

THE RUINS OF ANNÚMINAS



An Adventure For
The Lord of the Rings™ Roleplaying Game

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THE RUINS OF ANNÚMINAS

‘The Ruins of Annúminas’ is an adventure for *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* set in Eriador in the years leading up to the War of the Ring (TA 2953–3018). It will challenge a group of four to five beginning heroes, who should be close allies of the Rangers of the North. If the company consists of more than five heroes, or heroes with more than 5 advancements and/or superior weaponry, the Narrator should increase the number of opponents, their skill level, or their weaponry.

Access to the map of the Shire in the *Maps of Middle-earth* boxed set may prove useful for the Narrator, as most of the places referenced appear on it. It is not, however, absolutely necessary for play, as the general lay of the land is less important than the action that occurs.

BACKGROUND

In recent months the Rangers of the North have spotted unsavoury Men surveying the ruins of Annúminas. Less than ten days ago a large number of Dunlendings passed through Bree on their way up the Greenway. The Rangers are certain they are bandits planning to ransack the sacred ruins. Pelegond is the Ranger captain who watches over this region. His men are already occupied, so he has gathered a fellowship of young Rangers and their allies—the player characters—to stop the bandits.

What’s been happening is that, encouraged by Saruman’s promises of rewards for information and relics from the North, two separate groups of Dunlending bandits—the ‘Hawks’ and the ‘Hunters’—have gone up the Greenway. The Hawks set out first, the Hunters one day behind. They cut cross-country, following the east bank of the Brandywine. West of the North Downs sinister wolves on the hunt ambushed the groups and dragged off victims to devour. The Hawks reached Lake Evendim first, excavating the eastern shore. The Hunters arrived two days later, digging into a great burial mound. The rival bands were wary of each other and even fought a nighttime skirmish, but soon the Dunlendings uncovered dangers greater than each other. . . .

ACT I: GATHERED BY PELEGOND

However they have come to his attention, Pelegond gathers the PCs in the forest outside the village of Archet, just north of Bree. Pelegond warns the heroes that a darkness is descending upon Eriador. ‘Long have my folk guarded the lands of Old Arnor, keeping at bay Orcs and foes darker still from the evil lands between Carn Dûm and the Misty Mountains. But our numbers are too few to patrol all paths, and now our friend the Grey Wizard has asked us to expand our watch to include the Shire, too. In recent days intruders from the South have passed through Bree on their way to the ruins of Annúminas, the old capital. We fear they are bandits or, worse, grave looters.’

He explains there are no available Rangers to send to the ruins and asks the heroes to accept this quest, 'If not out of friendship for me, then out of honour for that long-lost kingdom and respect for her sacred ruins.' The task is to track down the bandits, take back any treasures they have looted, and drive them away from the ruins. Pelegond gladly answers any questions put to him as follows:

Who are these Men from the South? 'Throughout the past month Rangers have spotted unsavoury individuals scouting the Hills of Evendim. They always fled south when chased. Less than ten days ago, whole groups of similar Men passed through Bree along the Greenway. They are wild in feature and accoutrement, and dark of hair and eye, so we suspect they may be dispossessed Dunlendings from Enedwaith.'

How many are they? 'We have no true count. They came in several waves, whether in alliance we cannot say. Informers in Bree say they number at least a dozen and perhaps twice that many. No armour was seen, but most bore weapons.'

Where were they going? 'They headed north from Bree on the Greenway. They surely did not stay on that path, for Rangers guard it vigilantly. They likely cut across the open country to the River Brandywine. If these Men are in league with those we found scouting Lake Evendim then they are certainly marching to the ruins of Annúminas. The ruins are now buried and overgrown, but they could be plundered still, and much of what they contain should lay buried until claimed by a rightful heir of the line of Kings.'

Can we keep what we find? 'If you find that the intruders from the South have looted the ruins, try to take back what they have stolen. Bring the plunder to me in Archet; I will return here at the end of this month. You may use what items you recover, but true relics must be stored safely in Rivendell until claimed by the rightful heir of Arnor.'

Can you aid us? 'I cannot go with you, for I must hasten to Rivendell to meet in council with my brethren. I have torches in plenty you make take, and also three sprigs of *athelas*, which can heal your injuries (see page 125 of the core rulebook). And to each of you I give a large skin of water and cram bread for ten days.'

