

# MERP CON V

(TOLKIENMOOT 2009)

CAMPAIGN:

“LET SLEEPING DRAGONS LIE”

ADVENTURE II

“VIPERS NEST”

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# SUMMARY

## Adventure 2

**Working Title:** "Vipers Nest"

**Session:** 2 – Saturday Morning/Afternoon, 10:00 am to 3:00 pm.

**Time Period:** T.A. 2932 Late-Fall (Monday/Day ???)

**Environment:** Village, Outdoors, Hills.

**Location(s):** Ranges south from Men-i-Naugrim to area just West of Dol Guldur

**Challenge level:** 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> level (equivalent).

### Overview:

(Hopefully) The party has thwarted an initial effort to awaken an ancient dragon of the North. However, there is still the question of WHO was making this effort, and just because the party stopped one attempt, there is every indication that other attempts are/will be made (as they will be informed by Radagast). Better to find the source of the attempts and stop it there.

## BACKGROUND

At least some of the PC's (if not all) were previously involved in a situation where a small hamlet was attacked by a group of orcs. The PC's then found out there were more orcs in the area, and that they were heading north to awaken some kind of ancient evil to wreak havoc in the area. The PC's tracked down the orcs and dispatched them. The PC's have now returned, but with a few questions lingering. Will other groups be sent as replacements for those that the PC's slew?

Who is "the Boss" that sent them?

What is it they were being sent to unleash?

Who is the target of this trouble?

Why go to so much trouble and resources?

## INTRODUCTION

There are two introduction options. Option 1 assumes that at least one of the Player's Characters was involved in adventure #1 "Rude Awakenings". Option 2 assumes that none of the Players participated in adventure #1, and need to be brought into the adventure by some other means. Radagast is still the key, just some assumptions and explanations will have to be added instead.

### ***Introduction Option 1***

This introduction option assumes that at least one of the PC's participated in Adventure I "Rude Awakenings". If all of the PC's are new, then begin with Introduction Option 2.

The PC's have either returned to the Homestead from Adventure 1 where this all began, or are at an Inn elsewhere, when Radagast the Brown walks in, and makes a friendly but direct beeline to the PC's. He greets them very briskly saying there is something very urgent he needs to speak with them about in private.

When they adjourn to a more private locale, Radagast now merrily, and rather absentmindedly, begins to ramble about how pleasant the brisk evening air is, and the weather, and how it's affecting the robins this year, and that it was a poor year for

the daffodils, etc...

He will continue to ramble on if the PC's don't help get him on track as to why he has come to them, and what is so urgent. Though these rambles seem completely irrelevant, there are some subtle clues buried in some of them, but they are not required for the success of the game, just a little foreshadowing. Eventually, if the PC's don't take any action to bring him back on track, he will finally start to ask himself, "Why am I here? Oh yes, what was it I wanted to speak with you about?", then "Ah yes, 'The Boss'."

## Players Introduction

<To be read to the players>

*Thanks to the successful efforts of members of your party, a diabolical plot to unleash an unknown terror upon the Northlands, concocted by someone known as "The Boss", was recently foiled.*

*A week has now passed since that adventure concluded. You have returned to the Inn to recuperate before heading on your (in some cases separate) ways. The few villagers are grateful for your stay, and more than happy to provide those that were involved with free room and board. They have even been attempting to entice you to stay through the long winter in the hopes that you will give added protection against the inevitable Orc and wolf raids.*

## Opening Scene

<To be read to players>

*You have all finished your meals, and are sipping on warm drinks on this nippy late fall evening, before retiring for the night. The fire is crackling merrily in the hearth. Pleasant odors from the hearth, the kitchen, and your drinks waft through the room in a wonderful panoply of woodsmoke spices, and food.*

*You are preparing to say your farewells for the evening when you hear someone walking up the stairs to the Inn. All those within the Inn become silent as an old man in dusty brown robes walks briskly through the door.*

*The Innkeeper approaches the old man with a big smile and arms open in greeting, but you hear the Innkeeper muttering under his breath as he passes, "what is Radagast doin' here at this late hour? Nuttin' but trouble comin' I'll bet".*

*The old man looks through the room, and quickly spots your group. Completely ignoring the innkeeper, he steps past him and up to your table. The old man states hurriedly, "I must speak with all of you about a matter of utmost urgency, where can we go that is private?"*

< The old man will silently accept suggestions from the players to go elsewhere to speak in private >.

<To be read to the players>

*As you gather in a more secluded area, you notice this old man's face has changed expression from worried and stressed, to bemused and even relaxed.*

*He says "Beautiful brisk evening we are having tonight now isn't it?". He pauses, waiting for an answer,*

*<even if it interrupts someone's response or questioning>,*

*then abruptly continues*

*"of course, this early cold snap won't be good for those birds that didn't get out of their nests yet, and the vipers are stronger this year than ever, what with the hot summer, than I've seen them in a long time. Those serpents are making a bigger nest than I've ever seen in these parts.....".*

*... Another pause*

*<now is a good chance for PC's to jump in, Radagast will stop this time if the PC's interject now >*

*"But what beautiful eggs the robin's laid this year"....*

*... Another pause....*

*"My, but my rhododendrons really seemed to enjoy the extra sun this year, they must be near as tall as my house now, I'll have to do something to trim them back, or I won't be able to find my own place before long.".....*

*... Another pause ... His face gets slightly more serious now,*

*"It's going to be a bitter winter this year," he warns, "but not near as bad as back in 'The Fell Winter' of 2911 and 2912, or... did that happen yet?", he suddenly looks very confused now.*

< READ THE FOLLOWING IF RADAGAST IS EITHER INTERRUPTED, OR ALLOWED TO RUN ON THROUGH ALL THIS >:

*The smiling, bemused, relaxed expression he wore, now quickly transforms to a bewildered, seemingly disoriented look as he states "Why am I here?". He looks at each of you searchingly, looking deeply into your eyes, you feel as though he can see right into, and through, the very essence of your being.*

