



The Road Less Travelled

A low level MERP adventure

By Andy Warner

The Road Less Travelled is an adventure for low level characters.

It is set at the end of the spring of TA 1985, near the hedge-town of Bree. It is a follow-up to the adventure 'Snow and Subterfuge'

Introduction

The year is 1985, in the Third Age of the Sun. It is late spring in the North of Middle Earth. Although some snows still lie on the high fells, or in gullies the midday sun does not yet hold in its full glare the weather is warming. Lambing season soon, on the wide, open Downs around Bree, and the time for trade and travel too. It is the first wet night of the season. A cold rain is falling from grey skies as the bedraggled travelling party (the players) arrive just before the great gates are closed to shut out the wilds of the Barrow Downs. Too thick, the cloud, to allow glimpse of the moon just passing its fullest. A mere month ago She looked down on a landscape cloaked in white, glittering with beauty in Her eerie silver light. Now she would shine on a damp and dismal landscape if the leaden skies allowed her. The rivers are high with snowmelt and the latest rains, but they are no longer in flood as they were recently.

In the ancient hedge-town of Bree, spirits are high and tongues wag of good times to come. Life has been hard since the

Great War, only 10 years ago, where the Dark Host of Angmar threw itself mercilessly on the quiet towns of Arthedain, beaten back only by the joined might of men and elves, and then only just. It will take these shattered lands many more years to mend fully, but mend they will, and the folk of Arthedain know it.

'Care, there boys! have a care lest you spook the mule. I don't want to be chasin after her in this mizzle, now do I? Load em up boys, and keep that tarp tucked in tight against this weather, be wishin' for the cold I will, if this drench keeps up. Care I says! Have a care boys, these goods ain't no use broke now, are they?'

Outside the Kings Arms, work is carrying on into the damp early evening. Inside, a warm fire greets tired workers and the few travellers reaching Bree so early in the year. Mead a plenty, good food and a friendly atmosphere serve to lighten many a winter-weary heart. And with the traders active, it looks like work may be available too! But first things first, a bath, dry cloths, a bite to eat and a few beers with the last few coppers in the coin bag.

And so the evening becomes night and night gives rise to a dismal, wet and grey dawn which lingers into an equally miserable morning. Nothing to do but sit around the Kings Arms and rest a bit. Maybe play a game of dice and try to win lunch, or catch the eye of the serving girl with a rye smile and promise of company!

But by lunchtime, tongues are wagging and spilling forth gossip. Word is that a caravan has been attacked! And soon, the Inn is packed tight with townsfolk, and standing, stage centre, an excitable hobbit is holding open court atop a table, beer froth round his muddy feet....





'Its a wonder any of us got away with our lives! Poor Foren, I didn't see him leave, he's probably going to be held for ransom or something... The guard boys put up a good fight, but, but, the bastards were too good for them! Calwine ran, yes its true, but his runnin' meant I got away with Grubby too, and what good would three more dead be anyway? In Eru's name, I hope Calwine made it to safety, but what with him being off colour and all, I don't hold much hope for him. I've had enough of this! Last year I was lucky, and I didn't say or do anything when others got robbed. I just buried my head and mumbled into my beer. Well, now it's me on the sharp end and I changed my views. Now, I can accept if no-one wants to help, Yvanna knows I wouldn't, but lets put an end to this, lets string em up, lets make the North Road safe again! Whadaya say?'

Jerramiah Fallowhide stands wide eyed and expectant, a half cocked grin making him seem just ever so slightly mad.

'Well.....?' he says, hands held out to his silent audience. *'Damn you all then, damn you to the wargs and the barrows, I'll smoke them buggers out myself.'*

Just then a gruff voice from the back corner of the inn silences him.

'Well, well, little Hobbit. You have a heroes heart, there. How about I offer you a heroes hammer as well?' A burly dwarf rises and makes his way forward. *'Dagaard Drachoschlar is my name, and I accept your call. So long as you are buying the beer, I will act as your strong arm!'* With that, he places his dwarven hammer on the table, turns and scans the room. *'Anyone else care to join us, then? Beers on the hobbit'.....*

Well, thats the cue for the party members to jump into the plot! Rescue a trader, rid the town of brigands, become heroes **and get free beer!**

Adventure overview and goals

The players should set out to investigate the trader ambush, deal with the brigands, clean out the tower and restore the property of the traders. They should aim to make the North Road safe again. Simple! However, they should gradually become aware that this is not a simple bandit group, and there are sinister goings on behind the scenes. As they gain more knowledge, they will be drawn into an expanding campaign that will lead them into peril, adventure and the ultimate struggle for Arthedain itself.

