

I would like to recognize the artists of the maps within this document - All maps and pics are from varying sources and artists, predominantly from ICE/MERP books. I do not have any specific names or book titles, but I would like to thank them nonetheless.

CHAPTER 2 - The Road to Rivendell

Interludes:

1. *In a beautiful ringed white city, dirges are sung as a king and his family is carried to the Halls of the Dead. Their bodies show signs of the pervasive plague that lends no mercy to beggar or noble.*
2. *The darkness stirs and two large eyes glow yellow. A low grumbling voice speaks... "It is not He that I serve, but our Master". The two eyes blink and the voice replies... "I can see the benefit of our mutual assistance. Do not worry about these petty elves, soon fire shall rain down upon them". The gaunt shadow nods, turns and steps back out into the cold northern night.*

Setting: The party has spent the last couple of days relaxing and regaining their strength for the next leg of their journey. They must travel the Great East-West Road until it crosses the Ford of Bruinen and comes unto Imladris. The party's spirits should be rather high after their stay at the Pony, although none of them are looking forward to the next two weeks of travel. The Innkeeper will sell them any supplies that they might be low on, but he will sell it sparingly and at a much higher price than normal (30% higher).

The morning that the company is to set off, a light snow begins to fall. The snow accumulates as a light dusting only but the party wonders what the winter will be like if the snow is already falling this early in October.

SCENE 1 - The Road Goes Ever On...

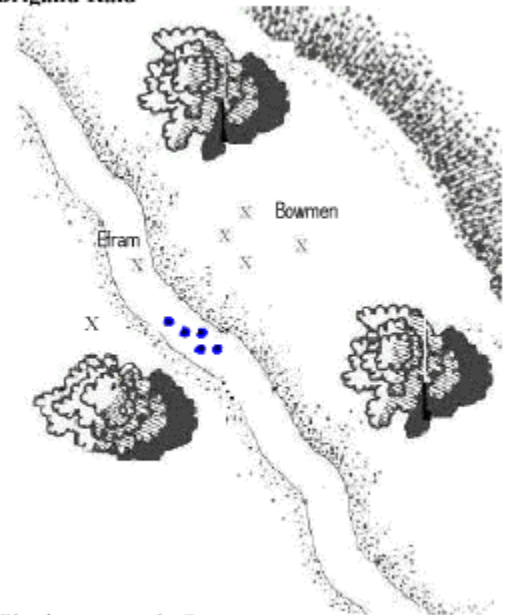
Days 18-19 Day 2 on the map

The party is two days out of Bree and the traveling has been good. Despite the fact that the Downs of Tyn Gorthad are on their right and that they are now passing the Midgewater Marshes, the party's spirits are high. None of them wish to have to sleep too many nights amongst the Barrows so they make good use of the daylight. Still, the lands are quiet and the colors spectacular. The light dusting of snow has accentuated the yellows and reds of the leaves and the smell of fall is heavy on the air. The party pushes on until the sun is beginning to fall in the west and the red dusk adds even more color to a brilliant landscape.

Suddenly, the horses wicker and act nervous as a flock of crows take to flight about 20 yards in front of the party. Stillness lies on the land as the crows squawk away into the evening air - their calls echoing on the hills. The party looks about wondering what spooked the birds and their horses. Just then, six men come out of the trees at the party - their weapons are drawn. Upon seeing them, you immediately recognize the one named Efram that you had met in the deserted town of Arnach not five days ago.

"Well lads, it looks like we meet again." he says; behind him, one of the ruffians coughs. "My lads tell me that you went and killed some of my boys then left them to burn in an old barn! We can't just let that be... there needs to be restitution!" Efram does his best to Intimidate the Company **Test** Roll (2d6)+7: 4,2,+7 **Total: 13**

Brigand Raid

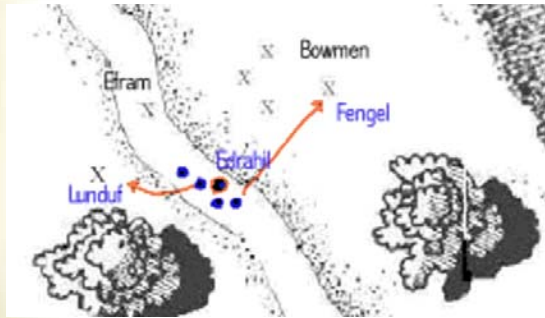


Blue dots represent the Company

Test	Edrahil		Angbor		Dirnhael		Lünduf		Fengel	
	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect
Willpower	13	-1 to Tests	14	Pass	12	-2 to Tests	13	-1 to Tests	13	-1 to Tests

"Don't you be threatening us, you scoundrel! I told you when we last met that we never wanted to see your kind bothering us again, and I meant it! We don't want to harm you, but we will if we must. You've heard what happened to your friends when they pushed our hand - don't you make the same mistake." replies Edrahil in his own intimidating tone. **Intimidate (Power)** attempt of my own: +8 Roll (2d6)+7-1: 4,3, +7 **Total: 14**.

