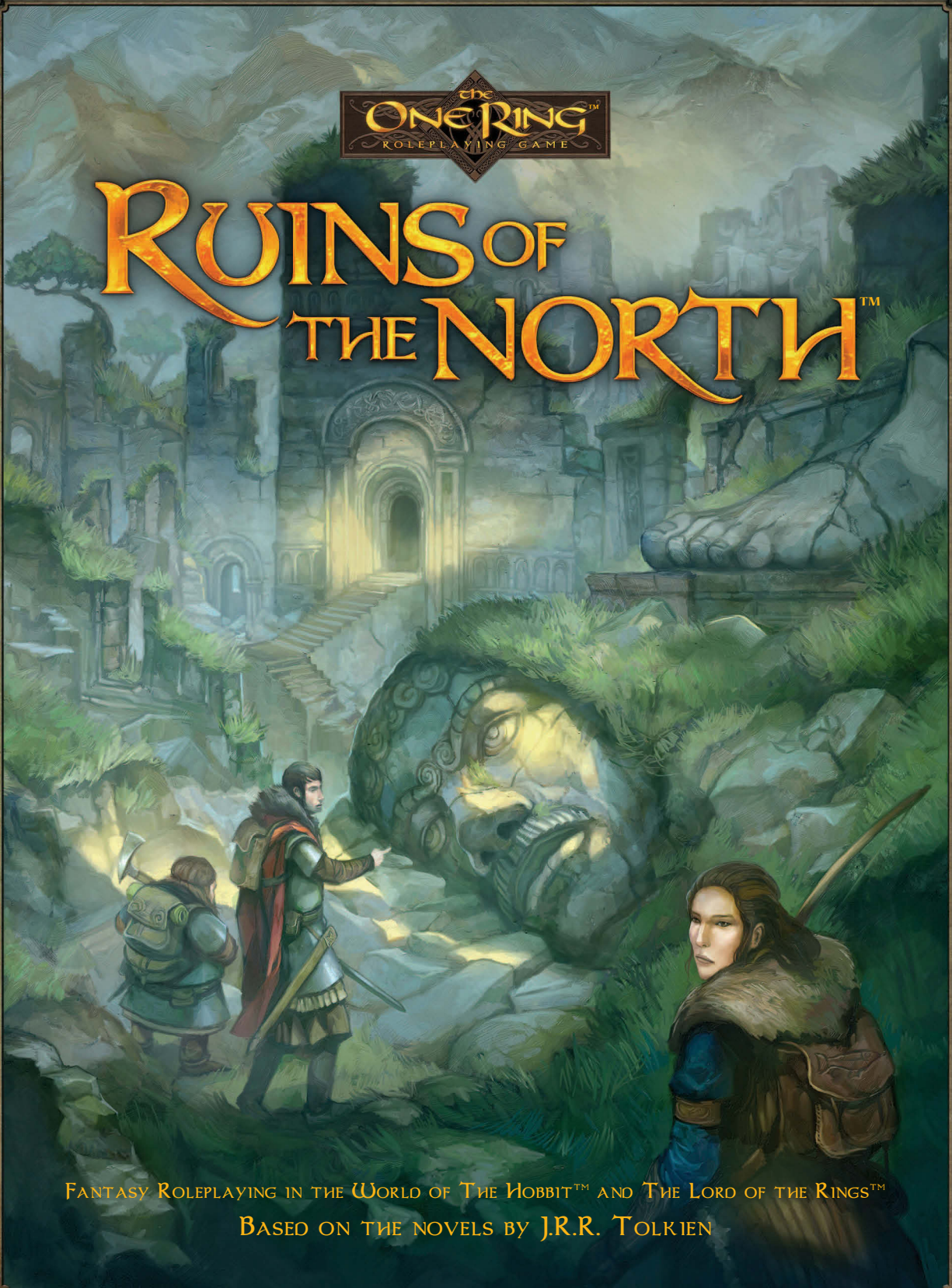


THE RING TO THE NORTH
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RUINS OF THE NORTH™



FANTASY ROLEPLAYING IN THE WORLD OF THE HOBBIT™ AND THE LORD OF THE RINGS™
BASED ON THE NOVELS BY J.R.R. TOLKIEN

THE RING TO THE NORTH
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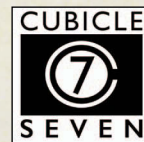
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- introduction -

This guide contains six ready-to-play adventures for your company of heroes, complete scenarios that can be played separately, or as a linked series of adventures spanning across a number of years. All adventures are notionally set in the years after 2954, and take place in eastern Eriador, but none are strongly tied to a date so you can move them earlier or later, depending on the needs of your campaign. These adventures all draw on the setting information contained in *Rivendell*, and that supplement will provide a useful companion to this anthology.