*< Have each of PC now roll save/RR vs. Will. If they succeed, they can maintain the gaze, if they fail, they break eye contact and have to look away in discomfort from his piercing gaze. >*

*After an uncomfortable silence, the old man states "Oh yes, I wished to speak with you..... what was that about?"*

*Again, another pause, and another round of looks.*

*Then he suddenly exclaims loudly, with a finger shooting into the air "Yes, I remember now, 'The Boss!'".*

*He looks around the group with a satisfied beatific smile.*

*Then his face suddenly falls, and reverts back to the worried, stressed mien that you saw when he first entered the Inn.*

*"First I wanted to thank those of you who helped protect the kind folks living in this small homestead. Its not many people nowadays would step up in times of need, and we are going to have such need for such people....." He trails off with a frown, looking off into space for a moment, then suddenly jolts back.*

*"Thanks to your efforts, those nasties that were heading north have been stopped from doing whatever terrible deed they were going to do. We only have a general idea of their plan, but there is at least the title 'The Boss'". This could lead to many places, but it just so happens there's been a group of vipers building a nest near my home, and the birds were kind enough to let me know that one of them uses that same title for all his henchmen."*

< continue reading to the players >

*"I believe we have found the source of the trouble. Unfortunately, I have some pressing business over at Imladris, and I must get over the pass before the snows close it completely, so I can not take care of this problem myself."*

*"I was hoping you would be so kind as to look into it for me? Someone needs to go to the source and stop this from happening again, assuming of course they haven't already sent someone else already?"*

*He looks around questioningly at the PC's as if they should know the answer to that question, or is it that he's waiting to see if they will accept his request?*

*<Encourage the PC's to head off first thing in the morning. Give them the Player Map #1, with a rough guide to the town. Radagast does not know the name of this place, just approximately where it is from the description the birds gave him. >*

*"Oh, and when you're there, please do dispose of the snakes, they've been eating too many of my birds this year, it upsets the balance. Not that I have anything against them normally, but this is just ridiculous!".*

*Once the group has agreed to go with the utmost haste the following morning, and they have been given the map (he doesn't really have any other information for them at this point), he will suddenly declare, "Well! I must go now. The pass will be snowed shut in just a few days, so no time to delay."*

*He then beams again, smiling, "Have a most wonderful journey, " as he goes around shaking each PC's hand, "Do be safe, take a warm blanket and dry cloak, be kind to the wildlife, and always check your boots in the morning!".*

*He then heads off.*

## ***Background Option II***

Use this background if none of the members of this party were in Adventure I. The situation is the same as Background IIb but how they are informed is slightly different.....

Hopefully this won't be necessary.....

Use Option I as a guideline.....

## GM ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The PC's will follow the rough map to this town. Those that have formed it are a motley band of thieves, cutthroats, Easterlings, and even some Orcs openly walk the streets of this vile place. Most just call it "Town", though the Boss prefers it is called "Port Durgol" since he has rather lofty delusions of grandeur. This place did not exist as any more than a camp and boat launch 10 years ago. But as more groups of unsavory types have slowly gathered in semi-secret at Dol Guldur, they met at this place because it has an area that can be loaded or unloaded by the Anduin from supplies up North, and not far from some roads south and east, but avoids using the main east-west road the Men-i-Naugrim which would draw too much attention. Later a wooden stockade was built, which more recently has been upgraded and reinforced. The "town" surrounding it, is a loose collection of ramshackle buildings, including a high ratio of low-end taverns.

Sauron, currently in disguise as "The Necromancer" in Dol Guldur tolerates this town for now, though in later years he plans to have the camp razed to the ground as he begins to implement stronger military discipline. For now he turns a blind eye to those gathering there, as long as it does not attract too much attention (which the PC's are likely to cause, much to his irritation).

Though Gandalf confirmed in T.A. 2850 that it was Sauron gathering his forces in Dol Guldur, Sauron will not be chased out by the White Council until T.A. 2941 (9 years from the time of this adventure), during the time Bilbo will be traveling with the Dwarves to Lonely Mountain.

## ***"The Boss" - Durgol***

"The Boss", is a particularly ugly fellow. Though claiming to be fully human (when the topic arises), he is nearly as ugly (though not as deformed) as many an Orc. He is a mixture of Easterling, Variag, and Southron blood, but there may be a little Orc thrown in there somewhere along the line. He never really knew his real parents, so who's to say. His real name is Durgol. He used to be called "Durgol the Ugly" in his years down near Umbar, but he wants desperately to be treated with more respect. Even though he is not really the one calling the shots in the grand scheme of things, he is basically allowed to run the town when his superior is away (much of the time), and he is allowed considerable latitude, as long as he keeps the supply chain flowing.

Durgol has no education. Before meeting Mordron, he couldn't even read (though he can read and write well enough for reports and inventory). He has street and combat "smarts" but is otherwise not especially bright. He's happiest when just working as a thug smashing someone's face into goo, and does so on every opportunity he gets. He's grateful for the money and perks of his position, but really hates "not bein' in the action, where the fun is". He is missing several teeth, and those he still has are disgusting. His breath is vile. His hair and beard unkempt (except when he's expecting a visit from one of Dol Guldur's representatives, he then does his best to clean up his hair and clothing (though it's a pretty pitiful attempt)). His clothes are usually dirty, greasy, torn, and often spattered with dried blood from his "ministrations" to underlings and others.

On the one hand, he is supposed to keep supplies from the Anduin and trails flowing to Dol Guldur. Durgol reports to an Uruk-hai captain from Dol Guldur. This captain is tough and disciplined, and makes genuine threats on Durgol's life if a shipment is ever late by even a day. The one time that a shipment was one day late, this Uruk cut off Durgol's left pinky finger as a warning. Explaining that each day a shipment is late, Durgol would lose another digit, to start with. This keeps Durgol well motivated (and equally harsh to his underlings) to do whatever it takes to keep deliveries on time. Many of the supplies come down from Gundabad and similar sources, by cover of night.