The Plot

Bree is at a great crossroads of the artery routes of Arthedain. The Greenway runs from Gondor in the far south to Fornost Erain, the new capital in the North, and the Great East Road is the route from the Grey Havens and the western Shire lands to the vast unmapped wilds across the Misty Mountains, to the East. It is a place of tales and rumors from across the land, some of which may even be true! As such, it is a great place for spies to linger a while, and that is exactly why Hoegwar Hoegs Son, the foremost spy of the North is here (see [Snow and Subterfuge](#) for some background to Hoegwar)!

Hoegwar has another reason for his stay in Bree, too. He has visited some old 'friends' in the town of Sarik, a few days north of Bree. There he passed on information, and new orders from his overseer, the foul Grouth of Pen Morva. Hoegwar's friends are small time villains and robbers who prey on lightly guarded caravans plying their trade up and down the Greenway and North Road. With the decimation of the Arthedain army in the war, traders find it hard to find good trained men to act as guards, and these days, each trip is a gamble.





However, this spring the robberies are not going to be random. Several traders have been persuaded to ship highly sensitive cargos up to Fornost Erain, *persuaded* mainly by the 'promise' of large amounts of coin. These are the traders that will be specially targeted by the bandit group. Late last year, a guard officer from Fornost contacted a few traders discretely, and asked if they could provide a shipment or two of arms and armour. Mainly spear heads, pike heads and breastplates, but with a few swords too, and some short bows with many cases of arrows, fletched red and white. All for the armoury at Fornost, it seemed, but still the contact told the traders to be covert and careful, afterall, who knows what spies stalk the towns of Arthedain, and none want the Dark Powers to know Arthedain is on the rise, eh? The traders were told that they would be well rewarded for such goods, but alas no money was available up front to purchase the cargo. The request was legitimate, to a degree. The powers in Fornost have requested arms, but the money they paid for them has been siphoned off by the Quartermaster of the Lower Bailey at Fornost, a man named Tasterlan. A black hearted villain bent to the will of the Witch King of Angmar, many years ago. Surviving the War, he worked his way up (though he has not managed to get that far, it seems!) to a position of power, at least in some quarters. Working with Hoegwar and the brigands of the North Road, he is stockpiling a cache of arms to be used against Arthedain 'when the time comes.'

A few weeks ago the first traders left for the north carrying winter trade goods. They got through to their destinations without incident, and all looked good. Last week, a couple of traders set out, including Jerramiah Fallowhide with his stash of weaponry, but they were attacked. Luckily, they escaped on foot and have just made it back to Bree, all their goods gone and thier livelihoods ruined - or so it seems.

A little more background information

The Bandits of the North Road are a loose band of about 25 members, though they are lead by a hard core of just four people:

Maugreth, a surly gruff outspoken northman from Sarik - the self appointed leader

Ferien of Howester, the spurned illegitimate daughter of a petty noble (who died in the Battle of Fornost) who hates everything Arthedain represents and uses her magical herb lore to powerful effect if needed.

Vallen Gumb, an intelligent but downtrodden Fornost northman with a head for figures who carries out most of the organisation and quartermastering

Gustaven Arenrim, their true leader, is a Dunedain of questionable lineage. He is happy to let Maugreth strut as leader while it suits him. He is a skilled orator with a subtle way about him, controlling weaker men without them suspecting a thing. He is also 'unkillable' (but more on that later).

They hole up in an old watch tower in the hills north east of Bree (similar to the watch towers of the Weather Hills) using its isolation to full advantage. Of the remaining 20 or so other members, the majority are just scoundrels that live in Bree, Sarik or Fornost. Only a handful know the location of the old tower. Importantly for this scenario, two of the bandits who do know its location have infiltrated the trade circle, and are manipulating it from within (simply timing of trips, number of guards, type of cargo etc). They are 'Grubby' Durnan, originally from the slums of Tharbad, and Calwine, a thug out of Sarik. 'Grubby' is posing as a coal merchant, and has taken a wagon of coal north in the last trade trip, along





with several other traders. Calwine has taken a job as a guard on the trade route.