The ruffians attempt to resist the elf's intimidation (+3 bonus for their anger - Roll (2d6)+4: 5,2, +4 Total: 11 - **FAIL -2 to all tests**) but again they cower to this company of travelers. Efram knows that his men, especially in their reduced strength, are no match for the Dwarf, Dúnedain, and Elf. One of his men even seems to have been weakened by a cold - he hears behind him another cough. Their will and strength tested and beaten, Efram knows he will only have one chance to exact the vengeance that he desires! He quickly lifts his left arm (non-weapon hand) noticing the slight tremble in it as he gives his command to attack!



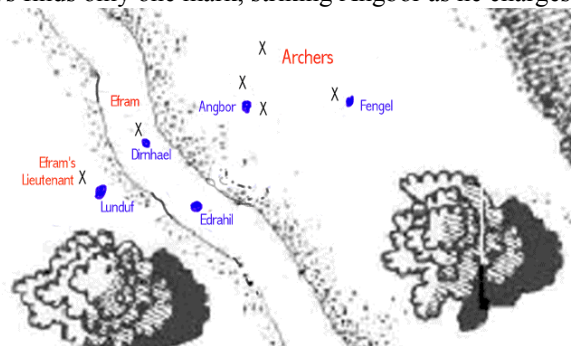
The Company is immediately aware of the four men on their right that bring forth bows from their cloaks and nock arrows (2 actions). Efram and the henchmen on his right (the parties left) yell as they rush forward with their shortswords raised. But, the seasoned Company is expecting the Brigands foolish assault and as soon as Efram makes his motion to attack, Fengel and Lunduf are moving as well.

Fengel spurs his horse and charges an archer, his spear lowered. The ruffian is too busy readying his bow to evade the oncoming Charger. Fengel's spear catches the man in the upper left shoulder and knocks him to the ground. The horse carries Fengel past his target but it is clear to the Éothraim that his weapon struck true.

At almost the same moment, in a fluid motion that belies his dwarven nature,

Lunduf dismounts and charges Efram's closest companion, swinging his axe. He is successful as well as the keen edged weapon cuts the brigand. All the while, the remaining Company spring into action as the inspiring sound of Edrahil's voice begins to fill the area.

Efram and Dirnhael clash as the twang of bows is heard. The first volley of arrows finds only one mark, striking Angbor as he charges into the archers. Both Efram and Dirnhael find a hole in each other's guard and each draw blood. As Angbor charges up, he draws his sword and dismounts from his steed swinging the ancient blade of his fathers at his unwitting enemy. Unfortunately, in his haste, the swing is short and the bowmen grabs for his quiver.



Across the road, Lunduf takes a jab in his chest from his attacker's shortsword. The Dwarf just smiles at the man, who looks on in surprise as his sword is turned by the fine Dwarven chain coat. With a hearty laugh, Lunduf lunges forward and his axe again slices into the soft leather armor protecting the brigand. The man realizes that he and his cohorts may have doomed themselves with this foolish attack. This thought quickly becomes reality for the man that lies on the ground below Fengel's rearing horse. The Éothraim gives a war shout as his hand raises his spear and then throws. The brigand looks to his midsection in shock as the barb pins him to the ground.

Dirnhael, feeling his warm blood under his chain coat, realizes that Efram presents a greater danger than his former mates, and needs to get off of his horse to give himself a better chance. He leaps to the ground and readies his shield and sword as Efram comes at him.

Edrahil may not be a warrior of any great skill, but he definitely has an imposing presence in battle. Even as the battle rages on around him he keeps his elven cool, keeping his mount in perfect control amid the chaos. He turns towards Efram and a look of frustration crosses his face. He speaks in a slow, forceful voice that can clearly be heard over the battle, as if projected by magic. "You just don't learn do you? We've warned you several times, but you just won't give up. Hopefully your friends can still be saved... but for you, it's too late." As he speaks, he slowly raises his left hand to reveal a blue glow forming around it; sparks of electricity crackling between his fingers. The sparking gets brighter and faster as the elf finishes his incantation and he then thrusts his hand at Efram, sending a giant arc of lightning, over Dirnhael's head, to make a solid connection with Efram's chest. Dirnhael's oncoming attacker instantly flies backward as the Dúnedain's eyes close from the flash and his hands go to his ears from the **BOOOM!!**

OOC: Been waiting for a chance to try that spell. That was fun. Lets do that again sometime soon. ;-) -- Edrahil

With Edrahil's magnificent display of power and attack on their leader, the Ruffians will need to make a new **Willpower Roll** or potentially run, **TN 12... Roll** (2d6)+-1: 2,1, +-1 Total:2 **COMPLETE FAILURE** (or **SUPERIOR SUCCESS** on the part of the Company which translates into Unnerved on the FEAR Table).

