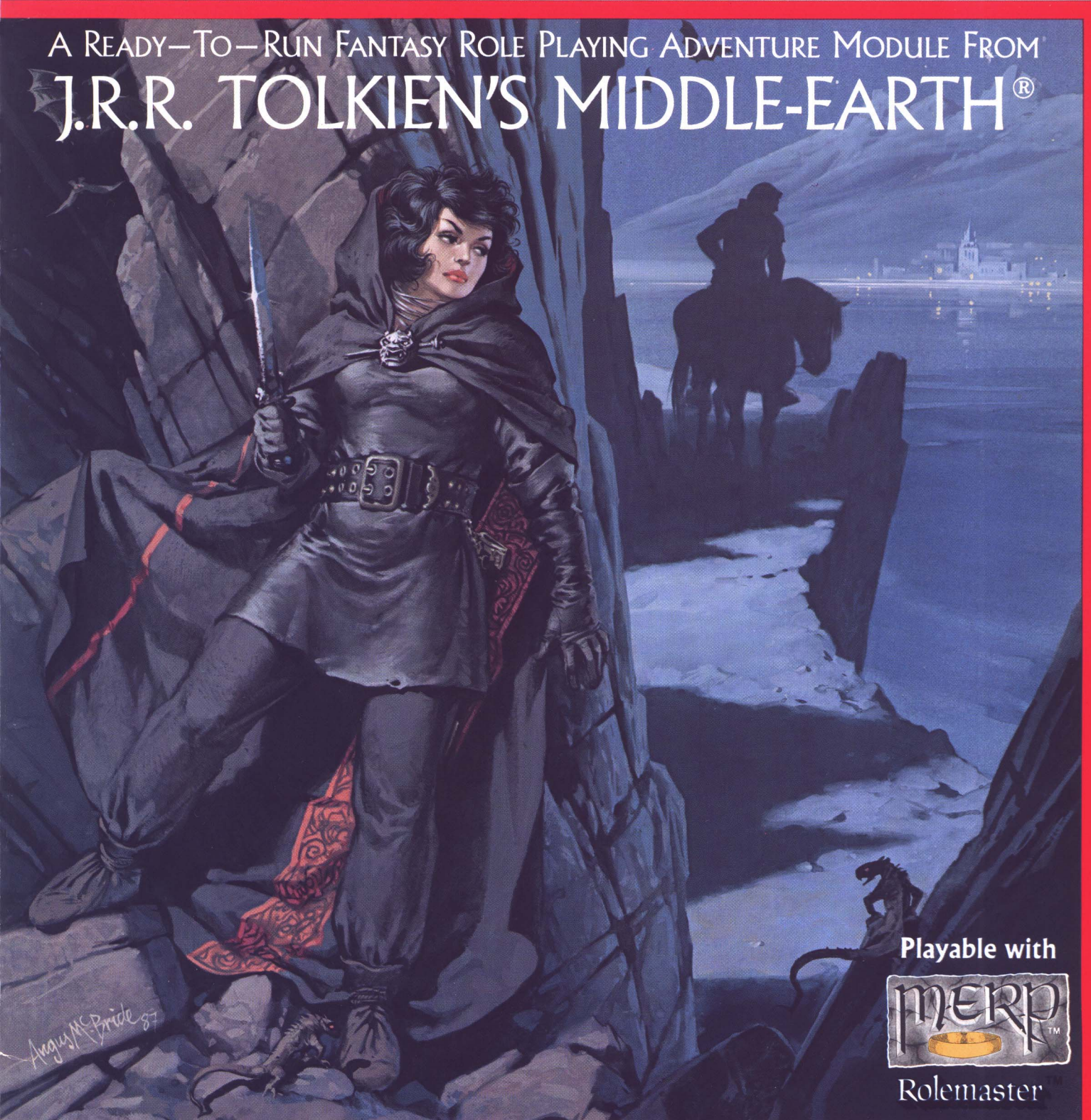


Assassins

of Dol Amroth™

#8106

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



Playable with



Rolemaster



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

ASSASSINS OF DOL AMROTH™

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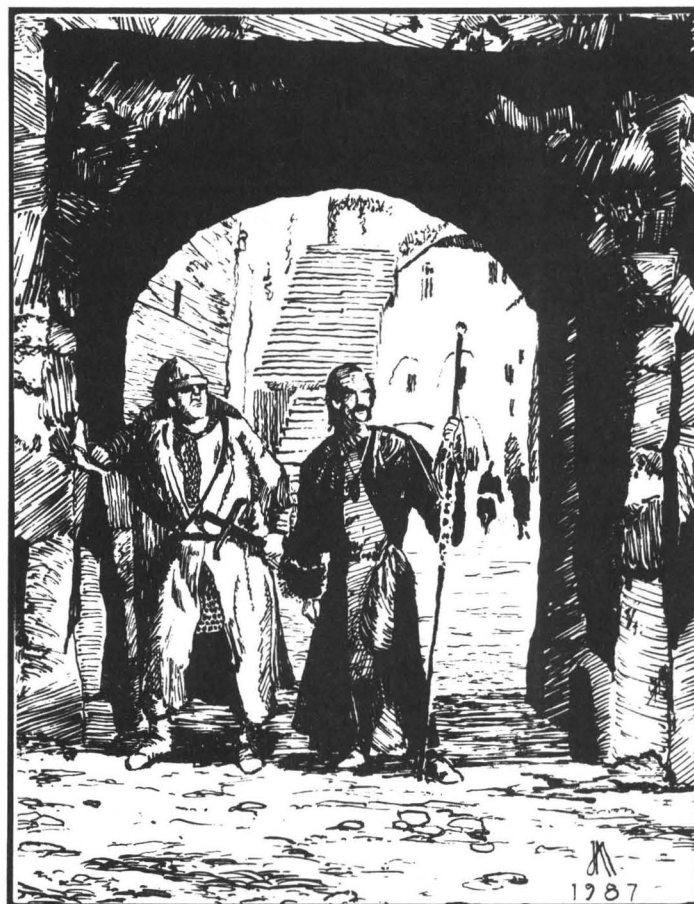
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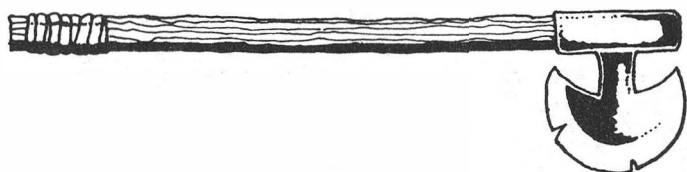
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Lothual waited, silent and immobile as the rock she leaned against. Her prized possession, the enchanted dagger, gleamed with a pale silvery light in the chill night air. Behind her, Dol Amroth glittered like a jewel in the moonlight, the port city alive and bustling even at this late hour — which would soon be more than she could say for the lone traveler approaching on the seaward path.

Blood rushed through her veins as Lothual's anticipation mounted, yet she remained quiet as the wind. Her hood fell back, freeing her beautiful sable hair, but she dared not move to gather it back. "No matter, it will not distract me. Gontran will be pleased with my earnings for tonight," she mused, already gloating over the uncounted wealth of her unsuspecting target. "Fool! He thinks that the Prince can protect him! Well, he is not safe from the Shades of Dol Amroth!"



1.0 GUIDELINES

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

Assassins of Dol Amroth has four parts. Sections 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 deal with guidelines regarding the use of the module. Section 2.0 provides pregenerated characters for the players (which can be used as non-player characters if so desired).

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

The fourth part consists of the tables. An area map is located on the last page and provides a blowup of the immediate region around the adventure locations.

1.1 HANDLING PLAY

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

The adventures are divided into five standard parts: (1) the tale, which describes how to start in terms of the setting, the background, and the plot; (2) the Player Characters, PCs; (3) the Non-player Characters, NPCs, a person-by-person description of the prominent non player characters, including their stats; (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. Adventure 3 (Section 5.0) also contains the primary layout: a level-by-level, room-by-room description of the major adventure site (Moonstone Castle), complete with numbered diagrams, floorplans, and illustrations;

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 1.3 (and described in Sections 3.2, 4.2, and 5.2), 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 Beasts and NPCs in Sections 6.0 and 7.0, at the back of the module. They cover the Beasts and NPCs found 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

1.22 CONVERTING STATISTICS

When using this supplement with your FRP campaign, be careful to note the character statistics before beginning play. Should any adjustments need to be made, you may wish to consider the following guidelines. The material provided is in terms of percentages and is intended to give the reader a relatively clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the individuals and creatures discussed. Most FRP systems will relate to the data, and conversion should be simple; remember, however, that there are dozens of role playing rules and the change-over from the statistics given here may be troublesome.

CONVERTING STATISTICS FOR ANY MAJOR FRP SYSTEM

All the statistics and numerical information used in this module are expressed on a closed or open-ended scale with a 1-100 base. They are designed for use with percentile dice (D100). Use the chart below to derive appropriate bonuses or to convert the 1-100 numbers to figures suitable for non-percentile systems.

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

1.3 DEFINITIONS AND TERMS

These abbreviations and terms are used throughout the series.

1.31 ABBREVIATIONS

GAME SYSTEMS

MERP *Middle-earth Role Playing*

RM *Rolemaster*

CHARACTER STATS

Ag Agility(**RM/MERP**)

Me Memory(**RM**)

Co Constitution(**RM/MERP**)

Ig Intelligence(**MERP**)

St Strength(**RM/MERP**)

Re Reasoning(**RM**)

PR Presence(**RM/MERP**)

Em Empathy(**RM**)

It(In) Intuition(**RM/MERP**)

Qu Quickness(**RM**)

Sd Self Discipline(**RM**)

GAME TERMS

AT Armor Type

Lvl Level (exp. or spell level)

bp bronze piece(S)

MA Martial Arts

cp copper piece(s)

Mod Modifier or Modification

Crit Critical strike

mp mithril piece(s)

D Die or Dice

NPC Non-player Character

D100 .. Percentile Dice Result

OB Offensive bonus

DB Defensive Bonus

PC Player Character

FRP Fantasy Role Playing

PP Power Points

GM Gamemaster

R or Rad Radius

gp gold pieces(s)

Rnd or Rd Round

ip iron piece(s)

RR Resistance Roll

jp jade piece(s)

Stat Statistic or Characteristic

tp tin piece(s)

MIDDLE-EARTH TERMS

A Adûnaic

Kh Khuzdul (Dwarvish)

BS Black Speech

LotR .. *The Lord of the Rings*

Cir Cirth or Certar

Or Orkish

D Dunaël (Dunlending)

Q Quenya

Du Daenaël (Old Dunaël)

R Rohirric

E Edain

Rh Rhovanion

El Eldarin

S Sindarin

Es Easterling

S.A Second Age

I.A First Age

Si Silvan Elvish

F.A Fourth Age

T.A Third Age

Hi Hillman

Teng ... Tengwar

H Hobbitish (Westron variant)

V Variag

Har Haradrim

W Westron (Common Speech)

Hob .. *Hobbit*

Wo Wose (Drúedain)

Kd Kuduk (ancient Hobbitish)

1.32 DEFINITIONS

A few crucial concepts are detailed below. The majority of unique terms and translations from *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* can be found in the text proper.

Anfalas: (S. "Long Coast;" W. "Langstrand.") Region of Gondor to the west of the provinces of Dor-en-Ennil and Lamedon.

Belfalas: (S. "Coast of the Powers.") Great, hilly peninsula in southern Gondor. Belfalas juts out into the bay that bears its name. Belfalas is also used as an alternative name for the land called Dor-en-Ennil, but this usage is not particularly accurate. Actually, Belfalas is the southern half of Dor-en-Ennil.

Dol Amroth: (S. "Hill of Amroth.") City and associated castle located on the coast of northwestern Belfalas (western Dor-en-Ennil). The capital of the Land of the Prince, it was originally (before T.A. 1981) called Lond Ennil (S. "Haven of the Prince"). Dol Amroth also refers to the hill upon which the town and citadel stand, a great granite massif that juts into the Bay of Belfalas.

Dor-en-Ennil: (S. "Land of the Prince.") Princely fief in south-central Gondor. Ruled by the Prince of Dol Amroth, it includes the area between the Gilrain/Serni and Morthond/Ringló rivers.

Dunedain: (S. "Edain of the West"; sing. Dunadan). These High Men are descendants of the Edain who settled the western island continent of Númenor around S.A. 32. The Dunedain returned to explore, trade with, colonize, and later conquer many areas along the western, southern, and eastern coasts of Endor during the Second Age. Unfortunately, their hubris and desire for power led them to attempt an invasion of the Valar's Undying Lands. As a result, Eru (the One) destroyed their home island in S.A. 3319. Those called the "Faithful" opposed the policies and jealous Elf-hatred that prompted this "Downfall." The Faithful were saved when Númenor sank, sailing east to northwestern Middle-earth. There they found the "Realms in Exile," the kingdoms of Arnor and Gondor. Although sparsely populated, Arthedain (in Arnor) contains the highest proportion of the Faithful and the most purely Dúadan culture in all of Endor. Many "unfaithful" (or "Black Númenórean") groups survive as well, living in colonies and independent states such as Umbar.

The term Dunedain refers to the Númenóreans and their descendants in Middle-earth, groups which possess considerable physical and mental strength, longevity, and a rich Elven-influenced culture. Adûnaic is their native language.

Dunlendings: (Dn. "Daen Lintis.") A rugged race of Common Men who, for the most part, migrated out of the White Mountains in the Second Age. The Eredrim of Dor-en-Ennil are a related folk. Descendants of the Daen Coenis, Dunlendings have a medium or stocky build, sparse brown hair, and tanned or ruddy complexions. Men average 5' 10"; women stand around 5' 6". Mostly mountain-dwellers or hill-loving herders, they are known by various names: Dunmen, Dunnish Folk, Dunlanders, Eredrim, the Hillmen of the White Mountains, etc.

Eriador: All of the territory north of the river Isen and between the Blue Mountains (S. "Ered Luin") and the Misty Mountains (S. "Hithaeglin"). Its northern boundary lies along the ridge that runs northwestward from Carn Dûm and reaches to the Ice Bay of Forochel. Some accounts place the southern border along the line bounded by the rivers Greyflood (S. "Gwathlo") and Swanfleet (S. "Glanduin"). Most hold it to be that area north of Gondor's traditional western border. Eriador loosely translates as the "empty Lands" and includes the regions of Minhiriath, Eregion, Cardolan, Rhudaur, Arthedain, and, by some, Dunland and Enedwaith.

Gondor: (S. "Stone-land.") The great Dunedain kingdom that lies west of Mordor and north of the Bay of Belfalas. It includes a number of regions: (clockwise from the north) Calenardhon (Rohan after T.A. 2510); Anorien; Ithilien; Lebennin; Belfalas; Lamedon; Anfalas; and Andrast. Osgiliath on the Anduin serves as the Gondorian capital until T.A. 1640, when the throne is moved to Minas Anor (Minas Tirith).

Lórien: (S. "— Dream".) Also known at various times as Lothlórien (S. "Dreamflower"), Laurelindórenan (S. "Land of the Valley of Singing Gold"), Lorinand, Lindórinand (N. "Land of the Singers"), and Dwimordene (R. "Haunted Valley"). The Golden Wood was formally established by Galadriel in T.A. 1375, although a number of Nandor Elves preceded her there.

White Mountains: (S. "Ered Nimrais.") Snow-capped mountains which run eastward from the Cape of Andrast and end above Minas Anor (Minas Tirith), just west of the Anduin. The Paths of the Dead cross under the White Mountains between Harrowdale (on the north) and Erech (to the south). Alpine in character, the White Mountains rise to heights of well over 11,000 feet.

2.0 PLAYER CHARACTERS

These characters may be used by players, or by the G.M. as non-player characters with whom the players may interact. An optional personality profile is included for each and their statistics are listed on the chart that follows.

Codes: See the NPC stat table for a list of the basic codes. The following is an explanation of other notations and abbreviations which are used in this chart.

Power Points: The number (if any) given in parenthesis 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 One-hand Edged, One-hand Concussion, Two-handed, Thrown, Missile, and Pole-arms; Dir. Spell = Directed Spell Bonus; 2ndary Skill = Secondary Skill.

Secondary Skills: Each secondary skill is abbreviated by giving the beginning letters of the skill (MERP section 2.33). The bonus for that skill follows the abbreviation.

Languages: Languages are abbreviated by giving their first three letters (MERP, ST-1, p. 19). The rank for each language is given following the abbreviation.

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

2.1 PC CHART

See previous page for the PC Chart.

2.2 ADVENTURE ONE

PC 1. PODDIT SMALL

It may be that the only reason Poddit has chosen the profession of a Warrior is his size. In his childhood he dealt with the fact that his cohorts were bigger than he was by knocking them down. Since that time the Dúnadan has mellowed somewhat and his overall outlook is friendly, but he is still prone to belligerence when his height is made fun of. Even now that he is fully grown, he stands only five feet tall. That five feet, though, is packed with muscles that are like coiled steel. For battle gear he wears a shirt of chain links and a metal cap. He fights with a short-hafted axe and carries a round shield of cured bull's hide stretched across an iron frame.

PC 2. BRACKEN

There is a tale told at the Prince's hunting lodge of a young boy, raised in the scullery by his unwed mother, who took on with the Gamekeeper and learned the ways of the woods as easily as another might learn the streets of a village. His natural talent was such, it is said, that he could cling to the forest like the bracken itself. The boy was born Kint Karninson but his skills bought him the name of Bracken. He left the lodge some months ago. His mother had disappeared, carried off by beasts or brigands, and he set out to find her. Since then he has searched to no avail, finding nothing more than the signs of some sort of struggle on a path she had been known to use and, on the trees near by, a thin residue of powder that looked like ash and smelt of pitch and smoke. At last he has given up hope and wanders the taverns of the town looking for something to make him forget his sadness. He is a tall boy, and sparely built. His dark hair reaches over the shoulders of his leather vest. At his belt hangs a short sword and a sling which he uses with fair skill.