Remember the Dwarf, *Dagaard Drachoschlar*? Well, Dagaard is not usually one to pledge himself to the nearest un-hinged hobbit, even for free beer. But Dagaard is intrigued. As a refugee from the mines of Khazad Dum, he spent several years in the dereliction that calls itself the City of Tharbad. It was in that decrepit place he came across a few unsavory individuals, and one of them is sat right across the room, wet to the skin, shivering over a cup of hot wine and looking very shaky. 'Grubby' Durnan, ex coal miner, ex smithy, ex con! Last time Dagaard saw 'Grubby', he was on the run from a clan of rather irate dwarves after trying to dupe them into buying a load of poor quality coal for an inflated price. And further more, rumor had it that Grubby Durnan knew a certain bad apple named Hogwash (Hoegwar) who had been responsible for the death of Dagaards close friend. And you know what they say about dwarves: Nobody ever did a dwarf a favor, or a wrong, without being repaid in full. And Dagaard is eager to repay the debt he owes Hogwash..... (see [Snow and Subterfuge](#))

Key Points

Three weeks ago: The first traders left Bree. Three carts laden with wooden goods such as hurdles, baskets, small furnishings etc, made from fine hazel over the winter months and a cart full of best quality shire charcoal were guarded by five local militia men. They had no problems at all and are now in Fornost, after selling goods en-route at Sarik and How-ester.

Last week: Three merchants (Grubby with coal, Foren with cured hides and Jerramiah Fallowhide with 'illicit weapons') went northwards with 4 guards (including Calwine). A further 4 guards were taken ill the night before departure, and

more guards could not be found in time. The three decided to risk a trip lightly guarded. In fact, Calwine had poisoned the guards (and a few other people) with a concoction made by Ferien for that purpose. He also gave himself a dose as a cover, though a mild one. Everyone believes the broth was off in the Inn, though the innkeeper vigorously denies the charge which has lowered patronage since.

2 days ago: The caravan was ambushed at dusk as camp was being made. The attack was swift and well executed. The two real guards and one of the traders were killed, and the carts taken away along a track to the west. The actual events at dusk were as follows:

- Grubby suggested a good camping spot, seemingly easy to keep watch from. It was where the ambush would take place.
- Camp was being set up by the three traders while the guards kept watch.
- Grubby was anticipating the attack, and took the opportunity to kill Foren with a swift knife to the neck when he was sure no-one would notice.
- Grubby then signaled to the bandits with a special bird call. Jerry Fallowhide had heard the strange call, and was a little wary.
- One of the mules started to get a bit jumpy and a guard went to check it was OK.
- The bandits attacked with arrows, wounding two of the guards, then rushed in from their hidden places. Jerry took cover under the wagon tarp among the hides and kept very still.
- The guards put up a good fight (Calwine faking it as he was fighting his bandit buddies), but one





was killed and Gillian was knocked senseless, leaving Calwine to fight on. Grubby was about to kill the reeling Gillian when Jerry grabbed at him and pulled him to 'safety'. Just then Calwine left the fray and ran off, chased by a bandit. Scared out of his wits, Jerry took the opportunity to run, and Grubby realised he had to do the same. He intended to catch and kill Jerry but never had the chance as Gillian recovered enough of his senses to run off too.

- Jerry, Grubby and Gillian travelled back to Bree as fast as they could.
- Later that day, Calwine joined his fellows at the Tower.

This morning: Grubby, Jerry and Gillian the guard arrive back at Bree in the mid morning, cold, wet and tired. They tell of their terrible ordeal and lucky escape from the brigands. The gossip centres around the goods they were carrying. Coal and hides were not normally the subject of robbery. Just what was it that young Fallowhide was carrying again? What? No-one knows? And Jerry is not sayin' nothin'.

Lunch time: Jerramiah Fallowhide has roused the traders, and is holding open court atop a table at the Kings Arms (see the [hobbit speech](#) in the introduction for details)

Cue the Party: We are up to date, and hopefully the party will take the 'job', after all, the beers free!

The Options

There are several options available. The hobbit will happily accept players ideas and thoughts, after all he has just escaped an attempt on his life. Grubby is less willing to join in, he says he wants to drink the memories away, and pretends to drink himself into oblivion. The most

obvious option is to investigate the ambush site and see what has gone on, and try to track the bandits. If players investigate the guards, the traders or people in Bree, they run the risk of becoming alienated - Bree is a close knit place and no-one wants to believe the raids were organised from within. They might find out that at least one of last years raids was on a trader carrying weapons bound for the Fornost garrison. He died in the attack. Calwine was one of the guards back then, too.