The Brigands, and even some of the Company, had shaded their eyes momentarily from the amazing flash before them. Their ears ring after the enormous clap of sound and the air stinks of brimstone.

"PEACE, LORDS! PEACE! We do not wish to incur any more of the wrath of the High Folk!" Efram's lieutenant yells as his and the rest of the brigand's weapons fall to their feet.

"Forgive Us! Save Us!" The men yell as they fall to their knees before you and prostrate themselves to your mercy. You even hear a few whimpering tears emanate from amongst them.

Slowly, still smoking on his chest, Efram pulls himself up... "Please" he croaks, "No more... We will bother you... no more. We ask your mercy for our misdeeds." He knows, as he had thought earlier - his men's will and strength had been tested and beaten; he now must do what he can to save the few that remain.

As the men yield to you, the adrenaline begins to leave your bodies and you loosen the grip on your weapons. Fengel looks down from atop his horse at the man that he has slain and deep within him, he feels a bit of shame. The Éothraim draws out his spear from the corpse and then rides over to position himself, and his horse, between the groveling bowmen and the rest of the Company - his face a threatening mask of anger and remorse.

Edrahil looks down at the rabble from atop his horse. "You have made some bad decisions recently, but your death would not be necessary... yet. Go on your way, and attempt to make better decisions in your future." He then turns to Efram, his face hardening into a sharp glare. "To you, I promised death. I don't like to renege on my promises. But in this case, I suppose I shall. Go your own way, but bear that scar on your chest as a reminder of what happens when you mess with the wrong people. And be sure not to make that mistake again."

Realizing they are not going to die, the ruffians gather themselves and slink off towards the forest. In moments, they have disappeared from sight and only the Company stands on the snow-dusted road, the cold wind blowing softly.

For Dirnhael and Angbor, the pain from their wounds becomes apparent - Angbor reaches to the arrow that struck him while Dirnhael places his hand across the small cut and applies pressure. Fortunately for the two Dúnedain, the wounds are relatively minor; Angbor sheathes his weapon and then sees to mending himself - he looks to Dirnhael, "Are you in need of any aid?"

"I will only need one of your bandages to keep the wound covered, but it is minor" says the Dúnadan warrior looking at his kin. Angbor walks to his horse and pulls both bandages and a salve from his saddlebags. "I will need your aid in this, Dirnhael. You need to draw this shaft from me and then apply pressure while Edrahil wraps my shoulder with this bandage and salve. Then I will tend to your wound."

The hills of the Downs are still on the right and the shadow from the setting sun creates a slight discomfort. The Company realizes it must make camp soon but all wish to continue a little further to at least get past the Barrow hills. As soon as the wounded Dúnedain are ready to travel the Company gets back on their journey, traveling another three hours before making camp for the night.

Test	Edrahil		Angbor		Dirnhael		Lúnduf		Fengel	
	Kills	Wounded	Kills	Wounded	Kills	Wounded	Kills	Wounded	Kills	Wounded
Combat Results	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	--

KILLS represents the number of creatures slain by the character. WOUNDED is the wound level of the character at the end of the combat.

There will be no need for any Stamina Tests the first two days out of Bree, due to the high spirits of the Company.

1. The Company must still make a Survival Test TN 8 each day to find a proper camp to rest. Failure to do so will cause the Company to acquire a -3 penalty to all Stamina Tests the day after the sleepless night. This penalty is cumulative for each night not soundly rested but is negated after one good night of sleep.
2. 13 Days of Food Supplies remain.

Day 18 Test	Edrahil		Angbor		Dirnhael		Lúnduf		Fengel	
	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect
Survival	--	--	9	Pass	12	Pass	--	--	6	Fail
Day 19 Test	Edrahil		Angbor		Dirnhael		Lúnduf		Fengel	
	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect
Survival	--	--	9	Pass	12	Pass	--	--	10	Pass

Scene 2 - A Test of Honor...

Days 20 - 23 Day 6 on the map

After traveling for four days, the party has left behind the brigands and the Barrow Downs. They have passed the long stretch of the Midgewater Marshes and the fetid smells that had come from that area. The company has been gifted with some beautiful weather and spirits are high as they ride. Except for the light snowfall out of Bree, it has been nothing but sunny, crisp days!

The party has been pushing to make for Weathertop and they are a little ahead of schedule. They should reach the tower of Amon Sûl by early afternoon. Everyone in the party agrees to make the old fortification their camp due to its broad view and the fact that there are still some of the walls standing about the ruins. There are some of the company who have mixed feelings regarding the hill, not sure that they want to be reminded again of the destruction that the Witch-King has brought upon the lands of Arnor - yet, they know that the hill is the best place to make a camp.

