebroc is described in Section 5.31.)

Witbert will be only too pleased to see the characters and will gladly lead a short service, calling on "Gerse and the Spirits that look Over us, and the Valar our Guardians". If the characters have offered something of value as a donation, or show particular devotion, he will attempt to cast a spell on the characters combined with his Ritual skill. The spell is *Area Protection II* ("Spell Defense" spell list). If successful, the spell will take effect the next time the characters encounter some magical or supernatural danger. The success of Witbert's Ritual skill depends on a roll on *MERP* Table MT-2, partial success being equivalent to 3 rounds of protection rather than the full 6 rounds.

Odelard the Healer will also aid any characters that need her special skills, and the characters can recuperate in her House of Healing afterwards.

Finally, Alfwald the Ranger may also offer his sword for a suitable share of the reward. If the PCs do not choose to include him in their party, he may try finding the Phantom on his own.

3.43 OBSTACLES

The main obstacle is Hannei's professional pre-occupation with secrecy and deception. She will be very hard to track down, and the search for her should be the main part of this adventure, although preparations are also important and should not be neglected. Once they have stumbled across Hannei, it is likely that she will evade them (see Section 3.52 for Hannei's Ploys), as she is an accomplished escapist. However, it is not essential for the characters to slay Hannei or even capture her — discovering her home and rescuing the shepherds will suffice to disrupt all her current plans. Faced with the reality of her Ogam stones being completely ineffective, she may flee. She would make an interesting NPC to come back and plague the characters at some future date.

Obstacles to the search also include the difficult terrain in the woods and the presence of many wild and dangerous animals. There are traps left by Hannei and other hunters. The weather may turn against the characters — after all, how easy would it be to discover Hannei in a sudden squall or hailstorm? Time is the final obstacle, if the shepherds are to be rescued before the sacrifice takes place, even though it will have no further consequence in itself. Give the characters up to 4 days to track down Hannei — less for a better equipped and skilled party.

3.44 REWARDS

The reward offered by Walvoric or the herder's kin is up to you. It might be a promise of any help they require in the future, or a magic item, or money (100gp). Hannei herself has little treasure.

3.5 ENCOUNTERS

Table 6.0 at the rear of the booklet details the possible encounters in different areas. A roll should be made on this table once every three hours of searching, and you should also remember to incorporate fixed encounters that characters would come across, such as the discovery of the Tateshalla in the Witbeamwyd, or Hannei's tree house in the Drebiwyd. Encounters are grouped together on the table and explained below.

3.51 STANDARD ENCOUNTERS

A) NPCs

All non-player characters will have reactions suitable to the time of day and location. To begin, refer to the character description details in Section 3.2, and make sure you invent a good reason for that character to be in that place at that time. They might be simply going about their business, or seeking the characters to tell them something. For example, if encountered away from her home, Odelard might be on urgent business, hurrying to attend to a very sick person. If the characters delay her, the person might die. On the other hand, she may just be foraging and be able to lend on-the-spot assistance.

If Hannei is encountered, she will be engaged in some obviously suspicious activity, such as incanting spells over stones. She will immediately try to disappear. If she succeeds, she will be actively harrying the characters from now on and any "Nothing" result has a 50% chance of being a "hidden" encounter with Hannei (see Section 3.52). Note that dopey characters might well mistake her for a huntress or trapper.

B) OTHER FOLK

These encounters are with local inhabitants. These might be ordinary townsfolk, farmers, herders or travellers in settled areas. In the woods of barren areas, they might be hunters (Rangers, level 1-3) or trappers (Scouts, level 1-3), probably from the Hunters' Lodge or a cottage in Nothva Rhaglaw. Such folk will not be hostile unless the characters have done something evil or illegal. Most will always flee combat, particularly if outnumbered.

BEASTS AND WILD ANIMALS

Name/Type	Lvl	#/ Encoun	Size	Speed	Hits	AT	DB	Melee OBs	Notes
Adder	1	1-2	S	SL/VF	15	No/1	40	20SSSt(poison)	A critical will inject level 3 poison, causes pain or death.
Black Bear	5	1-5	M	F/F	150	SL/8	30	60LGr/70LCI/30MBi	Normally won't attack unless provoked (<i>Hi: barg-moigh</i>).
Brown Bear	3	1-5	L	MF/MF	170	SL/8	20	70LGr/60LCI/20MBi	May charge (60LBa), mean if provoked. (<i>Hi: barg-dign</i>).
Wild Boar	3	2-20	M	F/MF	110	SL/4	30	50MHo/40MBa/30STS	Mean-tempered, vicious if cornered.
Wild Cat	2	1-2	S	VF/VF	45	No/3	50	45MCI/40SBI	Hannei's pets.
Deer	2	2-20	L	F/F	75	SL/3	40	25HMo/25MTS/20MBa	Wild herd animals, only males have horns.
Desman	3	1-2	S	SL/F	30	No/3	30	35SBI(poison)	See 3.33 for details.
Elk	4	4-40	L	F/MF	200	SL/3	20	65LHo/55LBa/60MTs	Wild herd animals, found in woods and highland regions.
Moose	4	1-2	L	F/MF	240	SL/4	15	55LBa/50LTS	Wild herd animals, found in woods.
Reindeer	2	2-200	M	F/F	130	SL/3	20	40LTS/30MBa	Wild herd animals (<i>Hi: Losrandir</i>).
Grey Wolf	4	2-20	L	VF/F	120	No/3	30	60LBI/30MCI	Will not attack groups unless provoked.
Fell Wolf	3	2-10	M	F/VF	110	No/4	25	70LBI/20MCI	Operate in cooperative groups.

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

Speed: A creature's speed is given in terms of "Movement Speed/ Attack Quickness": C = Creeping, VS = Very Slow, S = Slow, M = Medium, MF = Moderately Fast, F = Fast, VF = Very Fast, BF = Blindingly Fast. **AT (Armor Type):** The two letter code gives the creature's *MERP* armor type (No = No Armor, SL = Soft Leather, RL = Rigid Leather, Ch = Chain, Pl = Plate); the number is the equivalent to the *Rolemaster* numeric armor type.

Attack: Each attack code starts with the attacker's Offensive Bonus. The first letter indicates the size of the attack = T = Tiny, S = Small, M = Medium, L = Large, and H = Huge. The last two letters indicate the type of attack = Ti = Tiny, Pi = Pincher/Beak, Ba = Bash, Bi = Bite, Cl = Claw, Cr = Crush, Gr = grapple, Ho = Horn, TS = Trample/Stomp, St = Stinger, and We = Weapon. These codes may differ slightly from the *MERP* and *Rolemaster* codes.

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

C) BEASTS

Any of these beasts might attack a party or lone character, depending on their temperament and the characters' actions. Domestic herds of goats, sheep, cattle or horses are of course most unlikely to attack, and sport a 75% chance of having a shepherd within 100 yards or so. Wild herds of Losrandir, Elk, Moose or Deer may be nervous and can be panicked into stampeding. However, if the characters take sensible precautions, they are unlikely to be worried by any of these creatures. All animal attack statistics are summarized in the chart in this section.

D) CONTROLLED BEASTS

These are creatures under the control of Hannei's Animal Mastery spell. She needs to be within 100', and will probably be up a tree. Roll again on the Encounter Table to see what sort of beast it is. If the roll is outside the range of beasts, or the indicated beast would be too powerful for her to control, none of these is available and Hannei has to make do with some lesser creature — perhaps a tree bat, eagle, wild dog, craban or a poisonous reptile or insect.

E) HUNTER'S TRAPS

Hunters' Traps come in three varieties:

- 01-20 **PIT TRAP.** When a character stumbles on the loose cover of a pit trap they must make a hard (-10) MM roll or fall 12' taking one "A" Crush critical roll.
- 21-65 **SMALL SNARE TRAP.** This trap will catch a character's foot, attacking as a +25TGr and tripping them up.
- 66-00 **LARGE SNARE TRAP.** This will entangle a character's whole leg and either trip him or hang him upside down as a tree, bent over and strapped down. This is a +40MGr attack.

Traps may be spotted with an extremely hard (-30) Perception roll if the characters are not actively searching, or a medium (-0) roll if they are taking care. A detected trap can usually just be walked around.

F) TRACKS

If the characters are actively searching for Hannei (i.e., if they have discovered or encountered her or her dwelling), they may encounter her tracks. A successful hard (-10) Tracking roll (may be less difficult if they have had more than a glance of her) will lead them to:

- 01-15 Hannei
- 16-40 The tree house below Pen-Drebi
- 41-60 The summit of Pen-Drebi
- 61-00 Water/rocks: make another Tracking roll or lose the trail then roll again here to determine where it leads

If the characters are not searching for Hannei, the tracks might be of anything or anyone. You may alternatively want to use this encounter result as a clue to the identity of the "Phantom", such as a piece of torn clothing dropped by one of the missing herders, an old sprung trap of Hannei's (markedly unlike those of the hunters and trappers), an idle rune carved in the bark of a tree, or a place where a fire has been laid to make charcoal and paint.

G) NATURAL DANGER

A natural danger might be of any sort: a dangerous plant such as *Lawrim*; an unsteady rock ready to send an adventurer tumbling; a roaring waterfall; a boggy area; a thunderstorm or lightning bolt; and so on. Typically this encounter calls for an unusual MM roll to be made by one or more party members, the severity and consequences depending on their location.

H) NOTHING

No special encounter happens in the three hour period, unless Hannei has been encountered, when there is a 50% chance of her producing one of her "Phantom" manifestations or attacks. You may wish to sustain the atmosphere of suspense by using this encounter as some other event, such as a simple change in the weather, an eerie noise, a glimpsed sighting of "something" (actually harmless), an uncommon bird or animal, or anything to provide distraction.

3.52 HANNEI'S PLOYS

Hannei's reaction to given situations will vary. She has numerous options in most cases, and you should pick the one that seems most appropriate, or that gives her the best chance of success. You should also pay attention to the "dramatic" quality of the game and describe events in the most mysterious and different ways possible. Although very unwilling to reveal herself, Hannei may attempt to delude captors or those she is forced by circumstance to speak with. She has been trying to conceal her activities, but has not actually thought to disguise them as the activity of some other creature or person. That confusion has arisen naturally in the minds of the townsfolk. Further confusion of the PCs is likely to result as Hannei employs a range of tactics to annoy and distract parties. She will generally aim to harry a party searching for the "Phantom", creating fear and doing harm in the hope that they will be frightened away. Remember that initially neither side is aware of the other.

If seen or discovered:

Hannei will try to evade a party that spots her, initially seeing if she can Hide (SM +30). If necessary she will employ either *Quiet* (4PP) or *Merging Organic* (5PP) spells, the latter defeating any party except those able to detect the use of Channeling power. Simple hiding in trees or amongst rocks will usually suffice.

If forced to fight:

Hannei usually fights with her curved and spiked +5 sword (OB 35sc). Given the chance she will use either *Stunning* (5PP), which has no penalties for casting time but affects only one target, or *Sudden Light* (5PP) which covers a 10' radius of attackers. If she can stun all those immediately attacking her, she will probably attempt to escape, as noted above.



To attack from a distance:

Hannei's first line of attack, once concealed well, is her +10 longbow (OB +60/+101b). She may establish herself in a high-up position impossible for others to get at, also gaining additional OB bonuses, such as in a tree or on a rocky ledge. As an alternative, she may adopt a fire-and-run tactic. Hannei can also employ useful magic in this area, such as *Animal Mastery* (5PP) to control a beast and get it to attack characters nearby (see "D" above). Additionally, if she encounters characters already in combat, she may throw a *Hold Kind* (3PP) on one of them to freeze them defenseless.



To distract and annoy:

If Hannei needs to divert the party away from an area (e.g., the summit of Pen-Drebi), or simply wants to harass them, she may use any of the following plans. First, if there is plenty of time, she may set traps:

- 01-40 SNARE TRAP (max weight 150 lbs). Designed to pull on the foot of unsuspecting characters and haul them upside-down into a tree. Attacks as +40LGr, with only AG bonus counting toward DB when reckoning the attack.
- 41-80 TRIPWIRE (max weight 250 lbs). Designed to trip an unwary person over for a nasty fall onto jagged lumps of rock (attacks as +20MFa, Primary critical is Unbalancing).
- 81-00 SPRINGING SPIKE. This consists of a light trip wire which acts as a trigger for a horizontal beam to swing into a walker's path with an impaling spike set at 4' high, whilst from the other side a net of large rocks is released at head level. Attacks as: one +80 spear attack and one to six +40MRa attacks.

These traps are extremely hard (-30) to detect, but if under pressure, Hannei herself must roll to see if she can set them correctly (SM +40). The traps take 5, 2 and 15 minutes respectively to set up.

Magical spells applicable to this category include *Animal Sleep* (1PP), useful if the characters are mounted or are using beasts to track her, such as hawks or dogs; or *Animal Mastery* (5PP) to turn friendly beasts against their master. She may also make use of her *Light* (3PP) or *Projected Light* (1PP) spells in varying colors. Each of these spells lasts 50 minutes and could be used to produce some very eerie effects, particularly in the wood at night.



Hannei the Witch

4.0 THE RIDDLE OF RIDORTHU

This adventure uses much of the same material and setting described in the first adventure, *The Phantom In the Woods* (see Section 3.0). Many of the same NPCs may be found, the town of Nothva Rhaglaw is once again the starting point of the adventure, and the locales mentioned are used again. Therefore, it is advised that you read Sections 3.2 and 3.3 as well as all the details of this adventure before running *The Riddle of Ridorthu*.