On the other hand, Durgol has been letting a "little bit of excess" material be siphoned off to his (and Mordron's) "personal supply". Mordron and Durgol met years ago back near Umbar, and while persons of Durgol's ilk don't really have anyone they can truly call a friend, Mordron has become the closest thing to it. Mordron pays and treats Durgol well, and helps give him ideas on how he can run things more efficiently, what kind of men to look for as lackeys, and helped train Durgol in fighting skills considerably better than Durgol was getting previously as a street-brawler and militia type for various brute squads.

Durgol knows much of what is really going on due to his relationship with Mordron (the true cause of all this trouble). If the PC's can capture him, he will be a tough nut to crack, but if he does crack, he will be a useful font of information. He knows some of the history of Mordron, and many of his plans, though not every detail of either. So even, if the party isn't getting straight to the source now (Mordron), they now have a lot more information to go on than before.

### ***Mordron, The Real Boss, and (some of) the Real Story.***

Mordron was originally born in Eriador. He is of Mixed Mannish blood, but can trace some Dúnedain lineage on his mother's side. He is tall, and from his left profile a strikingly handsome fellow, but his the right side of his face is now horribly disfigured. However, this scarring is usually not visible to most due to something he takes that hides it. Only those skilled in penetrating visual illusions would be able to see the scarring.

After a series of incidents involving the Elves of Northern Mirkwood, he was later traveling around the Southwest end of Mirkwood near Dol Guldur, when a band of Orcs captured him. He had no weapons, and his supplies had long since run out. He was ragged, and tired. The orcs almost killed him on sight of his Elven-made clothing, but instead took him to their chief for sport. After a little "fun" torture, he cried out curses against "those damned Elves, may they burn in fire for what they've done to me!". This surprised the Orc chieftain enough to spare him temporarily. They eventually took him to Dol Guldur. And as he met with higher members in the chain

of command, it was eventually (after many weeks, rotting in a far less pleasant dungeon than the Elves') brought to a chamber containing "The Necromancer". At this meeting, Mordron swore his allegiance to the Necromancer and ,while still serving his own purposes, has been a faithful servant.

He was immediately released, given new gear and equipment, and after some training, he was eventually "stationed" in the far South, near Umbar. There his mission was to recruit troops and followers, and find sources of supplies, to build towards the coming war that The Necromancer claimed would be coming in the not too distant future (decades).

He was an outstanding success in his posting in the South. And made many contacts over the years, and fought in a number of smaller skirmishes, making a fair name for himself as an able warrior too.

Meanwhile, Mordron slowly began to formulate a plan, and build allies to his own personal cause. It did not in any way conflict with the Dark Lord's goals, and was very much in line, so even though Sauron was wise to Mordron's actions, he let Mordron continue to spend some more time and resources on his personal vendetta, though Mordron assumed that he would be in trouble for his "extracurricular activities" if he was discovered.

During this time is when Mordron built a close tie with Durgol ("The Ugly"), later to be known by his underlings simply as "The Boss".

10 years ago, Mordron and his now growing retinue were eventually reassigned to provide services in the North, covering the areas near Gundabad and Eastwards. Mordron's responsibilities were much the same as before, though recruiting was not much of an option in this very sparsely populated area (though he did what he could when he could). He was however responsible for developing a supply line from the northern mountains down to Dol Guldur. This is how Mordron and Durgol developed "Port Guldur", though Durgol prefers it to be called "Port Durgol", but it is known by most of its denizens and visitors simply as "Town".

Far more details on Mordron himself are provided in Adventure IV "Vendetta".

## **Mordron's Plan (what Durgol knows of it)**

Mordron wants revenge against the Elves of Northern Mirkwood. They apparently captured him, and held him prisoner for years, then released him to be nearly burned alive by Smaug, and Mordron narrowly escaped with his life, and most of the right side of his body painfully scarred. When Mordron is thinking, or discussing some of his plans against the Elves, he will sometimes suddenly break out in maniacal laughter, saying things such as "oh the sweet irony", and "I wish I could see their faces", among other ramblings, this has often made Durgol and others very uncomfortable when it happens. Durgol is convinced that Mordron *"is mad, but he don't let it get in the way of doin' the job right"*. Mordron's goal is to find a sleeping dragon in the Ered Mithrin, awaken it, and then "somehow he's gonna make that dragon attack the elves that done Mordron wrong".

Apparently Mordron has gotten enough information from his scouts and other sources, that he now has a map with likely locations of a sleeping dragon, *"o' the right kind'a dragon, you know, them that breathes fire and flies, like the one up by Dale they calls Smug or sumpin'... though Mordron sez he don't think any be so big an' bad as Smug"*, (misspelling of Smaug to Smug is intentional).

The group the party intercepted were supposed to scout out these possible locations to find the correct location, map it correctly, and then send the information to Mordron to follow up. If one of the Men with the group thought they could follow through with awakening the dragon and leaving some "proof" of the Northern Mirkwood Elves having stolen from his lair, they were supposed to try, but only after someone was sent back with the location information first, "in case one o' them fools goes and gets et by the dragon".

## **Taking Matters Into His Own Hands**

During the events recounted in Adventure I "Rude Awakenings", Mordron was down south at "The Town" working on supply chain issues with Durgol, when Mordron sent the band of Orcs with a pair of trusted henchmen (and a troll just for good measure), north with directions on where to find their target (but only the henchmen really knew *what* the target was). Of course, the PC's wiped this group out.

After word reached him that the group he sent had been wiped out. He was furious, then he decided to take matters into his own hands, and as the PC's were recuperating, he rallied some more of his henchmen, and began the long trek north himself to find and awaken the dragon.

Mordron left 7 days before the PC's arrive near "The Town".

## TRAVELING TO "THE TOWN"

There are really only 3 realistic ways to approach "The Town". If the PC's just use Radagast's map as a guide, then they will follow the Men-i-Naugrim East to cross the Anduin, then either follow a faint trail (made by suppliers from the north to Dol Guldur traveling at night in secret) south along the Anduin, or take one of the more established roads that follows fairly close to the edge of Mirkwood, or thirdly they may decide to cut "cross country" and avoid the roads.