The first adventure takes the companions from the foothills of Gundabad across the Misty Mountains to the former capital city of Angmar and finally to Rivendell itself. The following five adventures are all based out of Rivendell and are set in the various lands surrounding the Vale of Imladris. The adventures are presented in order of increasing difficulty: while the first five adventures can be tackled by a group of relatively inexperienced adventurers, the final adventure offers a much greater challenge.

None are recommended for completely novice heroes – it is recommended that a group have played through at least a few adventures first, such as those from *Tales from Wilderland* or even *The Darkening of Mirkwood*.

The six adventures are:

NIGHTMARES OF ANGMAR

A company of heroes embark on a desperate mission to recover the stolen children of the Black Hills from the Goblins who took them. They must find safe passage through snow and peril into the mountains of Angmar and the ruined city of Carn Dûm. As the enemy there seeks to poison their minds against one another, they must flee in the company of Glorfindel to seek sanctuary in Rivendell.

HARDER THAN STONE

A fearsome servant of Sauron has arrived in Eriador to rally the Trolls to the service of his dark master. The heroes set out to find out more about this 'Ogre Captain' and discover both a sinister plot and an unlikely ally, a spirit bound to the will of Sauron but who would dearly like to escape.

CONCERNING ARCHERS

Bilbo Baggins, at Rivendell researching his book in the company of Glorfindel and Lindir, asks the heroes to



search the ruins of the north to prove that there really was a regiment of Hobbit archers that marched to fight in the Battle of Fornost. To do so they must search a forgotten battlefield and enter a long-abandoned ruin, all the while contending with spirits, Orcs and the ghosts of the past.

THE COMPANY OF THE WAIN

The heroes cross paths with an itinerant group of tinkers and traders, selling their wares to the scattered folk of Eriador. But the traders are not what they seem – their leader is an agent of the White Hand, gathering information for Saruman.

WHAT LIES BENEATH

The company join a Ranger, Hiraval, on his quest to reclaim his ancestral home in the ruins of Arthedain, crossing paths with a group of bandits who might not be all they appear at first. But an ancient ancestor still resides within the holding, a Spectre who seeks to corrupt Hiraval's bloodline forever.

SHADOWS OVER TYRN GORTHAD

The Barrow-wights are slipping beyond the edge of the Barrow-downs for the first time in centuries and the heroes must help Gandalf the Grey restore them to their tombs.

The Return of the Witch-king

While the adventures found in Ruins of the North are all standalone, they do form a thematic story arc in their own way: that of the rise of the Shadow and the return of the Witch-king to Angmar in readiness for the War of the Ring.

As the players play each adventure, they should find themselves more and more troubled by this growing threat, fearful of the future and what is to come. Unlike in other campaigns, there is no chance of a denouement or a climax where the bad guy is bested; such a victory over the Shadow remains a distant, impossible dream that most will not live long enough to see.

You may think this premise gloom-laden and dour, and you would be right to do so; but have heart that the actions of heroes can still have an impact, and mayhap their victories combined will afford their people respite against the Shadow.





HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

All of the adventures presented in this guide are self contained, and can be played as single quests without reference to any past or future adventure. You can pick the most appropriate adventures to run based on the composition of your players' company and their journeys across Eriador. While the adventures have no direct links to the other adventures, save for mounting evidence of the return of the Shadow to the North, you can combine all six adventures into a campaign. The adventures should be played in the order they are presented in this guide.

Target Numbers

As detailed in *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*, the default Target Number for all actions is 14. This convention is followed in the adventures in this supplement; therefore if a Target Number is not specified for an action, it can be considered to be 14.

THE PASSING OF YEARS

If you want to follow the default pacing of gameplay suggested in *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*, playing all the adventures contained in *Ruins of the North* should take several years. Every scenario offers plenty of opportunities to keep the companions busy for a year of game time, as the players can easily follow their Adventuring phase with

a fruitful Fellowship phase, or even start a supplemental Adventuring phase building upon the consequences of the previous one. (Some suggestions concerning the follow-up to each adventure are presented at the end of the scenario).