ACT II: JOURNEY, SEARCH, AND CONFRONTATION

In this section the characters track the Dunlendings to the Hills of Evendim. The journey from Chetwood up the Greenway and west to Lake Evendim is about 200 miles. The terrain is mostly thicketed scrub grassland dotted with stunted woods (average ground), though within a dozen miles of Annúminas the terrain becomes hilly (rough ground). Fresh water should be plentiful on the journey, though food may be limited. Pelegond suggests—if asked—that the heroes follow the Greenway north out of Chetwood and look for the bandits' tracks away from the old road, or hike cross-country north-west of Chetwood and hope to spot their trail in the open countryside. The former course is longer but surer, the latter swifter but less certain.

FOLLOWING THE GREENWAY

The characters must first hike west through 10 miles of light woods (average ground) to reach the Greenway heading north (easy ground). The Dunlendings walked up the Greenway for 20 miles before cutting north-west through the open countryside. The characters must find the place where their tracks leave the trail, requiring an extended combined Track (or Search at a -2 penalty) skill test (1 hour time interval, 40 TN aggregate, $+4$ test bonus due to the number of Dunlendings). Once the tracks are found, they can be followed from the Greenway to the Brandywine River.

SEARCHING THE COUNTRYSIDE

This route, through light woods and scrub grassland (average ground), shortens the overland trek to Lake Evendim (only 160 miles total). However, there is no guarantee that signs of the Dunlendings can be found in the open wilderness. After reaching the river, the characters must drop to half-pace to search for tracks. This requires a combined Track (or Search at a -2 penalty) skill test (TN 15, with a $+4$ test bonus due to the number of Dunlendings). The time interval is 6 hours and the test can be repeated if failed according to the normal rules for repeat attempts, though on a complete failure the party gets hopelessly lost for one day, or two days on a disastrous failure.

TRACKING AND SURVIVING

Every day after they find the trail the characters must make a combined Track (or Search at -2) test (TN 10, with the $+4$ bonus) to keep following the Dunlendings' trail. The test can be repeated according to the normal rules for repeat attempts, but each failure wastes one hour of travel time. If the characters forage for food, make a combined Survival (Scrubland) test (TN 10) with a time interval of one hour. This test cannot be repeated. The party finds meagre sustenance for the day on a complete success, decent sustenance on superior, and bountiful sustenance on extraordinary, but the party goes hungry on a failure. If ever the party is completely out of food the characters suffer -2 on all Weariness tests and cannot recover Weariness until they eat again.

WOLFPACK!

Halfway to Annúminas the characters enter the territory of a pack of sinister wolves. Tainted by the Shadow, they are shrewder and more aggressive than normal wolves, and the lead wolf rivals a Warg in malevolent power. They hunt at twilight and strike using hit-and-run tactics. The pack leader only exposes himself to risk when necessary. The wolves are voracious but not suicidal, fleeing when Injured or worse. The pack leader can regroup them to strike again, and as long as he survives the pack does not give up hunting the party.

SINISTER WOLF

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 6 (0), Nimbleness 7 (0), Perception 8 ($+1$), Strength 8 ($+1$), Vitality 7 (0), Wits 2 (-2)

REACTIONS: Stamina +2, Swiftiness +2, Willpower +0, Wisdom +0

DEFENCE: 10

MOVEMENT RATE: 9

SKILLS: Armed Combat: Natural Weapons (Fangs) +4, Intimidate (Fear) +2, Jump +4, Observe (Smell) +4, Run +6, Stealth (Sneak) +8, Survival +4, Track (Scent) +4

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Natural Weapon (Fangs, 1d6+1), Snatch (may attempt to trip target as a free action if bite attack hits)

SIZE: Medium

HEALTH: 8

PACK LEADER

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 8 (+1), Nimbleness 8 (+1), Perception 9 (+1), Strength 10 (+2), Vitality 8 (+1), Wits 4 (-1)

REACTIONS: Stamina +4, Swiftiness +3, Willpower +1, Wisdom +0

DEFENCE: 11

MOVEMENT RATE: 9

SKILLS: Armed Combat: Natural Weapons (Fangs) +6, Intimidate (Fear) +4, Jump +6, Observe (Smell) +4, Run +9, Stealth (Sneak) +9, Survival +5, Track (Scent) +4