The Journey to the ambush point

It doesn't take too long to reach the ambush site, but the journey gives the players an opportunity to talk with any NPC's that are along for the ride. They might get Jerry to reveal his cargo, and Dagaard to tell of his previous dealings with Grubby. Grubby will not accompany them, he acts scared (quite well too!). A heavy smell of forge-smoke hangs in the air as the party near the site, and the odd wisp of smoke may be visible from the burned wagons - remember one was carrying coal.

The ambush site

Good scouting of the site provides leads to the tower hideout, and possible evidence against Grubby. The body of Foren lies here, pecked by crows and stiff with the death-rigor. His slashed throat is the obvious cause of death. Both guards have been left where they fell. Little can be gleaned from their bodies. No sign of Calwine can be found, though he can be tracked a little way. Tracks become confused and it would take an extremely difficult perception/tracking roll to work out exactly what happened. He actually fled into the hills and made his way to the tower by a long and difficult to track route. He feared someone might come





looking. Told you he is not stupid. Two of the carts have been burned along with their goods, but Jerrys cart and goods, plus all three of the mules have been taken away. The party should be asking themselves why valuable cargo has been burned along with valuable carts too. The tracks are easy to follow initially, but soon become hard to make out. Good tracking will lead to the old tower. The bandits will be making patrols now and then, but they will not attack a heavily armed party head on. Stalk, hide, cut and run, that's their game.

The Watch Tower

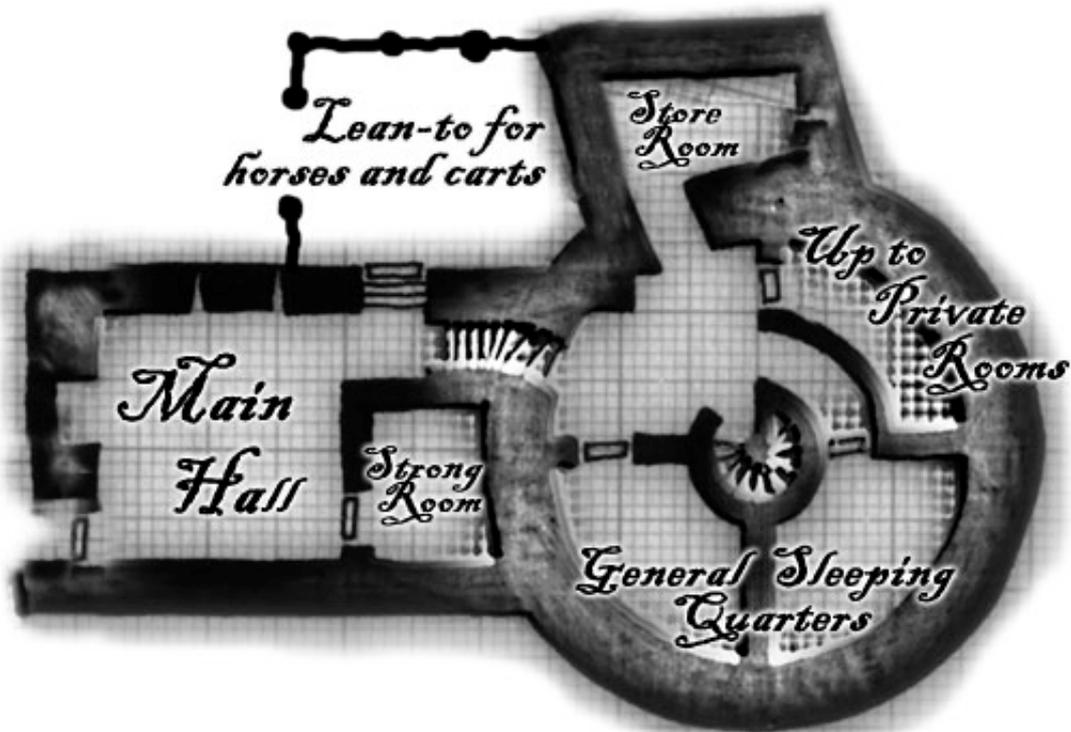
The main action takes place in and around the old tower. It is located on a small wooded hill near a stream. It is lightly guarded, but difficult to attack head on, so subtlety is the name of the game. It should lead to the discovery of papers showing some plot more important than simple brigandry. Hopefully it will draw the characters into the dark weavings of a sinister plot against Arthedain..... Firien, Gustavan and Maugreth are here, along with 5 of the bandits (treat them as low level rogues and warriors) and four orc scouts. Vallen Gumb might arrive later (see below). The orc scouts occasionally work with the bandits and are resting at the tower on their way back to the ruins of Annuminas, their main base. They have been scouting around the North Road, but are not directly involved in this adventure. They serve to add firepower to the 'bad guys' if needed, and orcs make good cannon fodder, eh?! Remember, the orcs will be sleeping during the day, and be most active at night, making it difficult for the players to infiltrate the hold under cover of darkness. Oh, thats mean! The keep has two intact levels and some out-house ruins. There are two main doors and several arrow slits. Any competent climber should be able to scale the walls and gain easy access through the roof or top level