4.1 THE TALE OF RIDORTHU

Away to the east of Nothva Rhaglaw rise the Ettendales; bleak hills rolling across the landscape like a sea in bad humour, tossing waves of granite at the sky with crests of dark, twisted trees. Beyond them loom the mighty Misty Mountains, the backbone of northwest Middle-earth, the barrier between Eriador and Rhovanion. The rough and ragged slopes and peaks of the Misty Mountains are cold and blasted by winds and rain throughout the year, making them inhospitable at best and totally uninhabitable in many places. Yet among those grey crags roam strange creatures. Other forces than the weather have shaped the mountains, and if beings do live there, they are so secluded and shunned by the Free Peoples as to be reduced to the status of legends and objects of folklore. All the same, legends may sometimes prove true...

One day, a farmer of Nothva Rhaglaw rose from his snug bed and kissed his wife good morning. He took his favorite hazel switch and went down to the byre and drove his beautiful roan cattle down to the Rhaglaw to drink, only to discover a set of huge foot prints in the muddy bank. He measured them with his stick and was staggered as he realized that these footprints were a yard long. The farmer didn't stay around to find out what had made them, but did ascertain that they came out of the east and passed perilously close to the town during the night. He fled into the town to warn the people and soon a crowd was hammering on the door of the Thegn's house. When a sleepy Althora opened the shutters to find out what all the fuss was about, everyone suddenly remembered that Walvoric was away at the court of the King in Arthedain with all the best warriors in the levy. With the Thegn in Fornost, the responsibility for the town's safety rested with old Bessandis. The crowd moved on to Bessandis' house and she came out into the street and told them all to go home and stop worrying; there would be a Mot starting at noon.

In the Morthalla, discussion and debate raged. Other folk had been down to the river to examine the footprints, which seemed to head for the Witbeamwyd. They all concurred as to the size of the footprints but disagreed as to their origin. Bessandis, although good at organizing, did not have the courage to suggest she lead an expedition to find what was disturbing the peace, and could find no volunteers. The Mot dissolved without resolving the crisis, offering only the advice to stay indoors at night. The gatehouse guards were told to keep a sharp eye out.

The next day, a cow and goat were reported stolen. Huge dents in the ground were found near where they had been tethered. Over the next few nights the fears of the townsfolk grew as there were further thefts from isolated farms and animal sheds. The foul deeds were perpetrated all the way from Nothva Rhaglaw to Gersebroc and practically everyone who had been out had seen the huge marks of the "thing's" feet, yet no one had so much as glimpsed it. Some said it was a massive Troll, others an invisible ghost. Farmers reported feeling the earth tremble at night with enormously heavy thuds. Concern grew, and there was no sign of Walvoric's return.



Ridorthu the Stone-giant

Then one day, a shepherd by the name of Fottred was found knocked unconscious and his flock raided. The poor man was taken to Odelard's house where she healed his wounds, but he remains so terrified that he cannot speak even now. Witbert advised Bessandis to seek some help to discover what or who is causing this destruction and recruit them to rid the area of it.

The intruder is that legendary creature, a Stone-giant, known to the Northmen as *stan-eotenans*. Ridorthu (Du. "*Rhydordhû*") the Stone-giant is a young and inquisitive youth. He is adventuresome and, on growing tired of his mountain home and argumentative parents, struck out on his own to discover the rest of the world. Having roamed the Ettendales for a while and found nothing more interesting than a few Trolls to fight, he has arrived by chance in the area and found a plentiful food supply — the herds kept by local farmers — but does not understand why they are so much easier than deer and elk to bring down, nor has he realized the annoyance he is making of himself.

Ridorthu has settled into a cozy cave almost at the summit of one of the great hills in the Witbeamwyd. He has enlarged it (using his giantish skills and strength) and sleeps there most of the day, being an essentially nocturnal creature.

4.2 THE NPCs

Like the folk found in *Phantom of the Woods*, the principal actors in this tale are a varied group of Eriadorans from Rhudaur and parts nearby.

4.21 WITBERT AND ODELARD

Both of these NPCs are described in the first adventure (see Sections 3.21 and 3.23).

4.22 BESSANDIS

Bessandis is the mother of Gadhordag, the innkeeper at the Limpid Pool, the inn where she resides. A lesser Dúnadan, she was once a keen warrior and fought against the armies of the Witch-king on several occasions. Her family has run the inn for many years, but when her husband died she handed over the business to her son and she takes a greater hand in town affairs. She sits on the Witanmot and acts for Walvoric when he is absent. She is also responsible for training young members to serve in the town levy.

She is now 62. Her Dúnadan blood has blessed her with a long life, and she is still healthy, strong, and intelligent. She wears her long, black hair tied back in a ponytail and few lines wrinkle her face. She is now a lot more cautious however, and the Dúnedain's fear of mortality gnaws at her bones. She would not risk herself in anything other than a direct threat to the town. However, while Walvoric is away, she proudly wears her white fur of office across her shoulders and carries her splendid long-handled axe around her to twirl in the face of an audience.

Notable Skills: *Brewing 60, Perception 40, Leadership & Influence 20. Languages:* *Westron 5, Dunael 2, Sindarin 2, Orkish 1.*

4.23 IOVIN & ALNOTH

Iovin and Alnoth are a pair of Dúnedain twins. With their jet black hair, hazel eyes and identical features they roam the trade routes and towns of Arthedain, earning a living as bards: reciting poetry, telling jokes and tall stories generally lightening the atmosphere wherever they choose to stop. They are well travelled and even known in places like Bree and Nothva Rhaglaw. They claim to have visited Lindon, Rivendell, Lórien, Tharbad and Rohan on their journeys, and carry tales from all these places to back up the claim.

The twins are generally pleasant and peaceful in their outlook and will not make trouble. Each has indential abilities and carries a longsword and shortbow, but they wear no armor and ride only light horses of a pale gold color. Their dress by choice is a variety of colored cloaks and shirts with black breeches. Both like gold jewelry as well. Although somewhat unscrupulous they are at heart an honest pair, and only occasionally steal to get by — choosing as their mark someone they know to be greedy, dishonest or very rich.

These bards should be used as a source of information as well as entertainment. Their special skill in Lays gives them a chance to know some pertinent historical, legendary or purely allegorical reference to any given subject, although a difficulty penalty should be applied to rolls for information on more specific subjects.

NOTE: *The form the information comes in may be a song, a tale, a riddle, a poem, a drama, and joke or even a horror story! Simply roll a SM (static maneuver) as with any Secondary Skill, with a successful roll yielding some tidbit of knowledge concerning the given subject.*

Notable Skills: *Public-speaking 60, Lays 35, Stalk/Hide 27, Leadership & Influence 25. Languages:* *Adünaic 5, Westron 5, Sindarin 5, Quenya 3, Dunael 3, Eothrik 3, Kuduk 3.*

4.24 DUNHEUET

Dunheuet might be Eowyn's predecessor in spirit, an indomitable daughter of Eriadorian Northmen, skilled in swordsmanship and a warrior-maiden as beautiful as any seen in any time.

Dunheuet is a figure best described as enigmatic in her own simplicity. She is still very young (24, as old as Eowyn) and has reached the full flower of her beauty, enough to make any man's blood race with desire for her. Yet her strong will and warrior's upbringing means that she finds it extremely hard to get on with anyone. She has a very pleasant demeanour, is well-mannered and both courteous and chivalrous, yet she cannot help passing over all that meet her in a search of the perfect man, so disappointment is sure to follow.

She also seeks to test herself against all manner of evils, for only in danger has she found excitement and satisfaction so far. Her extraordinary talents include smithing; the sword she carries she made herself. This gives it a +10 bonus when she (and she alone) wields it. It is a smaller version of the broc, and can be used one- or two-handed. She also wears a suit of chainmail she made, and over it a tabard of fine blue silk matching her piercing eyes. She stands 5'8" tall and is fairly slender (weighing just 130 lbs) but with cordlike strength coiled in her arms.

Notable Skills: *Smithing 45, Ride 38, Stalk/Hide 20, Perception 20. Languages:* *Westron 5, Dunael 3, Adünaic 2, Orkish 1. Special Ability:* *Resist Pain (only loses consciousness when "hits taken" reaches 150% of "hit total").*



Dunheuet the Warrior

4.25 SIBROC

Sibroc is a minor Dunnish agent and spy for the Witch-king of Angmar and is often enlisted to aid the King of Angmar, who now serves that evil master. Sibroc's main activities include information gathering, assassination and sabotage. Skilled in the silent killing arts, his specialty is the poisoned Neldil (S: "Three-spike"), a small flat star-shaped weapon that is thrown from the hand. Just 2.5" across, it flies like a dagger and injects its coating of poison on any critical result. He always carries at least 10 of these weapons secreted about his body and clothes.

As an assassin, Sibroc is very effective. He can get out of almost any situation through judicious use of his maneuver skills, and can get at the best-guarded target using climbing, stalking, hiding and spells. As well as a moderately extensive knowledge of poisons, Sibroc also knows how to fight man-to-man (and never fights "fair"!). He prefers to use a weapon akin to the Dúnnish weeb — a flanged face which can also be thrown (Base Range 10', weight 4 lbs). Sibroc's poison lore encompasses:

— **Poisons:** *Lawrim* paste; the vicious *Jegga* (level 7; causes 1-100 concussion hits) made in Angmar; *Taynaga* bark powder (level 8; sterilizes and gives 5-50 hits); and concentrated venom of the red-starred spider (level 10; causes total paralysis and slow liquefaction), known as *Pitsyuit*.

Any evil activities undertaken by Sibroc within 3 miles of Gersebroc (including the two Wyds and the town) will be subject to the counter-ing effect of Gerse and may be caused to fail automatically or suffer a penalty of up to -80. However, acts which are only indirectly evil (such as persuading someone else to do an evil act), or which have no bearing on the welfare of the local inhabitants, are not so affected. Thus, self-serving or evil-intentioned characters will not be protected from Sibroc by Gerse's charms.

Sibroc readily adopts disguises, dressing as a typical Dunlending, Hillman or rural Eriadorian depending on his needs. His hair and eyes are both an undistinguished brown, and relies on his own unremarkable appearance to enable him to get away with murder...

Notable Skills: *Climb* 96, *Stalk* 90, *Hide* 75, *Acrobatics* 75, *Track* 57, *Tumbling* 55, *Perception* 61, *Pick Lock* 34, *Swim* 27, *Disarm Trap* 24. **Languages:** *Dunael* 5, *Westron* 4, *Morbeth (Black Speech)* 3. **Spell Lists:** *Unbarring Ways*, *Spirit Mastery*. **Base Spells OB:** +0. **Directed Spells OB:** +30.



Sibroc the Assassin

STATS FOR NPCS IN "THE RIDDLE OF RIDORTHU"

Name	Lvl	Hits	AT	DB	Sh	Gr	Melee OB	Missile OB	Mov M	Notes
Bessandis ST81,AG60,CO74,IG76,IT51,PR68,AP&48. +5 axe.	3	53	CH	25	Y25	N	57ha	34da	0	Lesser Dúnadan female Warrior/Fighter.
Iovin/Alnoth ST71,AG68,CO38,IG59,IT53,PR90,AP75. Twins.	2	34	No	0	N	N	27ls	17sb	5	Dúnadain Bards.
Dunhuët ST90,AG44,CO86,IG31,IT65,PR75,AP99. Also uses: 59bs with a shield (DB:40).	3	86	CH	15	N	A/L	74th	29sp	5	Northwoman Warrior/Fighter.
Sibroc ST80,AG96,CO60,IG95,IT63,PR43,AP63. 14PP. +10 weeb. 12 neldili. Lawrim (5), Jegga(3), Taynaga(3), Pitsyuit(3). Also uses: 30sp.	7	55	No	15	N	N	67weeb	67neldil	25	DunlendingScout/Assassin-thief.
Ridorthu Use "Large Creatures" Critical tables CT-10 and CT-11. Thrown rocks (Ro) have same range as a longbow.	14	290	RL	30	N	N	135HRa	105Ro(LCr)	10	(Rhydordhû) Stone-giant Warrior/Fighter.

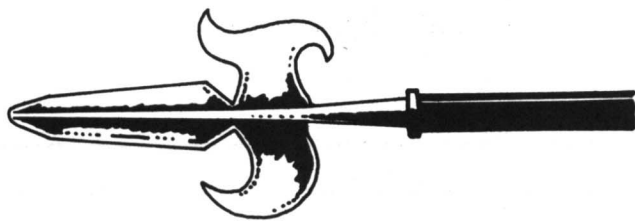
4.26 RIDORTHU OF BRIN COCH

Ridorthu is a young Stone-giant warrior from a high and remote place in the Misty Mountains known as Brin Coch. He stands 14' tall and has heavy arms and legs, greyish skin and a craggy appearance — rather frightening at first sight, but capable of mellowing into a welcoming smile of folds and dimples. Like all Giants, he prefers night-time or gloomy, stormy and cloudy days to the bright sun, but does sometimes venture out during the day. He dresses in a roughly-stitched jerkin of bear hides and breeches of tanned goatskin, and carries a rather large and stout staff of pine and a shoulder sack.

Ridorthu's outlook on life is a little different than that of other Giants. He is not particularly interested in gathering a horde and, although he enjoys shouting and hurling rocks around, he has become bored with mountain life. He has no brothers or sisters and his parents don't get on too well together. For a Giant, he is quite intelligent and seeks something more from his hitherto isolated existence. Of course he doesn't really know what this might be — perhaps a suitable mate to settle down with (though he's not too struck on the idea of marriage yet), a wider appreciation and understanding of nature, a worthwhile task for him to accomplish, or an answer to the meaning of life itself.