PC 3. JIN HAWTHORN

Just after her sixteenth birthday Jin found herself at the head of a noble house in Dol Amroth. She was the only heir to quite an estate and is now owner of a shipping empire and mercantile house in addition to the broad swath of farmland amid which the family manor rests. All this, though, means little to her. She has grown up with the luxuries wealth brings and finds most of the privileges that her station buys her to be rather dull and tiresome. To get away from this she has chosen to have a go at the adventuring life. She has trained under the Prince's Gamekeeper and has been a fair pupil. Now her teacher has decided that the time has come for her to do a little wandering on her own. She has purchased excellent armor and equipment, as well as a superbly balanced broad sword which should be treated as +5 just for its craftsmanship.

PC 4. MELADORN

Like his father, this young Dúnadan tends the burial grounds of Dol Amroth. In his free time though he dreams of a more adventurous life. He is tall, even among his own race, with dark hair and sea grey eyes. His personality shows the calm that is the rule among members of his profession, well suited to reminding the bereaved that death is Eru's gift to Men, not punishment. He has put great effort into his study of spells and learned an additional list for his troubles. He wears a robe of dark green, as tradition dictates, but when outside the Garden of the Tombs he also dons armor of leather and carries a steel shanked oak baton (treat as a mace). He also carries a pouch of healing herbs which currently holds two Mirennia berries and one dose of Anserke root.

PC 5. BRACHNE BRATCH

This young Bard has come to Dor-en-Emil out of the Wilderland west of Mirkwood. A Northman, used to Northern ways, he has found the atmosphere of the city to be a never ending source of wonder and of confusion. He has found though, that taverns here are much like taverns anywhere and so he has begun to make a living for himself telling his Northern tales. Brach is a large man, with a considerable paunch but he is as strong as one of his father's kine. He is good natured and friendly, quick to smile and always dependable when times get rough. He has reddish hair and a thin beard which only a few more years will thicken. In the streets the storyteller wears a tunic of buck skin with a belt of bronze links. He has trained in the use of the quarter staff and carries one that was carved by his father as a going away present before he left the village where he was born. It is decorated with a pattern like interlocking rings of rope.

PC 6. TENSIDIR OF LINHIR

This young Dúnadan has come from Linhir to The City of the Prince to seek a new master and continue his education. He left his home town when his old instructor fell victim to a misfired spell and was deprived of his reason. Tensidir made the best of the situation by moving on to the bigger city, looking for a more enlightened community of scholars. Now he wanders the streets in frustration because he has not yet been accepted, the days are dragging since he does not expect to hear for another week of two. He is a thin fellow who reminds one of an old man, though he is still quite young. He wraps his sharp-edged frame in a voluminous cloak of deep red and wears an odd hat of red and white on his high brow. He carries no weapons and deems physical combat unbefitting of a user of magic so he has gained no skill with arms.

2.3 ADVENTURE TWO

PC 7. THRODIN SON OF THOROD

This tough warrior is gruff even for a Dwarf. It is rare that he puts more than two words together to get his point across. Instead of speech he uses his hands to express himself. When at home, where he spends the Winter whenever he can, he is known as one of the finest metal workers in his clan. When out in the wild world he is renowned as a warrior of merit. His skill with metal is displayed in the gear he carries. He arms himself with a sword of the finest steel and elegantly simple design (+10 for its superb balance). His helm, greaves, and breastplate are of dark steel etched in a delicate pattern with inlay of copper. Beneath this he wears a padded surcoat of bright crimson, which is charmed to raise his DB by 15. All of this is set off by his beard of bright silver, forked and tucked into a broad belt of worked leather. His skill at arms is shown by a number of brass rings hung from the bottom edge of his belt, one for each opponent he has felled.

PC 8. LESSITH THE CLIMBER

In the town of Linhir there is a warrant out for a slender red-haired girl, suspected of robbery and murder. For this reason she has come to Dol Amroth. The robbery was hers, she will admit, but the murder was undertaken by the owner of the house, an old merchant who saw his opportunity to be rid of his nettlesome mistress. He slit her throat and then called for the guard. Now, Lessith seeks to spend some time and the money she stole from the merchant in a slightly safer town. The girl is a friendly sort, but none too trusting. She currently spends her time in the city's taverns, looking for entertainment. At just over five feet, she is short for a Dúnadan but her spunky personality makes her hard to overlook in relaxed times. Under her leather jerkin, hanging up-side-down in a cleverly designed scabbard, she carries an interesting short sword. Though it is not decorated and even looks rather poorly made, this weapon is actually quite a prize. It has been enhanced by enchantment which gives it +5 in combat, and allows it to be thrown with the ranges of a short bow.

PC 9. ELLOLLEN LANGRIDDER

An errand for a Rohir chieftain has brought this tall horseman out of the lands he knew and, now that his message has been delivered, he plans to spend a little time getting to know the strange folk of the city. Blond and bearded, and weighing in at over 220, he is an impressive figure as he wanders through the darker complected

crowds here. He is a gregarious fellow and already has several drinking buddies in the taverns he visits. His equipment is typical for his people, a broadsword and a shield with the white horse on green blazoned on its face. He wears buck-skin riding clothes under a linen tabard of green and red. He also owns a long lance, which stands by his horse in the stable of the White Shoals tavern (Havens of Gondor sec 11.36). The sword he wields is magical, with +5 normally and +15 vs. Orcs and Half-orcs. He also has a small earring which is a +1 spell adder.

PC 10. RELLO OF THE MACE

The patron of this Northman Animist is Fejjil Goldhair, a hero of ancient legend. The totem of his followers is the mace they use in battle. Rello travels as did his hero, throughout the Wilderlands.

He is a cheery fellow and is thought to bring good luck by the villagers he visits. Blond hair worn in braids and his rugged good looks call back the memory of the heroes of old. He wears armor of rigid leather beneath a cloak of sky blue. His mace is all of shining steel and gives him an offensive bonus modifier of +15 as well as acting as a +1 spell adder.

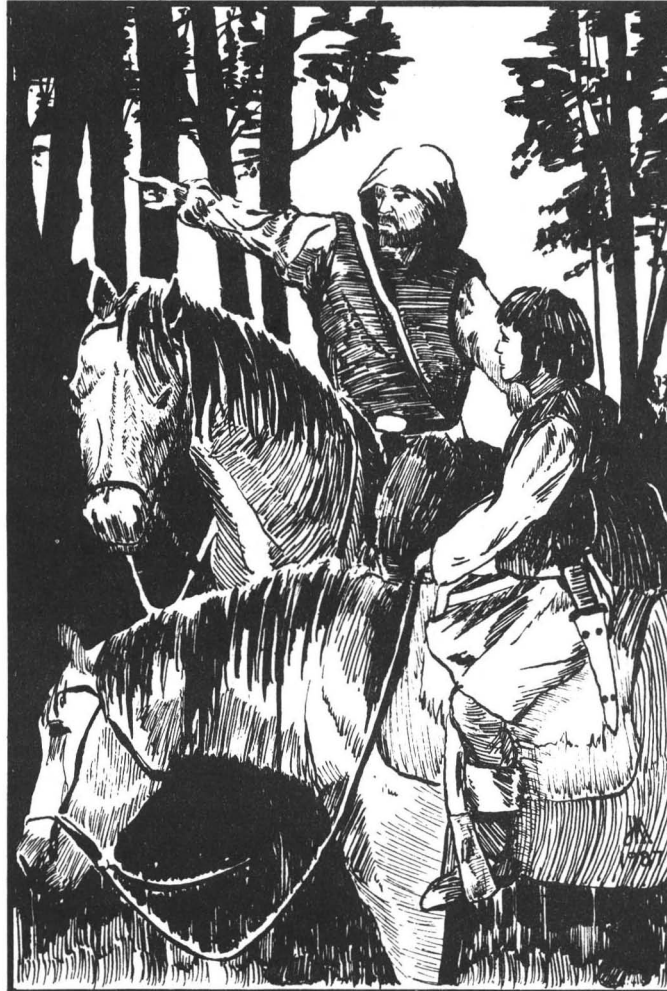
PC 11. KINDA THE SCOP

The tales and songs of the South Kingdom are the joy of Kinda's life. She sings and recites in taverns and courts across the land and is well liked by all of her hosts. She is plain in her looks but has a charming manner that often wins her friends. Browns and reds are the colors of her simple traveler's garb and her staff is twined with ribbons of these tones. At her belt she wears a long dagger but usually fights with her staff instead. This is a magical weapon and burns upon command with fire that will not harm her hands, but, in addition to any normal criticals it inflicts, delivers one heat critical of equal magnitude. In a pocket of her robe she keeps a mouse which is her familiar. She

has named it Huan and is quite fond of it.

PC 12. TIRALGAR OF THE WOOD

At about the age of seven Tiralgar stepped out of the forest into a Woodman village knowing nothing but his own name. The village mage took him in and trained him and he has grown up tall and strong but his birth remains unknown. Now he has left his home to seek his lost parents. He seems of Dúnadan stock and so he roams the towns of Gondor asking after any hints as to his heritage. He is a personable young man who makes friends easily and makes his living doing magical odd jobs in the places where he stops. His traveling clothes are of russet and green with a bright red hat in which he keeps a woodbird's feather. That feather was a gift from his teacher in the forest and acts as a x2 power point multiplier. He also has a dagger which is +15 in due to its fine construction.



2.4 ADVENTURE THREE

PC 13. PERDIDO

Dol Amroth has always been home to this young warrior. He is of mixed stock and heritage but has given his loyalty to the Dúnadain. He serves in the city lists when called but earns his daily bread as a sergeant of the guard at the Iron House (see Havens of Gondor 11.34). This pays well enough but he wishes for a more interesting lot. This wish comes from tales told by an old uncle who was quite a traveller. That uncle also left his favorite nephew his battle gear and travel equipment. There is a heavy mace, iron from grip to head, which has a magic about it that allows it to be wielded as if it were of normal weight. The end result is a bonus of +15 in combat. He also wears a suit of chain mail that was made long ago by the Dwarves of Moria. It is not magical but its quality is high enough to give it a bonus of 10 for defense. The travel gear is also high quality and consists of a long coat of dark blue leather, which he wears over his chain, and a magical belt which allows him to climb and run on rocky hills and mountains as well as any mountain goat (+20 to any MM that involves moving on precarious ground).

PC 14. GLORINADAN

An Elf of Edhellond, this scout has spent his life learning to know the woodlands and plains that surround his home. He spends a fair amount of time in Dol Amroth as he is often asked to carry messages there from his own city. For clothing, the color he prefers is a light green and he wears this both in his simple traveling tunic and in the leather armor he wears in battle. This armor is helped to protect him by the power of a ring he wears which adds fifteen to his defensive bonus as well as bringing him luck in the form of a +10 to any one roll he chooses in a day. The Elf fights with a long straight sword or with a long bow at range. The sword is a magic weapon with a bonus of +20 against any who serve the Enemy.



PC 15. THE RANGER OPPERITH

All the lands of the South Kingdom are home to this quiet Dúnadain. He roams from place to place in his own subtle war against the forces of evil. His thick beard (unusual for a Dúnadan) and fur cloak have earned him the nickname "The Bear" among the townsfolk he visits and those who have seen him fight will attest that the name is fitting. He has made many friends among the people of the towns and villages and is popular for his stories told late at night around the tavern fires. Beneath his great cloak he wears a shirt of non-metallic chain which does not inhibit his spell casting, is magical (+10), and cannot be pierced by any arrow (Arrow hits do only 2 points of bruising damage unless a crit that strikes lower arms, legs, head or neck is rolled.). A great two-handed sword hangs over his back which is plus fifteen in combat and at his belt is a short sword which has the same bonus and can be thrown as if it were a dagger, returning if it fails to hit its target. In a pouch he keeps two nodules of Rewk, one dose of Harfy, and one Degiik leaf.

PC 16. ULNO TULLWATER

Out of Rohan this Animist has come to see the World. His antlered leather helm shows him to be a priest of the Cult of the Stag. He travels through the land searching for adventure and observing his religious festivals with any folk he finds who share his heritage. Like so many of his folk, he has long blond hair which he keeps in braids. He also braids his thick reddish beard, with rings of copper and gold entwined among the strands that jingle slightly as he walks or rides, these rings act as a 3x power point multiplier and bring him luck (in the form of a +5 to any three rolls he chooses each day). A long rigid leather coat and a round wooden shield which bears a white stag on a field of green are his protection in battle and he wields a broadsword (+10) or a short, double-curved bow for which he has five arrows that are charmed against Orcs (+15 vs. Orcs, +10 normally).

PC 17. BEHRIN BEHHORNSON

Tavernkeepers throughout the South Kingdom are pleased to welcome this tall brown-haired storyteller at their doors. He is fed and kept without charge all across the land. In his travels he wears a cloak of grey and a tall hat of sky blue. He wears no armor but has a ring which increases his defensive bonus by 20 and acts as a +3 spell adder. As a staff he carries a spear which has a magical bonus of fifteen and can be thrown at double normal ranges. As can be expected from a Dorwinadan, the Bard is a warm and friendly type, given to celebration and drink as well as the storytelling by which he earns his keep.

PC 18. LARRITHIN

An Elf of Lorien, this Mage is out in the World as something of an agent of the Lady Galadriel. At most times he is free to go as he chooses but on occasion she will contact him with some mission or task for him to undertake. He wears grey robes with a silver cord about his waist and a silver circlet rests upon his brow. The circlet is a 3x power point multiplier and also protects his head as would a full helm. He has a staff of ash wood which is +10 in combat but he will go to almost any length to avoid melee. He prefers the greater subtlety of magic. He is somewhat carefree for a Sinda and tends to be friendly and talkative, even with strangers. In a pocket of he robes he keeps a small crystal statue of a finch which has power to charm birds and winged creatures and will cause them to obey simple commands, so long as such orders are not too alien to the subject's nature.



3.0 MURDER ON THE DOCKS

The area around Dol Amroth, Dor-en-Emil, is a pleasant region with fair weather and gentle terrain. Since late in the First Age its comfortable lands have been inhabited by a number of different peoples, both Elves and Men. With the founding of Gondor a new era began throughout Middle-earth and along the southern coast this came with the establishment of a principality under the House of Edhelion. Ever since this time the coastal lands have been ruled by princes friendly to Gondor. In times of peace these people are as gentle as their land but when the trumpets of battle are blown, none fight more determinedly in the armies of the South Kingdom.

3.1 THE TALE OF TIRANIR THE RANGER

Tiranir is at the latter end of an impressive career of service to his prince. In the court of Dol Amroth he has been honored for his bravery and fortitude many times. Now, at the age of sixty-one, he lives in retirement at his family home, a small stone keep not far from the city, known as The Woodhold. He passes his days teaching his young son the ways of Knighthood and enjoying the liesure he has earned so well.

In his earlier days Tiranir was known as the greatest hunter of Dor-en-Emil. He made a name for himself in the year following the Corsair Invasion of T.A. 2758, rooting out the last remnants of the Southerners' armies. At that time he was only twenty-one but had come to lead his family after his father's death during the initial onslaught of the invaders. Repeatedly since, he has been called to

track down criminals in the countryside and to lead skirmish troops into battle. He is known for these deeds to all the folk of Dol Amroth and he has always had great popularity among the city's people.

Now he has scheduled a party to celebrate the thirteenth birthday of his son, his only love since the boy's mother died a few years ago. The morning of the event Tiranir rode out across his estate in search of wild boar and the trail led him on a course he had not travelled for several years. He came upon a rocky knoll (see section 5.0) which was shrouded in an unusual and evil seeming mist. Unequipped for any real fighting, having only his boar spear and a long knife, he chose to forgo investigation until another day. He went on to take his quarry in a nearby thicket and returned home to deliver it to the kitchen. Afterwards he spoke of the knoll to his son, but without the eery feeling of the mist, it seemed less important than it had when he was there. He set the issue aside to go on with his preparations. Only one thing was left for the Ranger to do before the party, a quick run into town to pick up a present for the boy. He has commissioned a fine cloak at one of the weavers down in The New Port, near the docks....

3.2 THE NPCs

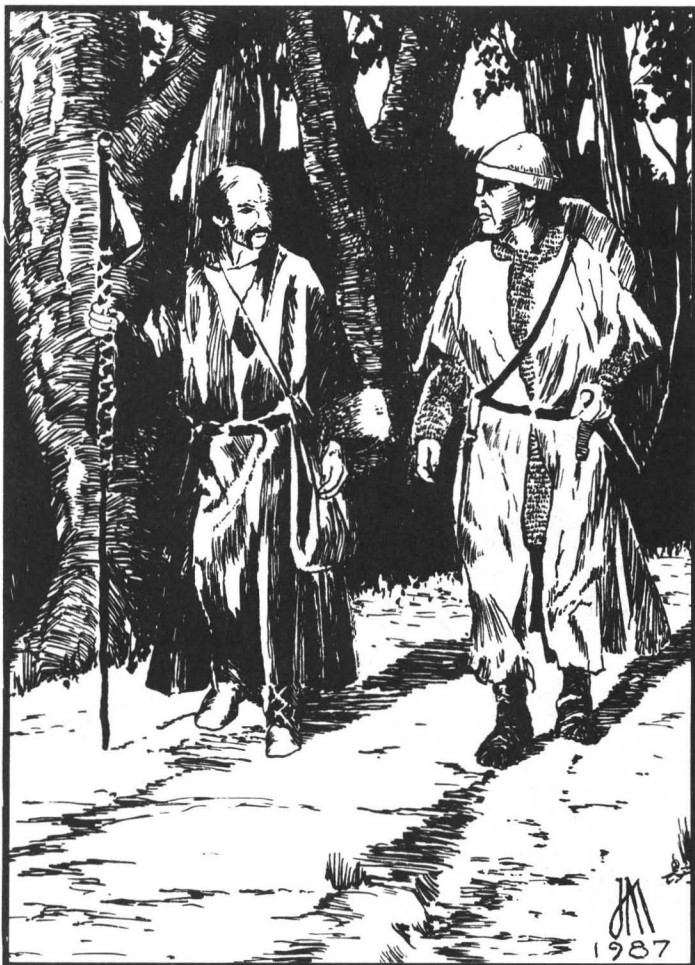
There will be only one NPC of note involved in this adventure, the assassin Joraal. His superior skills coupled with the challenges of the hideout into which the PCs will all travel should prove trouble enough for them to handle. See Section 5 for more on the Shades: that ring of assassins who have dire plans for the citizens of Dol Amroth.