windows. The Main Hall is where meals are cooked and most people will be found during the day. Visiting gang members usually sleep here too. The orcs are holed up in one of the ground floor 'bedrooms'. The other bedroom is where Maugreth lives. It has a sturdy locked door, with a simple spring trap that will do a fair bit of damage but is easy to disarm. The horses and the cart (still loaded with weapons though the orcs have rumaged through and taken a few of them) are in the lean-to. The strong room has a locked sturdy



The Watch Tower



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door, but no traps. It contains some of the important finds: A letter with a crimson crescent moon seal on it, in code. If the code is broken, the letter can be translated. It tells the brigands to raid certain traders caravans, including Jeremiah's. A bag of coins bearing the symbol of the iron crown of Angmar (worth 10 or so gold) can be found with some maps of the main trade routes. A book containing names of lords, leaders and people in powerful positions throughout Arthedain along with scribbled notes about each person highlighting their faults, weaknesses, how they might be bribed etc. One of these is the Lord of Sarik ([Sarik](#) is the location of the next adventure - the Forest of Fear), who it seems is a good and trustworthy man free of blight or blemish. He appears to be

singled out for an assassination attempt, though that's not exactly clear from the notes. Might be a good idea to warn him though.... The storeroom contains enough provisions for a couple of weeks, and there is a large water butt in the Main Hall, so 'siege' won't work! Only the tower has an upper level. There are three rooms, taken by the main characters as bedrooms.

The Main Characters

Hoegwar Hoegs Son aka Hogwash, currently travelling under the name Habbrin. 10+ level spy/rogue/assassin type character - the best spy that Angmar has. He is cunning, ruthless, a master of disguise. He is the worst nightmare a party



could have if they come to his attention. He is of Northman/Dunlending stock. He has some magical ability (make him powerful in your campaign setting, select spell lists based around subterfuge, confusion, treachery etc) and uses magical items such as a cloak that helps him to hide and boots that allow him to travel far at a good pace without tiring. he has a magical aura about him that makes him inconsequential to people - no one remembers him, even if he has spoken to them. He is a long term NPC antagonist - dont introduce him to the party yet, have fun with this one, but remember he has no reason to treat the party as arch enemies.... yet.... Hoegwar doesn't remember Dagaard as the dwarf he nearly killed in Tharbad, but if pressed, he will put two-and-two together. He might decide that one less dwarf is a good thing....

Gustavan Arenrim, aka the Sly Fox. 5th level bard. As the Sly Fox, he is a master of manipulation and deception. His commanding demeanor can hold a group together in the face of adversity, but he prefers to work from the sidelines, allowing others to bask in the glory of presumed leadership. A handsome Dunedain with a boyish grin and a shock of blond hair, the transfixing eyes of Gustavan hold a dark secret. He is virtually immortal. He wears his soul close to his heart, quite literally, hung around his neck on a chain of mithril. A small gemstone packed into a wool lined suede pouch glows and pulsates with his every heartbeat, and with every pulse of its ancient fire, it keeps him alive. Through fire and flood, sword wound, shattering fall, poisoning or throttling, his soul is held apart from this middle world, safe and sound. His wrent body recovers at fantastic rates, even from hot fires and terrible wounds. Gustavan does not flaunt this ability. In fact, he is careful not to get himself injured, and none are aware of his secret soul gem. He does not really know how powerful it is himself, but realises it is not a thing to be taken lightly. There are ru-

mors of his invulnerability and his uncanny ability to survive where others could not, but he plays these myths down with ease. An orator and diplomat, he can manipulate situations to his advantage. He may have magical abilities too, and his spell lists should be those concerned with diplomacy, oratory, subterfuge, misdirection leadership etc. He does not have any specific magical items save the gem, but may have a well made sword and some odd interesting items suitable for your campaign. Don't aim to use Gustavan up too soon, he is supposed to feature heavily in the forthcoming Forest of Fear scenario.