Even if you don't feel comfortable with playing one adventure per year of game time, we suggest that you at least let one year pass for every two adventures. A tight pace of gameplay could be as follows:

Nightmares of Angmar could be run as the last adventure of 2973, starting in Wilderland and ending with the heroes spending a Year's End Fellowship phase at Rivendell. **Harder than Stone** is suited as the first adventure of the following year, starting in spring as the company meets up once again. **Concerning Archers** could then be played as the second adventure of that year, starting in the summer.

The events of **The Company of the Wain** could, if the Loremaster wishes it, be spread across several years, woven in between any of the previous adventures as required.

What Lies Beneath is best started in spring or summer of 2975, so would suit being played as the first adventure of the following year. **Shadows Over Tyrn Gorthad** might then begin later in that summer, but this adventure is intended to take multiple Adventuring phases across several years to complete.

nightmares of - angmar -

- **When:** The company may undertake this quest during the autumn of any year between 2954 and 2977.
- **Where:** The adventure begins in the Black Hills in the Vales of Gundabad, goes to the Mountains of Angmar and the ruined fortress of Carn Dûm, and may end in Rivendell among the Elves.
- **What:** Goblins raid the dens of a Hill-men tribe and kidnap their children, kill some of their wives, and escape into the North. The player-heroes begin having nightmares of a desolate fortress where the children are being held captive. They embark on a quest to rescue them and must persuade the Hill-men to forsake their dark past and join the Free Folk of the North against the Shadow.
- **Why:** The Lord of the Nazgûl is luring the Hill-men of Gundabad back to the ruins of Carn Dûm to re-establish it as a stronghold of sorcery. If the player-heroes can save their children and make allies of the Hill-men, they will save the Hill-men from going down such a terrible path of evil and thwart the plans of the Enemy.
- **Who:** The company is joined by Hwalda, Essylt, and Fráech — three Hill-men whose fate hangs in the balance.

ADVENTURING PHASE

This adventure is divided into six parts, comprising the opening contest with the Hill-men, the gathering of the company, the journey over the Misty Mountains into Angmar, the hunt in the ruins of Carn Dûm, and the final flight to Rivendell.

For details concerning several locations and characters featured in this adventure (including the Hill-men of Gundabad, Werewolf Hollow, Hwalda the Guide, and

so on) see the description for the Vales of Gundabad, in *The Heart of the Wild*, starting from page 13.

PART ONE - BLACK HELMS

In the Black Hills of Gundabad, the player-heroes encounter a tribe of Hill-men. The companions compete in a ritual fight to prove themselves and achieve trust with the savages, but their celebration is interrupted by a thick grey cloak of mist that quickly settles over the land.

PART TWO - ORC-WORK

When screams are heard through the fog, it is soon discovered that Goblins have raided the dens of the Hill-men, killing their wives and kidnapping their children. Pursuit is cut off by a pack of vicious Wargs. The player-heroes begin to have nightmares of ancient ruins filled with evil creatures.

PART THREE - CONCERNING HILL-WOMEN

The companions join a young orphaned woman named Essylt on a quest to recover the stolen children, which include her younger siblings. She is protected by Fráech: a fierce warrior from her uncle's tribe. But how will they navigate the frozen mountains of the North? They must locate Hwalda, an experienced guide with no love for Goblins or Wolves, and persuade her to lead them.

PART FOUR - MOUNTAINS AND MONSTERS

The companions dare to journey across the Misty Mountains and into Angmar, in the face of patrolling Goblins and a terrible threat from the ancient past.

PART FIVE - CARN DÛM

When at last the company reaches the ruins haunting their dreams, they must search their underground halls and tunnels to find the children.

PART SIX - AN UNEXPECTED FOE

An evil servant of the Shadow tries to seduce Essylt to join him in rebuilding the kingdom of Angmar. The fate of the Hill-men and their children is finally determined.

EPILOGUE - TO RIVENDELL

Thanks to their heroic deeds, the companions are granted access to Rivendell, the sanctuary guarded by Master Elrond.



Key Moments

During parts of the adventure, Key Moments will be identified that will determine the fate of Essylt in the end. If the companions take certain actions, they will influence her positively; if they do not take those actions, they will influence her negatively. The Loremaster should keep track of the outcomes of these scenes, for they will determine the difficulty of persuading Essylt to turn against the Witch-king. Her decision in this matter will change the history of her people.

While the Loremaster is aware of these Key Moments, the player-heroes should be unaware of them and how important they will be to the conclusion of the quest.