Because of these feelings, Ridorthu has grown interested in men and other Free Peoples. He has become considerably more compassionate than most Giants — for example, he was quite sorry to have accidentally struck down the shepherd, and made sure he was alright before leaving him. Of course, the close attention of an enormous creature that has just flattened you isn't too good for mental stability, but Ridorthu wasn't to know that. At the moment, Ridorthu is enjoying life in the Witbeamwyd with its plentiful supply of "wild" game, but he will certainly resent the intrusion of company.

He has not had much experience in Mannish ways. He speaks very slowly and enjoys loud, brash music. Both of these traits might make him seem more barbaric than he is. He is most fond of thunderstorms, riddle games and tasty food. He also enjoys tests of skill like stone-throwing, a superstitious favorite among his Giant kin, particularly during storms. (A selection of his riddles and other notes for an encounter with Ridorthu are found in Section 4.52.)



4.3 LAYOUT OF RIDORTHU'S LAIR IN THE WITBEAMWYD

An outline description of the Witbeamwyd is contained in Section 3.33; its extent is mapped on the area map. The Wyd now bears some scars as a result of its occupant: trampled saplings, branches knocked and torn from trees and so on. There are several trails emanating from the hill known as Pen-Hag out of the Wyd and into the vales to the south and east.

LAYOUT OF PEN-HAG

Pen-Hag is one of a pair of hills rising on the west side of the Witbeamwyd, the other being Pen-Hum. Pen-Hum is the highest point in the Wyd, just to the south of Pen-Hag. Both are exposed hilltops surmounted by granite outcrops known as *tors*; from either a good view of the surrounding countryside can be had. Pen-Hag is almost directly west of the magnificent Tateshalla, which also stands free of trees in a sheltered vale (see Section 5.33). The two hills are regarded with superstition by the local inhabitants; they are reputedly haunted, or home to sacred spirits who protect the Wyd.

1. Pen-Hag. This is the tor on the summit of Pen-Hag. An outcropping of huge granite blocks, like those of Pen-Drebi and Pen-Hum, it is weathered and worn smooth by the elements. It requires a hard (-10) MM to climb, but from the top of the 18' high block there is an excellent view all around. The stones are unremarkable and untouched by human hand. All around are smaller, more splintered lumps of rock and boulders, and only the toughest grasses grow here with a few clumps of hard flowers. In a rain or thunderstorm, or a high wind, the summit can be a frightening and even dangerous place.

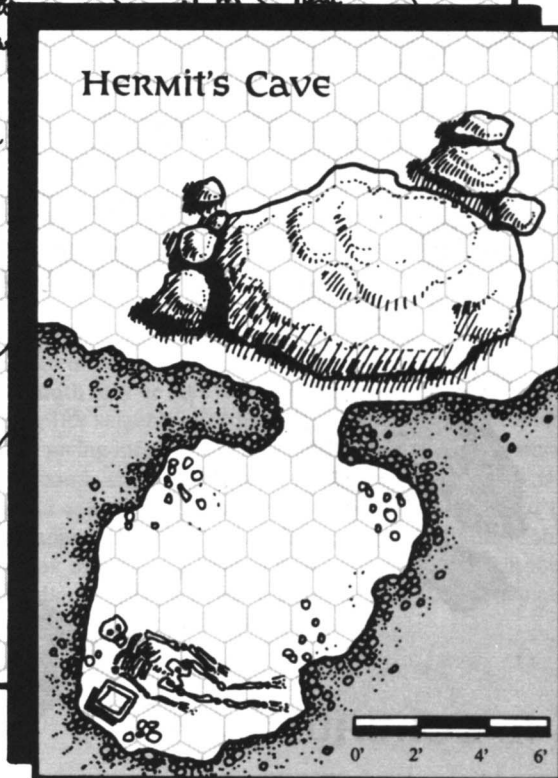
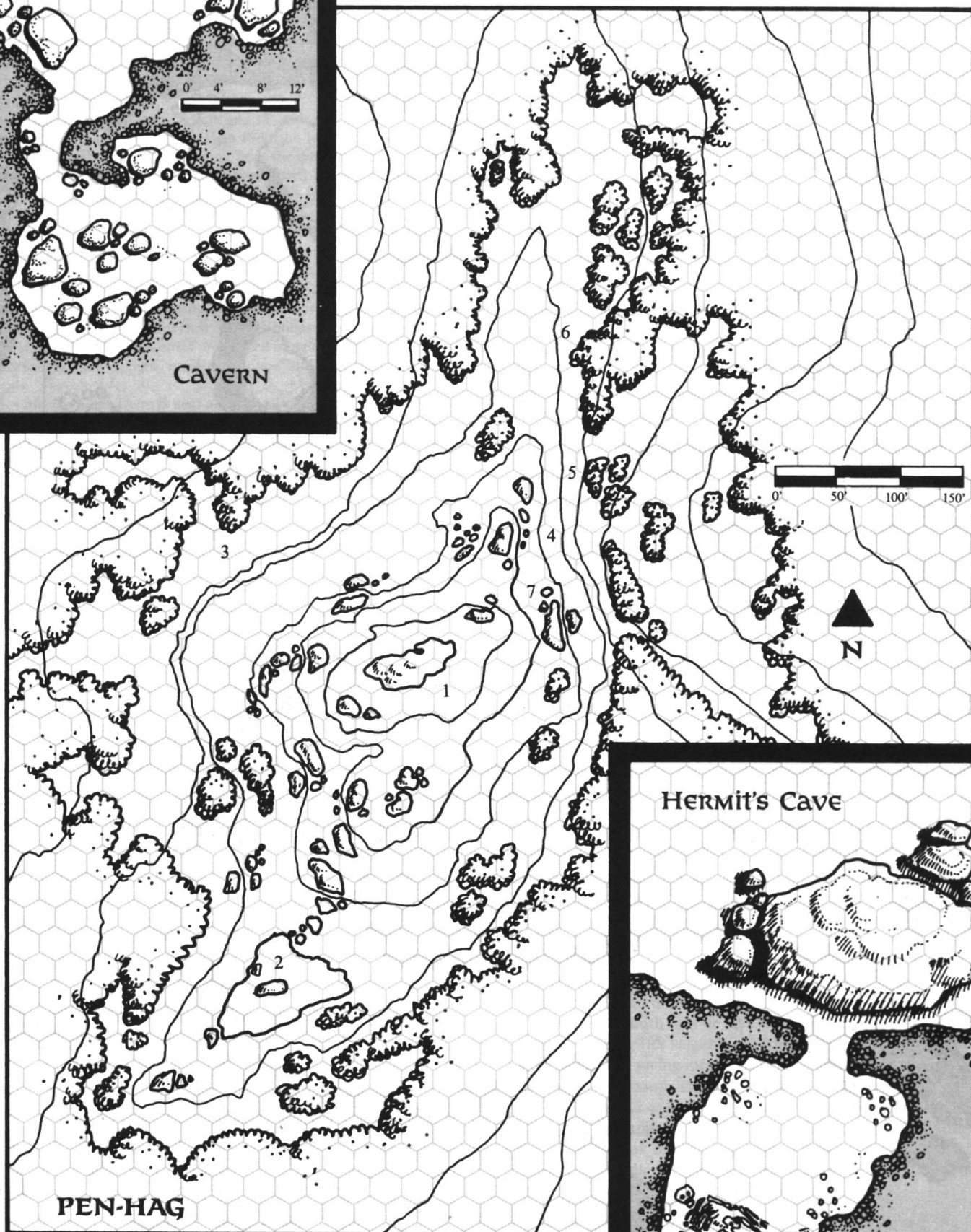
2. Little Tor. This is another, smaller tor. It stands but 12' high and from a distance resembles a standing stone such as those erected by the Dunmen and their Daen Coentis forefathers. Close up, however, it is obviously a natural feature.

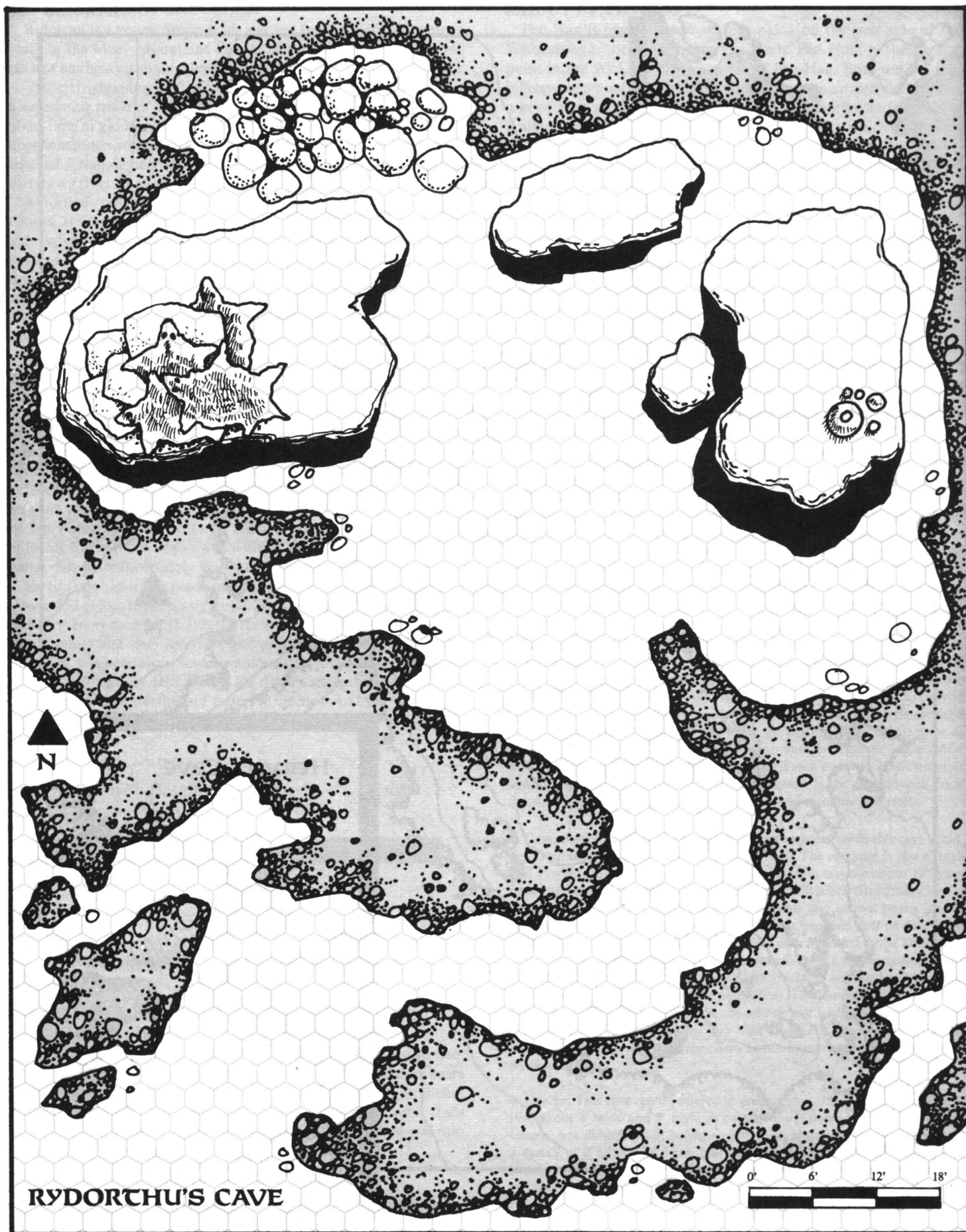
3. Western Cliff. This steep rock face guards the northwest flank of Pen-Hag. It rises between 8' and 22', with many cracks and clefts, but is too steep to scramble up — a proper climbing maneuver would be called for. In the evening many birds and a few bats flit around here basking in the last of the sunshine before roosting in tiny holes and cavelets. Jumbled rocks at the base of the cliff and hidden splits and loose sections make it rather dangerous to climb on or over: a very hard (-20) MM. None of the caves or clefts is big enough to get inside (except for the smallest Hobbit).

4. Eastern Cliff. This is a larger cliff, facing due east across Tateshalla Vale. Great striated rocks, shorn off nearly vertically, stretch up to 40' high from the huge splintered boulders at the bottom. A few narrow runs of scree reach up about half its height. It would require a sheer folly (-50) MM to try and climb this cliff. Numerous ledges do exist however, and the clefts are used by birds, bats and other small mammals for nesting. Rock plants grow in nooks and crannies and in spring and early summer there are the bright yellow flowers of the rock-creeping vines. If the cliff is seen at dawn, as the sun rises over the ridge to the east, veins of shinging quartz in the granitic rock catch the sun's rays and scatter them like a thousand rainbow waterfalls.

5. Cave. Situated 10' off the ground, the narrow entrance to this cave is hidden from immediate view by a prominent rock. The entrance is just 6' high and 3' wide at the base, tapering upwards. Inside is a space about 12' deep, once used by a Northman hermit. The roof is still black with greasy smoke deposits and the floor is littered with potsherds and animal bones. At the far end of the cave is the skeleton of the hermit, reposed as if he died in his sleep. There are a few rags and bits of dried skin attached to the bones, but these will disintegrate if the body is disturbed. Beside the body is an ivory box (worth 5gp) containing a large quartz crystal (a six-sided prism) and a quantity of dried herb wrapped in parchment. The parchment gives instructions to burn the herb, breathe in the smoke and look into the crystal for a vision of the future. *GM: You may wish to use this to give the PCs a clue as to how to deal with either the Giant in this scenario or the Dragon in the third adventure.*

6. Cavern. This cave can be entered at ground level. Its opening is broad and low, about 8' wide and 5' high. A passage leads down to a boulder-strewn cavern, but diminishes in height to just 3' at one point. In the lair will be a family of 2 adult and 2 cub black bears — and woe betide anyone who disturbs them! At certain times of the year they will be very aggressive, but at other times (such as winter) they will be slothful if awake at all.