THE SHADE JORAAL SHADOWSWORD

Dressed all in the Shades' chosen grey, this tall man cuts an imposing figure. His face is covered by a swath of cloth and his hands are gloved. Across his back he slings a light broad sword and in his belt are several throwing knives (six). He carries a twenty foot coil of rope with a grappling hook slung around one arm and a set of thieves picks are in a pouch at his belt along with two carefully wrapped glass balls in which his master has placed a spell of stunning (third level) which will effect all except the caster within a ten foot radius by causing them to be stunned for one round for each five points of RR failure. His robe is also magical and allows a servant of his cult the power to become invisible once per day. This invisibility is limited in that its subject cannot move in any way without cancelling its effect. Finally, he has, in with his picks and the glass ball a potion which will allow him to see clearly even in total darkness, though it will not aid him in seeing through smoke or mist.

Joraal is tough and wiley. He has a strong sense of honor which will rule out the possibility of surrender under any circumstances but will not prevent his use of ungentlemanly tactics to inconvenience his pursuers. His training has led him to hold all who are not of his order in contempt but he is unlikely to underestimate the skills of an adversary more than once.

Notable Skills: Climbing 60, Disarm Traps 30, Hiding 50, Ambush 40(8), Swimming 35, Stalking 50, Perception 35 [In Role Master add Adrenal Moves: Speed 35, Ballance 30, Leaping 35, Landing 35.]. **Languages:** Westron 5 Dunael 3.



3.3 THE SETTING

In the New Port Quarter of Dol Amroth, tucked in amid more active buildings, stands the abandoned warehouse of Fordis the Grain Seller. Years of business success were brought rapidly to an end for Fordis when, in the same month, seven ships and both of his sons were lost to pirates on the bay. The poor man has become something of a hermit now and has left the remainder of his holdings to fall into disrepair. This warehouse is one piece of property he has held onto but he has done nothing to keep it up or make use of it for several years. Now it is the sometime home for various wandering vagabonds but serves no other purpose.



THE WAREHOUSE

When it was active, this was considered one of the finest facilities in the area. Large and well ventilated, it was ideal for the great loads of grain the merchant brought through it. Below the ground floor is a storage area with room for many tons. Above is a complicated tangle of ropes and pulleys with two long platforms where mules were led back and forth, harnessed to the tackle, to carry delivery wagons out over the storage area and to lift containers up from below to be stowed on ships. Now, most of the hardware remains but years of neglect have allowed it to fall into a sorry state of disrepair.

1. The Main Floor. The ground level of the Warehouse is made of one large chamber. It can be entered through two pairs of large double doors in the street-side wall, each with a smaller postern gate in its left door, and through the seaward end where there is one normal door at the right side and a row of huge sliding doors all along the rest of the wall. These were all locked once upon a time but the many illicit tenants that have passed through the place since it was abandoned have long since done away with all of those troublesome bolts. The doors, walls and floor are all of sturdy oak planks, fixed with iron nails and hardware. The majority of the area is unfloored, open to the storage room below. This gulf is shielded by a three foot railing around its edges and spanned by a railed catwalk, running down its center from end to end. To avoid obstructions in the area below, the builders did not use pilings to support the walk. Instead it gains its strength from thick ropes that run under the treads and are attached at either end. These are stretched quite tight to keep the walk surprisingly rigid. For all its apparent stability, though, this is a dangerous bridge. A family of mice has been at work on the lines near their seaward ends and they are near the point of snapping. One man can make the trip across with no risk but under the weight of five or six the walk is certain to fail, dropping them into the grain bin below. In such a case, the ropes will not all break at once so it is likely that people will fall before the whole thing comes down. This will probably save a few cracked heads since even one of the ropes will still hold the wood of the walk so long as no one adds his weight to it. If anyone should manage to catch hold of some part of the structure when the rest fall, he may be able to hold for a few minutes but eventually the last rope will break, dropping him along with a fair load of wood.

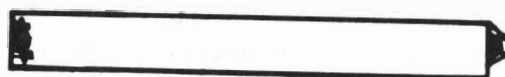
1A. The Loft. Hooks and pulleys hang here at all angles, with ropes dropping towards the floor and running the length of the warehouse to converge at the ends around great spindles just off of the two long platforms. To these are attached harnesses for several mules. The platforms themselves are very sturdily built, suspended from the rafters by thick beams all around. Each can be reached from below by ladders that run down from their seaward ends.

2. The Grain Bin. Its floor some thirty feet below the street level, this area was used to hold grain to be loaded aboard ships. The walls and floor are sheathed in copper to keep out vermin and to smooth the job of pushing the contents into shipping containers through the seaward doors. The second task was served well; years of abandonment have, however, given rats and mice plenty of opportunity to find ways into the bin. Currently the area is about a third full of grain that was left when the owner left the business. It is, of course, spoiled, but it will still act as a cushion for anyone who might fall from the bridge. This may not be pleasant, as there is quite a strong smell and no immediate prospect of getting back up, since the walls are smooth and have no ladder, however such a fall will result in no physical injury to a healthy character. Movement in the grain will be limited to about half normal but it thins out to almost nothing at the West end. There the floor and walls slope toward two exits. These once had doors but now the panels lie broken on the floor of area #3.

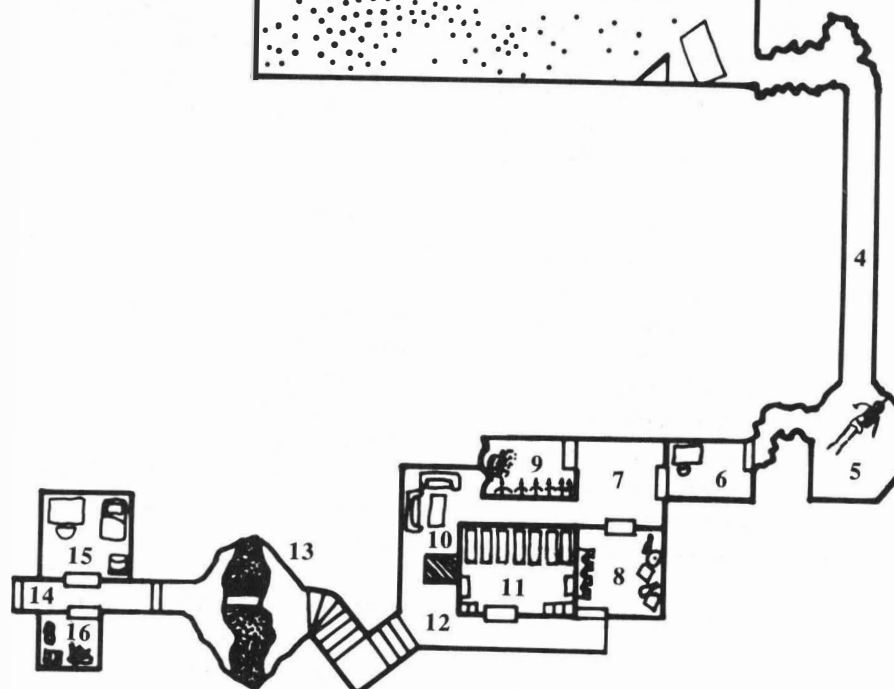
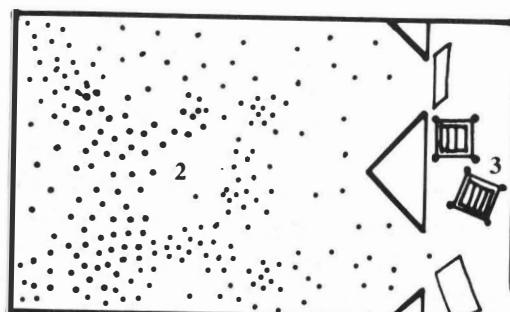
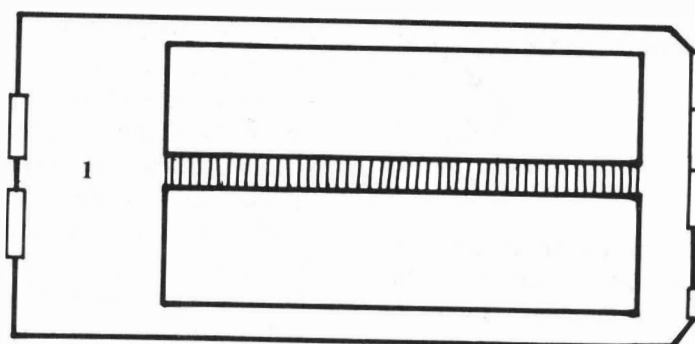
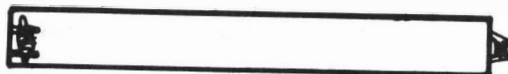
3. Loading Room. Here large, wheeled crates were filled with grain to be hoisted up by the mules and rolled aboard ship. Two such containers are here now, square with small wheels and eyes for hooks at each corner, and more can be found on the dock outside the sliding doors above. There is no ladder to the floor above to be found here either but, in the north-west corner of the room a passage has been cut through the oak planking of the wall. Beyond this, a short tunnel through the darkness leads to a dank passage that seems to run through the moist stonework of the seawall.

4. The Passage. In the construction of the seawall, the builders used thick stones for the facing of both sides but filled the area between them with earth instead of building it all of stone. This gave it almost as much strength but cut back sharply on the cost of labor and materials. In a few spots along its length, this has been exploited by folk who live outside the law. The dirt has been cleared out and breaches have been made in the landward wall, from cellars and disused basements along the way. This has created a number of hidey-holes along the waterfront which are almost impossible to detect. Here, of course, is one such place, dug out shortly after the grainery shut down, by a band of petty brigands that has since met its demise in a fight with some competitors. The walls and ceiling are the thick black stones of the seawall and on the left hand one can hear the pounding of the waves. From the entrance at the grainary it runs north for about a hundred feet to a place where it broadens to form a sort of cave.

5. The Cave. This "cave" is formed where the outer wall bulges out to support a small guard house. Here the thieves put up their own "No Trespassing" sign. The skeleton of a large man has been wired together and hung here with a rusted sword fixed to its right hand and another stuck through one eye hole and out the back of the skull. It hangs from the inner end of a mooring ring which moves as the boat tied to it rocks on the waves so the bones sway back and forth with a motion that is rather unsettling. There is nothing else in the room and neither of the swords is of any worth. Here the



1a



0 10' 20' 30' 40'

corridor leaves the wall and turns back inward, sloping sharply down through a short, dirt-walled passage.

6. The Guard Room. A rude door has been set up to block the end of the passage here but it has no latch and is not very stout in any case. Beyond it is a finished room that was once some sort of office. The building above was bought some years ago by a trader in livestock who needed the space for a stockyard. It had been a warehouse with its administrative offices down below and storage space above. The new owner wanted only the open space and had no desire to lease out the basement so he sealed it off instead. It is now never entered and pretty much forgotten. This first chamber was most recently used as a guard post by the brigands. It holds a simple desk and chair, turned to face the seawall door, and leaning against the desk is a heavy crossbow with several bolts set out on the desk top. The stone walls and floor are dirty and the ceiling is festooned with spider webs. In one drawer of the desk is a horn of dulled brass which was to be an alarm for the former occupants. It has no special properties but, if it is cleaned up it can be seen to have rather fine decoration and it produces a lovely tone when winded. At the market such a horn might draw as much as ten silvers.

7. Hall. Through the east door of the Guard Room is an open area where a hallway opens out. A thick, magical mist fills the room, limiting visibility to less than a foot. It is lit every few seconds by bright flashes of lightning that fill the air with a sharp crackling sound. Despite its fearsome appearance this is no more than a display, put here like the skeleton in #5 to discourage intruders. The room does, however, provide an excellent opportunity for an ambush where the mist thins, heading into the narrower section of the hallway.

8. Thieves' Common. Here the outlaws practiced their trade on each other, drilled with their knives and short swords, or just lay about between jobs. Along the north and west walls, tattered cushions lie on the floor and a few empty wine bottles are scattered among them. A thorough search will find that one of the pillows holds a sack of thirty bronze pieces and seven silvers hidden in its stuffing. Across the chamber from these is a rack that holds three short swords and two long, as well as two staves and two shorter rods of ash (used for fencing practice). None of these is of great worth but one of the short swords is of rather high quality, and has a hidden compartment in the hilts, now open (-15 to detect when closed), which might hold a tightly rolled scroll or a set of thieves' picks. There is also a wooden mannequin which bears the scars of many practice strokes.

9. False Treasury. This was once another office, and all of its furnishings are now heaped in its north-east corner. However, their appearance has been altered by a powerful spell. They now seem to be a heap of loot rather than an old coat, a broken desk, and a chair. The treasure consists of an open chest full of silver coins and gems, a throne of gold, and a glittering suit of plate armor. This "treasure" is not without protection and the protection is quite real. In a cabinet on the north wall are six miniature crossbows, each cocked and loaded with a poisoned bolt. Amid a heap of cleverly fabricated false cobwebs, three trip wires cross the chamber just in front of the door. If any one of these is hit (90% chance if walking normally) all six bows will fire, making unmodified attacks against whomever is within three feet of the trip wire that activates the trap. The poison on the quarrels is known as Lethenis and will induce a catatonic state for ten to twenty minutes if a RR versus a third level

attack is unsuccessful. A *Hard* (-10) Perception roll must be made to detect the wires or notice the trap before it is set off. Neither will be noticed if the PC does not actively look for traps. The illusion on the treasure will be dispelled as soon as it is touched. As a consolation prize, though, there is one silver piece in the pocket of the coat.

10. Ante Room. This room was used as a lounge when the basement was a place of business. It still holds the trappings for that purpose. There are two low couches with end tables and a chair with an ottoman. It was all rather nice once upon a time. Now the leather upholstery is somewhat moldy and one of the couches sits awry with one of its short legs broken. On each of the end tables stands a small lamp of decorated bronze worth about thirteen bronze pieces. Another trap is set here. A small ruby sits on the floor at the chamber's center. It is charmed, and if any person comes within five feet of it it will emit a powerful Fireball (+10), filling the entire room with flames. Such a blast will set the



furniture burning as well, but the fire will not last long as there is a fair amount of moisture in the stuffing of the seats. This trap will rearm itself after thirty seconds and will hold seven charges. (It is currently full). So long as charges are held in the stone it will be extremely hot to the touch, hot enough to cause cloth to smolder and, eventually burn. This will make it difficult to take. The fact that it will generate a new fireball every thirty seconds should further discourage any avaricious PCs.

11. Bunk Room. Here the thieves used to bed themselves down at night. The room was once an infirmary and is well furnished with seven sturdy cots and several sets of shelves and cabinets. There is also a table with a straight-backed chair. The former tenants were never strong on cleanliness and their bunk room shows the fact. The beds are rumpled and flea ridden. Under each is a heap which contains that thief's possessions. Most are no more than piles of clothing with an odd grappling hook or wrecking bar thrown in.

The farthest bed from the door is somewhat more neatly kept and the items under it are tucked into two duffle bags. Inside the smaller of these is another sack of leather which contains a carefully coiled rope with a folded grappling hook. This is a charmed item which will add +30 to any attempt to throw it and will hold its bite twice as strongly as a normal hook. In one of the cabinets there is also a canvas bag which holds 95 bronze pieces.

12. Hall. Through the door here are the stairs to the next floor. It is made of plain oak with iron fittings but a brass plaque has been fixed to it. This sign is part of a magical lock that holds the door. Upon it, in graceful script, is written a riddle:

*Feline Hunter and Feline Prey
Joined in an Unending Fray
Fiercly chasing, Runs away
Wildest Battle seen as Play*

When the answer ("A Kitten Chasing His Tail") is said aloud, the door will swing back to reveal the stair.

13. Bridge Room. At the top of the stair is a chamber where the diggers constructing the basement came across an underground inlet from the harbour. Fed by a deep and narrow channel, this pool stays relatively calm, a few feet below the level of the floor. It was once spanned by a wooden bridge but this has been torn out by the thieves and replaced by a slightly trickier path. This is a monkey bridge, three lengths of rope, strung across from the end pieces of the old bridge, one at floor level like a tight-wire and two on either side of it about three feet higher to act as rails. It is not too difficult to negotiate, being a light maneuver at a slow pace. At a run, however, it becomes hard. The pool beneath it will prove an uncomfortable surprise for any who fail to conquer the ropes. It is home to hundreds of Cave Stingers. These are blind fish native to sea caves all along the Bay of Belfalas, living off of tiny organisms they find in the water. Their name comes from a property of their skins. Like jellyfish, they exude a mild poison which stuns the tiny creatures on which they feed. This acts on human skin as a harsh irritant and anyone falling in among them will find himself covered in a burning rash. This will leave him at minus fifteen in all of his undertakings for several days. This can be allayed temporarily by applying lotion or permanently by a *Frost/Burn Relief* spell.

14. Corridor. At the east end of this corridor is the door to the stair up to the warehouse. It is blocked by a large, iron-bound oak chest. This was placed here by the thieves against the unlikely event of someone from above trying to gain access. It is filled with stones and held shut by a lock that has had its works disabled so that it cannot be opened. It will be more than any one man can move, weighing about eight hundred pounds. At the top of the stairs is another doorway which has been lightly boarded over from the other side. This leads into the warehouse stock yard above.

Anyone emerging from this door will be greeted with surprise and some degree of suspicion but the manager of the building is a good and trusting man so the party should have little trouble convincing him of the truth. Lying to him however, may be unwise for, if he discovers the untruth, word will soon go out that the party members are almost certainly thieves and murderers, not a good reputation to have these days in the city of Dol Amroth.

15. Brigand Chief's Bedroom. The leader of the thieves was only slightly more cultured than his men. His room is dirty and smells of spilled alcohol. It has a bed, draped in garish but filthy silks, a cluttered desk with a low chair, and a sea chest of scarred wood. The desk holds nothing of great interest, just a pile of papers with sketched out plans and drawings of various buildings around the city. In the chest, however, there is a heavy bag of coins with eighty bronze pieces and fifteen silvers, a scroll tube, and a well wrapped long sword. The scroll tube is empty but has a small magic of its own in that it will protect its contents from all forms of physical damage. The sword is also magical, giving its wielder an addition of +10 to his OB. The chest is locked with an intricately fashioned lock which is *Very Hard* (-20) to pick, and trapped with a poisoned needle (2nd level fatal) which is *Hard* (-10) to detect and *Very Hard* (-20) to disarm with failure on either resulting in its being activated.