Soon the Weather Hills begin to appear on the horizon and it is not long after, with the sun sitting in the afternoon sky (on the sixth day out of Bree), that the company gazes on the Ruins of Amon Sûl. Not much is left of the once proud tower that was a symbol of Dúnadan might; now only a broken ring and remnants of outer curtain walls stand to show that it was even there; both Dirnhael and Angbor feel a surge of anger and guilt as they look on the ruin.

It was 227 years ago that the tales tell of the attack on Amon Sûl. In the year 1409 SA, the combined forces of Angmar and those of the conquered and treacherous realm of Rhudaur fell on the last Prince of Cardolan and his army that protected the tower's walls. Signal fires had been lit to call for aid from far off Fornost and though King Arveleg I came, it was too late. The defenders of Amon Sûl and the army of King Arveleg met the Witch King's forces, and a great battle did take place. In the end, the tower lay in ruin; the King of Arthedain and the Prince of Cardolan were dead; and the Dúnedain dispersed. If not for the coming of the elves from Lindon, and new troops under Araphor, son of Arveleg, the field would have belonged to the Witch King; but he was driven back, and his forces dispersed as well. Though victorious, the new King of Arthedain had found little left to save.

It has been these many years since then and Cardolan's hope now dwindles again as the plague rages across the lands. Both Dirnhael and Angbor are brought from their thoughts by the sound of a voice...

"Strange Company. Men, Elf and Dwarf?" a gray-cloaked pilgrim says as you now notice him staring at you from the roadside. He wears a large-brimmed, pointed hat that his nose seems to extend beyond and he leans on a gnarled staff. There is a twinkle in his eyes from under the shade of the hat and though he looks aged, you all sense a hidden power within him.

OOO - I will need all to make the following tests: Observe (Spot) TN 12, Observe (Listen) TN 15, Recognition (Wits) TN 12

Test	Edrahil		Angbor		Dirnhael		Lúnduf		Fengel	
	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect
Observe (Spot)	12	Pass	10	Fail	7	Fail	6	Fail	9	Fail
Observe (Listen)	7	Fail	15	Pass	12	Fail	7	Fail	11	Fail
Recognition (Wits)	13	Pass	5	Fail	6	Fail	5	Fail	5	Fail

"Mithrandir? It is you, is it not?" asks Edrahil, a look of recognition on his face. To this name the old man gives a smile and nods, "That is one of the names I am called by Elven folk - Gandalf by Men."

"You were the voice in my dream, weren't you?" says Angbor.

"Dream? I know nothing of a dream," the old man replies, "I am not quite certain if I even know you."

"That may be the case old Father, but I am certain that it was your voice... then, that of a woman's..." Angbor's statement trails off as the Dúnadan sinks deep into thought. Suddenly his eyes widen, "A woman's voice!" he exclaims, "T'was that of my mother!" and Angbor's face takes on a knowing look - his mother has passed.

"It is said in times of need, that we can hear our loved ones call to us," says the old man. To this Angbor makes no reply; he merely rides forward away from the Company to be alone in his grieving. Dirnhael's head droops as he hears the sad news about Angbor's mother. He feels for his kin, but gives him space - as he would wish the same himself.

To the newcomer, Dirnhael speaks: "Gandalf. This name is known to me... Why is it that you travel alone? The road and surrounding areas are fraught with danger. There are brigands and Orcs about, and the very lands themselves feel as if they have been set against us. Two of us suffer still from wounds in battle mere days ago. This is a time of peril."

"Peril indeed" replies the old man, "But I have urgent business to the west and dangers or not, I must travel the roads. One might inquire as to why a Company made up such as yours travels these roads?"

Dirnhael explains their situation as briefly as possible and Gandalf quietly listens, seeming to absorb every word. When Dirnhael finishes the tale, he says, "Now we will travel with a heavy heart, as well. Perhaps solace and hope will be found at the Last Homely House - assuming we can complete the journey in time. May fortune favor you on your journey, my friend. Take caution, however, while I'm sure a man of your... experience and wisdom can avoid most problems, sometimes strength and steel become necessities."

"And sometimes my dear Dúnadan, the sharpness of a man's wits can outdo the cruelest steel" he says with a grin, but then, Gandalf adjusts his hat and his expression has changed. All of a sudden, there is a great commotion of crows in the trees around you and in the skies above.

"Thank you for your kind words Dirnhael and in the House of Elrond you may find what you seek. Take heed of what you have heard and be on your way with the morning's light. Atop the hill you will find moderate shelter, although you may find that you also have company! I must be on my way for something tells me that things are astir... Remember! Be off with the morning light and remember what you have been told!"

The old man yells to you as he strides away. You all marvel at the speed he makes and in a few moments, he is gone from sight. You all notice as the crows seem to circle above you as well as some of them flying off west in the direction of the old man.

"He called you by your name Dirnhael", says Angbor from behind you, "I do not recall you giving it to him."