7. Ridorthu's Cave. Partially concealed by an outcrop of granite rock is the cave the Stone Giant has chosen to occupy. The entrance is 8' wide and 10' high and bends to the left of the outcropping. Very perceptive characters may notice that the rocks look somehow fashioned into the tunnel shape, though not with any tools that they are familiar with. This is the work of Ridorthu, who possesses the innate ability of all Stone Giants to manipulate the stuff of the earth.

Inside, the tunnel opens to 16' high and 12' wide and passes 30' down to an irregular cave some 60' by 80'. Here Ridorthu is likely to pass the day, and if awake might be heard humming from the outside: a dreadful throbbing and painful rhythmic sound. This may well alarm and confuse the characters even more! He does not often sleep, but is more likely to the warmer it gets.

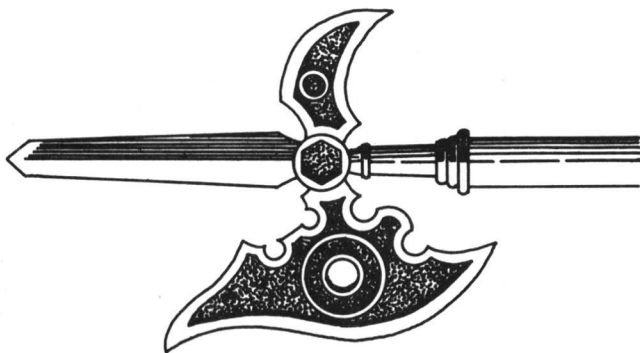
In the cave are few furnishings — a tall stone slab for a table and a lower one for a bed, the latter piled with washed sheep skins and a few furs. Nearby is small pile of boulders suitable for throwing when the mood takes him. There is also a loose stone slab concealing a hole in the floor. This slab is very difficult to pick up, requiring a successful absurd (-70) SM roll level: up to 6 characters may combine their Strength bonuses in the attempt to raise it, but if they fail, all risk hernias or strained muscles. In the hole is a large leather sack containing many nuggets of copper and gold, total value 780gp.

— *Marble Slab:* There is also a bluish, circular marble slab some 36" in diameter and 1" thick, weighing 100 lbs. This highly magical item will reveal an inscription in an Elvish-style design around the rim when examined under any magical light source (such as a Light spell, or the radiance of a magic sword or staff, etc.). There are three runic words written in the Angerthas script:

1. "DIR-NEN"
2. "BEN-G U L"
3. "OND-ANNON"

The first is a command which turns the disc into a +20 shield weighing just 5 lbs; it has a handle inside to grasp it and adds its bonus not only to DB but also to RRs against fire or lightning. The second command invokes total protection and insulation from Essence-based magic for anyone standing upon the disc — note that this means that they themselves cannot use Essence magic either. The third command turns the disc into a "stone door", so that when it is placed on a stone surface up to 5' thick, it will open to reveal a portal through the stone.

Each of these runes may be spoken once each day, the first use of each requiring a successful Use Item roll. Each effect lasts 66 rounds and, obviously, they can only be used one at a time. Unfortunately, Ridorthu knows none of these uses.



4.4 THE TASK

This adventure is another kind of hide-and-seek — a dangerous game. The characters have a better idea of what they are looking for, perhaps: a very tall, two-legged creature, possibly invisible, and capable of making very large dents in the ground. They might assume it is an enormous Troll or something equally nasty, and you should not help them at all in trying to guess what they are searching. If anyone mentions Giants to the townsfolk, they will say that Giants are just in children's stories. Iovin and Alnoth might be of more use, providing lore about Giants, but only if asked.

The adventure works best if the characters can be surprised when they eventually come across Ridorthu. Tracking down this creature might be a deal easier than the search for Hannei in the first adventure, but dealing with the Giant is sure to cause more problems.

4.41 STARTING THE PLAYERS

The adventure is best started with the characters who have participated in the first adventure (Section 3.0). However, this is not essential by any means, and if this is the first time that the characters have visited the area the adventure might start when they hear talk of the "Troll" or "beast" that stalks the countryside nearby.

An alternative start is a direct appeal from Bessandis or Witbert to help the town and local inhabitants, either by getting more information on the creature or finding a way to dispose of it. Word of the creature and the reward offered by Bessandis rapidly spreads to surrounding areas and characters may be attracted by the possibility of fame and fortune, as well as doing good deeds. Any PCs chosen from the list of lesser Dúnadan or Northman origin may choose to be locals with a commensurate knowledge of this area (see 3.41).

4.42 AIDS

All the aids described in Section 3.42 are available again in this adventure, except that Alfwald the Ranger is no longer in Nothva Rhaglaw.

Witbert the Priest will offer the same magical protection to those characters who show devotion to the heroes he worships, or any that offer a suitable donation to the Shrine. Alternatively, he could place a *Bless* spell (from the "Protections" spell list) on up to 3 of them using his Ritual skill; a roll must be made for each of the spells, as before.

The warrior-maiden Dunheuet has heard of the evil "beast" stalking the defenseless farmers of Nothva Rhaglaw and has taken it into her head that she must go and fight it to rid the land of this terrible threat. Her proud and formidable appearance may put the player-characters off, but she will join with a party as long as they are respectful toward her, do not make light of the mission and are obedient when she suggests a course of action. However, she will attack the Giant rather than try speaking with it, thinking such a course futile in the extreme and a waste of time.

Iovin and Alnoth may be able to assist the characters in two areas. First, they may offer valuable information on what a Giant is through their Lays skill, giving information on habitat, language, disposition and so on. Second, they will have a fund of riddles which the characters could ask them for so that they are better equipped to play a riddle-game with Ridorthu. As GM, you could simulate this by having a book of riddles to give to your players from which they could select riddles to challenge you with, rather than having to make up their own.

4.43 OBSTACLES

The major obstacle in this adventure is of course Ridorthu himself. He likes the change of scenery here, the food is good and he will not agree that just because some miniscule being asks him to move along, he should. He is rather strong-willed and will offer not to disturb domestic herds and be careful about where he steps as a conciliatory gesture, if necessary, but it will take a good deal of persuasion to be convinced otherwise (treat as Hard (-10) to deal with). If need be, he can defend himself very ably with his massive club and boulder-throwing.

A more subtle, and possibly more serious (to the PCs) threat comes from Sibroc. A Dunnish spy for Angmar, he has heard of the Giant's presence from an informant in Nothva Rhaglaw who keeps him up to date with all the local gossip. He will arrive in town as the PC's start their adventure, and he will attempt to frustrate them in any way possible so that the Giant continues to cause trouble for the good townsfolk.

Sibroc will follow characters using his Stalk/Hide skill. Using magical and normal thieving skills he will pilfer items from them when they sleep or rest, and also seek to alarm and disable them. His overall aim is to sabotage their quest. He is very careful to leave no trace of his passing and will probably be able to evade any pursuit by performing difficult maneuvers impossible for those pursuing to copy.

4.44 REWARDS

The rewards from this adventure are mostly fame — after all, few people even believe in Stone Giants, let alone think about dealing with them. Bessandis and the Witanmot can offer a reward of 100gp for proof of the creature's demise or departure. If the Giant is slain, there will also be his treasure concealed under a slab in his cave and any other plunder the characters happen to find. A party that has served this community well will also have a place of welcome should they need it, offering free board and lodging, and possibly healing and protection. Such things are sometimes worth more than money.

4.5 ENCOUNTERS ON THE TRAIL OF RIDORTHU

Table 6.0 at the rear of the book details possible encounters in different areas. A roll should be made on this table once every three hours, in addition to any fixed encounters that occur in specific locations. Encounters are grouped together on the table. Explanations for the common sorts of encounter are explained in Section 3.51 of the previous adventure.

NOTE: *If the characters stay in the vales around the Wyds long enough to roll for an encounter, use the "Vales" column on Encounter Table 6.0, treating any conflicting result as "Nothing".*

4.51 STANDARD ENCOUNTERS

A) NPCS

Read Section 3.51 A). For additional notes on Ridorthu, see Section 4.52 following. Ignore encounters with Dunheuet if she is accompanying the party at the time. Ignore encounters with Sibroc if he is already following them: see Section H). If he is encountered, he will appear to be a solitary peasant farmer, but this might make the characters suspicious — after all, isn't everyone supposed to be in mortal fear of this "beast"? If Dunheuet has left the party after a disagreement, she will ignore them and refuse to speak with them, unless they reveal to her that they have discovered something about Ridorthu.

B) OTHER FOLK (Read Section 3.51 B).

C) BEASTS

Read Section 3.51 C). Herds will always be tended closely, by one to four shepherds armed with clubs and alarm bells, and possibly missile weapons as well (treat as level 1 Warriors).

E) TRAPS (Read Section 3.51 E).

F) TRACKS

Tracks encountered will be either Ridorthu's or Sibroc's. They will only be found if the party is looking specifically for them and has either not found them before, or failed a previous Tracking roll — i.e., ignore this encounter if the party is not looking for tracks, or is already following trail. A successful Tracking roll will enable the party to follow the tracks discovered in this encounter. A +15 bonus is given to rolls for parties following a trail they have met before. Any tracks found will be quite fresh and can be followed either toward their maker, or to his starting point. Remember to take account of the prevailing weather conditions and the speed of the person followed.

G) NATURAL DANGER (Read Section 3.51 G).

H) NOTHING

No special encounter happens in this three hour period unless Sibroc has caught up with the party. You may wish to relate some secondary event like those described in Section 3.51(H). If Sibroc is following the party, there is a 25% chance he gets a chance to "attack" them. This might be a *Sleep VII* (3PP), a *Suggestion* (5PP) spell, a thrown Neldil coated with Lawrim or Jegga, a sudden violent screech or scream and so on. Be inventive; create an atmosphere of uncertainty. Immobilized characters will be raided for magic items and weapons, and possibly slashed and cut about. Once Sibroc discovers the nature of the creature, he will either "imitate" it and attack the characters, or attempt to put the Giant and the characters into conflict, aiding the Giant! Sibroc is both vicious and merciless, but enjoys playing with characters and tormenting them. Finally, remember Gerse's protection, which (if the characters are good and currently devoted to helping the townsfolk) will extend over them and force most potentially fatal attacks by Sibroc to fail.

4.52 RIDORTHU'S RIDDLES

The Giant may be attracted to the characters by any number of means. They might meet if by chance in the woods or vales, or at home in its cave after following one of the many trails Ridorthu has left. Ridorthu will at first be silent and cautious, particularly of an overly martial party, or one that seems intent on doing him harm. However, he is quite willing to make friends: a gift such as a splendid meal of roast elk or stag would provoke a very positive reaction from him.

Once the characters have gotten on speaking terms with him, Ridorthu will only comply with any requests (such as asking him to leave) if the characters are very persuasive, or if they beat him in a trial of skill or wit. Two trials of skill that Ridorthu would immediately agree with are strength (although it is doubtful whether any character could take him on!) and missile accuracy. He might be willing to compare his rock-throwing skill with a longbow, since both have the same range. Ridorthu will set up a series of targets 150, 250 and 350 yards away, and each competition will take 5 shots at each target.

A trial of wit means a riddle-game to the Giant. Ridorthu's riddles are listed in order below. Players must think of riddles for their characters to ask him, and you as GM will have to try and guess them. The Giant will be the arbiter of dubious riddles, if the player-characters want to argue about it. If the players guess all 5 of Ridorthu's riddles, they will win (pretend to be stumped by their fifth riddle if necessary), and he will agree to leave the farmers and citizens of Nothva Rhaglaw in peace. He will also, as a thank you to the entertaining characters, leave them a memento — one nugget of gold each, worth 5-30gp, plus a statue of himself.

For the latter, he will mount the hill and from the top on top of Pen-Hag tear a huge chunk of rock, as big as himself. This he will shape — using his hands — into his own form (after carrying it down the hill and through the wood into the town). The statue will be planted in the center of the Green as a gesture of friendship. Naturally, the townsfolk will be madly alarmed and afraid, locking themselves in their homes, screaming and fainting when the Stone Giant walks through the streets! You may wish to have Thegn Walvoric ride back into town with his band of armed men and women at this point, and a conflict is likely if the characters do not prevent it quickly.

Ridorthu will then wander off northwards towards Angmar, and nothing more will be heard from him, except in legend and lore.

NOTE: *If Ridorthu is attacked by anyone at any time, he will defend himself vigorously. He has absolutely no qualms about squashing pesky little man-things, and neither should you as GM. If characters get killed fighting the Stone-giant, it's nothing more than they deserve.*

THE RIDDLES

1. *Grey as a mouse
Big as a house
Nose like a snake
I make the earth shake.* (ANSWER: Oliphaunt)
2. *It comes a voiceless breath
Like smokeless smoke.
Swallowing the earth
And shielding the folk.* (ANSWER: Fog)
3. *It starts bright and tall
and is oft seen to fall;
It gets shorter and flatter
And broader and fatter.
When it is narrow
It's swift as an arrow;
But when it is slow
It's bent like a bow.* (ANSWER: River)
4. *Tall and Small,
Dark and Light,
Good and Evil,
They flee and fight.* (ANSWER: Man)
5. *He who wears them not for weighing
He who bears them not for braying
His speech withers the ears
And his eyes are all-seers.* (ANSWER: Dragon)

5.0 GERSE'S-BANE

This adventure is set (like the others) in the environs of Nothva Rhaglaw. Sections 3.0 and 4.0 contain much useful and pertinent information for the running of this adventure and should be read thoroughly. All locations are sited on the area map and detailed in Sections 3.3, 4.3 or below. It is suggested that you run this adventure for characters who have been through the two earlier scenarios, or who have plenty of experience elsewhere. This is easily the most dangerous of the three adventures presented here.