Another option that might occur to them, is to take the Anduin by boat, floating down to the town. Of course, unless someone in the group knows it's waterways, this can be hazardous, AND they don't actually know if there is somewhere near the town that they can leave the river. Many parts of the Anduin have tall cliff faces that are all but unscalable.

Travel along the western side of the Anduin will be uneventful for the PC's. They also will not have any encounters at the crossing of the Anduin (most likely at the Men-i-Naugrim east-west road).

However, once they are east of the Anduin, things can get a little more interesting. Try not to bog down the game with any major encounters until they reach areas covered by the lookouts for the town, but DO allow the PC's to see some activity. This could turn into encounters, but that could very well lead to the end of the PC's.

## ***Travel Time***

The travel time from the Homestead to the crossing of the Anduin will be approximately 60 miles (about 3 long days by foot, or 1-2 days by horseback at normal speed, or  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a day if at a quick pace).

If the PC's stick to the main roads of the Men-in-Naugrim (east-west), and then follow the road just along the western edge of Mirkwood traveling south to the first lookout point. From the Anduin crossing to the intersecting north-south road is about 40 miles. Then using the north-south road it is about 80 miles from the Men-i-naugrim to the east-west road out of Dol Guldur that leads to the town. From that crossroads it is about 60 miles to town. All together, the journey from the Homestead to town using Radagast's route is about 240 miles total. Approximately 12 days total.

If the PC's decide to follow the faint trail along the eastern bank of the Anduin, until they reach the first lookout along that road, they will shave off about 120 miles. For a total average travel time from the homestead to town, of around 7 days.

If they brave the dangers of the Anduin (they would need somehow to have acquired a boat, and these are not exactly in plentiful supply in the area), to the point where they come in sight of one of the look outs (if day time, or pass by unnoticed at night if on the river – only a madman would take on the river at night without special sight or aide) it will take approximately 3 days to flow down the Anduin. This means a total travel time from homestead to town of about 5 days (assuming they survive of course).

## ***Encounters During Travel***

What the PC's may encounter depends on which route they take. The most "interesting" and probably most risky from a "trying to not be detected" approach is to take the faint (smugglers) trail on the east bank of the Anduin.

The safest and least eventful path would be to follow the map and stick to the main roads.

The lowest risk of "encounters" but the most dangerous from a death-defying approach would be trying to boat the Anduin down to the town.

## **Encounters on the Smugglers Road**

If the PC's take the faint trail following the eastern shore of the Anduin. They are going to see at one point a group of smugglers coming from the south heading toward "the town" during the middle of the night. The smugglers are NOT interested in an encounter, and if the PC's are not going out of their way to be discrete, especially during the night, the smugglers will make every effort to sneak around the PC's, and will report to the lookout and to town, that there are some unknown people on "their" road. This will lead to the town sending out a group of ruffians, at least 3 times as many in number as there are PC's (the ruffians assume 3 to 1 is more than enough, not realizing the PC's are made of sterner stuff). They will wait until the PC's are camped for the night and sleeping (except for anyone up for watch), when they make a quiet rushing attack. If the ruffians easily have the upper hand, the ruffians will try to take the PC's prisoner rather than slay them. If it is a fairly even match, the ruffians will fight, until their numbers are equal in number to the PC's. Then those that are capable will flee.

If the ruffians see that the PC's quickly outmatch them, then the ruffians will quickly break off the attack, and get to their horses, to make a run for town to get reinforcements.

If the PC's do not evade an all out attack from a large group, if the PC's even put up a moderately decent fight, the ruffians will all flee back to town, being inherently cowardly, but it would be far wiser for the PC's to try to avoid such detection and

confrontation, they will find things much easier to deal with if they just “show up” at town (or even better in the middle of the night), and carefully learn the area.

## **Encounters on the Main Road**

If the PC's just follow Radagast's rough map, and stick to the main road, they will see occasional small bands of only 2-4 Men, including Easterlings and even the occasional orc group. But these groups will NOT want a fight (however they will report back seeing the PC's if the PC's are out in the open. The Easterlings and such travel during the day. The Orcs travel during the night. The PC's could of course attack them, and the NPC's won't present much of a challenge, and will really just try to run away if attacked.

However, as the PC's come in range of “the town's” Lookouts, things could get considerably more interesting. If the PC's begin to make a beeline for the town (stop following the main road, to follow Radagast's map, or one of the other trail they find heading to town), the lookouts will at first attempt to talk to the PC's and ask their business. No matter what happens, they will send a runner (on horseback) to attempt to warn Durgol of the group's approach. If the PC's are sly, the runner will just relay whatever story the PC's give. If the PC's chose combat or are not clever in their story, then Durgol will be waiting for them in force.

The lookouts have no interest in fighting such a well-armed and capable group as the PC's. They will not hesitate to assault poor civilian travelers however (rarely on this road anymore due to it's reputation for danger).

If the PC's attack, the lookouts will attempt to flee on horseback as quickly as possible to town. They travel in groups of 4. When meeting the PC's, two will come into sight to discuss, while the two others will hang back, or if cover is available, will remain hidden, observing, and split the moment there is any trouble (to run back to the city). Their job is to observe and report, not combat.

If captured, none of these lookouts have any information for the PC's about what is going on. They are too low in the food chain to know anything relevant. They can tell the PC's about the structure of the town, and that "The Boss" runs it. And that Orcs also intermingle (though usually only out at night) in the town alongside Men.

If on friendlier terms, they can make recommendations to the PC's on which (dive) Inn or tavern to visit. If on REALLY positive terms (charm, or persuade success by the PC's), two of the lookouts might even offer to escort the PC's to town, and show them around (especially if money is offered). However, they will at any opportunity slink away once in town to inform Dorgul's lieutenant Melb, about the PC's. Though looking at them as naïve "marks" rather than as a threat.