"I did not," replies a mystified Dirnhael. His voice trails off as he speaks; his eyes never leave the horizon where the man walked so swiftly away. He turns to put an arm around Angbor's shoulder, and says, "My friend, I grieve with you for your loss. I will do everything in my power to ensure that our journey will succeed, and her loss will not be vain."

To Edrahil, he asks: "Who was this Gandalf, or Mithrandir, as you called him? He knew my name, yet we have never met. How can such an old man travel these woods safely by himself? I am vexed. Please tell me what you know."

"Mithrandir is somewhat of a living legend, you could say. Not much is known about him, except that he spends a lot of time wandering, and definitely has some source of powers hidden within him. I don't think he'll have a lot of trouble proceeding alone. Though he does often give mysterious warnings, so I feel we should proceed with caution up the hill."

"If there is danger on the hilltop, don't you think he would have given us more of a warning?" Fengel asks.

"It makes sense that he would have, Fengel" Angbor replies "Let us be on our guard, just in case."

The Company starts up the hill of Weathertop, winding up its long trail to the ruins above. The air seems heavy around the hill as if it itself remembered both its glory and its ruin. The only sound that can be heard is the clunk of the horses hooves and the squawks of the crows that circle above. The party is now aware of a faint smell of smoke as they continue up the hill - perhaps this is the smoke that Edrahil had spoken of earlier. Angbor draws his sword in readiness in case the mysterious gray wanderer did speak of dangerous persons atop the hill.



After twenty minutes of climbing, the Company finally reaches the hills summit, and as they expected, they are not alone. The hills flat top is still covered with large pieces of the once proud tower and its surrounding curtain wall. The large ring in the center of the hill is the most evident reminder of where the tower had once stood. Rising above these old ruins is a thin wisp of smoke. What catches the Company's attention most is the four bodies that lay about the fire - all covered by blankets and firs. It is easy to see that these are some of the Hill Folk that reside in Rhudaur, and it is also easy to see that they are sick. Angbor dismounts, sheathing his blade as he does and slowly walks over to the camp - from his position he can see that two of the men are definitely alive. Their shaking forms tell of the chills that rack their bodies - a sign of the deadly Plague. The other two forms that lay there are still.

"Two are alive!" he yells back to his companions as he proceeds closer. "Yes... a third is still breathing but I think the fourth is dead! Come! Help Me! The fire is dying."

OOC - Angbor instinctively acts in the manner that he has trained for so long, but Dirnhael, you recognize these men as the enemy - the ones who rose up against the Dúnedain of Rhudaur and then went to war with both Cardolan and Arthedain. It was the grandfather's of these men that had ravaged northern Cardolan and their grandsons that now sit in the host of Angmar in the lands east of Tharbad.

"These men need water" Angbor states as he looks at the three men that still live, "They have been taken with the Plague. Dirnhael, in my saddlebags are my medicines and herbs -with them I may be able to ease their sickness. Can you bring them over?"

Without looking up, Angbor continues "Lunduf, please bring me two of the waterskins." The Company looks on as Angbor immerses himself in the skills he has trained all his life, but in each of your minds is the thought that the waterskins are already dangerously low. To add to the Company's concern, one of the Hill-Men begins to hack a nasty "wet" cough, his lungs filled with death.

Dirnhael says nothing. He stares at the sick men for a moment, and then does as Angbor requests.

When Angbor has a moment to spare, Dirnhael takes him aside, and says, "Do you recognize what these men are? I appreciate that you wish to treat them, and I am not without compassion - but when they are able to speak, we must find out why they are at Amon Sûl, and what they are doing here. Our people may be at even more risk than we anticipated. Moreover, we must ensure that we do not take ill ourselves, or all is lost. I am no healer - what must we do?"

"I will not give these men our water. If we were next to a lake I would not give a drop to help these men." Lunduf does not move towards the supplies. "I am with Lunduf. These men deserve what has come to them and more!" says Fengel, keeping his spear raised and ready to strike.

Angbor looks at the Dwarf and the Éothraim with a shocked expression on his face - he cannot believe what he just heard. "You will let these men die without even trying to help or to ease their suffering?! Is this what we have become?... Dirnhael, you cannot possibly feel the same, nor you Edrahil? Yes, these are the Hill-Men that allied with the Dunlending. Their kin have pillaged and raided as far back my father's father... but what of us, did our people not come here to teach? To heal? To help these more simple, common men? That is what the old tales say... the great mariners of Númenor came back into Middle Earth with their great knowledge to share with each - elf and man and dwarf. But then you must remember, we also came as conquerors - long before Elendil and the Faithful escaped the sinking of our ancient home!"