16. Treasure Room. Here the rogues kept a store of loot against the day when they might find a buyer for it. There is a chest that holds twenty silvers and sixty bronze. A suit of chain mail that is +5 due to the strength of its rings is bundled on the floor in the corner. Beside this, a staff of reddish wood leans against the wall. It is not magical but it has been crafted to be receptive of Essence power and will store a spell (up to 10th level) that is cast into it. This spell can then be cast once more at a later date without power point expense. Of course, points must be used to charge the staff with the spell. On a small table in the south-east corner is set a largish book that may be quite interesting. It is entitled *The Traps and Wards of Lithnantir*. It is from this tome that the various traps in the thieves' home have been taken. Some, like the arrow trap in #9, are simply mechanical devices; others like the fire trap downstairs and the guardian of this chamber are essence magic, a series of seventh level spells. All of the magics described are limited in use to the protection and defense of objects or places. The value of such a tome will depend upon the market at the time of sale, but it could well run as high as 50 gold or even higher. The treasury is guarded well enough that all this will not be gained without sweat. Standing in the center of the room is what seems to be an empty suit of plate. When the room is entered it will animate, wielding a broad bladed axe. It will attack all who enter the room without calling the thieves' password ("Illgotten"). It fights and takes damage as a normal second level warrior (OB 56, DB 15, Hits 47) but will not be effected by stunning, blood loss, or spells that attack the mind or spirit. Once it has been vanquished this false warrior will revert to its unenchanted state. It is no more than a rusted breast plate and a battered hatchet.

3.4 THE TASK

The players' objective here will be simple enough once things get underway. There is a question of survival in a fight with the assassin. They must also find their way back to the streets above. If they are morally motivated, they will probably also see the need to avenge the murder they have witnessed.

3.41 STARTING THE PLAYERS

It will not be difficult to bring the PCs into the story of this adventure. Any of a number of errands might take them into the New Port area and from there it is only a question of timing which will be completely in the hands of the GM. If, however, the party is prone to callousness or tends to err on the side of inaction, the GM may deem it appropriate to establish some prior connection between them and the Ranger to add to their interest in the event.

"As the old ranger turns to answer your wave, a grey cloaked figure detaches itself from the shadow of a small shed and rushes toward him..."

3.42 AIDS

Aside from the talents and skills they bring with them to the docks the party cannot expect any special aid. If the events and encounters provided here are handled carefully and the players act with some care, this should be enough to bring them all through alive, and somewhat wealthier as well.

3.43 OBSTACLES

There should be no need for obstacles beyond those already included in the descriptions above. The traps and wards set by the thieves and the cruel cunning of the assassin Joraal should prove quite enough to keep any party of novice adventurers quite entertained. It should be noted that the party, on a simple excursion in town will probably have their weapons and armor, and perhaps a torch for their trip home that night, but will not have such adventurers' items as rope, lanterns, provisions, etc.



3.44 REWARDS

Above and beyond the spiritual gains that will come from bringing a murderer to justice, this adventure holds substantial worldly rewards as well. The artifacts left behind by the thieves, in with their personal gear as well as in their treasure chamber, constitute a generous haul for a band of youths. There will also be some degree of public acclaim bestowed on the adventurers who avenge the death of such a popular man as Tiranir.

3.5 ENCOUNTERS

This module has been designed to fit with a rather structured series of events. This is, of course, open to modification by the GM at his discretion but care should be taken to avoid the PCs' becoming overwhelmed or exasperated by Joraal's superior skills. The encounters around which it is suggested that the adventure be developed are as follow.

1. After putting an end to Tiranir, Joraal will see that he has been observed and flee into the warehouse. Mention to the characters that Joraal disappears into an oily cloud of smoke which reeks of pitch. He will use the bridge across the grain bin and as they follow him he will cast his grapple toward the rafters, hoping to escape among the shadows overhead. Just as he does this, the bridge will fall out from under him. As he goes down he will lose his rope in a moment of surprise. As soon as he regains his bearings he will see that going back up is not possible and so will head for the exits to the west.

2. Joraal tends to cope with doubt by charging through, so the scare tactics at #5 and #7 will not hold him long. Just through #7, he will stop as the mist thins and wait in hopes of scoring an ambush. After his attempt or when he can tell from the conversation or noises of the PCs that he will get no chance, he will move on to area 10. Here his tendencies will come to hurt him. As he rushes through this room he will be hit by the fireball. This will single the assassin for seventeen hits.

3. Coming to room 12, Joraal will admit that he has no head for riddles and sit down to wait, under his invisibility spell, for the PCs to catch up and answer it themselves. Once they do, he will leap up and cast his glass ball on the floor, using the ensuing confusion to run through and up the stair.

4. The assassin will have no trouble with the monkey bridge in 13 but will take the time to add to the PCs' troubles. He will cut the lower rope, making passage across a hard and rather slow process. He will then wait in the shadow of the far hallway, with his throwing knives prepared, to make the crossing still more troublesome. As soon as missile fire is returned, however, he will move on.

5. The final encounter with the assassin will come at the door at #14. Having seen that neither of the side doors holds any promise of escape and being unable to move the whole chest by himself, Joraal will pull out his thieves' picks and go to work on its lock. This vain attempt will keep him busy until the players catch him up for the final showdown.

4.0 A HOME BY THE SEA

In the wake of their assassination of Tiranir the Ranger, the Shades have grown bolder in their activities, attacking parties on the roads around Dol Amroth to hone their skills in preparation for the eventual execution of their leader's designs (see section 5.1). *A Home by the Sea* is set in this period and centers upon an ambush. If the PCs are those who fought in *Murder on the Docks* this attack can be considered an act of vengeance for the death of Joraal. Otherwise, it can be explained as a random act, part of the Shades' training. The adventure that grows out of this assault will provide several tests for the players in which their minds and their morality will be called to task (as well as their combat abilities).

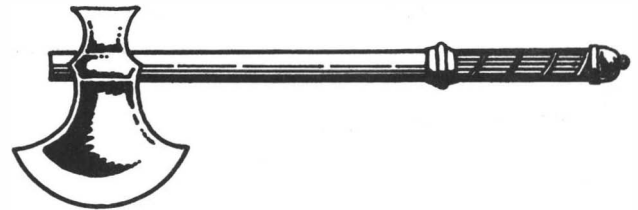
The rich countryside about the city of Dol Amroth is dotted with the manors of the region's powerful men, knights of the nobility, particularly wealthy merchants, and the leaders of some of the craftsmen's guilds. In the evenings the owners of these mansions entertain themselves by throwing gala parties for their neighbors and as dusk comes down, the dust of the roads that wind between them is stirred from its daylong rest by the passing of happy, talkative bands, on foot or horseback, going out for an evening of merriment.

The adventure *A Home By The Sea* begins on just such an evening with the group of PCs on their way to just such a party. They stroll happily toward the home of an old wine merchant who is known for his festivities, fashionably late and ready for an evening of quiet fun...



4.1 THE TALE OF GABBON TROLLSDIRGE

In T.A. 2745 the House of Grallow had been minor nobility in Dol Amroth for many generations. Its head in that year, Abrin the Tall, had two sons who were as different as day and night. The elder, Abris, was a man of kind heart and quiet disposition while his brother, Gabbon, was known for a rough nature and a rather poor temper. Abris was given to study and the arts; Gabbon had a passion only for the arts of war. In 2745, at the age of forty-five, Gabbon had grown tired of the quiet life of Dol Amroth and took up his weapons to find adventure in the lands of the South and East. He sailed away alone and in secret, leaving only a note which said he would someday return, when he had made a name for himself. That name was never to be heard by his father or his brother, for the former fell ill and died in the next year and the latter was mortally wounded in the battles of 2758. In fact, since that day, no word of the younger brother has come to anyone in the City of the Prince. However, Abris, after his injury at the hands of the Corsair raiders, on his deathbed and without an heir, willed the mansion of his family to his wandering brother, insisting that the man would someday return and that the house should be kept for him. Since that time the estate has been maintained at rather irregular intervals by the servants of various friends of the family, but no one really hopes for the adventurer's return and only for the sake of their respect for the last wishes of Abris has it not been sold.



After his leavetaking, Gabbon did indeed make a name for himself. In the lands of the far east he fought with a band of mercenaries and discovered in his heart a great hatred for the race of Trolls. This arose, it is said, from a period he spent as the guest of a group of these folk who impressed him as appallingly poor hosts. After a daring escape he returned and gave the Trolls a lesson in etiquette which none of them survived. This won him, among his associates, the epithet of Trollsdurge. Many years passed before the warrior, with old age eating away at his sanity, took it into his head once more to see the lands of his birth and to visit his father and brother. Thus, 2800 finds him at home at last, but in the end, the strains of this last journey and the realization that no one remains to welcome him, have broken his mind completely. He lives now in his mansion but lives as he has for years in the wilderness. He has seen none of the people of the city, and they remain unaware of his arrival. He camps within the fine halls of the house as if he were alone in the lands of the Enemy. A few recent reports of lights in the windows of the building have simply been put down with all of the other ghost stories that have formed around the estate over the last forty years.

4.2 THE NPCs

The NPCs of *A Home by the Sea* are not numerous. There are eight Shades of second level whose stats can be found on the master NPC table in section 6.0. Aside from them there is only Gabbon himself, who also appears on that table and is described in detail below.

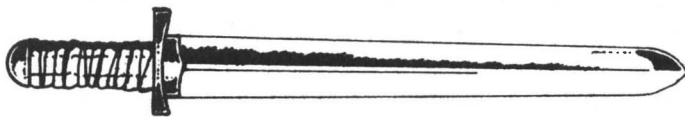
4.21 GABBON TROLLSDIRGE

The “lost” adventuring son of the House of Grallow is a man of impressive size indeed, standing 6’8” and weighing over three hundred pounds. Long, peppered hair and a grizzled beard adorn his proud head; he is dirty and unkempt and has more the look and smell of a wild man or hermit than that which befits a noble of Dor-en-Ernîl. He is a warrior of tenth level but is feeling his age, at just over one hundred years, and his strength and skills are fading. So is his reason. He recognizes this place as home but knows no more about it. He often muses that he wishes to see his father and brother again but does not realize that with a short walk he could come to a neighbor’s house and learn where they have gone.

The old warrior wanders the mansion halls and camps in his father’s old room. His war gear is left in the closet there, and he carries with him only a heavy oaken cudgel and a bag of old soup bones for his dogs. Around his neck on a chain is a silver whistle which will summon the beasts with an ultrasonic call. The bones will add 20% to any attempt to calm the warrior’s hounds.

Any intruders in the house are seen by the owner as thieves and robbers and no arguments to the contrary will be able to pierce the clouds of dementia that darken his mind. For this reason he will attack visitors on sight, calling down condemnation on all thieves and particularly on those in his house; and though he may pause to listen for a moment to whatever denials they may make, he will not be satisfied until they fall or flee from the house. His dogs are of similar attitude but, though they are huge and were once formidable, age has dulled the edge of the threat they pose to those whom they might attack.

Notable Skills: *Trap-building 60, Foraging 100, Sailing 80.*
Languages: *Westron 5, Logathig 4, Adúnaic 3.*



4.22 THE SHADES

The group of assassins is made up of eight second level Shades. They are all clothed in the grey livery of their cult, full-body covering with a shroud for the head and gloves, all of a cotton duck. They wield broadswords, which are scabbarded across the back, and carry throwing daggers, five each, in their belts. As per their normal team procedure, each has a shrill whistle on a chain about his neck, which he will use to bring his fellows in for a kill.

Notable Skills: *Stalk 42, Hide 40, Ambush 20 (4).* **Languages:** *Westron 5, Morbeth 2.*



4.3 THE MANOR RANORAN

On a reasonably well-travelled country lane, not far from the city of Dol Amroth and close by the sea, stands the Grallow family manor, Ranoran. Set in a small wood of tall dark pines, the estate is surrounded by a wall of stone ten feet in height with an oaken gate that lets onto the road.

Within the wall the wooded grounds are overgrown with weeds and brambles making passage through them noisy and difficult. The courtyard, however, has remained clear and the house itself has been kept in fair shape by the visits of servants sent by friends of the family who act as caretakers awaiting Gabbon’s return.

The mansion is built running down the bank that forms the seashore and the roof of its uppermost story is only even with the ground-level of the road. In three steps the house drops to where its lowest story’s floor is but a few feet above the high-tide mark. Its roof is made of red clay tiles which have been weathered such that they give good traction when dry, but when moistened by rain or the sea spray they are as slick as glass. The seaward walls are all pierced by or entirely made up of thick-glassed windows, set to take advantage of the glorious sunsets over the Western Sea. Around these windows there is plain stonework of grey marble. Where the house meets the waves, at its northern end, a covered stone pier juts out into the sea, ending with a glassed sun room and a dock for boats.

1. The Courtyard. A seven foot wall, done in the grey marble that is found throughout the house, comes off of the main wall to form this large yard. It is floored with white gravel, now strewn with needles from the surrounding pines, and has at its center, a hitching post set with iron rings, each held in the teeth of a carved marble face, and encircled by a trough of carved stone. In the north-east quarter stand stables built of dark-stained wood with a roof of thatch. These hold neither horses nor tack as all was removed by the caretakers years ago to prevent its theft. There are four exits from this area, the doubled main gate to the east, one small door in each of the north and south walls (These are locked but their keys are in the mechanisms on their inward sides.), and a wide stair that leads down to the house's entrance in the south-west.

2. The Ante-room. The lavish decorations of this chamber have long since come to show their age, but still, their quality and style are impressive. A fine woven carpet covers most of the stone floor. Its pattern depicts beautifully the petals of an opening rose. The walls are decked with portraits and tapestries that show the founders of the Grallow clan in battle and at sea. Between these hang sconces for candles, but they hold none. Around the edges of the floor are set several comfortable chairs and two end tables, all of which are bare of any artifacts. On the south wall is a plain door of wood that leads to an empty coat closet. On the north is a door of varnished wood which leads into the parlor and on the west is a grand pair of doors, decorated with flaking paint of red and gold, which open onto the great ballroom.

3. The Parlor. This chamber is as finely fitted as the ante-room but its furnishings are more comfortable. From the walls hang tapestries of thick weave that depict great game animals of the region, the wild boar and the proud woodland stag, among others. The floor is of bare stone set in a pattern of black and grey squares. There are several low couches covered in richly embroidered fabric of intricate pattern. Among these are three small tables of smooth wood that once was beautifully polished but has grown somewhat dull with the years. On one of these is a small silver box which holds five brown nuts. These are mild stimulants and each, if eaten, will cure five hits of non-critical damage. The box itself is worth about thirty-seven bronze pieces. Doors of plain varnished wood lead north and south from this room into the office and the ante-room respectively.

4. The Office. Much more functional in its design than rooms 2 and 3, the manor's business office has only a bas-relief of the family crest for decoration. This is a shield with a bear's head on its face, carved from the grey stone of the north wall. In front of this carving is a massive desk of black oak with a heavy chair. Facing it are two smaller chairs of worked wood. Any search of the desk's drawers, which are unlocked, will yield nothing more than several sheets of old and yellowed paper. Underneath, however, where the chair can be pushed in, is a small metal oblong (1"x1"x6"), hanging from a nail on thong through a hole in one end of it. This device holds a version of the spell *Stunning* (Calm Spirits) which will effect all within ten feet of it except for its wielder. This is activated by squeezing the oblong in one's fist. (Note that anyone trying to pull on the device where it hangs below the desk will probably set it off.) Only one charge can be placed in the item at any given time but for its renewal it needs only to have a normal *Stunning* spell cast upon it. If, incidentally, the item is empty when its holder is attacked with the spell, it will absorb the

attack as a charge. The only exit from this room besides the door to the parlor is a curving stair downward to the guardroom on the level below.

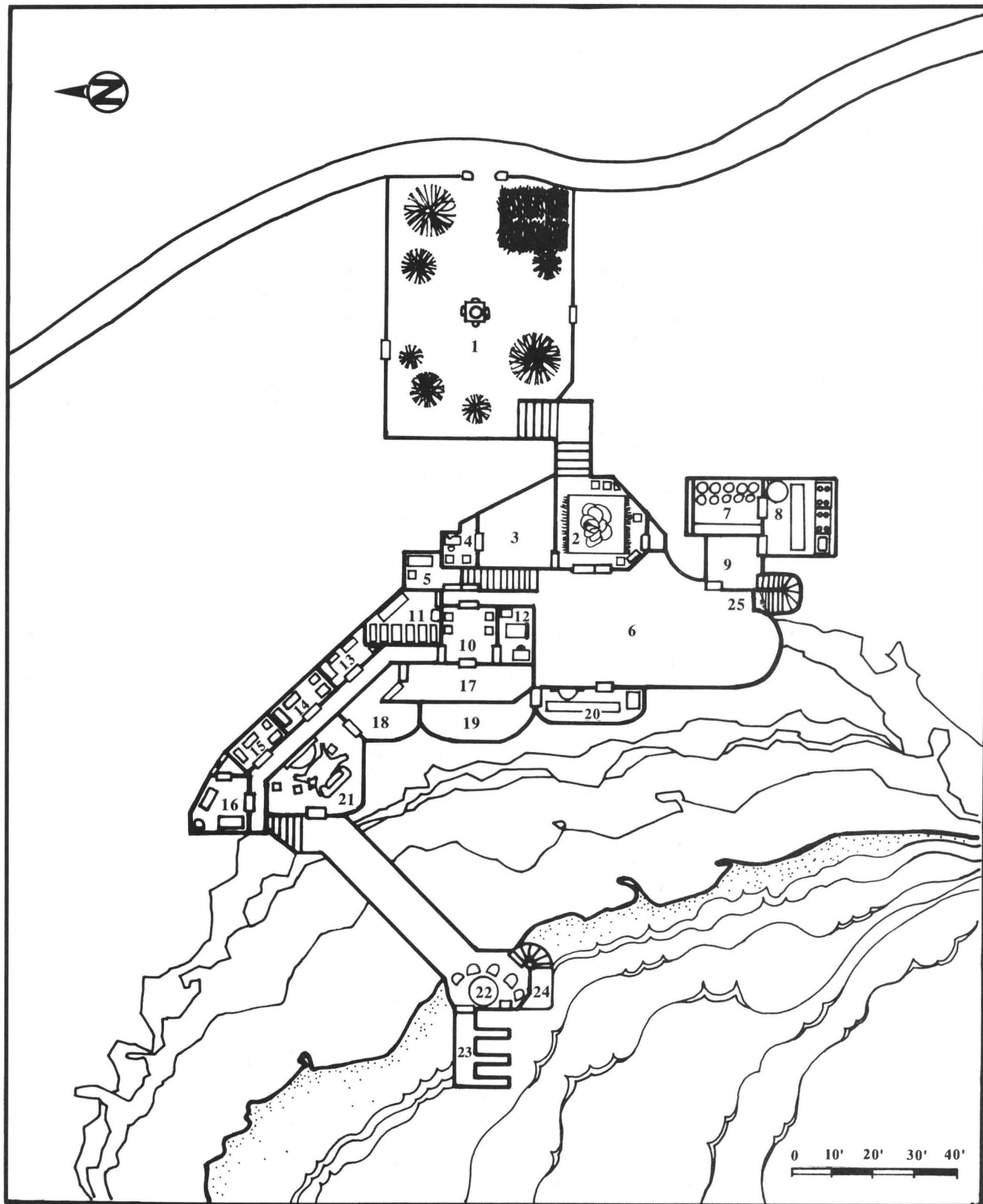
5. The Guardroom. Spartan in its furnishings, this room was home to the household lieutenant who kept the upstairs office. It holds a simple soldier's cot at the north wall and a plain bureau on the west. The bureau's drawers are empty and the cot is bare. In the center of the floor lies a thick rug of brown and red. The room has exits to the hall through a wooden door and to the office above by a stone stair. Neither exit can be seen from the other.