## ***Encounters on the Anduin River***

The one advantage of trying to boat the Anduin (especially at night), is the PC's could slip into town completely undetected in advance. In the day time they would easily be spotted by the lookouts on the Eastern shore. But the lookouts never watch the shore at night (only the smuggler's road). The dock is guarded, but only by one young teenage whelp who is paid (very little) to keep an eye out for anyone coming to the port, so that he can run to Melb (to inform Durgol) about someone at the port (usually deliveries). The boy will try to remain unseen.

If spotted during the day time on the river, the lookouts will send a runner to town to inform Melb. Then there will be a large armed force of 20 ruffians waiting at the port for the PC's. However these ruffians will not hop in a boat to attack, they will merely come "out of the woodwork" armed with crossbows and such, once the PC's step foot on the dock.

The greatest danger in taking the Anduin is just the river itself, there are rapids here and there, and steep cliffs. Only skilled boatmen, who have experience with it's paths can traverse it safely (as the supply runners do frequently). Without someone who has both strong boating skills, and the experience of the area, the PC's are in great jeopardy of their craft being smashed upon the rocks, capsized in the rapids, and the PC's beaten, waterlogged, or even drowned, before they make it to the port. There are two sets of difficult rapids between the Men-i-Naugrim, and the port, that the PC's would have to traverse. There is also no egress/ingress in between except at the Men-i-Naugrim and at the port. If they lose a boat, their only hope is to try to get to a cliff face and successfully climb it, else they are likely to eventually suffer hypothermia, exhaustion, and then drown.

## “THE TOWN”

The Town area is broken up into several sections; the outer areas with the lookouts, the outer town area, the port, and the fort. There are also the fairly recent tunnels excavated from the Fort as escape and secret routes used by Mordron, Durgol, Melb, and a handful of trusted lackeys. Most do not know the tunnels exist, although there are a few rumors about how Mordron seems to just appear from nowhere, and disappear too. No one ever sees him come or go to or from the town.

### ***Outer Areas with Lookouts***

Most of the land between where the lookouts are camped (usually in an area of tree cover away from Mirkwood) is fairly flat with only slight rolling grasslands. There are miscellaneous copses of trees scattered throughout the area (that are not indicated on the map, so feel free to use them when desired). See Map 2 (Adventure Area) for details on the approximate locations of the lookouts. There are 4 lookouts per location indicated (6 locations), for a total of 24 lookouts. See the NPC chart for their stats.

### ***The Outer Town Area***

The Town does not have any set boundaries. It is a loose ramshackle collection of decrepit, poorly built glorified shanties scattered haphazardly around the center point of the the Fort. There are no walls, or gates, or guards on duty (officially) protecting the entrance to the town. There are the lookouts in the outlying lands around town. And there are plenty of henchmen working for Melb/Durgol/Mordron who will quickly report any suspicious visitors (likely), or confront them directly (less likely).

If the PC's get into any brawls in a tavern or in the street, that is not an immediate concern, this is a common occurrence in this place, and the PC's would actually fit in better, if they acted very uncouth, and acted “tough” and picked a fight with the nearest “bully type” in a bar. Just think of a town run and populated by a

bunch of unreformed, remorseless ex-prison-convicts, and you'll have a fairly good idea of how things work here.

Most of the Taverns/Inns are huddle close to the Fort area, with most of the outer and mid buildings being poor excuses for homes, and meager business-like shops (a poor quality blacksmith, a drug-pusher apothecary, a food-monger of old smelly meats and wilting fruit/vegetables, etc.). The shops line the rough quasi-road towards the fort and port. There is no set "marketplace" in this "town".

The total population of this outer town area (does not include the fort or the port, or the outer lookouts) is roughly anywhere from 100-300 denizens at any given point. Generally it peaks in the Summer, and bottoms out just before the Winter snows hit. When the PC's arrive, the town is nearing it's bottoming out stage, with only about 125 currently "residing" in this outer town. There are a number of abandoned/seasonal buildings that the PC's could easily find to stay in, or just sneak into for cover. The "prime real estate" is primarily near the fort, followed secondarily by the port, and thirdly along the rough road like areas radiating out from the fort or port.

## ***The Port***

The "Port" is a bit of an over glorified title for something is just a single rickety-looking wooden floating dock extending out a little from the bank of the Anduin in the only low spot in the cliffs for many miles. This is also one of the few areas where it widens and slows down so the current is much more manageable in this area. Immediately below this area is a quick 20' drop into some more rapids, so this is the best place to stop and pull a small boat out, and walk it south many miles to the next access way. Though these rapids are navigable to the skilled and experienced boat handler.

There are a few buildings close to the shore that sometimes contain a watchman or two (or else the young teenage ruffian during the night on one of the rooftops), and a few laborers to help load or unload shipments. Product is never stored here, it is immediately either sent to the fort's storage, or sent immediately on

it's way to Dol Guldur. Shipments are (almost) never sent upstream. Instead the few times supplies need to go north, they are transported by land. The supplies that come down stream are usually on disposable rafts or barges, that are then disassembled as supplies to use in the town, or just let loose down the river as flotsam.

There is also a large 10' high cave in this area, that smells terrible. This is the lair of the trolls. They of course only come out at night. The cave twists back underground far enough to escape any daylight, and has room for up to 10 of their ilk, though it has rarely held more than 3 or 4 at a time. They are usually used for heavy lifting, and heavy construction work on the dock, town, or fort. They sometimes are also used to haul heavy loads of objects too large for a horse, to Dol Guldur occasionally.

Currently there is only 1 troll left here. One was slain (or driven off) in Adventure 1 by the PC's. Another has gone with Mordon's group to the Ered Mithrin. The remaining one is the "runt" of the group, and the dimmest in intellect.

## **The Secret dock**

This dock is only known by Mordron, Durgol, and Melb. No others. This is one of the routes that allows Mordron (and on occasion Durgol or Melb) to seem to "appear" and "disappear" to/from town undetected. It is a small save, partially submerge just north of the port. The rocks are angled so that you can only see it after you have passed (from a southern view), and even then it doesn't look like much. It is very tricky to time it right with the currents to swing around and in, and you have to duck low. The clearance is only 3 feet high above the waterline (more during drier seasons, and usually in the Spring this is unusable due to the Spring runoff causing much higher river levels.