5.1 THE TALE OF AIVNEC AND GELLIR

The travellers who go north from Nothva Rhaglaw must be both brave and strong, for they will encounter ever steeper hills and ever more hostile inhabitants until they reach the Ettenmoors and the jagged peaks of the northern Misty Mountains. Here dwell, for the most part, only the cruellest and toughest creatures, on the borders of Angmar. In times past, many Dwarves lived in the area and delved into the deep-rooted mountains to find their precious hidden treasures. Now they are almost all replaced by Orcs and Trolls....and Dragons!

There was a Dwarf named Gelir that lived long in these inhospitable parts. He was brave and strong, and worked out the end of old mines and ore seams, searching for caches of rubies and emeralds hidden from thieving, evil plunderers. One day Gelir was unfortunate enough to investigate a cave occupied by a huge sleeping Dragon. Needless to say, the Dragon immediately awoke, intensely disliking the smell of Dwarf. Captured, Gelir tried to bargain with the fiery drake for his life, yielding up all his collected wealth of gems and nuggets of gold. The booty was insufficient to Aivnec (the Dragon) who, although without much of a horde himself as yet, felt insulted by the offer. The Drake desired more, his rapacious and acquisitive nature inflamed by the Dwarf's talk of treasure. Gelir told the Dragon of all the treasure hoards he knew of at Aivnec's urging. Each one the Dragon considered and rejected. All were either too far away for him to reach (for he had no wings and could not fly), or too strongly defended. — The Dragon was, as he admitted (if only to himself), still young and a mere stripling beside relations who had been hewn into a disturbing number of pieces by upstart Elves and men. — But then, Gelir mentioned the Tateshalla.

The terrified Dwarf, almost convinced of his own doom, had been making each description more luridly excessive and wildly extravagant than the last. He portrayed the Tateshalla as a huge hall of a hundred Northman kings, roofed with gold and stuffed with unimaginable treasures. Well, not unimaginable to Aivnec, you understand, since Dragons have a very *large* imagination when it comes to gold, silver, mithril and other finery. Now, said Gelir, the Tateshalla stands abandoned in a wood guarded only by the piffling ghosts of its former occupants.

Aivnec locked down his magnificent snout, wisps of smoke curling from each nostril like an elegant moustache, and thanked the trembling Dwarf for the information. Then with one huge bite, he snapped his jaws and Gelir was gone. And that is the last part that Gelir plays in our story. That's what you get for exaggerating, said Aivnec to himself. But his mind was made up — he certainly would investigate the Tateshalla.

And so Aivnec the Dragon came to Nothva Rhaglaw. Crawling and wriggling he made his way from mountain cleft to high ravine, through rocky valleys to the Oiolad. Sentries and guards of Angmar reported its rushing, fiery passage in the most horrified terms and the Witch-king laughed, hoping that the Drake would cause harm to his enemies wherever it went.

AIVNEC'S PROGRESS

This section should serve as a guide to the early stages of Aivnec's destructive invasion of the Nothva Rhaglaw area. If characters are in the area at this time, they may witness these events or even try to change them. It is important that the characters do not kill the Dragon too early on, however — if they manage to wound him, he will flee, returning shortly.

The First Day

Aivnec arrives in the area early in the morning, coming first upon Gersebroc. He burns every building there and only Odelard escapes. Witbert is slain defending the Shrine. The Drake overcomes the magical protection of Gerse, but unwittingly releases the *Gersebroc* (the sword of Gerse) from the icy heart it was embedded in (such is the heat of the Dragon's fire) and then overlooks it in haste. After frightening off several people and devouring some herd animals, Aivnec then heads into the Witbeamwyd, leaving a trail of destruction, and discovers the Tateshalla. Feeling tired and sated, he merely sits in front of the Tateshalla and examines its magical defenses. The Dragon sleeps lightly on the top of the hill behind the hall.

The Second Day

Aivnec awakens at first light and spies the town. Immediately, he races down the hill and through the wood toward the town, perceiving the men of Nothva Rhalaw as the only threat to himself. Thegn Walvoric has drawn up the full levy of all able bodied men and women by the river on the rise beside the Hunter's Lodge, where they courageously meet the Dragon, only to be utterly destroyed by him: some of them being slain outright, others chased and pursued, burnt and mangled. After this furious and terrible onslaught of fire and fang, Aivnec rampages through the town.

NOTE: *The GM may wish to have the Dragon injured to make him easier for the characters to fight.*

Many townsfolk flee to isolated farmsteads and nearby villages; others are killed in the defense of their homes. When all resistance is quelled, Aivnec returns to the Witbeamwyd and the Tateshalla. In the afternoon Thenesleag comes home from an extended hunting trip and finds the destruction wrought by the Drake. He discovers his father's body and claims *Carelsbroc*, and also the bodies of his many comrades. Even old Bassandis has lost her life in valiant battle.

Third Day

The Dragon concentrates on the magic protecting the hall, and succeeds in breaking the spells the Númenorean Mage, Olpessa, wove about it. He blasts his way through the copper doors and takes up residence inside. From now on he stays here most of the time, making occasional forays into town and other settlements to search for treasure to amass. Thenesleag starts trying to find someone to help him slay Aivnec.

5.2 THE NPC's

Since this adventure is a lot more straightforward than either of the other two, there are fewer NPC's. Of those already described (in Sections 3.2 and 4.2), Odelard and Thenesleag are the only locals of note to have survived. Of the outsiders, you may wish to include Dunheuet in this adventure if she either was omitted from the second adventure, or performed well and stayed attached to the village. See also the Section on Aids (5.42) for more information on these NPC's.

5.2.1 AIVNEC THE FIRE DRAKE

Aivnec is a fairly young and inexperienced Dragon. Yet, he is no less a formidable foe. He has bright red scales, a golden-orange underneath and scarlet on his crest. From the tip of his snout to the end of his tail is 90 feet, and he stands 18' at the shoulder. His legs are more powerful than those of many Dragons since he has no wings and therefore moves everywhere on his feet. Aivnec can speak but knows no magic. He has fiery breath capable of being used in two ways, as a ball or bolt, and can breathe once every 6 rounds (once a minute), a maximum of 5 times in any one hour and 12 times in a day.

Practically the only way to kill Aivnec is through a lucky critical strike. He can dish out massive amounts of damage to anyone who comes near him. PCs should only think of approaching him when they have a large amount of protection from his breath weapon **and** a powerful offense, such as the *Gersebroc*. When the characters first meet him, stress Aivnec's massive size, his armor-plated scales and the destruction he has already wreaked, so that if PCs do get themselves killed by him, at least they had fair warning. The mere appearance of the Dragon in an aroused state forces all viewers to make a 10th level RR (use Presence bonus). Failure by 1-50 means they will run in terror; failure by 51-100 results in either fainting or being frozen in place for 1-10 rounds; failure by 101+ results in a heart attack.

NOTE: *In order to determine the effects of the heart attack, roll another RR (modified by Co bonus). Failure of this RR results in death. A successful RR results in the victim merely being completely immobilized for 1-50 weeks.*

Remember that like all Dragons, Aivnec possesses very delicate senses and can smell an invisible person and hear anyone creeping up behind him (+ 100 to such Perception rolls). He will not hesitate to do his utmost to slay and devour anyone approaching him. If he is attacked, his initial response will be to rear up on his hind legs and breathe a fireball (or bolt if there is but a single opponent). He will then crash mightily down from 40 or 50 feet, his impact causing a + 59 Unbalancing attack (roll on Table AT-6 and give Unbalancing criticals) on everything within 100'. Anyone who takes damage

STATS FOR NPC's in "GERSE'S BANE"

Name	Lvl	Hits	AT	DB	Sh	Gr	Melee OB	Missile OB	Mov M	Notes
------	-----	------	----	----	----	----	-------------	---------------	-------	-------

Aivnec	21	299	Pl/12	45	N	Y	see below	Flame Br.	20(MF)	Young wingless Dragon.
--------	----	-----	-------	----	---	---	-----------	-----------	--------	------------------------

Use "Large Creatures" Critical tables CT-10 and CT-11 with an additional -10 modification. *Melee attacks:* Bite(105HBi), 2 Claws(115LCI), Tail(100LBa). *Flame Breath:* 90Firebolt or 50Fireball (1x/6rnd., 5x/hour, 12x/day).

Gerse	16	172	No/4	50	N	N	110We	—	40(VF)	Greater Ghost.
-------	----	-----	------	----	---	---	-------	---	--------	----------------

Use "Large Creatures" Critical tables CT-10 and CT-11, and ignore all "stun" and "hits/rnd" results. All within 10' must resist or lose 5 points of CO each round (recover at 1pt/hour). Also uses: 95LBa. May assume non-solid form at will (can pass through solid material); when non-solid it may not attack, but it is immune to attacks from non-magic weapons and only takes half damage from non-solid attacks (e.g., flame breath, spells, etc.).

from this must also make a Hard (-10) MM roll to avoid falling over. Those unaffected by the UB attack have one free round to attack Aivnec before the Drake himself recovers — or, if they have any sense, to flee clear away!

Normally in melee, each round Aivnec can use:

- 1) his breath and (a claw or his tail) **or**
- 2) his bite and a claw and his tail **or**
- 3) both claws and his tail

If more than one attack (possibly against a single opponent) occurs, each attack is a -15 per extra attack. He will also breathe as much as possible. Aivnec's only weak points are his eyes and his initial attack: should someone know what his strategy is (having seen him in action before), they will realize there are two possibilities. First, someone prepared for the shock of his impact could arrange to avoid it and get in a useful strike in the round that Aivnec falls, a very hard Moving Maneuver. Second, a clever person might try to set a heavy spear or sword under him when he crashes down, as his own weight would almost certainly mean that the weapon would pierce his hide and perhaps reach some internal organ, as long as it didn't break or slip.

NOTE: To determine the results of such an attack first roll (1-100, open-ended) and add the holder's Presence bonus: the weapon slips if the result is less than 20; then add double the weapon's bonus, the weapon breaks if the second result is less than 40 (the weapon can both slip and break). If the weapon did not slip or break, make a normal attack roll with an additional +100 to its OB, and add an additional +20 to any resulting critical roll. However, anyone holding such a weapon (even if it slips or breaks) is subject to one to three +250 Huge Crush attacks from the falling colossus!

Notable Skills: Breathe Fireball OB: +50 (+70 at center of target), max range 150'; diameter 50'; Breathe Firebolt OB +90, max range 300'; single target only; Totally invulnerable to fire; half damage from all other elemental attacks except cold; Constitution 102. **Languages:** Westron 4, Sindarin 4.

5.22 GERSE

Gerse's story is told elsewhere. His ghost is said to be the one thing which protects Nothva Rhaglaw and the surrounding area. The spirit is also the one thing which stands a good chance of destroying Aivnec. However, let the characters have a go first, since if Gerse and Aivnec fight and the Dragon wins, Gerse's protective influence over the area will quickly fade and another restraint on Angmar will disappear. Aivnec will then sack the Tateshalla, and everyone will see the falseness of the tale of King Gotshelm returning to save his people in their time of need.

Gerse will normally appear as a shifting, near-invisible figure of a truly heroic Northman. To evil creatures and men, he can reveal himself in a terrifying undead guise, equivalent to a 16th level Fear attack. RR failure by 01-30 causes the viewer to stand immobile for 1 round; then attempt the RR again. Failure by 31+ causes the viewer to flee in utter terror for 10 minutes (60 rounds). The ghostly figure can also *Entrance* any viewer (equivalent to combined *Hold* and *Calm* spells) at 16th level, the effect lasting a number of rounds equal to their RR failure. Unfortunately for Gerse, Aivnec resists such effects as if he were 32nd level.



AIVNEC the Fire Drake

Gerse's one aim is to protect the area; indeed, this objective is the sole reason for his spirit remaining on Middle-earth as an undead being. Heretofore, this has mainly been accomplished by a magical power he acquired after death, through being worshipped. His spirit, which was already strongly bound to this place by his oath to defend it against all evil, now exerts a 16th level influence over a 5-mile radius of his tomb, and anyone failing to resist on entering will suffer penalties of up to -80 on any activity detrimental to the well-being of the inhabitants.

In the few cases where evil has broken this barrier, his sudden appearance has always put an end to its plans, scaring away Trolls, Orcs and Wargs. However, with the coming of Aivnec, Gerse's influence might be destroyed or disrupted permanently. So far, Gerse has only manifested himself in incorporeal, spirit form. Now, he will raise up his corpse in order to wield a real weapon against this foe, as he would have done were he alive. His spirit will cloak the corpse to appear as the "normal" ghost described above. He will naturally prefer to fight with his own sword, *Gersebroc*, but if this is gone he will use an ordinary two-handed sword.

Gersebroc

Gersebroc (Old Nth: "Gerse's sword") is Gerse's magic weapon. It is a special sword, over 6' long, of the type traditionally used by Eriadorian Northmen over the centuries. The blade is 4' long in the main section. A further 12" of blade is separated by cross-piece with spikes extending 12" from each side. The section above the cross-piece is unsharpened. The hilt is wooden and 15" long, bound with the toughest leather. At the end is a 3" diameter ball pommel. This is a steel sphere encrusted with polished silver and laen facets, a ball which also serves as a counterweight.

The broc requires a minimum strength of 95 to wield properly, although a character of strength 90-94 could pick it up and use it as a two-handed spear with half the magical bonuses listed below. It weighs 28 lbs. *Gersebroc* is a +20 two-handed sword that is +30 vs Orcs. Trolls and similar evil "intelligent" creatures and treated as a Holy Weapon for criticals. Against Dragons and Fell-beasts it is +40 and treated as a Slaying Weapon for criticals.