6. The Ballroom. This huge hall is dominated by the great expanse of glass that makes up the entire west wall and half of the ceiling. A great sweep of the ocean can be seen through it and the view is truly wonderful (though some of the panes are now cracked and broken. In an alcove to the east is a low stage with stairs up to it on the south. A massive chandelier hangs above the dance floor but is, of course, unlit. Three doorways lead out of the room, one to the north and two to the east. One of the latter pair holds red and gold painted double doors and leads into the manor's ante-room, the other lets through a door, painted to blend with the wall, into the kitchen area. The northern exit leads through another painted door to a stair that leads down to the lower floors. Beside this, on the wall, is a wooden box, also painted red and gold. It is open on top and holds two short rods, each contained in a leather bag. If these are examined they will be seen to produce light equal to that of a normal torch but give off no heat. This magic is permanent and cannot be doused except by covering them.

7. The Pantry. The air is musty here and carries a scent of vinegar. Wooden shelves run along the north and west walls and along the east is a double row of sturdy casks, each marked with the sign of a prominent local wine merchant. None of these hold more than a pint or so of dregs, long since soured to vinegar. Parallel to the barrels run lines of ceiling hooks, some of which still bear strands of stale herbs and vegetables. The room has only one door, a plain wooden one which leads into the kitchen.

8. The Kitchen. From the door to this chamber a low moaning sound can be heard. Though it sounds like the wailing of spirits doomed to wander after death, it is actually nothing more than the wind blowing across the chimneys of the three large ovens which line the south wall. These are built of brick and fitted with doors and racks of wrought iron. Before them runs a twenty foot preparation table with a well-used butcher block surface. Underneath can be found all manner of fair quality cooking implements, from pots and pans to knives and skewers. Across the table from the ovens is a large, circular fire pit with a smoke hood which connects to one of the other chimneys. In the westernmost oven lives a flock of small, dark birds which go in and out through the chimney. A careful listener might hear them moving about inside any time after dark. If the door of the stove is opened they will burst out into the room with a loud flurry of wings and noisy chirping, probably giving anyone around quite a start but causing no real damage.

9. Assembly Room. Empty save for its three doors, this room was used to gather the waiters to carry out dinner courses on feast days. It now holds nothing but dust, and a slight echo. A wooden door leads to the ballroom and another into the kitchen. The third lets onto a curving stair that goes to a corridor running north under the ballroom.



10. Hall. The walls of this room are hung with torch brackets and woven tapestries depicting scenes of battle. Each wall has a door of oak with fittings of bronze and against the north and south walls are four highbacked chairs with cushioned seats. The floor is covered with a thick brown carpet.

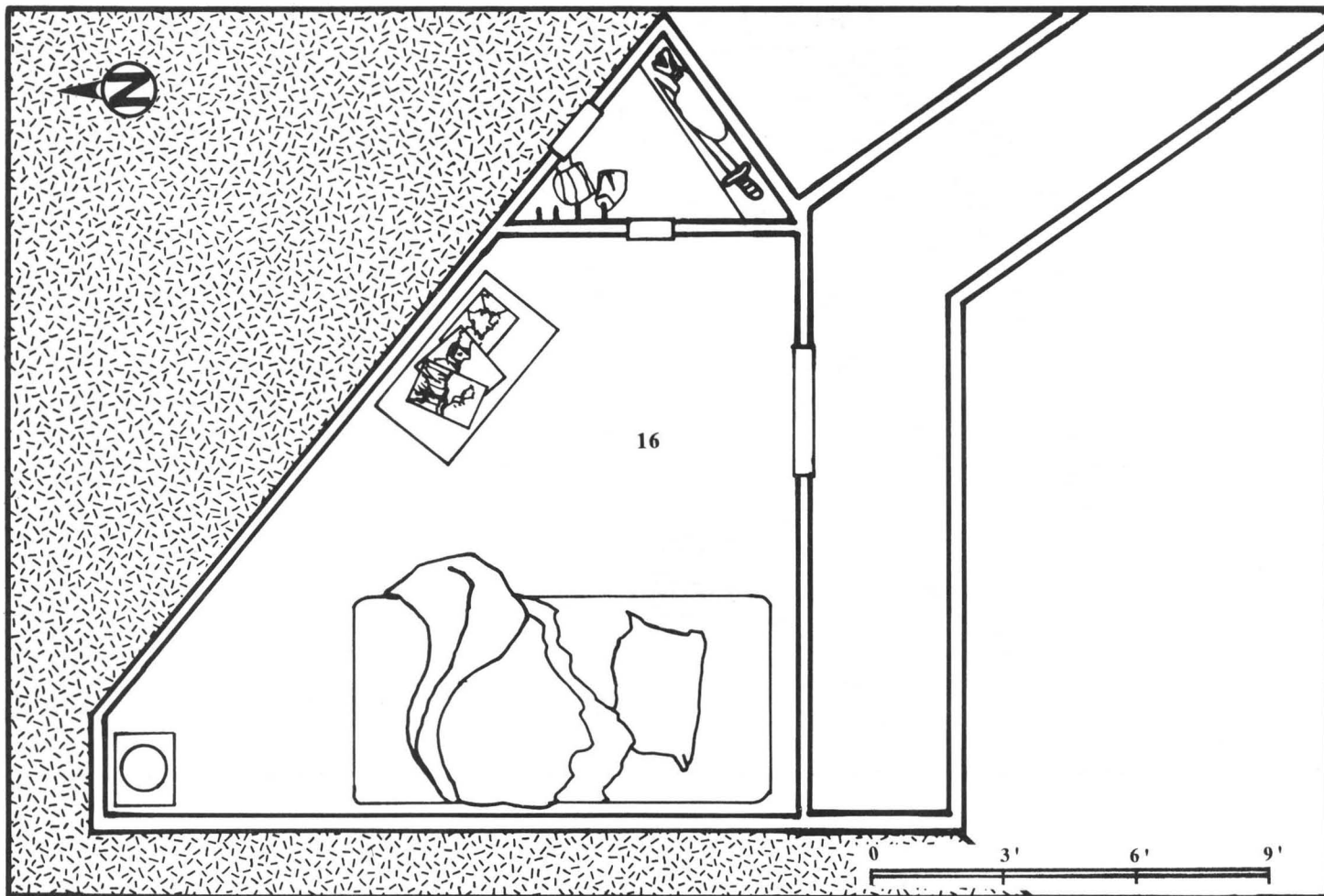
11. The Servants' Quarters. Six simple beds, bare of any linen, are set along the South wall of this room. Each has a small drawer beneath it but all are empty. By the single wooden door, on the south wall, is a wash stand with a brass bowl, corroded and green, and a clay pitcher for water. On the northwest wall is a large wardrobe which once held the housemen's clothing. Termites have made this into a formidable trap. They have eaten away at the front of its base to such a degree that any touch will bring it crashing forward onto any unfortunates within six feet of it. Those who fail to make a successful maneuver roll will suffer a "B" crush critical. It will also produce a fair amount of noise as it comes down. Unfortunately, there will not even be any consolation for the poor victims as the wardrobe is completely empty.

12. The Steward's Quarters. Just off the hall (number 10) to the South is the comfortable chamber once used by the steward of the house. It is carpeted and hung with bright colors. In the South-west is a writing desk with a chair. This holds nothing more than useless papers covering the maintenance of a manor house. Beside this is a bed with a richly carved headboard, covered with skillfully rendered flowering vines and mute depictions of garden songbirds. On the far side of the room from this is a matching wardrobe which also has a cleverly worked cat eyeing one of the birds from its place at the base. Inside this are two suits of clothing in the family livery,

brown and red, and, behind them, hanging on a nail in the wardrobe's back, is a ring with the keys to the house dangling from it. *NOTE- Except where otherwise noted, all of the house's doors have locks but are not locked at present.*

13. Bedroom. Paintings of pleasant landscapes set a gentle atmosphere for this room, which was used to house any overnight guests of the family. It is tastefully furnished with simple, wooden pieces. A bed and bureau are set against the west wall and a wardrobe faces them across the chamber. On the north is a dressing table of rosewood, topped with a large, circular mirror, and a writing desk has been built into the niche to the right of the door. The various drawers and cabinets around the room are all empty, but there is a small brass box on the dressing table such as might hold jewelry or other small items. It is empty as well but trapped with a magical pain spell that will afflict anyone who handles it unwarily. This will result in the loss of one to ten hits for two hours, after which time it will fade away and the victim will return to normal. This damage cannot be healed by healing spells or herbs but the spell itself may be dispelled by normal means. The trap, however, is not difficult, being +5 to find and +10 to disarm. A small lever on the side must simply be depressed to keep the magic inactive. The box alone would net 50 silvers in town.

14. Bedroom. Up the hall from the guestroom is the chamber that housed Gabbon in the years before his departure. It is well furnished with a bed, desk, bureau, and wardrobe, all of highest quality, carved from a rich blond wood and fitted with brass and mother of pearl. Unlike those in the rooms to the south, the bed here is disheveled and untidy. The sheets are dirty and smell of wet dog.

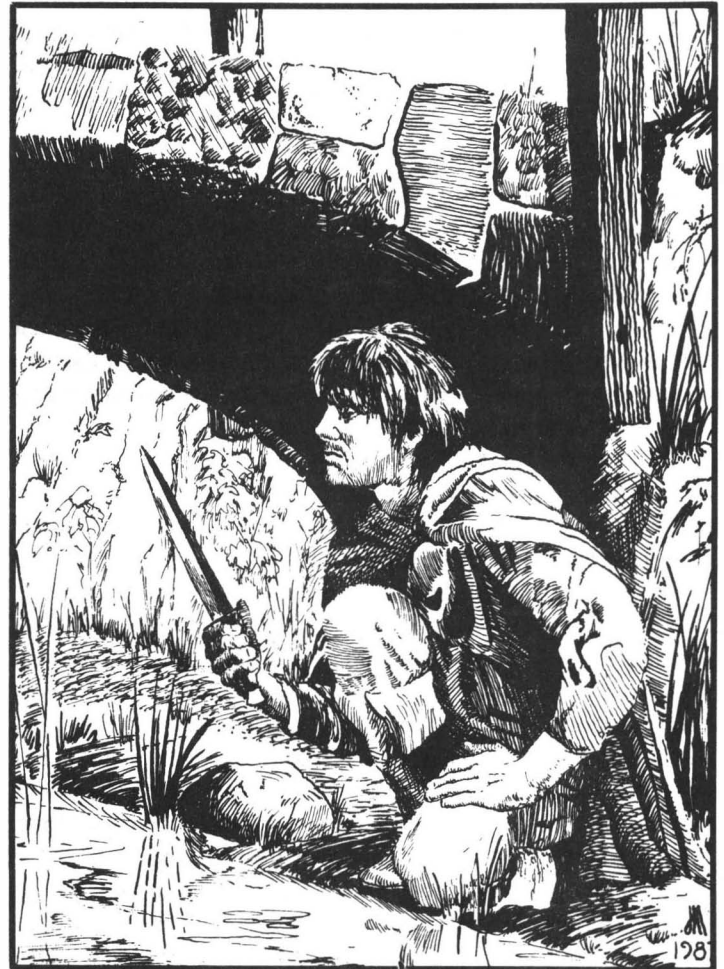


The cupboards and drawers of the room are all empty save for a mouse nest in the bottom of the wardrobe, but even this is long abandoned by its builders. On the wall above the bed, however, is an item of some interest, a particularly realistic painting of an elderly man working in a garden of herbs. Anyone looking intently at the painting has a 66% chance of falling into a deep trance. Once the picture's magic begins to act the player will spend five plus 1-10 rounds studying herb lore with the old man, while seeming merely to stare into space. If allowed to learn uninterrupted for the first five rounds, the pupil will gain two levels of skill in herb lore. He can only be shaken from his trance by a blow that actually wounds him for one or more hits. The painting's power can be invoked only once per month and it cannot be removed from its place on the wall without breaking the spell.

15. Bedroom. This chamber reeks of dog, and there is a good chance of its being occupied by one. The furnishings (identical to those in Gabbon's old room next door) and the thick rug on the floor are awash with a mixture of torn cushions and shed fur. In the top drawer of the desk, by the north-east wall, is an amulet of horn, carved to the shape of a five pointed star and strung on a thong of rawhide. This room was home to Gabbon's elder brother Abris who had a strong interest but unfortunately little talent in the arts of Essence. This amulet did a bit to enhance his limited powers by allowing its wearer to cast one additional spell, of any available level, each day. In addition to this, there is, in the wardrobe on the south-west wall, a rather travel-worn blue robe which also holds some Essence magic. It allows its wearer to become completely invisible once a day. The enchantment will last up to one hour or until it is dispelled by any violent action: falling, striking a blow or the like. The user of the robe can see himself at all times, so he is able to retain his normal hand eye coordination but will never know whether or not his invisibility continues until some other observer notices him.

16. The Master Bedroom. Here the smell of unwashed human almost overpowers the dog scent. It was once well furnished with worked wood and wrought iron fittings. It shows signs of recent human occupation in addition to the smell. The bed has been slept in and there is a bowl of tepid water on the washstand in the northwest corner. On the west wall is a large, heavy desk with a painting above it of a seaward tower beset by the fiercest of storms. Lightning seems to crackle around its height where stands a slender maiden looking out on the waves. The top of the desk is strewn with sheets of yellowed paper on which have been drawn dreary landscapes and harsh portraits of Orcs and Trolls. The art work is fair at best and worth nothing. In the east wall is the door to a walk-in closet. It is set with coat pegs and a high shelf along its South-east wall, the north-east is bare. From one of the pegs hangs a plain brown cloak and tumbled on the floor behind and beneath it is a suit of rigid leather plate. This was once powerfully magical but it has been allowed to fall into disrepair and the enchantment has fled. It is repairable, though, if taken to a fairly skilled leathersmith. On the shelf, where any but the tallest of men would need a stool to see up to it, is a scabbarded two-handed sword, and behind it, a moldering canvas rucksack. In the sack can be found a bed roll, a sack of gemstones (fifteen at 30bp each) and what looks to be a charm bracelet made from finger bones of Orcs. The sword is a very special blade. An inscription on its blade names it as its master was called, Trollsdurge, and whenever it is drawn it moans a low song

that speaks without words of the stilling of the earth from which Trolls are made. It adds +5 to its wielder's OB in normal combat and adds +25 when used against a Troll. The sword is possessed of a semi-sentient soul which cannot communicate but will slowly work upon any who lays claim on the blade, instilling in him a burning hatred for the race it seeks to destroy. The wristlet of bones holds power as well. It bestows upon its wearer the ability to assume the form, gear, and speech of a lesser Orc. This can be held for one hour, twice per day and it should be noted that, should the user be unable to speak Orcish without the charm, he will know only that tongue while he is disguised.



17. Hall. This simple passage is made remarkable by the arches along its west wall, open to the breezes from the sea. Graceful, slightly pointed curves with their keystones carved in an intricate pattern of leaves are supported by slender columns of marble, each bearing a trailer of leafy vine etched in the stone. The craftsmanship is excellent. This hall is the most beautifully built portion of the entire estate. The years have taken some toll here as well, however. Creepers and vines have found their way through the archways and now tangle the floor and add decoration to the stone work. Even these, though, add to the beauty of the place, giving it the look of a long lost ruin, full of old tales and history. Gabbon notices none of this, but sees that the floor is an excellent spot for a snare to be hidden. He has placed a trap such as hunters use for bear beneath the foliage on the floor. Any who pass unwarily through here will have an 80% chance of encountering it, since the

clever woodsman has put it upon the only easy path through the undergrowth. Anyone actively looking at the floor will have a 20% chance of spotting it before it is sprung (To this roll perception bonuses should be added.). The trap has lost some of its spring from rusty joints but will still have the effect of a sprain on the ankle affected. This will reduce the victim's movement by half for three or four days and subtract 15 from all moving maneuvers that use it, as well as from his OB in melee. The pain will also disturb concentration to deduct five from any spell casting that might be undertaken. These effects will be halved in strength and duration if the victim is wearing high, hard boots.

18. Hall. This hall tends to be a bit dark these days. Though its west wall is pierced with windows, the style is different from that of the other seaward rooms. There is more stone and less glass, lots of little windows, rather than one large one. This pattern has offered vines and creepers much more to bite into. They have covered most of what glass there is. The decor can be seen to further the atmosphere that the windows begin. It consists of heavy panelling, dark and richly carved, set with a number of small mirrors along the landward walls. All together it makes for an interesting play of light and dark in patterns all across the walls and floor. Beside the steps to the east door there is a ledge, about five feet above the floor. It was once used for the display of a large, decorated ewer which has since been moved off to decorate the home of one of the caretakers. Now it is no more than a perfect place for an enterprising assassin to lie in wait to ambush passers by.