## ***The Fort/Headquarters***

The fort acts as the HQ for Durgol and his regular lackeys. It is also where supplies are stored, and where his “private supplies” are kept. The buildings here are surrounded by wooden stockade style walls, with towers on each corner. The walls are 10' high with sharp wooden spikes along the top. The walls are only as thick as the 3' thick trees they are assembled from. The towers are 20', and square with basic roof coverings, and window slits facing in all four directions.

The buildings within include the stables, HQ building, known storage building (for/from Dol Guldur), outhouse, “barracks” (more a flophouse), blacksmith building (a decent quality one, who also is fair at weapons and armor repair too), spring/well, and guest house (for when special guests are in town such as the Uruk-hai captain).

The HQ is two stories (20') tall, plus has a crenelated roof for additional defense. It is the only stone construction in town, and well made. It has no windows on the first floor, and only narrow arrow/crossbow slits on the second floor. It is accessible only through a trapdoor accessed from Durgol's “office”. It has a lower level underground. One part is known, and acts as a dungeon/jail (usually to let drunkards sleep it off after a fight). Another part, separate, but at the same depth, is a hidden basement, only accessible from Durgol's bedroom through a hidden trap door in the floor.

This basement area also has two separate secret doors. One leads to the hidden dock cave, the other to the tunnel with exits through town, and outside of town to the north near one of the tree copses along the Anduin (see Map 2, the purple dots indicate two of the main exit/entrances, with another one actually in the outer town area (it is hidden in a shack that no one is allowed to enter, and is much sturdier than most of its neighbors, and well locked).

At any given time there are usually around 30 men within the walls of the Fort. An additional 24 always out at lookout points, and usually a half-dozen or so wandering the streets of town on “patrol”. The lookouts, though trusted, are not actually members of the “vipers”, and not all within the fort are members either, and

those who are not members, are treated as lower level in the pecking order, given themore menial tasks.

All told, if all the men were pulled within the walls of the fort (over capacity), there would be 60 men, plus Durgol, Melb, and Mordron. However, since Mordron took a dozen of the best men (except Durgol and Melb), there are now only a maximum of 46 men. 18 in the fort (usually), 4 around town, and 24 at lookouts points. Of the 22 non-lookout men, only 10 are "vipers".

## **The Tunnels**

The tunnels radiate out from Durgol's hidden basement. One tunnel heads West by Northwest to the hidden dock cave about .5 miles away.

The other tunnel heads north through the outer town, and has one exit on the edge of town in the aforementioned shack. The tunnel continues north to the copse of trees near the Anduin, and in the middle of those dense trees, is covered by a well concealed trapdoor covered with dirt and leaves. This exit/entrance is about 5 miles north of town. There are no included light sources (though there are 2 shuttered lanterns in Durgol's hidden basement, and 1 lantern at the hidden dock, and 1 lantern just inside the entrance to the shack, and one just inside the tree entrance to the north.

## THE VIPERS – DURGOL'S LACKEYS

Durgol has always had a fondness for snakes. He raises nests of them, especially poisonousness vipers. He loves to use them as a torture and often fatal punishment for anyone that displeases him. Because of this, his lackeys over time began to call themselves "The Vipers" to those around town, and even had themselves tattooed on each side of their neck with opposite facing viper like squiggles (poor quality tattoos).

Everyone in town knows them now as the Vipers, and steers clear of them, they are bullying, and always looking for a chance to exert their "authority" on anyone that gives them the slightest excuse to use force. They usually never travel in groups smaller than 4, and often can be seen in groups of 8 or more, frequently drunk, hopping from tavern to tavern. Though seemingly completely undisciplined, they are quite loyal to Durgol, of for no other reason than he pays them fairly well and they are terrified of him (and his snakes).

After the loss of the first group wiped out in Adventure I (they lost two of the "Vipers" then, the orcs were "expendable"). Mordron left with a larger contingent of his men (fewer orcs, but more men) numbering 10 of the vipers, and half a dozen others, plus half a dozen orcs and a the second to last remaining troll in town (usually used to help with the heavy lifting at the port).

Over time, with help and direction from Mordron, Durgol has actually built up an immunity to the venom of his vipers. He has won many a bet or arm-wrestling match involving his snakes (and the loser usually became very ill, blind, or died). Durgol is frequently seen carrying at least one viper on his person, even when walking around town. Everyone gives him an even wider berth then (even his lackeys, who are not immune) tend to guard him from a little further away then.

## ALLIES AND ENEMIES, DOL GULDUR, GUNDABAD, & MISTY MOUNTAIN GOBLINS

Though Mordron has developed a decent working relationship to mutual benefit between the Orcs of Dol Guldur and Gundabad, the same can not be said for the goblins of the Misty Mountains. He has inadvertently (and despite his best efforts been unable to turn around) caused the Misty Mountain group to feel snubbed, and resentful towards the better supplied (and tougher) orcs from the north and south. Unfortunately for Mordron, this means sometimes his groups have been attacked by the mountain goblins attempting to steal his supplies. So far they have failed every time, but this has only increased their ire.