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Natural Weapon (Fangs, 1d6+1), Snatch (may attempt to trip target as a free action if bite attack hits)

SIZE: Medium

HEALTH: 10

COURAGE: 1

NEARING LAKE EVENDIM

The characters must eventually cross the Brandywine River. A successful Search test (TN 20) allows the company to find a suitable ford across the swift river. A TN 10 Sea-craft test allows the party to build a suitable raft for one. Each increment of success at raft-making past complete success adds capacity for one more aboard the craft. Otherwise the party must swim across. This is a difficult task as the current is strong (+5 TN to Swim tests) and the water wide (1,000 yards at the Bucklebury Ferry, though narrower further to the north). Considering the modifier, swimmers must make three TN 15 tests, spend 10–15 minutes, and make Weariness tests for an Extreme activity.

BLOODY BIVOUAC

Halfway between the river crossing and the hilltop excavation by the lakeshore is the site where the Dunlending Hawks camped several days earlier. The rival Hunters launched a night raid on the camp after they arrived, and in the skirmish several men were killed or injured. The surviving Hawks fled, leaving their dead behind. The Hunters buried their dead at the site, but the slain Hawks were stripped of possessions and left to rot on the ground. The Narrator may wish to reward characters who take the time to bury the dead.

LAKESIDE EXCAVATION

The most visible sign of recent activity is on the hill down which the Brandywine River flows from Lake Evendim. At one time the hill supported a great tower, and the Hawks began excavating the ruined foundation. This part of the lakeshore, however, also contains an underwater cave that has recently become the lair of a sea serpent from the underdeeps far below Middle-earth. The monster can sense vibrations near the lakeshore and rise up from the water to bite those atop the hill and drag them beneath the waves. Several Dunlending Hawks met this fate, and the rest scattered in panic. The serpent has been tainted by Shadow but is mainly interested in a meal. If seriously wounded (Injured) it retreats beneath the water, though it may return again if the party hangs around here too long.

If the characters drive off the serpent they can make Search tests (TN 10) to examine the excavated foundation. On any success they learn that the bandits unearthed four objects here, which are nowhere to be found. On a complete success they find two preserved arrowheads (the pair together are one of the four unearthed objects) dug up by the bandits but suddenly dropped. The arrowheads, after a TN 5 Craft: Bows/Arrows test, can be made into two Westerne arrows which deal +1 damage against evil foes and count as enchanted weapons against supernatural enemies. Made of silver and marked with Adûnaic runes, the arrowheads can be reused and are destroyed only on a disastrous failure on an attack test. On a superior Search success the heroes also unearth a buried gemstone encrusted with dirt but otherwise fair to behold. Finally, any hero who achieves extraordinary success finds a longsword preserved through time, etched beautifully with intricate designs, but having statistics similar to those of other longswords.

UNDERDEEP SERPENT

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 8 (+1), Nimbleness 10 (+2), Perception 12 (+3), Strength 12 (+3), Vitality 10 (+2), Wits 4 (-1)

REACTIONS: Stamina +5, Swiftmess +3, Willpower +0, Wisdom +0

DEFENCE: 12

MOVEMENT RATE: 12 (swimming only)

SKILLS: Armed Combat: Natural Weapons (Bite) +4, Intimidate (Fear) +4, Observe +8, Stealth (Hide, Sneak) +6, Survival (Lakes) +6, Swim +8

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Natural Weapon (bite, 1d6+1), Long Neck (4 yards extra reach), Gripping Bite (may automatically grab target with successful bite attack)

SIZE: Large (6 Wound Levels, 2 Healthy)

HEALTH: 13

COURAGE: 1

ROVING BANDITS

Surviving Hawks are scattered across the land, led by one or more surviving chieftains. The bandits are all at least Dazed from wounds and at least Tired from hunger. The party may encounter them hunting or lying in ambush to attack the rival Dunlendings. The bandits are wary but not necessarily combative, unless they suspect the characters are rival bandits. They do not fight to the death, instead fleeing or surrendering if Incapacitated. Most speak

only Dunlendish, but some speak Westron. The bandits wear no armour, but each is armed with a long-knife dagger, a plain wooden staff, or a shortbow and half-dozen arrows.