Until Aivnec burns the Shrine where it stands, *Gersebroc* is unusable since it has a frozen Cold-drake's heart impaled on it just below the cross-pieces. The heart resembles cold amber and weighs 50 lbs.



5.3 LAYOUT OF GERSEBROC AND THE VALE OF TATESHALLA

The locals consider Gersebroc and the Tateshalla to be enchanted places imbued with the spirit of the land and its heroes.

5.31 LAYOUT OF THE VILLAGE OF GERSEBROC

Gersebroc lies to the north of Nothva Rhaglaw along the road running to the east of the Witbeamwyd. It is a small hamlet of just 5 buildings.

1. Gerse's Shrine. This stone building has just one floor at ground level, but high walls so that inside the ceiling is lofty. It has been whitewashed inside and out and is roofed with magnificent old oak beams and wooden tiles. This building is about 400 years old and is built in a T-shape, the front portion split off from the Shrine proper by wooden screens (which may be moved against the walls if desired). The front portion is more decorated. A pair of superbly carved wooden doors depict scenes from the most famous of Gerse's many legends. The front room has bench seating, some books (records of the area, local history, poetry and lays connected with Gerse and other Northman heroes) and cupboards containing paraphernalia for use in services and blessings — Witbert's robes, candles, oils, etc.

Behind the wooden screen (which is painted and carved with memories of Gerse on the front room side) is a bare shrine 30' long and 20' wide. At the northern end is a stone sarcophagus on a plinth. Behind it rests the *Gersebroc*, set in a slot in a stone dais, so that it stands upright (it is easily removed). High windows in the side and end walls light the Shrine, but also make it freezing in winter. There are no seats, just cold stone flags and bare white walls. Even the wooden screen is bare on this side. There is a wooden lectern reached by four steps to the left of the tomb. Witbert addresses his congregation from here. Sometimes scented oils or candles are set around the sarcophagus and burned to lend an holy air to the place.

2. Witbert's House. The priest's house is connected to the Shrine by a covered wooden passageway. The house itself is small and built like the town houses of Nothva Rhaglaw (see 3.31 at #6). The priest, currently Witbert (see 3.21), lives here but is often absent. He has a servant housekeeper, an old woman of 70 or so. There is little of any interest in the house — his bedroom, study, the kitchen, storerooms, the servant's room, stables in the lower portion and so on. Concealed beneath a flagstone on the ground floor is a wooden chest. The chest is locked (hard, -10) and trapped; the trap consists of a sprung blade beside the lock (one +40 dagger attack) which is disarmed by depressing two of the rivets on the lid (very hard, -20). Inside are 45gp and 210 sp, Witbert's emergency funds. Concealed in a false base to the chest is a curious shortsword Witbert has probably forgotten all about. It is magical and of Silvan Elf manufacture. The sword has a 12" blade, the last 2 1/2" of which are crystal of some sort. The +15 shortsword delivers a Secondary Critical on the Electricity Critical Table if a "C" or better critical is obtained. It also confers +15 to RRs vs. electricity/shock/lightning attacks.

3. House of the Healer. Odelard lives in this large and handsome villa built like the town houses. The ground floor serves as the "hospital", with a "surgery", several beds close to a central hearth, and a small "apothecary" area for preparing herbs and cures. It also houses a stable and byre, but the area for animals is well-separated. Odelard keeps a few pigs and chickens, a goat and a dairy cow and three horses. The house is only a few years old and looks very new still. Since Odelard is not short of money, she lives well and likes to have her house kept tidy and clean.

Odelard is often absent (see 3.23), foraging for herbs, but at least one of her two assistants will always be here, tending to 0-7 patients. The assistants both have rooms on the upper floor, alongside Odelard's own room (a large and spacious room with rich furnishings), a bright day room, a small reference library and workroom, a kitchen, a bathing room and several storerooms. An extensive herb garden has been planted around the house sheltered by a stone wall, along with some fruit trees and succulent vegetable plants. Many valuable healing herbs and preparations can be found in the garden or the "apothecary" area, but no one knows where Odelard keeps the remains of her fortune.

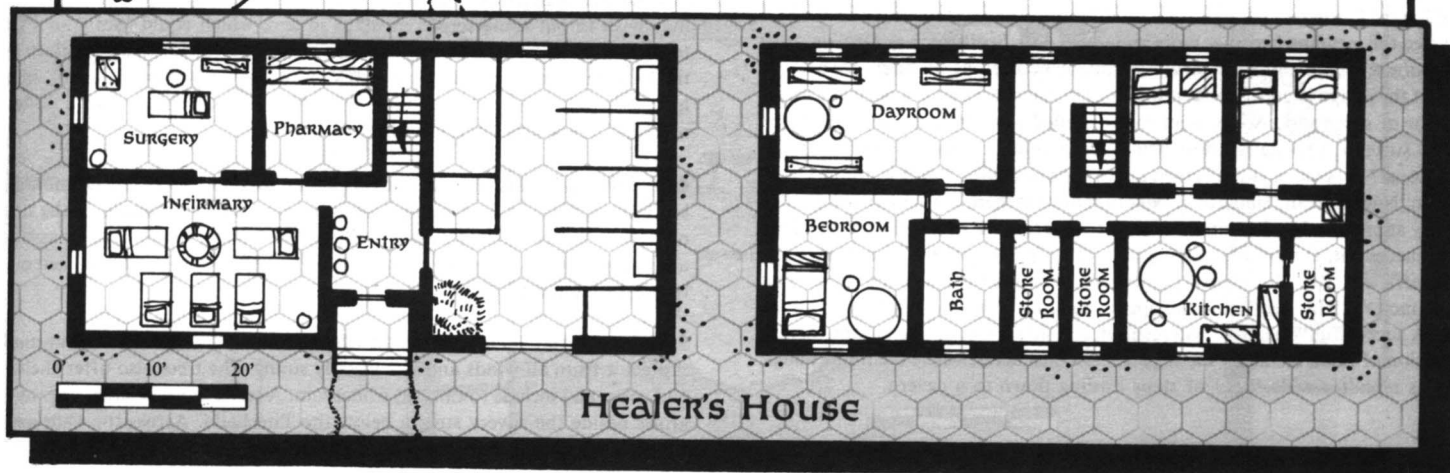
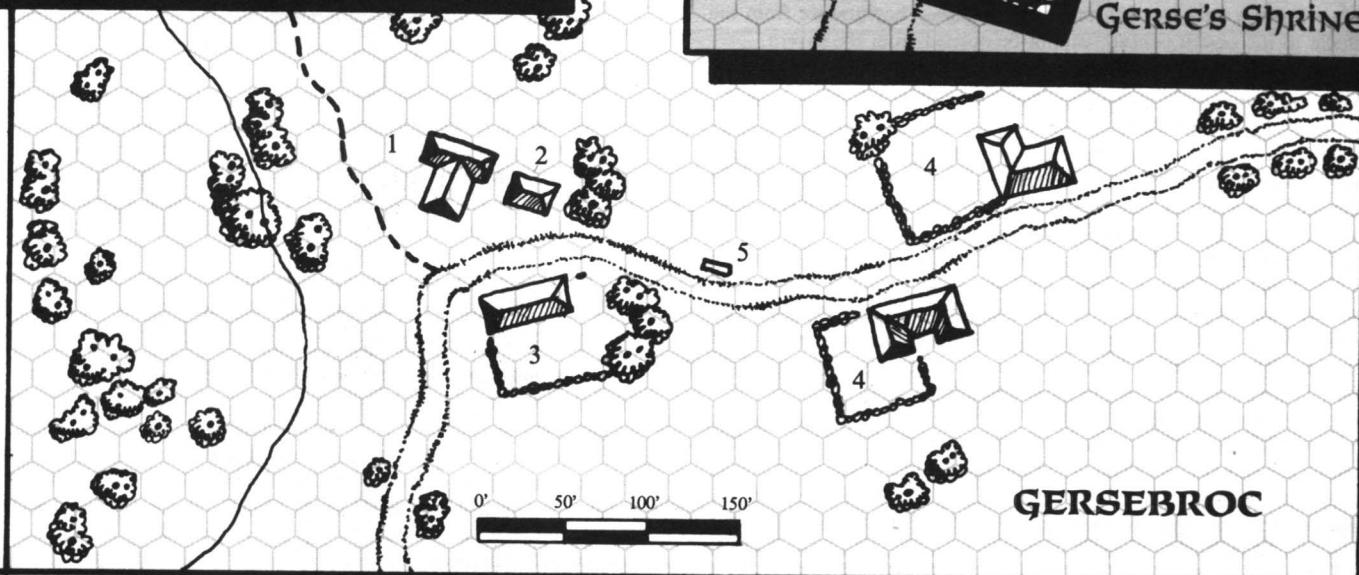
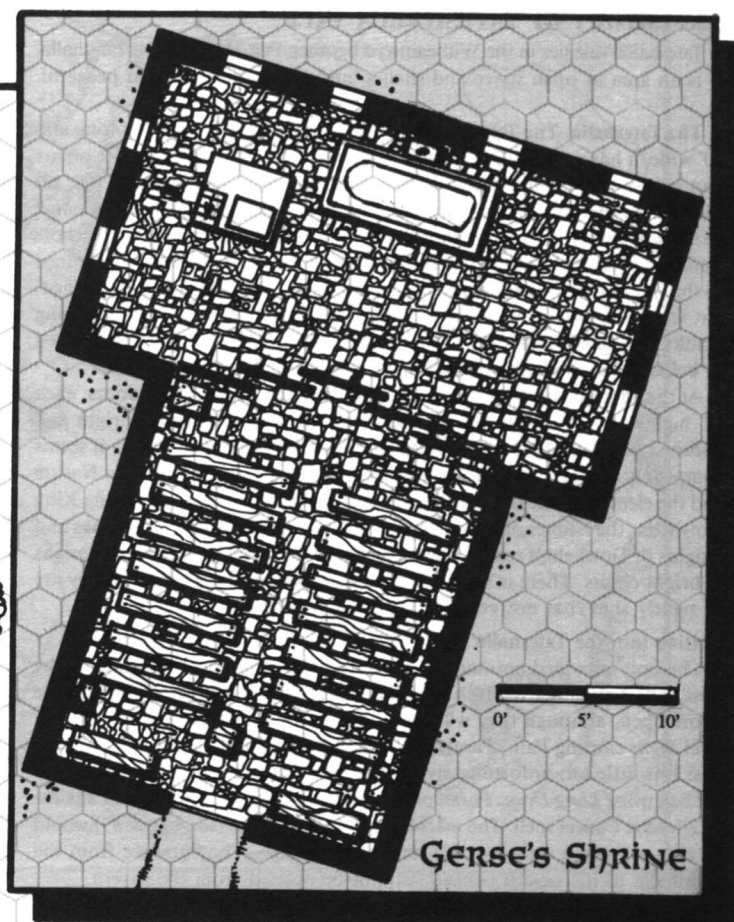
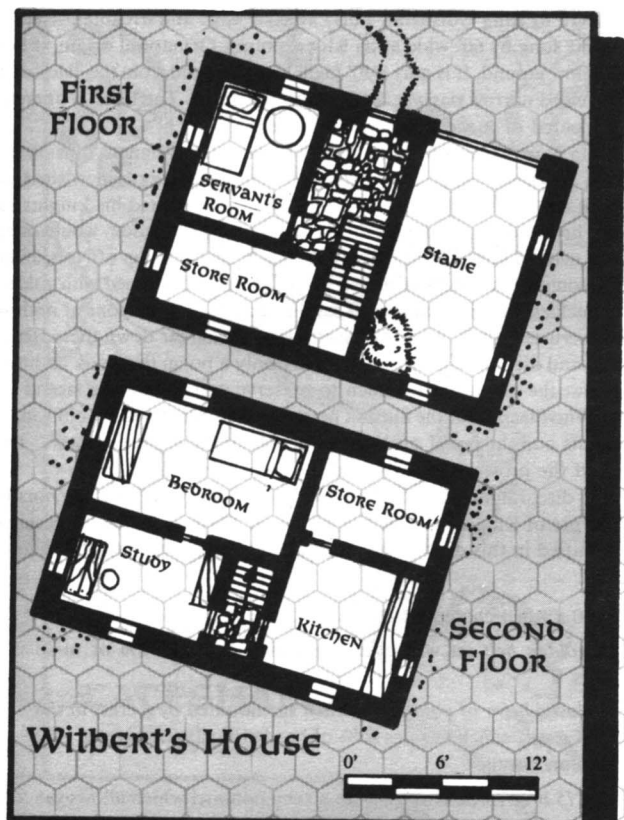
4. Farms. See #10 at 3.31.

5. Standing Stone. This stone is of an unnatural brown coloration, unlike any local stone. It was brought here and erected in ages past by an unknown people and for a forgotten purpose. It stands upright, 8' tall and 2'3" thick. On the east face, towards the top, it bears a star-burst engraving, but the etching is exceedingly ancient and weathered. The stone has no significance and does not detect as having any power or magical attributes.

5.32 LAYOUTS AFTER AIVNEC'S PASSING

1. Gersebroc. Every building is burned and smashed. The timbered upper stories and roofs will be completely destroyed and the stonework blackened, even collapsed in some places — although for the most part it has proved remarkably sturdy. The Shrine is the most intact of all village structures. It is still possible to get to the sarcophagus and to get the *Gersebroc* in the Shrine, and characters may remark upon the fact that the stone covering on the tomb has been dislodged — and that there is nothing within the sarcophagus. It is also still possible to get to the secret chest hidden in Witbert's house. There is a small chance that some herbs will still be growing unwithered in Odelard's garden.