19. Dining Room. On a stormy night, the ocean waves break right against the thick-paned windows of this chamber. When Gabbon's father was still master of the house, the long table was the site of many late suppers when the waves were high. He loved the sea and would often spend hours here, reading or talking with his sons long after their meals had been cleared away. The table is built of white pine, thickly varnished, and mounted on its surface is a beautiful map of the surrounding lands and the coastline for several miles in both directions. Currents are charted and any one who can read Adúnaic will be able to tell, if he is interested, that a boat put out from this cove would be carried almost directly into the harbor at Dol Amroth. The dining room also holds a buffet, running along the inward wall. Its drawers are empty, but on its top are two silver candle sticks, cleverly shaped to twine about a tall candle like the shoots of a flower. These end with leaves that will frame the light with a reflection that looks like a bright bloom. These could easily be sold for fifteen silver pieces each.

20. The Kitchen. Intended only for the lighter duty of preparing small meals for the family or a few friends, this kitchen is less fully outfitted than the one upstairs. It has only one oven and a small fireplace, both on the inner wall and served by a common chimney which runs up through the stonework between two windows on the Ballroom's north-west wall. A prep table runs the length of the chamber and an extensive selection of well made cooking utensils are stored under it, on hooks and in its three deep drawers. The room's north door leads into the Dining Room (#19) and the door on the east lets into a corridor that runs under the Ballroom and branches to the Servant's Quarters at #11 and the kitchen area upstairs.

21. The Sitting Room. An extraordinarily large bearskin rug covers most of the floor here, and the rest is taken by the three leather chairs and the couch that molder around the walls, facing the large fireplace on the northeast wall. Above the mantle is a large composite bow which will add fifteen to its user's offensive bonus. To draw it, however, one must have at least a 100 strength and stand over six foot two. A string for it, waxed for storage, can be found in a pouch on the mantle itself. The north and west walls are lined with shelves holding various nautical curios, scrolls tied with faded ribbons, and books on history and on the sea. None of these is valuable but there is a decanter of cut glass which might catch someone's eye. It holds a sweet-smelling liquid of an orange color which has no properties beyond its ability to preserve soft leather. It does not taste bad, and is not poisonous but, if drunk it will have the same effect as would a large dose of Castor Oil.

22. The Sunroom. The best view to be had from the main house pales by comparison when one watches the ocean from this glass-walled gazebo. It is reached by a stone pier that runs from the house, which is covered but has glassless windows along its entire length. At the walkway's end, through a glass paned door, the sun room holds five sturdy deck chairs and a hatch cover table, all of polished teak with fittings of slightly corroded brass. In a locker by the west door is the tackle for the boat which can be seen through the window, bobbing at #23 and a set of pilot's instruments which have a magical bonus of +40 for navigation at sea. They would be worth as much as 50 gold to any merchant-sailor captain who could afford them.

23. The Dock. An open stone pier runs off from the west side of the Sun Room with docking space for as many as three boats. In the nearest slip is the boat that brought Gabbon home. It is of strange design, but is quite seaworthy. About twenty-six feet in length, it has a small, enclosed cabin and a single mast, set up for a main sail and a jib. Setting it up and sailing would be beyond the skills of any but an experienced seaman, but, if it can be boarded and pushed away from the dock the current, as shown on the map in #19, will nose it into the New Port of the City of the Prince within a few hours.

24. The Deck. The wood of this structure has seen better days. It is now quite soft and anyone walking on it runs a 60% chance of falling through into the water, two to five feet below, depending on the tides. In Winter this can be quite serious as the cold of the water can kill within minutes. Getting out again will also be difficult. Once the first hole is broken the rest of the surface will weaken to offer an 80% chance of breakage. It will also be slippery and wet to inhibit climbing. Just getting back onto the wood counts as a *Very Hard* (-20) maneuver, requiring 60% success (i.e., a total roll of 86 or better) and the player will still have to make it to the door. Of course, before he can even attempt to free himself of the water, he must successfully swim in choppy water, and then there are the sharks. There is a lesson a player might learn here.

25. The Main Stair. This stair runs down from the Ballroom to the floor below. The walls are plain, save for empty torch brackets and the steps are of smooth stone. Gabbon has greased these heavily to inconvenience intruders. It will be noticed in time by any one who looks at the floor and makes a perception roll at +20. If one knows the grease is there, negotiating the stair is a *Light* maneuver. If not, however, it is *Very Hard* and rolls on the failure table should be modified by +15. If the victim is running, it becomes *Sheer Folly*, though the bonus does not increase.

4.4 THE TASK

On this night, the adventurers' task is laid out as clear as crystal. It is simple survival. They are attacked and pursued and will have to fight, using stealth as well as strength to save themselves. The players may choose to expand their objectives by attempting to capture an attacker, seeking to understand the mystery of the old man, or just hunting for loot. This is up to them. The balance of the game, however, should be such that their main concern is staying alive.

4.41 STARTING THE PLAYERS

The PCs can be drawn into this adventure in one of several ways. They can be on their way to a party, as suggested above, on some other errand that takes them out into the country, or even simply traveling in the countryside on their way to some other region. The only important factor is that they be on the road by Ranoran at the about eight one cold and blustery night. From that point on it will be easy enough for the GM to get things rolling. As the party passes by the front of the Grallow Manor, an ambush that has been set for them will misfire.

For one reason or another a group of eight Shades has lain in wait here, but their attack will be just far enough mistimed for the PCs to notice an opportunity to slip away through the manor gate. From there the chase is on. Two pairs of the attackers will take off around the sides of the estate to cut off escape and to look for other ways in (There are none). These will be essentially out of the game unless the GM sees a need for reserves. Otherwise they will lurk outside, acting only to limit the PCs' choices of escape routes, until just before dawn when they will be forced to move on so as not to risk discovery. The other four will follow the PCs in through the gate, or over the wall if the players are clever enough to bar the gate.

4.42 AIDS

Aid will be hard to come by in this adventure. All of the NPCs involved will be ill-disposed toward the players, so they will find no friends. The only real help they will get will arise from the fact that Gabbon is no more fond of the Shades than he is of any other trespassers. This is true of his dogs as well, of course.

This aid will take effect at least once when, at a time best chosen by the GM to suit the flow of his game, one of the assassins will fall victim to the trap the Warrior has set upon the stair at #25. At the bottom, the poor soul will meet the Man himself. The broken body should be found half way through the lower door, obviously the victim of more than just a fall. This will have its best effect if it can be thrown in before the PCs have an idea that the owner has come home.

4.43 OBSTACLES

Of course, the main obstacle with which the players will be faced takes the form of a gang of grey cloaked assassins. With the skills of stealth and night fighting on their side, and with the possibility of bringing in reinforcements from outside, the GM should be able to use these foes to give his players quite a run for their money. Added to this will be Gabbon himself, his dogs, and the traps he has set around the house. It should all make for an interesting night indeed.

4.44 REWARDS

For those players for whom survival is not enough, there is also a fair amount of treasure to be had inside Ranoran. The household

goods alone, not to mention Gabbon's things, should keep them happy enough. There is also the question of fame to be had for the first folk to prove that there really is a gang of assassins, organized and striking right here at home. Many would also be glad to hear the tale of Gabbon's return. However, if the old man is dead, it will be best that the tale has him slain by one of the Shades. In this case, though, fame and fortune will not go hand in hand. The adventurers who tell the tale of besting assassins in the manor of Ranoran will be ill advised to seen selling off the family silver. Here they can have riches or renown, but not both.

4.5 ENCOUNTERS

Here again, it is advised that the GM keep a close eye on the flow of the game and schedule encounters as they become opportune, rather than leaving it up to random methods. If he must use dice however, it is suggested that percentile dice be rolled for each twenty minutes of game-time with the result bringing encounters from the list below:

01-60 — No Encounter

61-75 — A meeting with a roving Shade is an encounter which could take many forms. Checks should be made for surprise with some advantage being given for the assassin's training. The specific circumstances will influence this. Once the adversaries are aware of each other the Shade will pull forth his whistle and begin to blow it loudly. This will attract another shade every two to five rounds to the location of the combat. Gabbon's dogs will also arrive after eight rounds and the Warrior himself will come within ten.

76-84 — A Shade lying in wait for the players will lead to a similar encounter to that in #1 above. However, the opening of the skirmish will run differently. The assassin will choose his hiding place with care and skill (e.g., The ledge beside the stairs in room 18.) and will do nothing to give away his position until he has attempted to spring the ambush. After he is exposed, the whistle will be blown, if possible, and things will move on as described above.

85-93 — Encountering one or more of the dogs will prove an interesting event. The beasts are not trusting by nature but someone possessed of skill with animals will have some chance of befriending them. Magical charms may also calm them but will almost certainly not override their true master's specific orders. If a fight begins with one of the animals, the barking will draw the other dogs within two rounds. Shades will begin to show up after four, one every two rounds, and the master of the house will come along in eight.

94-00 — The probable outcome of a meeting with Gabbon is described in section 4.2 above. If he chooses to attack, which is likely, he will not call for his dogs until he really seems to be in trouble, but the sound of a fight will draw them on within five rounds. Shades will begin to arrive within six, one every three rounds, but they will probably not join in until the combatants have worn each other down as much as possible. They will also use whatever opportunity this all provides for them as far as setting ambushes or striking from range.

Note: In all of these encounters, the GM should feel free to modify the rate of arrival of enemies to suit the flow of the game. Having all of the foes at once will detract from the players' enjoyment of the game whether they are victorious or not.

5.0 THE HILL OF SHADES

Far out on the Woodhold estate, in a clearing in the forest, stands a low, stony hillock. On it, the broken ruins of a burned out lodge and watchtower give mute testimony to the damages done by the Corsairs' attacks on the lands of Dor-en-Ernil. In recent times it has come to be shrouded in a cold mist through even the brightest days. Around it there is a charge in the air that will raise the hairs on the back of any good man's neck and causes normally sedate horses to become skittish and difficult to manage. Hidden in this fog is the meeting place of the Shades of Dol Amroth.

The stone walls and the contours of the hill itself form a maze of ravines and shadowy hollows. Tough grass grows among the rocks but the paths remain free of vines and undergrowth so it is not difficult to pass through them. In what once was the courtyard of the lodge, the cult has given over a space to their worship of Darkness, and all through the tangled ways of the hill, wherever the light of the sun cannot reach, are scattered small shrines where the totems of the cult are placed. These ten artifacts, talismans of wrought iron, provide the Shades with power; enabling their leader to produce various magic items and devices which aid them in their exploits. So long as these medallions are not exposed to sunlight their power will continue to increase, growing along with the numbers of the Shades on their hill and as Sauron, in the guise of the Necromancer, builds his strength in Mirkwood and across the face of Middle-earth.

5.1 THE TALE OF THE HILL OF SHADES

Ten years after the assault on Dol Amroth by the armies of the south, a young man called Gontran, orphaned son of a soldier of the Prince's guard, had become embittered with his lot in life. After his father's death in the fighting, the lad had been awarded a small sum by way of pension from the Prince. That, however, was long since gone and the sour boy had done little to make a life for himself. In his meanness, he held the Prince responsible for his misfortunes but was, of course, in no position to do any more than complain about it to whomever would listen, a rapidly dwindling group of friends from his childhood.

Things began to change for the boy when, roving through the forest in search of small game for his supper and chasing a large jet black squirrel, he chanced upon a bag of iron symbols hidden beneath some weeds. The devices, left from an ancient temple of Sauron, caught his mind and he began to develop new ideas. Ideas that would help him avenge himself for the wrongs he imagined the Prince had done him. It was put into his mind to set out the pieces among the ruins on the lands of Woodhold Manor, each in a place of permanent shadow. Once all were placed their power was released. Gontran's personality was altered. He became charismatic and grew more and more energetic. He also withdrew from most human company, living on his hill and gathering strength. When his master saw that the time was right, Gontran began to gather men to himself. He sought out weak-minded folk and dominated them with his own borrowed will. He taught them the skills he had learned from the charms, the ways of stealth and cunning that make a perfect assassin. He had studied alone for nearly thirty years, for his learning had been slow without a human teacher. With his aid, his students progressed much more quickly.



As he gathered these pupils to himself and led them in worship at his alter, the power of the talismans grew. The evil mist closed around his hill, and a growing sense of expectation came upon his men.

He began to supplement the arts he taught with items and bottled spells for his students and sent them to try their new-learned skills on local farmers, all in careful preparation for a reign of terror to be launched upon the city. Gontran feels this plan will pay the Prince for past injustices, but it is actually more tied with the will of the Dark Lord and his schemes against Minas Tirith.

The discovery of the Hill of Shades by Tiranir forced the assassin to early action; this his first strike against a prominent figure may have been premature. However, the success of that mission has convinced him of his cult's abilities and in the months following that attack, his undertakings have grown steadily bolder. Now he deems his forces nearly ready, after a raid which took the life of one of Dol Amroth's most well-protected nobles. In town, however, the powerful have decided that things have gone too far. A small band, the PCs, has been selected to investigate and try to stop the recent outbreak of killings. There seems to have been no real pattern to the murders so far but some say that the Ranger, the first figure of note to be killed, must have done something to touch it all off. They suggest that the investigators might speak with his son to see if he knows anything that might help.

5.2 THE NPCs

It is unlikely that the PCs will have much opportunity to get to know any of the Shades except in combat. Therefore most will be described only on the Master NPC Table (Section 7.0). The leader of the Assassins, however, as well as his lieutenant Balthrod and Tinindil the son of Tiranir, are described below.

5.21 GONTRAN THE SHADE

As can be seen from his tale in section 5.1, Gontran is a mean-spirited man. His life has been hard, but the dark path he has chosen was never forced upon him. His nature has not been changed by the charms he found, simply magnified and added to by the will of his Master. His youth was full of anger and frustration, but in command of his band of killers he has found another view on his lot. Now, he feels that he is in pursuit of a great goal and it is finally in his sight.

His long study under the guide of the Talismans has given Gontran many unusual skills. He has learned the rituals required to make a number of enchanted items, as well as the techniques needed for the fabrication of many non-magical, but very effective devices (see the description of the Store Room in section 5.3 area #9). He has mastered the arts of stealth and deception needed by an assassin and now teaches them to others. He has also been given spells to cast which are unknown to Men who are not enthralled by the Dark Lord. These are of the realm of Essence and are listed by level below.

3. Leaping/Landing. This spell enables the caster or his target to make jumps and land uninjured at three times his normal ability (i.e., If a man could jump 10 feet this will enable him to jump thirty. If he should fall, the distance he falls will be reduced by two-thirds for the calculation of damage.). This effect will last 10 minutes for each level of the caster.

4. Stealth. The caster or target may move with complete silence. This spell does not deaden sound, but gives its subject higher skill in moving silently. It will add +100 to his normal chance. It will not, however, prevent him from making noise should he choose to do so and cannot prevent the noise that will ensue in the unlikely event that he should fail his roll to move silently. The magic will endure for ten minutes per level of the caster.

5. The Shade. This enchantment allows the caster to become his own shadow for a previously determined time (up to ten min. per level). As such, he is able to perceive his surroundings in only a general way. (E.g., he will be able to sense the shape and size of a room or the presence of a living being, but will not be able to distinguish between colors or identify a passerby.) While the spell is in effect the caster will be limited to one form of motion. He will be able to attach himself to other shadows and move with them as they follow the objects by which they are cast.

6. Venom. The assassin may create one dose of lethal poison (Attack level will equal half of the caster's level). upon any item. The thing poisoned, a sword, a dish, et cetera, will remain lethal for ten minutes per level of the caster. The poison created must be taken into the body through a wound or orally to take effect. The death of the victim will be slow and terribly painful (over 2-20 rounds) and the effects may only be relieved by a magical cure.

8. Moving Shade. Like the 6th level spell except that the assassin may move at will, at walking speed, and the duration can be determined while in shadow state. The maximum duration, however, is still ten minutes per level.

10. Vanish. By means of this spell, the caster can instantly return to a predesignated place from any point within ten miles per level of that place. This will carry the assassin's body only and requires

that some item known to him be left at the target location

The leader of the Shades is able to cast any of these, and has an allotment of twenty-four power points a day, given him by the power of the charms. Joraal would need to "overcast" Vanish (see Spell Law Optional Rules if using Rolemaster), or he can place the spell in a token.



In dealing with the men he has corrupted to his service Gontran is stern and harsh but he is also dynamic and offers them the inspiration that is the sign of a great leader. Of course these skills are simply borrowed from his Master but, nonetheless, they are effective. His men are unquestioningly devoted to him and to his cause. He has found in each of them a complaint or dissatisfaction to nurture into outright hatred for the Prince. As a commander, Gontran has also been aided by the teaching he has received. In battle he will be calm and cool. He will direct his troops, through well-practiced signals and calls, with great skill and cleverness. He also fights quite well himself and is full of dirty tricks and guile. This composure, however, will hold only so long as he can still believe that victory will be his. If faced with the prospect of failure, of destruction, he will quickly grow desperate and his ability to evaluate the events around him will fail. It is likely, at the end, that his reason will leave him altogether, reducing him to an angered beast.

Notable Skills: *Climb* 70, *ambush* 9, *Stalk/Hide* 65, *Pick Locks* 58, *Disarm Trap* 55, *Ritual* (Allows the enchantment of certain items when at his shrine.) 85, *Acrobatics* 70, *Contortions* 55, *Signaling* 79, *Trap Building* 65. **Languages:** *Westron* 5, *Morbeth* 2. **Spell Lists:** *Special*.

5.22 BALTHROD

Like his mentor, Balthrod has long harbored a strong hatred for the Prince of Dol Amroth. His father also served in the armies of the city but was never true to his duty. He met his end in a duel, after trying to blackmail one of his superiors. When the officer was not punished the young Balthrod took it as evidence of a plot against his family. The idea was preposterous, as his friends all told him. But, at twenty-five he had the world all figured out and the good sense his comrades spoke could do nothing to sway him. Then one night in a tavern his raving was given a sympathetic ear. This older man could see just what he meant, could feel for what he must be going through... the friendship between Balthrod and Gontran was begun.