'Grubby' Durnan, 2nd or 3rd level fighter. A northman from Tharbad. Once a miner, then a smith, he was never any good at either. Grubby was always dirty, and the name, like the grime from the coal pits, stuck to him. Not intelligent enough to realise that a name like Grubby makes him stand out, he doesn't hide his identity. Quite imposing, and not a bad hand with the dagger and hammer, he will happily stand up to any antagonists. He is trying to ingratiate himself with the bandit leaders, and so far has been quite good at his job of infiltrating the traders circle. He even realised he was more useful as an escaped victim of robbery, and he does look for all the world like he has lost everything to this raid. Well done Grubby, you surprise us all. If questioned briefly, his story stands up, but if cross examined or interviewed extensively, he will get confused, let things slip, and get angry. Grubby has a very well made dagger, based on a wide bladed Dunlending pattern (+5 or +10 to suit your campaign). It tends to leave a wide gash of a wound which, although not unique to the weapon, could be a telling sign to any competent healer examining the wound it inflicts. Forens fatal wound could be traced to this weapon upon an extremely difficult roll (or a difficult roll if the knife has been seen to wound someone else). Grubby does not recognise Dagaard, but





if reminded, he pleads that he was poor, hungry and down on his luck, that he is really sorry, and is trying to live a good hard working life now. If the party inquire about his coal wagon, they will find out he came from the Shire. Further inquiries may reveal there is a hobbit mining family just inside the Shire, and a visit would confirm that a wagon was stolen in the winter. However, if the party go off to the shire, then the trail will be cold when they get back. Use that kind of side event if a player cannot get to the game for a few sessions. You could have the character go and do some digging while the others get on with the task in hand. Grubby does know Hogwash, but would not be able to identify him, they were never friends.

Maugreth Warrener, 4th level rogue and ex game keeper. A surly gruff outspoken northman from Sarik - and the self appointed leader of the brigands. He postures a lot, tells people what to do and doesn't do a lot himself. He is handy with a bow and short sword, and is skilled in woodland craft, skulking around, tracking and the like. Known as Rabbit behind his back. The name might be used by one of the brigands in Bree or Sarik and overheard by a player.... He would like to take Ferien as his wife, but he is not having much luck. He would defend her to prove himself, but to be honest, she does not care for him in the slightest. He has had word from Tastelan in Fornost that he is to target specific traders. He doesn't know Tasterlan himself, and gets his 'orders' by coded letter. He has to get Vallen to help him with the reading, its not really his strong point. He looks really hard, and can put the fear of Morgoth into people with his stare!

Ferien of Howester is the spurned illegitimate daughter of a petty noble (who died in the Battle of Fornost) who hates everything Arthedain represents. She has been swayed by the powers of Angmar and uses her magical herb lore to powerful effect if needed in 'The Fight'. She

knows of Tasterlan, and of Hoegwar, but has not met either of them. If caught and pressed, she will plead innocence and say she was forced to act by magics and threat. She is twisted and evil, and can manipulate people, words, whatever. She will not give anything away unless its in her best interest.

Vallen Gumb, scholar, 1st level thief type. An intelligent but downtrodden Fornost northman with a head for figures who carries out most of the organisation and quartermastering for the Bandits. He will arrive at the tower a few days after the ambush to sort out the 'paperwork'. Depending on how the players get on, he may already be there, or he may arrive later. If he stumbles upon them, he will attempt to escape without being seen, and failing that he will come up with some plausible excuse for being there. Be creative, but be sensible! Vallen knows a lot about the Angmar Plan..... He also knows to spill the beans would be death, and it wouldn't be quick. He has been careful not to incriminate himself.