2. Nothva Rhaglaw. Here, one in two buildings has been laid waste in the initial fury of the Dragon's attack. Others only suffer superficial damage at first, but subsequent forays by the Drake into the town will slowly result in the destruction of all that remains standing. The Mothalla has been thoroughly worked over by Aivnec and the Gate-houses are mostly destroyed, but the walls and the Levy Training House are almost undamaged. The Hunter's Lodge, where Walvoric and the Levy met Aivnec, has been smashed by his tail and burnt badly. If you have played the second adventure and Ridorthu set his statue on the Green, it will have been toppled. Finally, rubble from the old Watch Tower has dammed the Rhaglaw just north of the pool, flooding many of the cottages beside the stream.



5.33 LAYOUT OF TATESHALLA VALE

Tateshalla Vale lies in the Witbeamwyd between Pen-Hag and the Tateshalla. It is an area of open space and shelter, and is usually quiet and peaceful.

1. The Tateshalla. The Tateshalla is a vast Northman hall. Over 90' long and 50' wide, it has a traditional construction, including dark-grey granite pillars and golden tree trunks. The cylindrical pillars are 5' wide and 30' tall, set 15' apart. Each has carved banding setting out panels 2' high, each panel bearing a unique decorative motif. Between the pillars are stripped whole trunks of a golden hue set vertically. Each trunk is at least 2' thick and trimmed so that it has the same thickness top and bottom. The trunks are unadorned, but seem polished or varnished. The roof is made of massive overlapping planks at least 4" thick of the same golden, honeyed wood. It is easy indeed to believe that the hall is roofed with gold!

At the western end two steps lead up to the huge doors. These doors, each 18' high and 7' wide, are square and shod with copper sheaths, bright and polished as the day they were erected. This is true of the entire hall — it seems completely unweathered and untouched by centuries of exposure to Nature and the elements. The doors are exquisitely beaten into panels depicting King Gotshelm, the Númenorean mage Olpessa and many princes, princesses and knights of Gotshelm's realm. These panels are bordered by enamelled designs in bright colors. There is neither handle nor lock on the doors, but they are so tightly shut that not even the insidious northern winds can get in.

Getting into the Tateshalla

The only provided entrance to the Tateshalla is the pair of doors at the west end. Anything over 10th level has a (level -10)% chance of forcing the doors open, although they will then have to resist against a series of 25th level *Signs* causing Pain, Paralysis, Insanity, Aging and Death. (Aivnec will pass this little lot, unfortunately for the PCs!) Magic-users could pass into the hall using *Long Door*, *Portal* or *Teleport*, although they must resist against a 12th level *Cancel* spell. The marble disc of Rhydordhü (see 4.31 at #7) would be able to open a door through one of the pillars. The entrance from the Tateshalla to the cavern beneath cannot be opened from the cavern.

Inside the Tateshalla

Inside, the Tateshalla is one huge chamber. A second row of logs form the walls, these split, with the flat sides facing into the room. Between these logs and the trunks outside is a mixture of crushed granite and limestone set into a crude form of concrete. The dark pillars are decorated inside (as out), and the logs are hung with rich tapestries and drapes. The vaulted roof is crossed by high tie-beams each 3' thick and 45' long.

The floor is stepped. An 8' wide tier runs around the walls, but in the center, three 12" steps lead down to a lower level about 60' long and 22' wide. In this sunken area are strewn many cushions and rich furs in good condition, racks of drinking horns, wooden bowls and platters, a few stools carved from dark wood and other everyday items. There are no great treasures lying around however, to the disappointment of would-be looters.

On the right-hand-side of the hall, behind the tapestry of a warrior fighting a giant, an 8' square wooden frame is mounted on the wall. Inside the frame is a continuous sheet of very thin mica (a translucent crystalline stone), etched and filigreed with mithril wire. The design within the frame is exceedingly complicated and can only be understood if a successfully Knowledge roll is made — roll on the first column of the Static Maneuver table, using added IG and IT bonuses (if any), and at -20 unless the frame is lit from behind, when the meaning becomes more apparent (+0). Spells such as *Delving*, *Item Analysis*, *Significance* or *Intuitions* might be used as an alternative.

If the design is understood, it will appear that the frame is a portal or magic door of some sort. A Use Item roll is needed to operate it. Any non-Mage will suffer a -10 penalty; those whose realm is not Essence will suffer an additional -10 penalty. If the person attempting to use the frame is not of Dúnedain, Númenorean, Sindarin or Noldorin descent there is a further -20 penalty. Any attempt to Use Item in this case also uses up 2PP (normally recoverable). If successful, the act of opening uses up a further 8PP. If the opener has insufficient PP, the excess points are **permanently** removed from that character's "Hit Total", and the opener collapses unconscious for 1-10 hours.

A successful "opening" will result in the slow swinging down of a 10'x10' section of floor, including the steps section, just below where the frame hangs. This reveals a wide flight of steps leading down to a cavern.

2. The Cavern of King Gotshelm. This cavern is large and irregular, stretching about 80' long by 60' wide at its widest points. Of natural origin, it lies some 25' below ground. It is only 8-10' high. Steps descend from the Tateshalla and a concealed narrow passage leads off to the north. The floor is uneven, although cleared of loose stones and boulders.

Olpessa (a Númenorean Mage) placed a powerful, permanent illusion on this cavern for King Gotshelm when the latter was dying and wished to establish an epic tradition to succeed him. Gotshelm wanted his knights to follow him here and wait with him for the day when the kingdom would once again be in need of him. The illusion is of a magnificent troop of Northman warriors accoutered in shining mail and burnished helms, adorned with golden belts and buckles, carrying banners of samite and silk and weapons of mithril and gem-encrusted silver. When Gotshelm led his charger down these steps, he rejoiced and died happy, leaving in reality only a poem that took an hour to recite. But the poem did so much to preserve and spread the legend of The King Who Sleeps that the illusion persists. The strength of the old King's poetic talents and the belief of the local people in the legend "powers" the illusion and the protections woven on the hall.

The only discordant part of this splendid illusion of sleeping warriors is the real corpse of King Gotshelm and his horse. Their bodies are desiccated and mummified in this dry, sealed atmosphere. The King wears the following items:

— +20 mithril chainmail.

— A golden belt set with tiger-eyes which negates 40% of torso criticals.

— A closed helm of gold and mithril surmounted by a crest in the form of a stag which negates 80% of head criticals and gives a +20 Perception bonus.

— A +15 broc (broadsword) with a ruby pommel which allows the wielder to Regenerate 2 hits per round;

— a scabbard of Dragonskin which confers +10 DB and acts as a permanent Cut Repair I, reducing the effect of bleeding wounds.

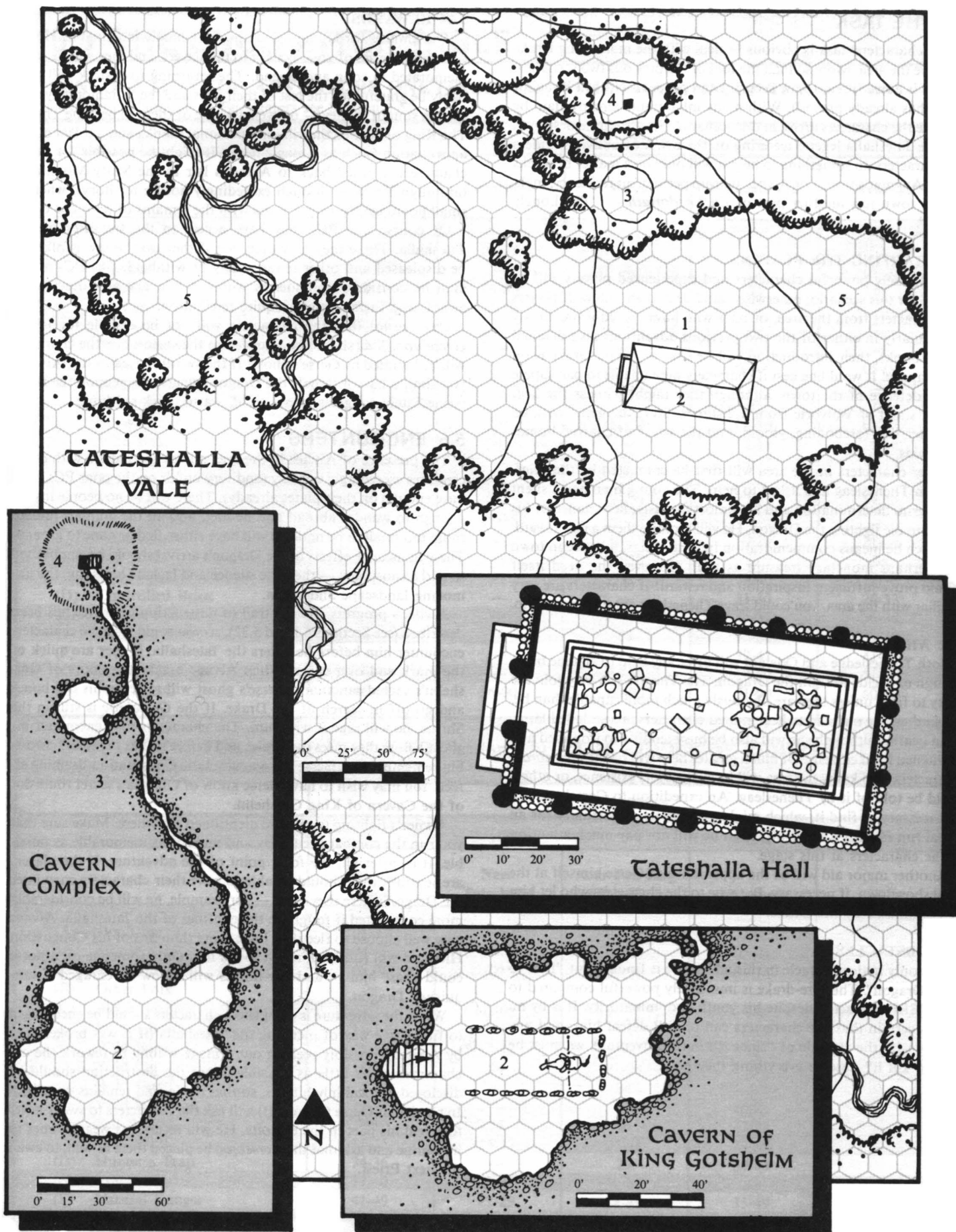
NOTE: If any of these items are stolen, the GM may decide one or more to be of no benefit to the user until a Remove Curse is successful against their 25th level protection. You may wish to let Gerse obtain the King's sword if the characters have Gersebroc. If someone helps Gerse kill the Dragon, he may present them with one or two of the items (uncursed).

If Aivnec ever gets into this cavern (which is unlikely since he could not operate the frame), he will automatically be able to see through the illusion.

3. Passage and Cave. A narrow passage just 5' wide goes north from the Cavern of King Gotshelm. It winds and twists slightly, ascending, before ending in a short flight of stairs after 250'. The entrance to the passage from the Cavern (#2) is hidden by Olpessa's illusion. Towards the northern end of the passage is a small side passage ending in a cave about 25' across and just 8' high. In this cave Olpessa dwelt whilst seeing King Gotshelm. She then left through the secret exit in the Mound (#4) and had it covered up. In the cave are the remains of her furniture — a bed, a table, two chairs and some rubbish. You may wish to put some scrolls or maps in here which could lead your PCs to further adventures, either in this area or another — for example, clues to the location of magical places or items known in the Second Age and since lost. Remember that Olpessa came from Númenor originally and travelled much of north-west Middle-earth.

4. The Mound. This mound resembles a typical barrow or burial mound, but is concealed amongst the trees and not immediately noticable. In the side of it, now turfed over, is a door with a stair leading down to the passage and thence to the Cavern of King Gotshelm. The door is neither locked nor trapped, but exceedingly rusty with age.

5. Tateshalla Vale. This combe is a sheltered and idyllic spot. Hills all around protect it from all winds and it is usually sunny. The trees also offer shelter and color, and include rowan and whitebeam. A small grove of water chestnuts grows beside the silvery stream below the Tateshalla. Across the Vale west of the Tateshalla is a splendid view of Pen-Hag (see 4.31).



5.4 THE TASK

The characters' task is obvious — deal with the marauding Drake and save the area. More so than the foes of the previous two scenarios, Aivnec is a real threat to the security and peace of Nothva Rhaglaw (as he has already proved). With many inhabitants already slain by the time the characters arrive in this scenario, Gerse's Shrine destroyed and the Tateshalla legend teetering on the brink of oblivion, unless the characters do something to help it will only be a matter of weeks before Angmar's troops or Aivnec take up permanent residency, making the town just another part of *En Enedoriath* — “The Lonely Lands”.

5.41 STARTING THE PLAYERS

Moderately powerful characters and experienced players will be needed for this scenario; otherwise, rapid death can follow. If players use characters from the area, or ones who have visited it previously (particularly in either of the two previous adventures also detailed in this book), their introduction will be easy — a Fire Drake is on the rampage! It would be best if characters were unable to participate in the defence of the town, although they might witness the last, valiant stand of Walvoric from a distance. Start the game with an air of terrible foreboding, gloom, and the whiff of charred homes and fields.

Other characters in the area will first be contacted by the grief-stricken Thenesleag and asked to help. The young man has a silent air of grim determination and an almost fatalistic acceptance of his doom, to die fighting the Dragon. He will promise them a rich reward, by which he means commemoration in local songs, a house in town and perhaps monetary treasure as well. However, the deed itself should prove sufficient inspiration and reward! If characters are very familiar with the area, you could leave Thenesleag out of the scenario.