"I can understand the dwarf not feeling, but you Fengel... these people are in ways related to you and your kin!" the Loremaster rants. "I have trained my whole life to heal and bring ease of pain to those who feel nothing but... and so far on this journey, I have seen, and taken hand in the slaying of men who hungered for horsemeat, though they forced our hand, and now I see the denial of a few drops of water to dying men. Has the Shadow of Old rekindled and now work within our hearts?! Do we forsake ourselves by doing nothing and in our hearts become as corrupt as the Dark Lord himself?"

OOO - Angbor attempts to Inspire his friends: **Inspire Test** Roll (2d6)+3 -1 (Tired): 3,2, +2 **Total: 8** **Favour of Fortune** (Re-roll) Roll(2d6)+2: 6,6,3 +2 **Total:17**. Party members must make a Willpower Test vs. the roll 17 to resist not feeling inspired by Angbor's words. If the Company Fails, it will add a plus to his roll below based on the following - *Disastrous Failure* +4, *Complete Failure* +3, *Failure* +2, *Marginal Success* +1, *Complete Success* +0

"Dirnhael look around? This is the closest shelter for miles. These men do not lead or scout forward of an advancing host... we would have espied them from this great height. Aid me in aiding them. We must... it is the right thing to do." and Angbor falls silent looking to each of his companions.

OOO - Angbor attempts to Persuade (Charm) his friends: -1 Tired - Roll (2d6)+5: 3,1, +5 **Total: 9**. Party members must make a Willpower Test vs. the roll 9 plus whatever bonus Angbor may have gotten by the Inspire roll above (i.e. if you had a Failure above, you would add +2 to the 9 roll for TN 11 Willpower Test) to resist not giving into Angbor's words.

Test	Edrahil		Angbor		Dirnhael		Lûnduf		Fengel	
	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect
Willpower 1	--	--	--	--	--	--	10	Fail	9	Fail
Willpower 2	--	--	--	--	--	--	13	Pass	10	Fail

Dirnhael grabs the items out of the saddlebags and begins to help Angbor, but he still has concerns. Seeing the delirious state of the Hill-Men, he knows that they will be unable to hear his words and he says to Angbor. "This is Weathertop; 'tis no normal camp site, and these Hill Men are far from their home. It may be pure chance that they are here - but then it may not be. I will help you nurse them to health, but I insist that we find out more about them when they can speak. It is least they could do in exchange for your ministrations."

"I do not believe that there will be any nursing them back to health. I believe that I will only reduce their suffering before they pass, Dirnhael. If there are questions you have of them, ask them now. Perhaps in this state, you will get true answers." Angbor begins to grab some herbs out of a small leather pouch stored amongst his healing materials. He looks over to the dwarf and the man still sitting on their horses, "Will you be bringing me that water or no?"

Fengel finally lowers his spear and reluctantly dismounts - his anger is evident as he throws his spear into the ground. "Fine, as your will! I am willing to aid these men as long as they are to be our prisoners." Lûnduf feels his heart moved by the inspirational words of the Dûnadan, but the fires of hatred burn too strongly. He stands stoically by his mount and does nothing to aid.

As these mortals have been quibbling, Edrahil has espied something amongst the Hill-Men's gear. He walks over and picks it up. The evening wind grabs the cloth and causes it to unfurl. Upon the banner is all the evidence Dirnhael needs to see - the emblem of the Witch-King and his Rhudaaurim forces.

OOO - I cannot remember the individual's name, but I would like to thank them for this excellent banner picture.

Angbor looks over towards the elf and his hands stop breaking up the dried leaves that he had been working on. Many questions run through the Company's heads and hearts... is this an act of heroism or treachery?

The unfurling of the banner causes Lûnduf to stop in his tracks, "Step aside Angbor! I will help these men. My axe will stop all their suffering."

Edrahil looks from his companions to the damning banner he holds in his hands. "These men obviously work for evil, that cannot be denied. But I believe that they do remain men, and if they are to die, at least we can try to make it an easy death for them - free of pain. As was mentioned, perhaps we will be able to extract some information from them before their departure..." Edrahil's words strike Lûnduf and he lowers his axe. Perhaps these men can be of use.



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Upon seeing the upheld banner, Fengel bursts out, "These men are servants of the Shadow! I will not slay them while they lay defenseless, but should we consider helping them!?"

"Yes, we must." Dirnhael says in response to the Éothraim. Angbor's tension eases as he hears his friends willingness to at least aid these men, not to treat them as animals - though they would probably never show the same respect if the roles were reversed. He breaks up the dried leave and puts them in a pot that the Hill-Men have near their campfire. Angbor watches as Dirnhael stokes the flames and pours what little water he has left from Angbor's and his waterskins. The broken leaves are put in the water and the pot is then set on the fire to brew. "It will be a few minutes on that... perhaps you should ask your questions now Dirnhael. This man here is better off than the other two - he is the most cognizant. The fourth I believe has passed."