NPC's

***ICE MERP Chart***

## ***Ea d20 Chart***

***Radagast the Brown***

***"The Boss" - Durgol "The Ugly"***

## ***Mordron***

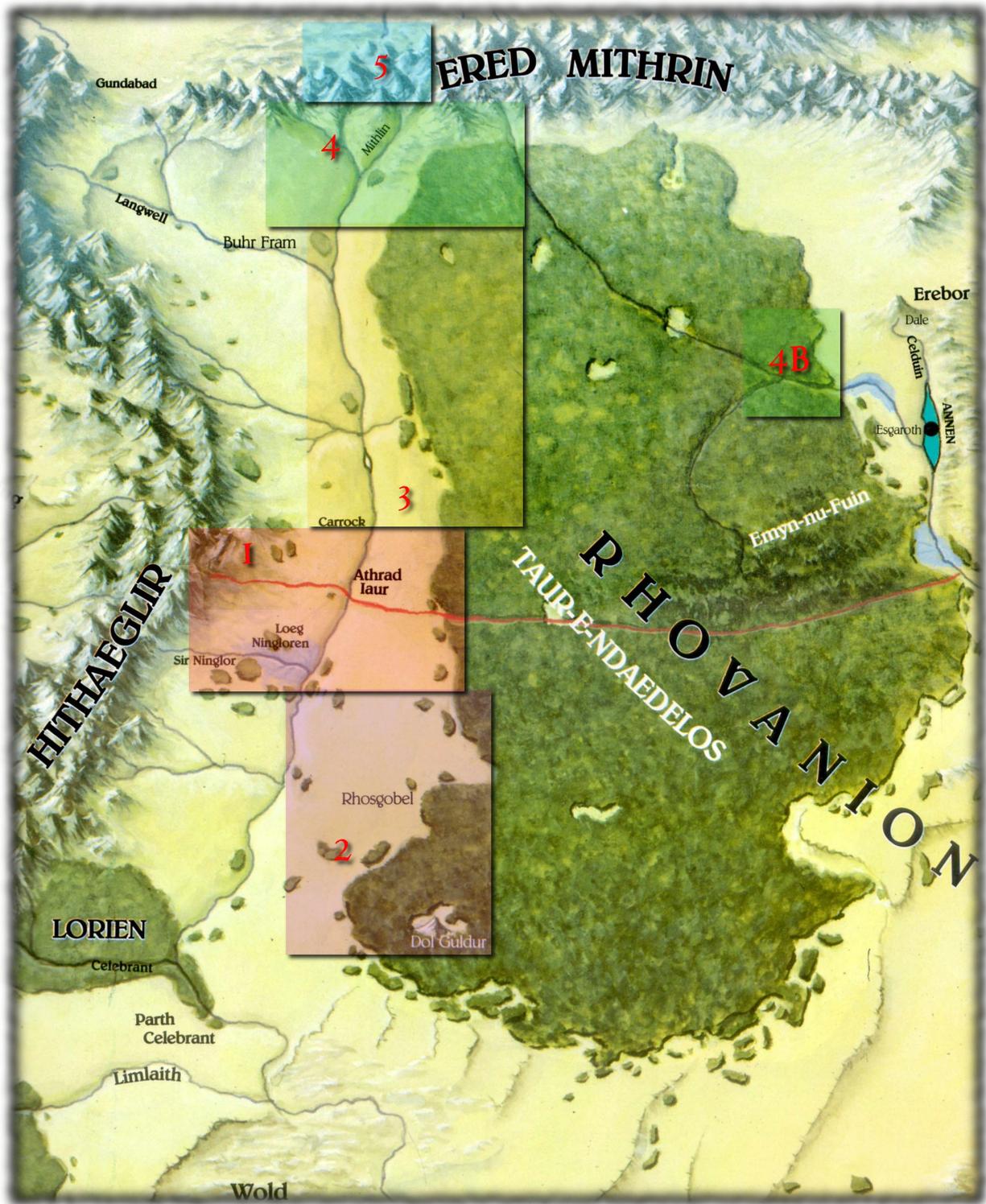
The PC's won't have any chance to meet him yet, so the details, especially stats on Mordron are not detailed until Adventure IV. But here are some tidbits that might be needed for Adventure II questioning about him....