Additionally, the Hawks possess the three missing plundered relics: a jewelled medallion, a sapphire necklace, and a tattered scale-mail corslet that can be refurbished with a TN 10 Smithcraft (Armour) test. The Hawks do not freely give up their treasure, but the heroes can recover the items through stealth (stealing them back at night), deception (a riddling game), intimidation, or diplomacy (acts of mercy). If overpowered or outwitted, the bandits swear to quit the area forever.

DUNLENDING BANDIT

RACE: Man (Middle Man: Dunlending)

RACIAL ABILITIES: Adaptable (+2 to Stamina), Skilled

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 6 (0), Nimbleness 7 (0), Perception 7 (0), Strength 8 (+1), Vitality 8 (+1), Wits 6 (0)

REACTIONS: Stamina +3, Swiftiness +1, Willpower +1, Wisdom +1

DEFENCE: 10

ORDERS: Rogue

ORDER ABILITIES: Fleet-footed

ADVANCEMENTS: 0

SKILLS: Armed Combat: [varies] +2, Climb +2, Craft: [varies] +1, Healing +1, Inspire +1, Intimidate +1, Jump +2, Language: Dunlendish +6, Language: Westron +2 (only possessed by some), Lore/Realm: Dunland +4, Observe +3, Ranged Combat: [varies] +2, Ride +2, Run +3, Siegecraft +1, Survival +2, Unarmed Combat: Brawling +2

HEALTH: 9

DUNLENDING CHIEF

RACE: Man (Middle Man: Dunlending)

RACIAL ABILITIES: Adaptable (+2 to Stamina), Dominion of Man, Skilled

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 8 (+1), Nimbleness 7 (0), Perception 7 (0), Strength 8 (+1), Vitality 8 (+1), Wits 8 (+1)

REACTIONS: Stamina +4, Swiftiness +2, Willpower +2, Wisdom +2

DEFENCE: 10

ORDERS: Warrior

ORDER ABILITIES: Evasion

ADVANCEMENTS: 1

SKILLS: Armed Combat: [varies] +4, Climb +2, Craft: [varies] +1, Healing +1, Inspire +3, Intimidate +3, Jump +2, Language: Dunlendish +6, Language: Westron +4, Lore/Realm: Dunland +5, Observe +3, Ranged Combat: [varies] +2, Ride +2, Run +3, Siegecraft +3, Survival +2, Unarmed Combat: [varies] +2

EDGES: Command, Rank

HEALTH: 9

COURAGE: 2

ACT III: THE WIGHT'S DOMAIN

In this section the heroes venture into a burial mound excavated by the Dunlending Hunters and confront the cursed Wight of a long-dead king. The characters are not able to spot the mound until they cross the Brandywine and go past the first excavated hill. The burial mound sits in the open a thousand yards from the lakeshore, overgrown with tall grass and bearing no ruined construction—though recent excavation into the western facing can be seen.

BANDIT CAMPSITE

A hundred yards north of the mound the Hunters established their base camp amidst a small copse of trees. They have plenty of food and are not weary, but they are all at least Dazed from wounds. They are also leaderless. Some hours earlier, the Hunters broke into the burial mound. When attacked by the Wight, most fled back to camp. Their chieftain—named Unnell—refused to leave the plunder and is now trapped inside. The surviving bandits are hotly debating (in Dunlendish) whether to flee to Dunland or wait for their chief to escape the mound. When the heroes are discovered the frightened bandits prefer talk to combat. Using intimidation or diplomacy, the heroes can convince the bandits to swear they will quit the area forever. If the heroes announce they are going into the mound, the bandits share their supplies: they have plenty of food, wine, shovels, picks, and rope. They will not go back inside under any circumstances, however, and warn of the evil spirit that guards it.

ROYAL BURIAL MOUND

There is a hole dug in the middle of the mound's western facing, leading into the dark depths. (The characters need to carry their own light.) It connects to a circular tunnel, two yards tall and wide, which runs around the interior circumference of the hill. Four secondary tunnels aligned north, south, east, and west lead into an interior chamber eight yards in diameter and three yards high in the hill's centre. All secondary tunnels save the eastern contain a covered pit trap. The heroes can notice the traps with Search tests (TN 5) or Observe (Spot) tests (TN 10), both at a -5 test penalty if in total darkness or -3 if in torchlight. Each pit runs the width of its tunnel and is three yards across.