As Dirnhael begins to speak to the Hill-Man, Edrahil's far seeing gaze looks out across the range of land at the feet of the hill. Though the sun has set, the elf can discern many things and he sees naught of any army or any other sign of people on the plains. He does see that about two miles east, there is a small stream that runs parallel to the road for about a half-mile - the Company will pass it on tomorrows travel.

Fengel and Lûnduf begin to set a camp for the Company, far from the Hill-Men and the death that they exude. They prepare their bedrolls, each knowing that there will be little sleep tonight.

Dirnhael finishes his questioning after thirty minutes. The information he received was quite garbled by the Hill-Man's feverish state, but it seems that they were part of a large company (30 in number) of the Witch-King's army, ranging this area. The sick man and his companions had taken ill before they had reached Amon Sûl, but their company had left them for fear of the sickness. He says that they staked the banner with the sick men as a sign that the Weather Hills no longer belong to the Dúnedain rabble.

After Dirnhael finishes, Angbor continues his ministrations - nursing the men. The rest of the Company cook the evening meal and then eat. The night sky is clear and the moon sits brightly above the Weather Hills when Angbor finally makes it to his bedroll. In the faint light he hears Dirnhael ask... "Well?"

"They have all perished." Angbor says quietly as a bitter cold wind begins to softly blow in from the north.

OOC - Angbor, Fengel, Lunduf and Dirnhael will need to make a **Stamina Test TN 10**. Except for any questions you wish to ask of these men, the Scene is over - the Company will be bedding down soon. Due to the proximity of the "enemy", sleep will not come easily for the Company - a **Willpower Test TN 12** must be performed by all or that character will suffer a -3 to their Stamina checks the next day to resist Weariness for travel.

Test	Edrahil		Angbor		Dirnhael		Lûnduf		Fengel	
	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect
Stamina	--	--	14	Pass			13	Pass	11	Pass
Willpower			18	Pass			14	Pass	11	Fail

1. The Company will need to make a Stamina Tests TN 8 for each two-hour period of travel. Each member will make 5 test per day (a total of ten hours of travel per day). If a test is failed, the individual will mark their Weariness accordingly and suffer the penalties for their level of weariness. If a PC should fail the first 3 tests made during the days travel, the Company will need to stop for the day due to that PC's inability to carry on. This will lengthen the trip and may cause a problem with supplies.
2. The Company must make a Survival Test TN 8 each day to find a proper camp to rest. Failure to do so will cause the Company to acquire a -3 penalty to all Stamina Tests the day after the sleepless night. This penalty is cumulative for each night not soundly rested but is negated after one good night of sleep.
3. 9 Days of food supplies remain. You will need to refill your waterskins.

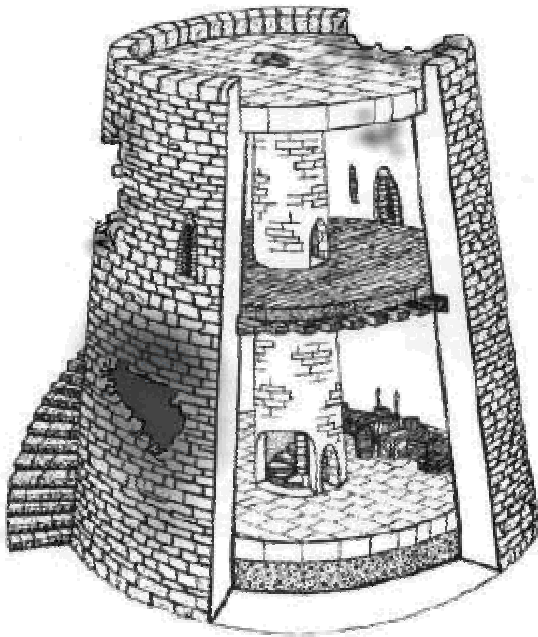
Day 20 Test	Edrahil		Angbor		Dirnhael		Lûnduf		Fengel	
	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect
Stamina 1	8	Pass	10	Pass	12	Pass	16	Pass	9	Pass
Stamina 2	9	Pass	9	Pass	9	Pass	18	Pass	14	Pass
Stamina 3	7	-1 Winded	10	Pass	18	Pass	17	Pass	10	Pass
Stamina 4	11	Pass	9	Pass	19	Pass	13	Pass	5	-1 Winded
Stamina 5	5	-2 Tired	12	Pass	14	Pass	12	Pass	8	Pass
Survival	--	--	1	Fail	10	Pass	--	--	8	Pass
Day 21 Test	Edrahil		Angbor		Dirnhael		Lûnduf		Fengel	
	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect
Stamina 1	8	Pass	11	Pass	15	Pass	15	Pass	8	Pass
Stamina 2	7	-1 Winded	7	-1 Winded	16	Pass	20	Pass	12	Pass
Stamina 3	6	-2 Tired	8	Pass	10	Pass	17	Pass	14	Pass
Stamina 4	8	Pass	10	Pass	9	Pass	19	Pass	11	Pass