Calwine of Sarik, 2nd or 3rd level thief. One of the bandits, he is a northman from Sarik. Calwine has also been a trader on and off for a few years, and was a good choice to place in Bree. He is not well known here, but some people will vouch for him. He took the job as guard because 'I need the coin, what with me gamblin' debts'. Anyone inquiring of his gambling habit in Sarik might find out that he plays the dice in the pubs and inns of the rough area, and that he wins more than he loses. He is a competent thief, and has enough sense to make sure he is not incriminated in anything that takes place here. He even made himself ill when the guards became sick. The lure of good coin is all that Calwine needs to become a friend. In fact, his one failing is his disloyalty. It would not take much to make him turn kings evidence against his former allies, and since he has no ties, no family and no close friends, threats except





against himself are inconsequential. He is however a little superstitious and he knows the tales told about Gustavan, and he does fear him. He also has a healthy respect for Firien and her magics. If things get too hot, Calwine will fade into the background, leave Bree and return to Sarik where he will go into hiding if required (see the forthcoming Forset of Fear adventure for details....). Calwine has a short sword with an odd design scratched into the blade near the hilt. It is a poor representation of a spider, scratched onto the blade by Calwine himself in an idle moment. Its meaning will become clear in the Forest of Fear adventure (bet you can't wait, eh?).

Dagaard Drachoschlar, 2nd or 3rd level warrior. A stout dwarf with a good heart. Calling himself Dragonslayer, he does fall victim to bouts of stupidity in combat that some people call heroism. One day it will get him killed. He also partakes a little too freely of ale, mead, wine... well alcohol in any guise really. Ever since the loss of a close friend and treasure-seeking ally at the hand of Hogwash the Dunlending, he has fallen on hard times. Unable to find the man responsible, angry at loosing a treasure map (see map in [Snow and Subterfuge](#)) and feeling totally inadequate as a dwarf, he has started to travel the inns of the North. Seeing Grubby has brought him back to his senses and he will now start his search for Hogwash in earnest. He would not recognise Hogwash due to the strange dweomer, though he is adamant he would know him in an instant. Dagaard will try to catch Grubby Durnan out, he knows he is 'up to no good' but has nothing more than a gut feeling to go by. He will not openly accuse Grubby of anything, and will not ask him directly about Hogwash. Remember, seeing Grubby has pricked Dagaards memory, its not like he has a quest to avenge his friends death..... yet. Don't play Dagaard as stupid, depressed or suicidal. he is a stout warrior with good battle sense. He will stop to don his helm, or pick up a

shield before battle, but he may get a bit carried away. He will ignore some critical wound results in this state (at your discretion, such as stun results). He favours hammer (+5) and shield and wears chain mail (+5). His favourite saying, when things go wrong is: *'Tss, give me 5 good dwarves.....'*

Jerramiah Fallowhide, 2nd or 3rd level rogue. A hobbit entrepreneur from the Shire, Jerry is always on the lookout for a good deal. He isn't very good at finding them though, and has squandered his meager inheritance over the past couple of years. He has little to loose now, so a foray against the bandits is a good idea. Yes, he is a little unhinged. Last year, he and a few other traders were approached by a man from Fornost, in garrison colours, and persuaded to ship weapons north. The man cannot be traced. It was, of course, Hoegwar.

The Bigger Picture:

The power of the Witch King may have waned, but the threat from Angmar is not dead. The Lord Arkish of Eldanar, a commander in the Dark Army, has seen a power vacuum in the North, and intends to exploit it. He is plotting to take the weakened Arthedain and is raising an army of Hillmen and Orcs (no mean feat since the decimation of the orcs in the War). He has several petty lords in his pay (including Lord Grouth of Pen Morva), employs spies and scouts throughout the area (including Hoegwar Hoegson), and is currently arming the tribal rabble in Rhuador and the Troll Shaws. He is getting the weaponry from our friendly traders, as the armouries of Angmar are much depleted and its output is of poor quality now. The plan is complex and will take a few years to come to fruition. Arkish is of the line of Dunedain from Numenor, a descendant of the original Fallen Edain, a Black Numenorean. He rules under the banner of the Crimson





Moon. Legend tells of the Crimson Moon at the Battle of Fornost. Of all the forces of darkness on the field that day, those under that banner did the most hurt to the Men and Elves. A man rode at its head weilding a black sword in one hand and a pale mace in the other. He was armoured in plate that shone red with the blood of his enemies and his eyes blazed with a fire of hatred and evil. Dark will be the day the Crimson Moon banner flies again.....