TRAPPED BANDITS

The chieftain Unnell and two of his Hunters were driven into the northern pit by the Wight. While the bandits were shrewd enough to approach the burial chamber through the untrapped eastern tunnel, their looting roused the guardian Wight. Most bandits fled in terror, but Unnell had already recovered the royal longsword *Foréstel* (see below) and several valuable pottery jars. Unwilling to abandon the plunder, he fled north and fell down the pit. The pottery jars were smashed to pieces, but the longsword is undamaged and still in Unnell's possession. Unnell is Injured and Winded, one of his men is Incapacitated and Spent, and his second man is dead. Though he has no hope of getting out of the pit without help, Unnell is corrupted by desire for the sword and can be convinced to give it up only if beaten in an opposed Willpower test.

Foréstel ('Hope of the North' in Sindarin) is a legendary longsword forged in TA 861 for the ailing King Eärendur, last monarch of unified Arnor. His sons were quarrelling over succession and the sword was crafted for the king to give to his preferred heir, but Eärendur died suddenly and the rival heirs partitioned Arnor into three separate states. The blade bears runes that spell out in Sindarin, '*Foréstel* made by Cúrudil for the King of Arnor, not to sunder but to unite.' The weapon provides a +1 bonus to Armed Combat tests, +1 bonus to damage against evil foes, +1 bonus to Inspire (Majesty) tests, and counts as an enchanted weapon against supernatural foes.

GUARDIAN WIGHT

When King Eärendur died in 861 his body was hastily sealed up in this mound. A few valuable pottery jars were placed in his burial chamber as tribute and *Foréstel* was laid across the top of his crypt. When Angmar arose, an evil spirit penetrated the mound and transformed the king's corpse into an evil Wight. Ever since it has wandered the mound, floating freely over the pits. The Wight is especially bound to the royal sword and will hunt anyone who tries to take it.

The Wight hides behind its crypt when the heroes arrive. If they try to rescue the Dunlendings from the pit or pull up *Foréstel*, the Wight immediately attacks, trying to take them by surprise. The Wight uses its Terror and natural strength to force the interlopers into the pits. It fights unceasingly, and only if struck down by enchanted weapons or fire or lured out into the sunlight (while pursuing the royal sword, for example) can it be permanently destroyed.

GUARDIAN WIGHT

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 10 (+2), Nimbleness 10 (+2), Perception 8 (+1), Strength 10 (+2), Vitality 10 (+2), Wits 6 (0)

REACTIONS: Stamina +4, Swiftmess +4, Willpower +3, Wisdom +3

DEFENCE: 12

MOVEMENT RATE: 6

SKILLS: Armed Combat: Blades (Longsword) +8, Armed Combat: Natural Weapons (Claws) +6, Intimidate (Fear) +4, Observe (Spot) +5, Stealth (Hide) +8

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Icy Touch (see page 14 of *Fell Beasts and Wondrous Magic*), Natural Weapon (claws, 1d6+1), Terror, Undead Stamina (see page 14 of *Fell Beasts and Wondrous Magic*), Unholy Armour (10 damage absorbed vs. normal weaponry, 5 damage absorbed vs. fire, 0 damage absorbed vs. enchanted weapons), Vulnerability (sunlight, 2d6 per round)

SIZE: Medium

HEALTH: 12

COURAGE: 3

BACK AGAIN

Pelegond is waiting for the heroes back in Archet. He takes the valuable medallion and necklace to store at Rivendell. At the Narrator's discretion he may also reclaim *Foréstel* and the Westernesse arrows, or he may permit the heroes to keep them for now. ('Hold them in your keeping until the return of the king, for the day will soon come when the North needs hope once again.') He lets the heroes keep mundane weapons and armour brought back, whether taken from the bandits or recovered from buried caches, as their reward.

EXPERIENCE

For the purposes of awarding experience points, the primary objectives of this adventure are compelling the Dunlendings to leave Annúminas and putting to rest the Wight of Eärendur. Secondary objectives include overcoming the sinister wolves, slaying the pack leader, defeating the underdeep serpent, bringing the jewelled medallion to Pelegond, bringing the sapphire necklace to Pelegond, and recovering *Foréstel* and offering it to Pelegond. Miscellaneous scene objectives are reaching Lake Evendim without going hungry, finding a ford across the Brandywine River, giving the dead proper burials, and saving Unnell and his men.