The younger man showed himself to be a willing pupil and displayed promise. His fervor matched that of his teacher and he rapidly became second in command of their growing cell of discontents. Now he has become quite skilled in the ways of the assassin. He does not have his leader's charisma and could not rule the band, but he has no such aspirations. He is fanatically loyal and would die for Gontran without a second thought. In combat style the lieutenant is a loner. His only failing as a student has been his inability to learn group tactics and master team work. He is, however, a terror with a sword and can do, on his own, the work that most would give to a group of men.

Alone among Gontran's pupils, Balthrod has also learned the spells that have been given to the cult. He knows them up to his own level (Six) and has twelve power points to use them, drawn from his own natural talent.

Notable Skills: *Climb 50, Track 20, Ambush 6, Stalk/Hide 42, Pick Lock 42, Disarm Trap 37, Acrobatics 45.* **Languages:** *Westron 5, Morbeth 1.* **Spell Lists:** *Special.*

5.23 TININDIL

This young man is not destined for his father's greatness. Now going through the early stages of puberty, he shows every sign of growing up to be no more than a weak-willed courtier. He has been cared for since the death of his mother by a maiden aunt who coddles him unceasingly. He is spoiled and temperamental. However, he is relatively bright. Once he has spent some minutes disparaging the chances of *anyone* being able to beat the men who killed *his* father, he will settle down and listen to their questions. If prompted properly (e.g. Did your father say or do anything, abnormal on the day he met his untimely end?), he will recall Tiranir's strange tale about the mist and the rocky knoll. He will also remember the location vaguely, having been near there once when his father had taken him hunting years ago. Beyond this he will be of little help and his aunt will begin to shoo his visitors out. She puts little store in any sort of fighting, for good causes or no, and she'll keep her little Tinni right out of it, thank you very much!

5.3 THE SETTING

The directions Tinindil can give to the hill will prove accurate enough. It rests in a vale between two higher hills which are covered in tall beech trees. From the edge of the forest it will be difficult to determine much about the assassins' hold because of the thick mist that surrounds it. Only the top of the old watchtower rises above the grey vapors and little can be told from it.

The assassins keep a constant watch over the approaches to their home, from several cleverly concealed blinds around the area. It is quite unlikely that the PCs will manage to arrive at the hillock unannounced (a 20% chance if they travel normally and a 50% chance if they are attempting to hide their passage, for which every party member must successfully attempt one Stalk/Hide roll). At the time of their visit, however, a substantial portion of the students will not be present, as most of them have kept up a pretense of being normal citizens and spend their off hours in town. Those who are home will not have a great deal of time to prepare but can be expected to have set up their defensive positions. These will differ from what might be found in a camp of normal soldiers. These men are trained for stealth and ambush, not for a stand up fight. Their leader is also confident that his men will be able to use these tactics to defeat any group so small as this. Thus, the assassins will attack by ones and twos from under bridges and behind walls. Their efforts will be coordinated but there will be no pitched battle as long as other alternatives are available.

The occupancy of the Hill will be as follows. Gontran and Balthrod will be there at any time; they are now only teachers until the reign of terror begins. There will be a number of other cult members; four of fourth level, eight of second and eleven of first. These will be spread about the ruins in various hidey-holes and waiting to spring ambushes on the intruders. In the event that the PCs do arrive unexpectedly, they will be somewhat less dispersed, tending to their duties around the camp. Even in this case though, at the first sound of trouble they will take off to their assigned waiting points as rapidly as possible.

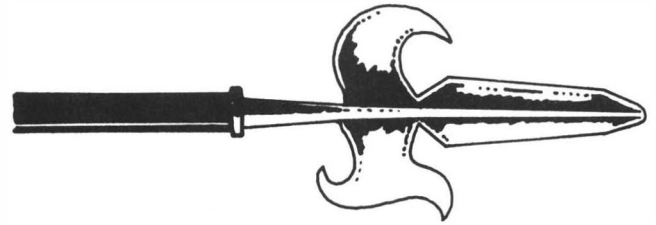
NOTE: Differences in the make up of particular parties and even in the playing style of the players themselves may call for adjustment of the balance set out in this adventure. The GM should consider the skills and limitations of his own players and adjust the numbers of the Shades up or down accordingly, if necessary.

1. The Tack Room. This was once the storeroom for the Stable at #2. Around the two walls that remain can be seen shelves and pegs for saddles and the other accouterments that would be needed for a mounted hunt. All of the equipment is long gone and even the racks themselves are mostly broken and useless. In the south corner, though, there is one small bit of shelf-work that has been repaired. In a pigeon hole, about four inches to a side and five deep, is a curious bit of worked iron. It has a shape which represents nothing material but which is disturbing to the eye. This, of course, is one of the ten charms that are the focus of the cult. If a PC is searching the walls or is actively looking for wrought iron items, this one will be easily found. If not, however, a perception roll must be made to notice it.

2. The Stables. The broad door of this building lies flat on the oaken boards of its floor, and the whole north corner of the walls has tumbled in around it. A few charred beams also poke out from the tops of the walls that stand, or from the floor where the frames of the stalls were. The rest of the wood has been used to feed the fires for ceremonies in area 4. In both the east and west corners the old beams support cascades of leafy vines that fall right to the floor. These have been carefully cultivated by the assassins. Behind each tumble of green is a space in which men might hide. These spots are the ambush posts of three Shades, two novices in the east and one adept in the west. Their battle plan is for the two to launch their attack first, with their senior waiting to take advantage of any confusion they might cause. In the last corner of the room, the south, a hollow has been made in the stone of the wall and in it is a second talisman, similar, but not identical to that, in area 1. The same guidelines apply as far as its discovery as did in the Tack Room.

3. Bunkhouse. Of all of the buildings that made up the lodge, this is the only one that the Shades have rebuilt completely. The cedar-shingle roof, a fair portion of the stone work, and all of the windows, three on each side, can be seen to be relatively new. Inside are twenty sets of bunk beds, each plain and without drawers. The mattresses are simple and utilitarian as are the bed clothes. In the southward portion of the single room is a large table where the assassins take their meals. The entire building is spotlessly clean and nothing is ever left lying about. The novices would be treated harshly if they should ever fail to keep the area, maintained. This is part of their training and is never taken lightly. If the PCs have been seen as they approach the hill, this building

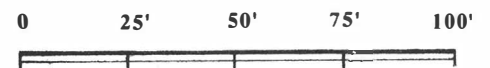
will be quite empty. If they should achieve surprise, and if they come to the Bunkhouse before any great deal of noise is made or any of the assassins can find time to alert those who are asleep, then there will be one adept, two initiates, and three novices here. They will be light sleepers, but since the door is never locked there will be a fair chance of catching a few before the others awake.



4. Courtyard. This yard is the focal point of the assassins' cult. The mists and the eerie feeling are heaviest here, so strong that any animal that has not been trained to stand against Dark Magic will simply turn and bolt if forced to come within the walls that surround the area. In a shallow pit where the flag stones have been torn up and the earth scraped away, there is place for fires to be built. This serves as Gontran's altar for his dark worship services. Above the ashes that lie here the mists are thick enough to be almost completely opaque, looking like a cloud of murky milk. Within this, dark, disturbing shapes seem to move back and forth. There is a strong sense of menace in the atmosphere. The evil here is very powerful and anyone fool enough to treat it lightly will pay a heavy toll for his rashness. The vapors over the pit surround the nexus of the forces that are generated by the charms that are scattered across the hill. Anyone who does not remain cautious in the vicinity may be subject to the same effect that that snared Gontran in the first place. The charms reach out to willing or unprotected minds to gain control over them and, though the effect may or may not begin immediately, they will try to influence anyone who comes near the altar. In the case of wary men who have come to destroy the cult, their power will have little chance of penetrating their quarry's guard, but any who let themselves relax before all of the charms have been set out for the sun will be at risk. The attack is made as a fourth level channeling spell, and its effects, though subtle at first, will be strong, finding some hatred in the victim and nursing it into an obsession to be twisted to the service of their master. If there is a threat that the talismans might be exposed, this attack will be stepped up and it will act more quickly. The PC who fails to make his RR will be taken by the darkness at once, causing him to turn against any who would destroy the temple with any means at his disposal. His sanity is also quite unlikely to survive. The only cure for the possession is the destruction of the charms but even that will not restore the mind of one who has been broken by them. Powerful healing spells would be required for that.

The leader of the assassins has forbidden them to fight within the courtyard, so there will be no attacks on PCs there. A close watch, however, will be kept on anyone who enters there and any actions they take will serve to add fury to their opposition.

The walls of the courtyard are of the same grey stone as the rest of the ruins. There are two doors that let through the stone work, made of stout oak with hardware of iron. Though they look to be in fair condition, the locks on both are rusted inside and cannot be opened.



5. The Stair. This wooden stair has been refurbished by the shades, as has the building to which it leads. A banister runs up along each side and there is a landing where it turns, about half-way up the hill. Under this landing there is a space, about four feet high and with a floor area of six by three. This is another ambush post. If trouble comes, two initiates and one adept will hide here, observing the alter and waiting for a chance to strike. Also beneath the stair here there is a lever which will release the supports of the stair itself. To it is tied a rope of about forty feet to allow the man who pulls it to be safely out of the way when the steps come down. Any who are on the upper portion of the stair (or on the landing) when this trap is sprung will suffer damage as if from a ten foot fall with a twenty percent chance of taking puncture criticals instead of crush, since the wood will tend to splinter.

6. Bridge. The three covered bridges that are found on the hill have all been set right by the members of the cult. They are built of thick wooden spars, fastened by brackets and nails of iron. This one is used often for trips to and from the tower and the guard post at #15. In the rafters that support its shingled roof is another ambush post. Near the midpoint of the span two Shades, one novice and an initiate, will wait to drop on passers by. Their positions are screened by vertical baffles that are set every eight feet along the length of the bridge. In addition to his normal gear, see section 5.0, each of these will have an extra coil of rope which he may use to drop to the ground below if the initiate should choose to attack the intruders there instead.

7. The Game House. Here the hunters used to hang their prizes out and do the skinning and cleaning. The building is of stone, with a simple door of wood that has no latch. There are two windows on each wall except the north which has only one, but all are shuttered and held by bars from within. Inside are several large and sturdy tables with thick tops that bear the marks of long use under sharp knives. Around these are racks of wood where skins might be hung out. Hooks of horn are fixed to the walls and the low ceiling for meat to be hung upon. Above all this, in the south-east corner of the building, is a cramped loft where the supplies needed for tanning hides and preserving meat were kept. It still holds three small barrels of salt and a wooden box of ointment the old gamesman used for curing leather. This is particularly effective stuff and, if treated with it, leather armor will grow more supple, adding ten to its wearer's DB above and beyond any other pluses it might have. There is enough here to maintain one suit of armor for six months (must be applied monthly). On the ground floor, tucked back in an alcove in the southeast, is a small niche in the wall. Within this is another of the talismans to which the same rules of observation will apply as did in areas 1 and 2. Directly above this, however, in the darkest corner of the loft, is another niche with another talisman. This one will only be noticed if the loft is actually entered and searched with a torch, a difficult task, since its ceiling is only about thirty inches above its floor. The building is never occupied and has not seen use since the lodge was abandoned years ago. All that remains besides the furniture is a varied collection of dry bones from the kills that were left upon the tables.

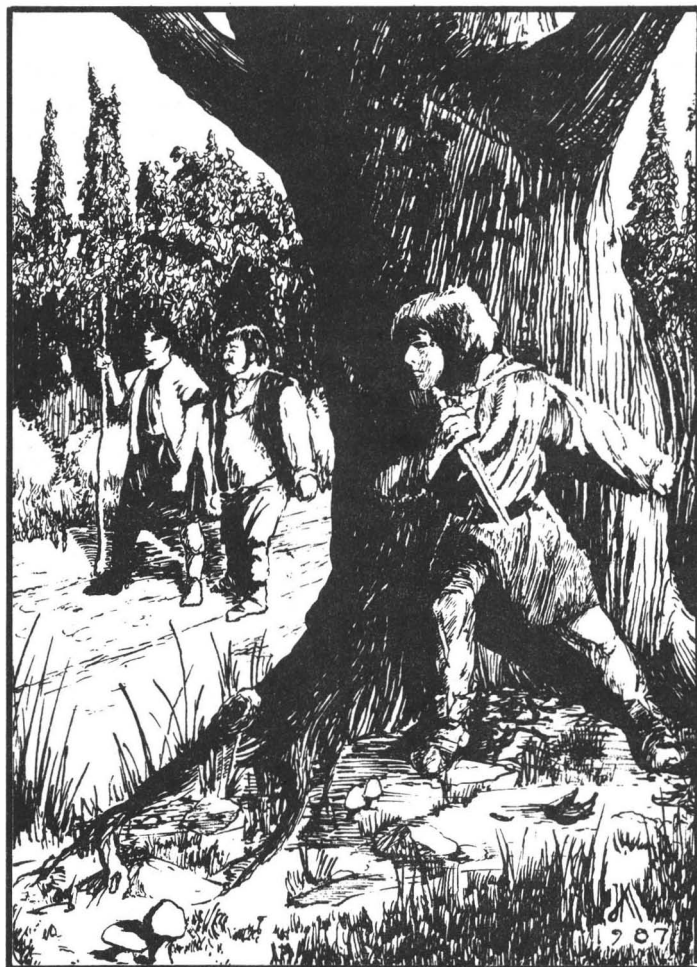
8. Bridge. This bridge is never used by the men of the cult. It has been set with a clever trap to discourage intruders who might see that the game house is not ruined and head for it. When any one of three trip-levers near the middle of its length are hit its entire floor will be loosed from its fastenings along the north side, dropping whoever might be on it to the ground, twenty-five feet

below. The triggers are hidden in the planks; there is a 70% chance of triggering the trap while walking normally; 50% if running. The trap is *Very Hard* (-20) to detect.

9. The Tower. This stone structure holds three rooms of identical dimensions, one on each floor, with a narrow spiral stair in the south-west alcove connecting them.

A. The first floor is Balthrod's quarters. It is sparsely furnished and always kept neat. There is a simple cot in the north corner. By it is a small chest which holds the assassin's few possessions, an extra suit of greys and a set of plain clothes. His training has taught him to do without more than this since an assassin must be unencumbered. The only other object on this floor is a spare sword that the lieutenant keeps propped by the stair. It is a normal long sword in a scabbard of grey leather.

B. The floor above Balthrod's room is the storeroom for the cult's tools and devices. Several racks here hold various mundane items: two swords, several grappling hooks with rope, a folding ladder, and other tools of the trade. On a table in the south corner is a smaller rack that holds eleven glass bulbs. These are made by Gontran with the power of the charms and each holds a spell inside it. Though the bulbs are made with the power of Channeling, the spells inside them are of Essence. Three hold *Stun* spells (see section 3.2), two hold *Opening I* from the Unbarring Ways list, one has *Sleep X* from the Spirit Mastery list, two have *Sudden Light* from Light Law, one has *Shade* from the same list, one has *Vacuum* from Wind Law, and the last holds a *Fire Ball* from Fire Law. In a chest beneath the table on which a permanent version of *Venom* (6th level attack) has been cast, is a set of the cult's greys which carries two enchantments. It will cast both *Stealth* and *Moving*



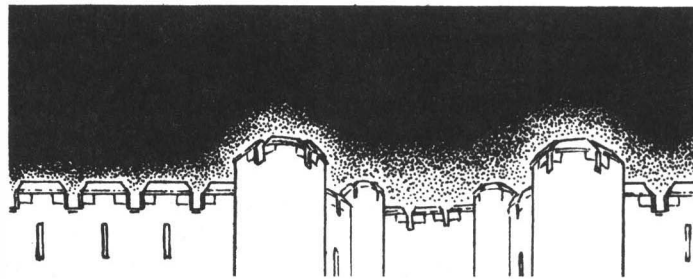
Shade, twice and once per day respectively, with durations based on an eighth level caster. The chest can be opened safely with a dagger or with gloves but any touch upon it with unprotected flesh will allow it to take effect (This version of the spell creates contact poison that need not be ingested.). In two other chests on this floor are some thirty more sets of greys in all sizes, ready for new recruits.

C. Gontran's room is on the top floor of the tower. Like his pupils, the master of the assassins keeps things neat in his room. He has a bed, a desk, and a large chest. The bed is simple and utilitarian with one pillow, one sheet, and one blanket. A large and difficult (-20) lock graces the latch of Gontran's oak and iron chest. Gontran carries the only key on a chain about his neck. If this is broken or picked a magical trap will be triggered. The chest itself will teleport to the tower's flat roof, accessible through a small trap door in the ceiling fifteen feet above. In its place will be left what seems to be a lovely silver vase. This is actually a cleverly constructed spring trap which will launch a great number of razor sharp shards into the air around it as soon as it is touched, even lightly. The flying metal will deliver five to fifty points of damage (halved for metal armor) to any who stand within ten feet, with one C slash crit for each ten points of damage taken. If the chest is opened, it will be seen to hold two sets of greys, three sets of street clothes, and, under all the rest, a sack which is full to bursting with gold coins. These, Gontran calls his pension; he has had them collected from the victims of his cult and thinks of them as an advance on what he will collect from the Prince. The bag contains three hundred fifty-seven gold pieces. The desk, in the south corner, is bare on top, but has a deep drawer underneath. In this can be found a large, leather bound book, along with a pen, ink, and several loose sheets of parchment. The book is a journal wherein the most recent entries describe the events that form the two earlier adventures in this module and many other similar occurrences, as well as the Shades' plans for the terror they would unleash upon the city. As one delves farther back, the information given in the tale in section 5.2 will come to light. The only omission will be any mention of the Dark Lord. Poor Gontran actually has no idea whose power lies behind the charms he worships. His terms for it are all references to "the ancient strength" and "the vengeful force." Like so many others, the assassin has been taken in by the wiles of the great deceiver.



10. The Short Stair. Rising only about ten feet, this stair gives a small boost to those who wish to get to the top of this hillock. It is not used by the Shades, who practice their climbing skills here instead, and has been allowed to remain in the poor condition they found it in. For this reason, it is rather treacherous. Though the wood still looks reasonably sturdy, the higher treads are all rotted nearly through. This should be handled as a trap, requiring a normal perception roll to be detected. If anyone steps on the sixth through tenth stairs, he will need to make a Hard maneuver roll to maintain his balance as the wood crumbles under his foot. Failing this will result in a fall of ten feet onto an uncomfortable bed of thorn vines and rock. The Shade on guard at #17 has a bow which he may use to take advantage of any confusion these stairs cause.