Stamina 5	4	-4 Weary	7	-2 Tired	17	Pass	21	Pass	6	-1 Winded
Survival	--	--	5	Fail	13	Pass	--	--	8	Pass
Day 22 Test	Edrahil		Angbor		Dirnhael		Lünduf		Fengel	
	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect
Stamina 1	9	Pass	12	Pass	14	Pass	20	Pass	8	Pass
Stamina 2	7	-1 Winded	12	Pass	13	Pass	13	Pass	10	Pass
Stamina 3	8	Pass	13	Pass	14	Pass	16	Pass	15	Pass
Stamina 4	6	-2 Tired	9	Pass	16	Pass	14	Pass	12	Pass
Stamina 5	8	Pass	9	Pass	13	Pass	12	Pass	6	-1 Winded
Survival	--	--	9	Pass	16	Pass	--	--	4	Fail
Day 23 Test	Edrahil		Angbor		Dirnhael		Lünduf		Fengel	
	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect
Stamina 1	11	Pass	13	Pass	11	Pass	18	Pass	10	Pass
Stamina 2	8	Pass	11	Pass	13	Pass	17	Pass	7	-1 Winded
Stamina 3	11	Pass	6	-1 Winded	10	Pass	17	Pass	14	Pass
Stamina 4	6	-1 Tired	8	Pass	12	Pass	12	Pass	12	Pass
Stamina 5	9	Pass	9	Pass	15	Pass	12	Pass	12	Pass
Survival	--	--	4	Fail	10	Pass	--	--	12	Pass

SCENE 3 - The Long Heath and Lone Tower...

Days 24 - 26 Day 9 on the map

Rhudaurin Watch Tower



With the coming of the morning light, the Company rises to begin their day. Everyone wishes to be on his way from Weathertop as soon as they can, so, Angbor prepares a quick meal as Dirnhael and Fengel saddle the horses. Edrahil and Lünduf stand on one of the remaining partial curtain walls and look out. The far seeing eyes of the elf can see no sign of this roving band of which the Hill-Man had spoken. Above the hill and on the walls, crows circle and perch - the Company can only assume that the birds look to make a meal of the four dead men that lay by the burnt out fire. This has also posed a problem; what to do with the bodies?

After some argument, it is agreed that the Company should again use fire to consume the bodies instead of leaving them to be picked apart as carrion. The Company quietly builds the pyre and they set it ablaze as they mount and ride from the hill. Their minds wander as they descend the hill - once there sat here a proud tower and bulwark against the enemy, now a broken ruin that houses only the dead.


The Company turns east along the old East-West Road. The bitter cold wind that began last night continues to blow from the north across the long heath. Gray clouds have blocked out any warmth from the sun above and only the knowledge that Rivendell is less than a week away makes the trip endurable. It is not long before they pass the small stream, seen by Edrahil, the day before. They stop momentarily to fill their waterskins and then quickly move on.


The Company has noticed that the great flock of crows flying about the area still circle high above the Company. It seems as if the birds are moving along the road as the company pushes east - although they never come close, they are never far off.

On the third day of their travel, the company rides just north of a set of small hillocks. Atop the largest hillock is a ruined signal tower. One of many that Rhudaur had built - these towers were used to send a signal of any danger to Amon Sûl far away. Unfortunately, the tower did little to serve its purpose. The old stone tower stands alone upon the hill, beckoning to the Company - its wooden roof collapsed and walls perforated.

☀ The Company will need to make a Stamina Tests TN 10 for each two-hour period of travel. Each member will make 5 tests per day (a total of ten hours of travel per day). If a test is failed, the individual will mark their Weariness accordingly and suffer the penalties for their level of weariness. If a PC should fail the first 3 tests made during the days travel, the Company will need to stop for the day due to that PC's inability to carry on. This will lengthen the

trip and may cause a problem with supplies.

 The Company must make a Survival (Plains) Test TN 10 each day to find a proper camp to rest. Failure to do so will cause the Company to acquire a -3 penalty to all Stamina Tests the day after the sleepless night. This penalty is cumulative for each night not soundly rested but is negated after one good night of sleep.

 6 Days of food supplies remain.

Day 24 Test	Edrahil		Angbor		Dirnhael		Lünduf		Fengel	
	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect
Stamina 1										
Stamina 2										
Stamina 3										
Stamina 4										
Stamina 5										
Survival										
Day 25 Test	Edrahil		Angbor		Dirnhael		Lünduf		Fengel	
	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect
Stamina 1										
Stamina 2										
Stamina 3										
Stamina 4										
Stamina 5										
Survival										
Day 26 Test	Edrahil		Angbor		Dirnhael		Lünduf		Fengel	
	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect	Roll	Effect
Stamina 1										
Stamina 2										
Stamina 3										
Stamina 4										
Stamina 5										
Survival										