***Melb (Durgol's "lieutenant")***

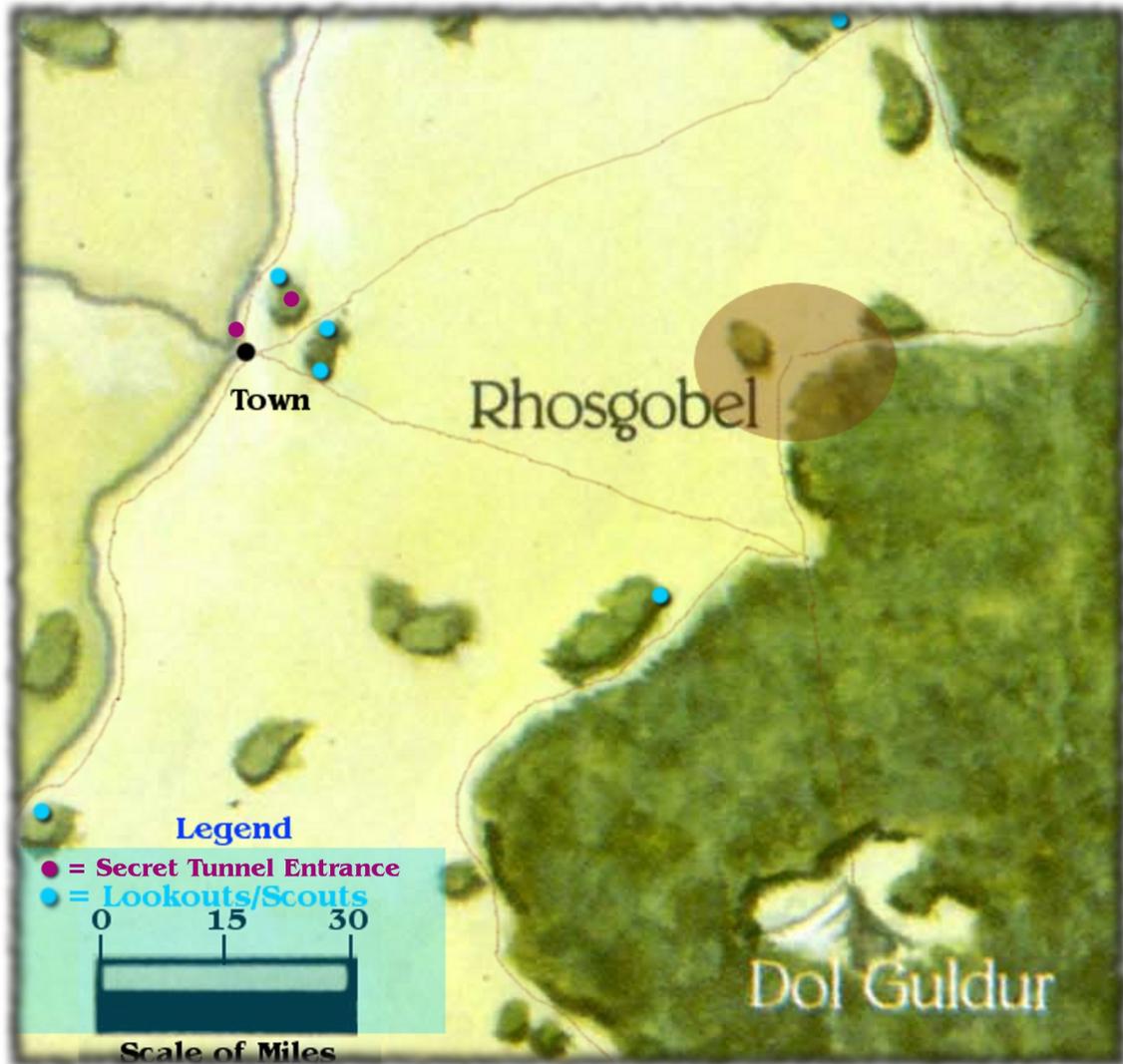
***Uruk-hai Captain from Dol Guldur***

# MAPS

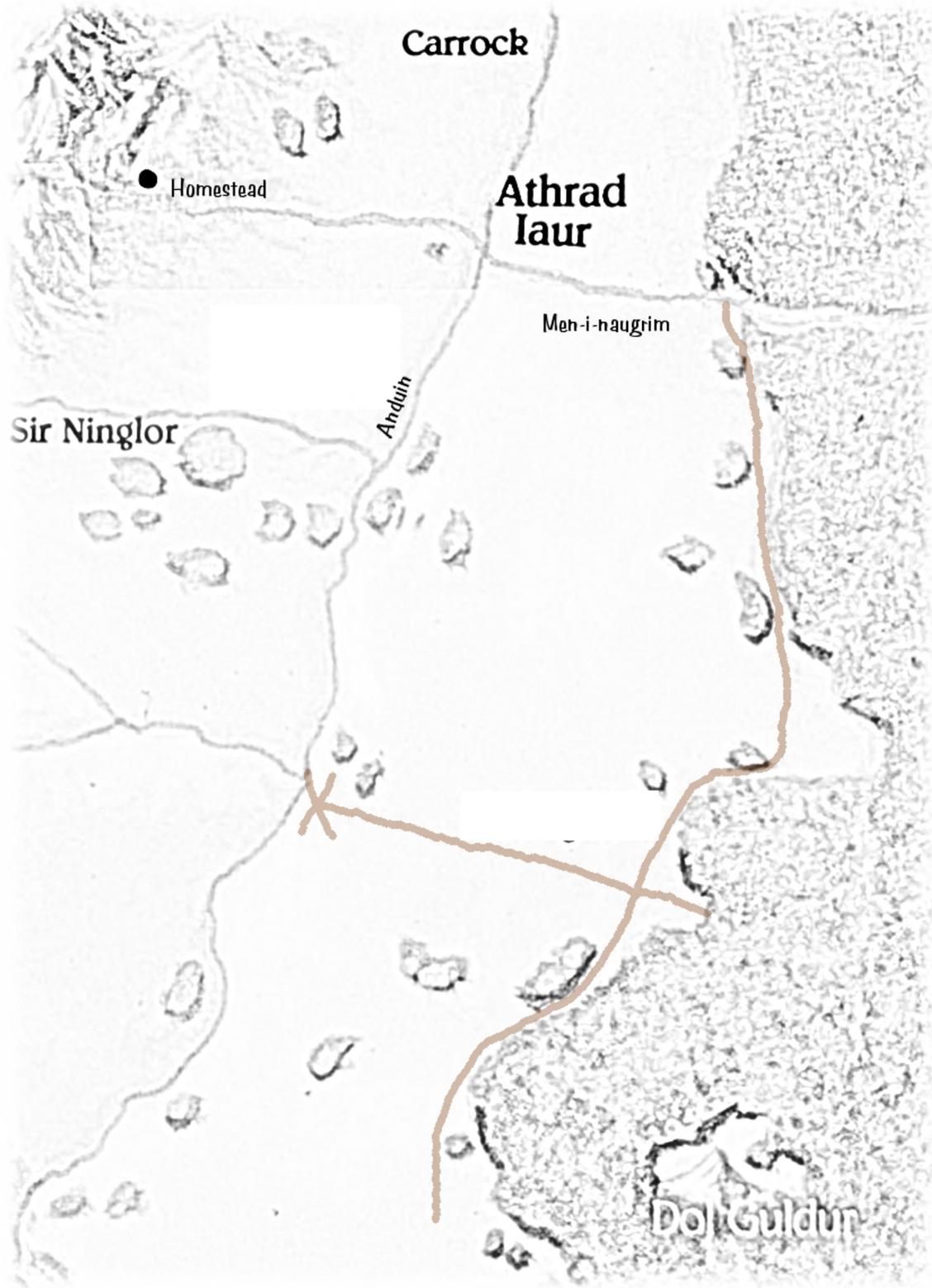
## Map 1 - Campaign Area Overview



## Map 2 - Adventure Area



### Map 3 - Player Map



***Map 4 – Town Map***

***Map 5 – Fort/Headquarters Exterior Map***

***Map 5 – Fort/Headquarter Interior Map 1<sup>st</sup> Floor***

***Map 6 – Fort/Headquarters Interior Map 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor***

***Map 7 - Fort/Headquarters Interior - Basement***

***Map 8 – Town – Underground Tunnels***

***Map 9 – Fort Exterior Map***

***Map 10 – Fort Interior Map – Ground Floor***

***Map 11 – Fort Interior – Upper Level***

***Map 12 – Fort Interior – Cellar / Dungeon***