5.42 AIDS

Both Thenesledge and Odelard will offer any help to anyone brave enough to decide to fight the Dragon. The Thegn's son may join the party to fight unless they are obviously much more capable than he. Odelard will be on hand to heal injured characters in a secluded farmstead nearby, although she will also be busy tending to wounded and frightened local citizens. Of much greater help will be the *Gersebroc*. Characters who know the area will be aware of its existence, or others could be told of it by Thenesleag. An expedition to *Gersebroc* will be necessary to find it, which might provide an opportunity for an initial run-in with Aivnec, although he will not pay much attention to the characters at this stage.

Another major aid will be the appearance of Gerse himself at the final showdown, if necessary. But woe to the characters who let him be annihilated by the Drake!

5.43 OBSTACLES

The only major obstacle in this adventure is finding out “how to kill a Dragon”. The Fire-drake is immensely powerful compared to any MERP character, despite his youth and immaturity. It is by no means certain that the characters can or will defeat him, and any players with the attitude of “since it's in the adventure, we must be able to kill it” deserve everything they get.

5.44 REWARDS

The rewards for killing a fire drake are barely imaginable. Heaps of experience are of great benefit to the slayers, and they will be commemorated in song and legend. The returning townsfolk will probably be grateful for the rest of their lives and the Witamot may vote them a sum of money — or even ask one of them to become Thegn. The King of Arthedain will send personal thanks and a token of his appreciation (such as a magic item). It might be possible for adept characters to track back to Aivnec's lair in the Misty Mountains (although this goes through exceedingly hostile territory), where a small hoard can be found along with the remains of poor old Gelir.

Of course, the PCs may have access to the treasures of the Tateshalla. These they may take, but if they do the townsfolk will be displeased and other rewards may be withheld. The PCs might even be considered plunderers whose mercenary acts deserve no award, and in fact might require retribution.

One reward that the characters will not be eligible for is the *Gersebroc*. This should be returned to the shrine, else the character will be haunted by Gerse's ghost! If the sword is used to slay Aivnec, you should have it impale the Dragon's heart, whereupon the heart immediately congeals into a solid, warm, dark-red lump....

5.5 ENCOUNTERS

The presence of Aivnec in the area makes encounters with other creatures exceedingly unlikely (and very unfair on the poor PCs, who have enough on their plates already). There will be no people insane enough to wander abroad and be met, and all the animals (except those too small to be noticed) will have either fled or gone to ground. These immediate effects of the Dragon's arrival should be emphasised to add atmosphere — the eerie silence and lack of birdsong, the un-moving landscape and so on.

Aivnec's progress and the trail of destruction he leaves has been described (see Sections 5.1 and 5.32), so you could have the characters encounter him before he enters the Tateshalla, if they are quick of the mark and over-eager. When Aivnec breaks the doors of Gotshelm's sacred sanctuary, Gerse's ghost will raise up his old bones and go off in search of the Drake. If the *Gersebroc* is still in the Shrine, he will take it with him. The characters may encounter his ghost before they meet the Drake, and before he has raised his corpse, but remember that Gerse has an automatic Constitution-draining effect. You may wish to have Gerse know of Olpessa's secret route out of the Cavern of King Gotshelm.

Aivnec's fighting tactics are mentioned elsewhere. Make sure that you run the combat accurately and make it as memorable as possible. It is, after all, the focal point of the adventure. If the players are sensible, they should be able to have their characters encounter the Dragon where they want — for example, he will be considerably more constricted if fought in the confines of the Tateshalla. Aivnec may well choose to flee if he loses more than 2/3 of his Concussion Hits and will run back north to his lair. Only someone on a horse could chase him — and few horses will follow an enraged if vanquished Dragon.

When the adventure is completed, characters should be encouraged to find some way of mending the Tateshalla (if it was broken into by Aivnec), possibly seeking out a mage willing to rework the enchantments. As little as possible about the destruction should be disclosed to local inhabitants, so that the legend remains unsullied. In particular Gerse (if present) will ask the characters to swear never to reveal his part in the exploits. He will return his weary bones to his Shrine and ask that the *Gersebroc* be placed there as well, to await the next Priest.

6.0 THE ENCOUNTER TABLE

ENCOUNTERS FOR ADVENTURE ONE (Section 3.0), "THE PHANTOM OF THE WOODS"

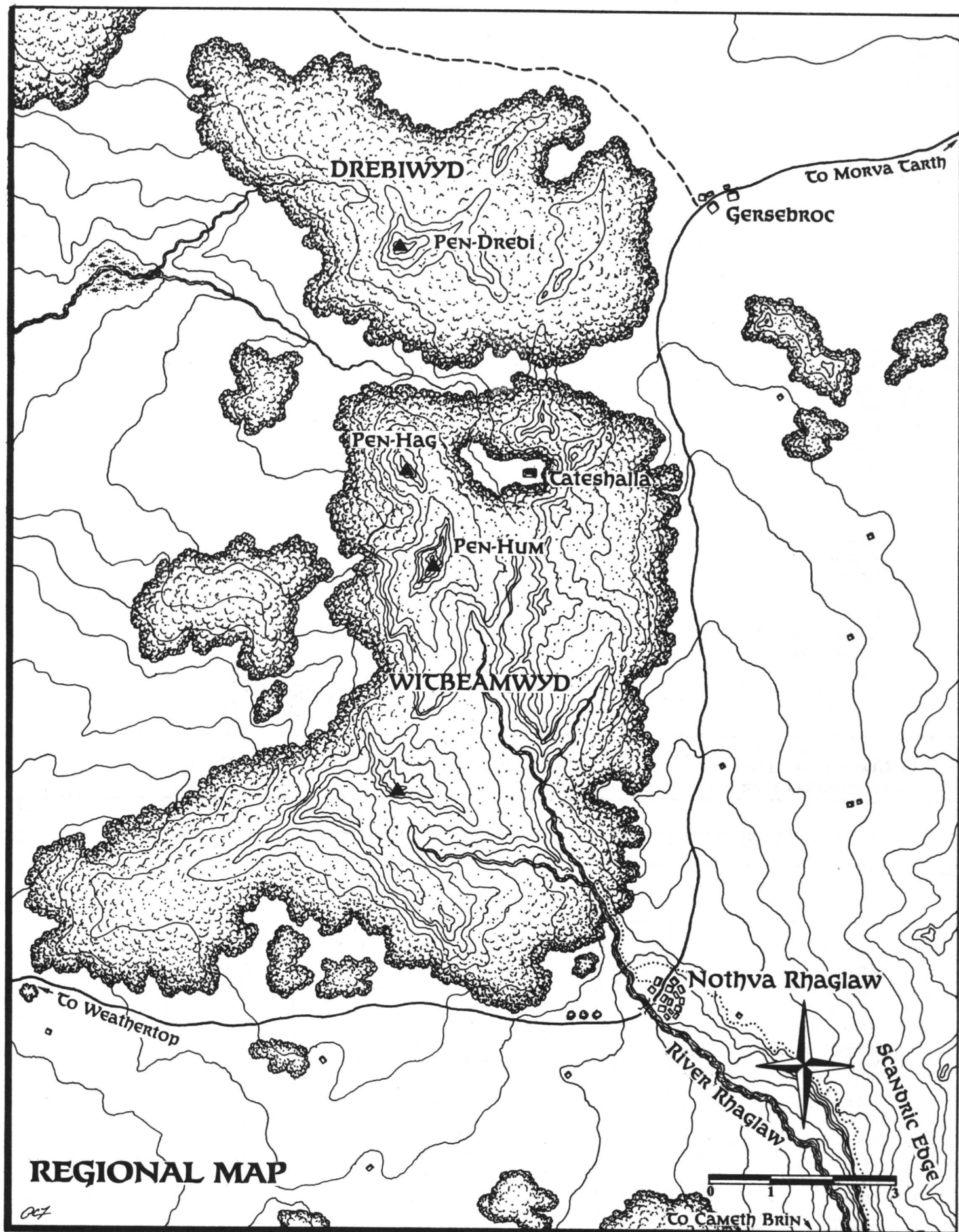
For an explanation of Encounters see Section 3.51.

		LOCATION				
		Nothva Rhaglaw	Gersebroc	Vales	Witbeamwyd	Drebiwyd
(A)	Witbert	01	01-15	—	—	—
	Hannei	—	—	—	01	01-03
	Odelard	02	16-25	01	02	04
	Alfward	03-07	26-30	02	—	—
	Walvoric	08-09	—	—	—	—
	Thenesleag	10-12	—	03	—	—
(B)	Other Folk	13-80	31-50	04-18	03-06	05-06
(C)	Adder	—	—	19	—	—
	Black Bear	—	—	20	07	07
	Brown Bear	—	—	21-22	08-10	08-10
	Wild Boar	—	—	—	11-14	11-14
	Wild Cat	—	—	23	15-17	13-17
	Desman	—	—	24	—	—
	Wild Goat	—	—	25-29	18	18-20
	Herd, domestic	81-85	51-55	30-39	—	—
	Wild Herd	—	—	40-49	19-26	21-24
	Fell Wolf	—	—	50-52	27	25
	Grey Wolf	—	—	53	28-30	26-28
(D)	Controlled Beast	—	—	—	31-33	29-33
(E)	Hannei's Trap	—	—	—	34-35	34-38
	Hunter's Trap	—	—	54	36-38	39-40
(F)	Tracks	—	—	—	39-41	41-50
(G)	Natural Danger	—	—	55-59	42-50	51-59
(H)	NOTHING	86-00	56-00	60-00	51-00	60-00

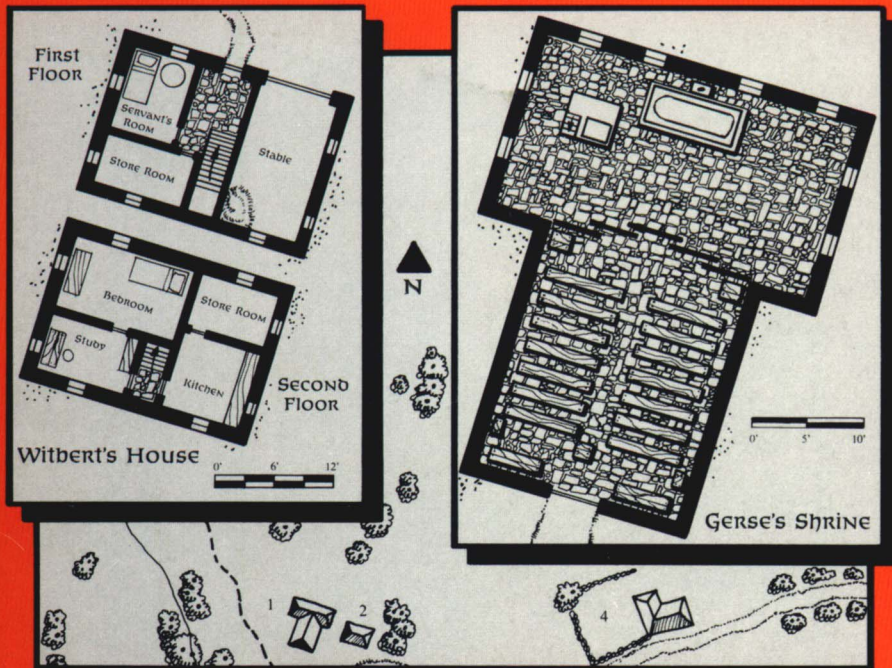
ENCOUNTERS FOR ADVENTURE TWO (Section 4.0), "THE RIDDLE OF RIDORTHU"

For an explanation of Encounters see Section 4.51.

		LOCATION			
		Daytime			Night
		General Wood	Near Tateshalla	Near Pen-Hag & Pen-Hum	Anywhere
(A)	Dunheuet	01-03	01-03	01-03	01
	Sibroc	04-06	04-06	04-06	02-04
	Ridorthu	07-08	07	07-10	05-14
(B)	Other Folk	09	—	—	—
(C)	Black Bear	10	08-09	11-12	15
	Brown Bear	11-13	10-11	13-17	16-17
	Wild Boar	14-17	12-13	18-21	18
	Wild Cat	18-20	14	22-23	19
	Wild Goat	21	—	24	—
	Wild Herd	22-29	—	25	20-21
	Fell Wolf	30	15	26	22-23
	Grey Wolf	31-33	16-17	27-28	24-29
(D)	Hunter's Trap	34-36	—	29	30-34
(E)	Tracks	37-40	18-21	30-33	—
(F)	Natural Danger	41-49	22-29	34-49	35-49
(G)	NOTHING	50-00	30-00	50-00	50-00



EXPLORE J.R.R. TOLKIEN'S MIDDLE-EARTH WITH IRON CROWN ENTERPRISES' READY-TO-RUN ADVENTURES



A simple tree house sits in the shadow of the peak called Pen-Drebi. Inside, a horrible revenge is being planned against the sleepy village of Nothva Raglaw. Can you face the menace of *The Phantom of the Woods*?

An intruder from the Ettenmoors haunts a cave in the Witbeamwyd. Farmers report missing livestock. At night the earth trembles with heavy thuds, and daylight reveals huge, yard-long footprints. Is it a monstrous Troll? Is it a ghost? Can you solve *The Riddle of the Ridorthû*?

A huge firedrake has crawled out of the shadows of the northern Misty Mountains. His path of fiery destruction leads to the Witbeamwyd and the town hall where he lies unchallenged. Can you match the massive strength and hot breath of *Gerse's Bane*?

IRON CROWN ENTERPRISES, Inc. holds the exclusive worldwide license for FANTASY ROLE PLAYING GAMES and ADULT BOARDGAMES based on J.R.R. Tolkien's THE LORD OF THE RINGS and THE HOBBIT.



© 1986 TOLKIEN ENTERPRISES. THE HOBBIT and THE LORD OF THE RINGS and all characters and places therein are trademark properties of TOLKIEN ENTERPRISES, a division of ELAN MERCHANDISING, INC., Berkeley, CA. No unauthorized use permitted.

Printed in U.S.A. #8102