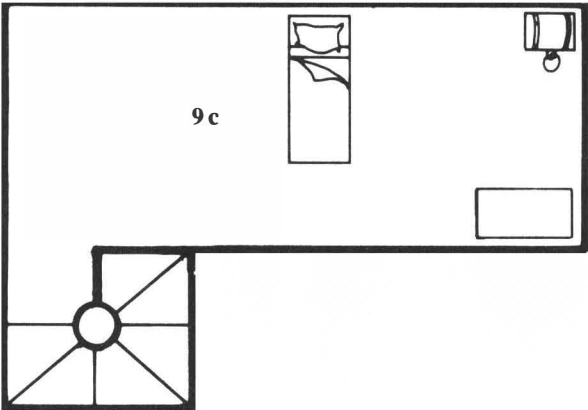
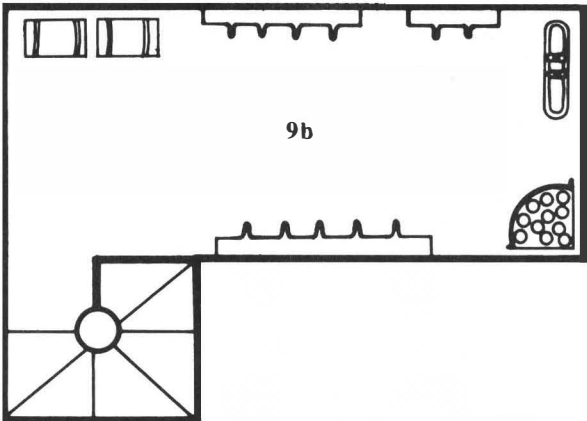
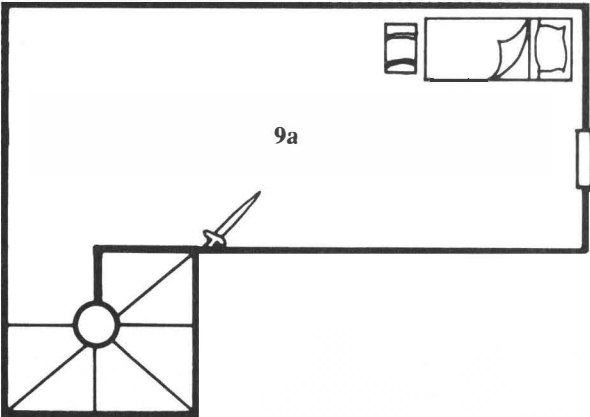
11. The Spring House. This low building is all of stone, roof and walls, with only a small door of wood, latched with a bronze hook. The outside is covered with thick moss and it looks almost like part of the hill. Inside there is always a cool darkness. No noise is to be heard save the tinkle of water pouring from the spring's mouth in an outcrop of rock, into a natural basin of stone, and back into the earth through a small hole near the south corner. Floating in the basin will be various vegetables, ready for the Shades' mess. Where the shadows are deepest, near the spot where the water leaves the room, there is a small hollow in the floor. In it is set another talisman. To find this the PCs will have the same difficulties as in location 1 with an additional -10 for the darkness unless they carry torches.



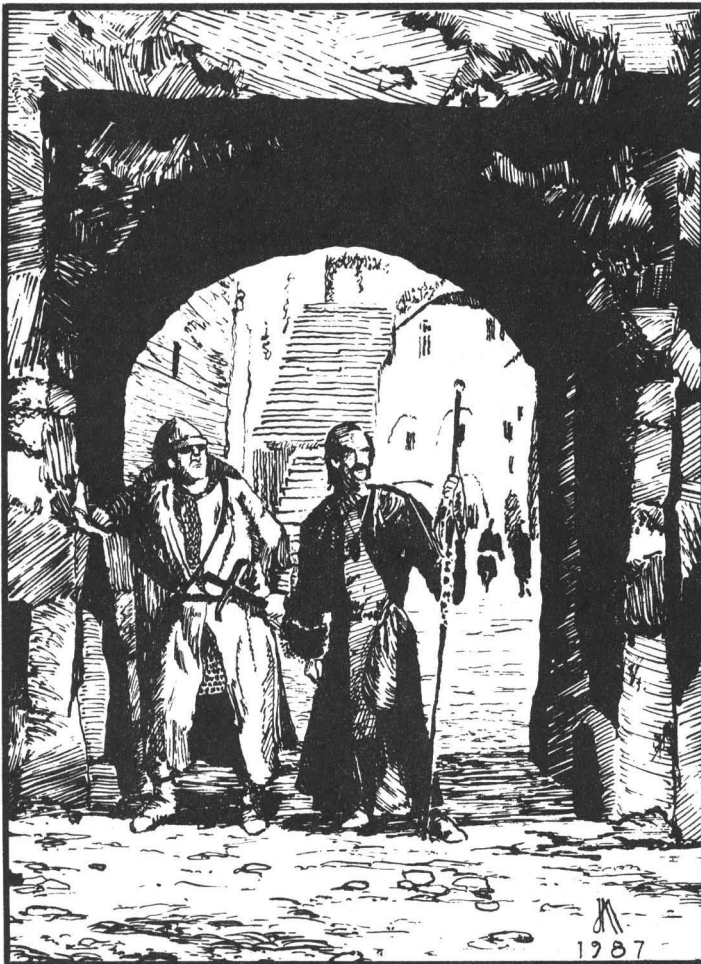
12. The Kitchen. Fire took this building during a Corsair raid. Its roof is a tangle of charred and sagging beams to which a few blackened cedar shakes still cling. The old chimney still stands in the south corner. Inside is a broken table under which are scattered several rusted cooking implements. The burned ruin of a large wooden cabinet that once held spices and food stuffs stands on the south-east wall, to the right of the door. Under the rubble from the north corner are the remains of a crockery chest. Shards of pottery are scattered across the floor. (Anyone falling or being downed here has a 15% chance of suffering an A puncture crit). The chimney served both a brick oven and a normal fireplace. In the latter of these, in the shadows near the back, is another talisman. The requirements for observation of this are the same as applied in the Tack Room. Hiding here in times of attack will be two Shades, an Initiate and a Novice. They will use the cover of the large cabinet and the table to hide in preparation for ambush on anyone who enters through the door. PCs entering from the other side, unless they were seen coming from the North in the first place, will have a 50% chance of surprising the assassins if they are able to stalk up to the entrance successfully. In this they will be aided by the fact that the earth there is soft and adds 25 to stalking maneuvers but the guards at 17 must not be forgotten. They may signal those in here (with a bird call or some such).

13. The Hollow. In the south wall of an arrow ravine here there is a hollow about four feet deep. In it Gontran has placed a small shelf and on it is another talisman. This will be easy to find once in the ravine, as in area 1, but the ravine itself is unobtrusive and unlikely to be noticed by anyone who is not actively looking for such a place. Of course a bright PC who asks himself, "Now where could they find a shadow to hide one in, if its not in one of the buildings?" will be just the sort to see this spot.

14. Bridge. Like the others, this bridge is built of strong wooden spars, but, unlike them, it is completely safe. West of it though, on its south end, there is a hiding place under a leafy thicket. Here two Shades, an Initiate and a Novice, will wait for an opportunity to launch their attack on passersby above or below them.



15. Guard Post. At the north end of the bridge at #14, surrounded by a stand of tall grass, is a small clearing with two wooden benches. Here two Shades stand guard, looking out, up the vale that holds their hill. An Initiate and a Novice man the post and their guard will always be vigilant. The approach to their post from the north side is steep and treacherous and if any intruder should try to scale it the guards will have a 90 point bonus on hearing him, even if they have not already seen him, and a bonus of thirty in attacking him, as long as he remains on the slope. If trouble begins in the camp behind these guards they will turn their attention inward and act along the same plan as the assassins at #14.



16. Guard Post. This post is hidden in a group of stone outcroppings. It is furnished and manned just as is #15, but the way up to it is gentler, so these guards will not have the bonuses their companions were given. The more experienced of these two men has a weapon of higher quality than most. It is plus 10 in combat due to its sharpness. The quality is also shown in the decorative work of its fittings, they are all of worked brass.

17. Guard Post. The guards here watch the slopes to their west for signs of intruders. As at #16 there are two men here, one Novice and one Initiate. Like the others, they sit upon benches, and like #15 they are surrounded by high grasses and sit atop a difficult climb. The Initiate here has somewhere acquired fair skill (OB 45) with a bow and keeps one here with him along with twenty regular and five +5 arrows.

18. Guard Post. This well hidden spot looks over the most convenient route in from the city, also from Woodhold. The watchmen sit on their benches in a small pit, dug out of the rocky soil. An Adept waits here with an Initiate, and both are in good position to spring on anyone trying to pass into the camp beside their post. The Adept carries a matched pair of throwing knives which are enchanted to be as effective as bolts from a light crossbow and will return to the thrower's hands one round after they are cast. Thus, with two knives, he can throw one each round indefinitely.



5.4 THE TASK

The task the PCs will face is reasonably straightforward. Their mission is to seek out and destroy the cult of assassins. With careful management, this will provide them with an evening of play where they walk the line between power and peril and end in their victory over the Shades.

5.41 STARTING THE PLAYERS

The players can be brought into this scenario in any of a number of ways. They might act for reasons of vengeance if an associate should be killed by Gontran's men. They could simply be wandering through the woods and come across an odd looking hill. The idea suggested in 5.1 is that the powerful of Dol Amroth have found the assassinations to be a thorn in their side and, though they are reluctant to commit troops to what may be a wild goose chase, they wish to take some action. They will approach a band of worthy adventurers with an offer of gold, or perhaps simply play upon the good will of the group, if they are known to be loyal to the Prince. The PCs should be offered a reward which they are likely to accept but haggling for more will be frowned upon by their potential employers.

5.42 AIDS

Any aid the players can expect will come almost entirely before the actual adventure begins. If they are working under the commission of the city, they will be supplied with whatever normal equipment they may require and perhaps, if the GM deems it appropriate, a few doses of healing herbs. They will also be guided by directions from Tiranir's son, if they go to him. Otherwise, they should be allowed to track a Shade from the sight of some recent killing. Beyond this, the GM may feel it necessary to give some sort of clue as to the nature of the charms. This might come in the form of a prophecy from some soothsayer, reading as follows:

*Half a Score Charms
Rule the Swords of the Night
Mists Shroud Their Home
Clouds of Cold Fright*

*Shielded by Stones
They Hide from the Light
The Dark is Their Solace
The Sun is Their Blight.*

5.43 OBSTACLES

There is an impressive force standing in opposition to the party that undertakes this mission. The main obstacle they will face is the group of Shades that are in residence at the hill. In addition, unless they are able to approach the hill without being detected by any of the watchers that are stationed along the routes in, the guard who spots them will send a signal to the hill (by coming to a preassigned point within the sight of the inner guards and giving a sign) and then make a circuit to gather the other outer sentries (a total of four) and bring them into the fray. These are designed for use as reinforcements to be used if needed. The GM should set their experience level and the time of their arrival to fit the flow of the game and if things are going too badly for the PCs, they need not come at all. The skill of the assassins, the amazing swordsmanship of Balthrod, and the evil cunning and magic of Gontran should go together to make the adventure lively indeed.

5.44 REWARDS

The material gain available in this adventure is relatively unimpressive. The gold Gontran has hoarded and the magical devices in the Store Room of the Tower, as well as the few items of value on the persons of the other assassins, will constitute some small profit. If the players, however, tend towards materialism, the GM should consider this when setting the reward offered by the Prince. Beyond the possible monetary gains, though, there is the glory and reputation that will come from ridding the city of this menace and, of course, the peace of mind that comes from working in a good cause.



5.5 ENCOUNTERS

As in *A Home By The Sea*, the encounters involved in this module should be handled carefully. The ambush posts give some structure to the assassins' combat tactics, but their battle order is designed for flexibility. Gontran will redeploy his men if he needs to and is able. This flexibility should be used to keep the game in balance. The Shades may also miss an opportunity to press an advantage, if the PCs are in danger of extinction. The master assassin himself, as well as his assistant, will travel all over the compound, fighting or giving orders as needed.

As was mentioned above, there are also the guards from the outer posts who must be considered. If these are brought into play, they will rove the camp at will unless told otherwise. As a general rule for all of the encounters, the shades have a bias towards stealth and ambush. Even in cases where a bold attack would be vastly more effective they will often, though not always, drop back for a surprise attack at a later time.



GAMEMASTER'S NOTES

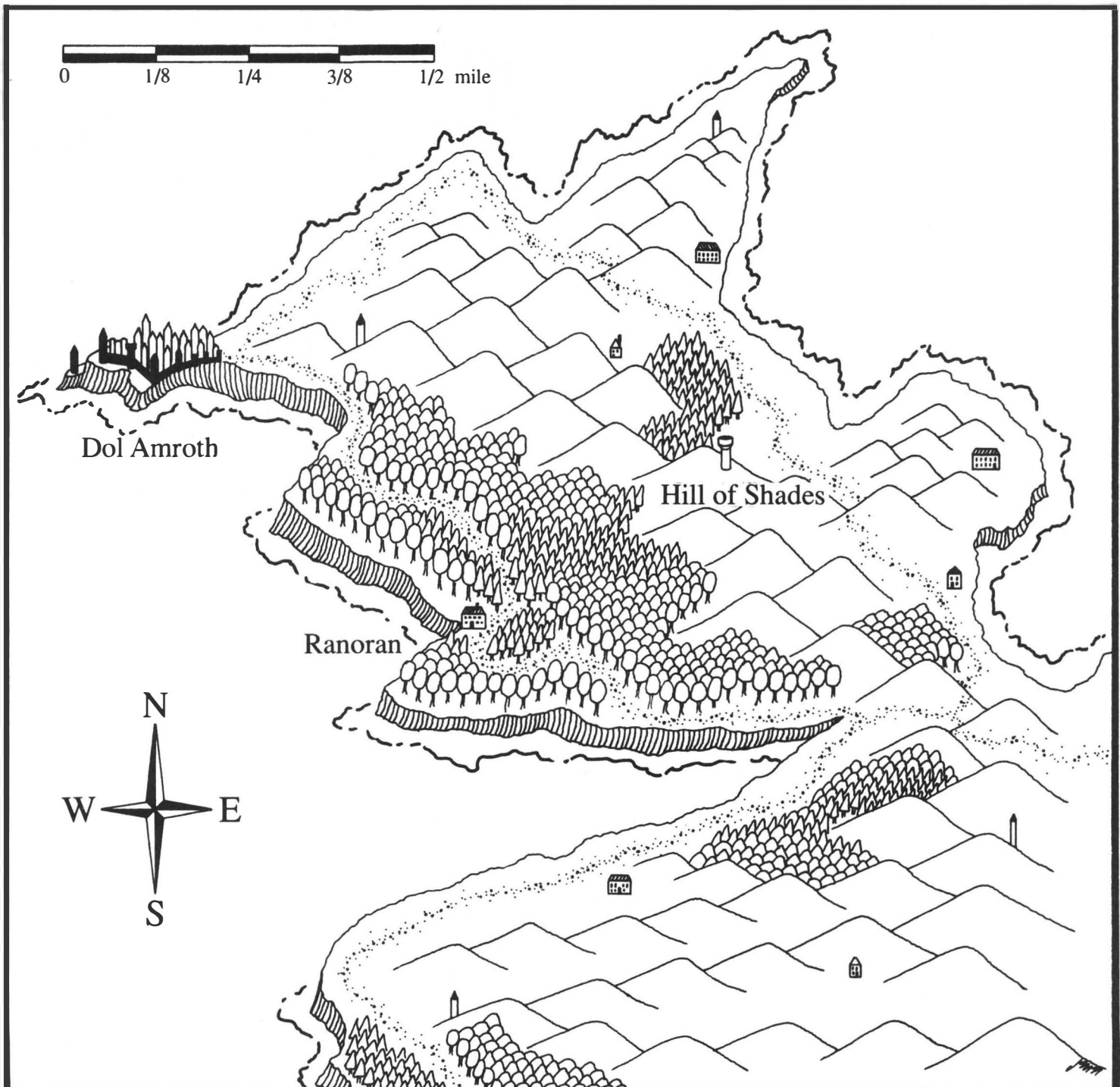
1. Beyond the items found in the thieves' den, the contents of the book in adventure 1, room. 16 is left up to the GM. It is possible that there are no others, but others could be added as game balance and the GM's inventiveness allow.

2. In Section 5.0 it is important that the GM pay attention to his players' ability to figure things out. The Talismans will be a mystery at first and it is up to him, in his descriptions of the rooms, to guide the PCs toward the realization. If the poem given in section 5.42 is not used, the fact that the Charms will lose their power if all are exposed to sunlight can be hinted at by their placement in permanent shadow. However, this should be done as subtly as possible, beginning, perhaps, with simple mention of the fact that all of the hiding places face north, putting them where the sun never shines since this is the Northern Hemisphere, and growing more blunt as necessary. Again, if the poem is not used, the fact that there are ten of them can be discovered by the fact that, though as each is moved the mists seem to lighten a bit, they will not go completely until all ten are found.

3. Standard equipment for a Shade is as follows: a grey uniform of cotton duck with gloves and covering for the face, a long sword (slung across the back), five or more throwing knives, soft leather boots (also grey), and a small pouch for carrying any special equipment. In addition, one may have a number of special items ranging from a set of thieves' picks or a grappling hook, to a clutch of bottled spells, depending upon the requirements and importance of his mission.

STATS FOR NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Name/Rank	Lvl	Hits	AT	DB	Sh	Gr	MeleeOB	MissOB	MM	Notes
Joraal	4	63	None	15	N	N	80	45	15	Urban Man/Assassin
Gabbon Trollsdurge	10	90	None	10	N	N	70	—	5	Dúnadan/Warrior
Gontran	8	110	None	20	N	N	110	80	25	Dúnadan/Assassin
Balthrod	6	87	None	20	N	N	135	42	15	Urban Man/Assassin
Adept	4	70	None	15	N	N	80	45	15	Urban Man/Assassin
Initiate	2	40	None	5	N	N	55	35	10	Urban Man/Assassin
Novice	1	35	None	5	N	N	43	28	5	Urban Man/Assassin



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