If it seems appropriate, additional Key Moments can be created on the spot. It does not matter how many of these scenes are factored into the final difficulty.

Companies from Wilderland

As this adventure begins in Wilderland, it is the perfect way to bring an existing company from Wilderland over the Misty Mountains and into Eriador. While a company might then desire to return to Wilderland once the adventure is over, they might fall under the enchantment of Rivendell instead, and find themselves eager to explore this new land further.

Companies from Eriador

It may be the case that the players' company is already based in Eriador. If this is the case, the Hill-men of Gundabad may be replaced by Hill-men of Rhudaur, and have the adventure begin in Rhudaur instead. Part Four will most likely be cut out entirely, but the trek along the Frozen Path may be enlarged instead by adding in any of the material presented in *Rivendell* or of your own devising.

The Eye of Mordor

If you are using the optional Eye of Mordor rules presented in *Rivendell*, any revelation episodes occurring during this adventure are likely to revolve around the sudden treachery of allies, in particular Hill-men of Gundabad that the company encounters, or an increase in the threat posed by the Goblins of Carn Dûm.

- PART ONE - BLACK HELMS

It is a gloomy day when the company steps foot in the Black Hills. A cold mist is gradually descending from Mount Gundabad to the North, spreading forth like probing, ghostly fingers across the ground.

There are several reasons why the player-heroes may have travelled to this area, when most days they would likely have avoided the dangerous Vales of Gundabad:

- They are searching for wild horses, offspring of the steeds of the Éothéod.
- They are hunting Wargs or Goblins, or searching for the legendary Werewolf Hollow.
- They were sent by a patron, such as Beorn or Radagast, to muster allies to stand against the wicked things being drawn to Dol Guldur in recent years.
- They have come to explore any of the notable places in the Vales of Gundabad or to search for the Lost Watchtower (see *The Heart of the Wild*, pages 17-19) and they want to consult the Hill-men for lore or even to hire a guide.

Whatever their purpose, upon entering the lightly wooded hills, they pass a barren patch of ground in the shape of an imperfect circle. The rock and dirt are a smoky grey, as if an intense fire had burned there in ages past.

The player-heroes may wish to stop and inspect the circle. If they do, a successful **Lore** roll tells them that this might be a funeral site from long ago, used when the Éothéod cleansed the Vales of the Men of Angmar.

Memorial Circles

They say the Black Hills are haunted by ghosts, inhabited by wild men, and crawling with wolves. Northmen are encountered rarely here, as they shun the Black Hills out of fear that a cruel vengeance will be enacted upon them for the actions of their ancestors – centuries ago, the Éothéod had been relentless in their fight against all servitors of Angmar, seeing them only as wicked workers of sorcery and friends of Goblins and Wargs.

Today, circles of barren ground pepper the hills where the Éothéod piled and burned the bodies of their enemies. No grass or flower ever grows on these dead spots, and their emptiness remind the Hill-men of their sorrow-filled past and the divide that exists between them and the Northmen. Yet, among the Hill-men tribes, there are some who speak of a day when the circles will bloom again. That will be when the strength of their people will be restored, when they will rise from the ashes. Tribesmen holding to such beliefs visit a memorial circle before they engage in important endeavours, like going on a raid, or hunting.

DISCOVERED IN THE HILLS

A pair of Savage Wolfdogs comes bounding over a high wall of earth in the distance, greeting the company with barks and snarls. They are large beasts with a wolf-like appearance. They do not attack, but turn and head in the direction whence they came.

At this point, the companions must decide what to do.

1. The companions may ascend the hill and follow the Wolfdogs;
2. They may take up defensive positions among the trees and rocks in preparation for a possible encounter;

3. They may dash in the opposite direction to escape a possible confrontation.

A companion acting as the Look-out of the company and succeeding in an **Awareness** roll may have noticed the Wolfdogs in time to attempt a single ranged attack before the Wolfdogs disappear. The shot will be moderately hindered (TN 14) due to the medium range and sparse woods.

The Wolfdogs belong to a group of Hill-men who were approaching the memorial circle from the other side of the mound. Their barking alerts the warriors who quickly draw their weapons and prepare themselves for any aggressive action that might be coming; they cannot be ambushed.

- If their pets were shot at, the Hill-men become enraged and charge over the hill with great howls in the tongues of Wargs to attack the player-heroes.
- If they stayed their bows, the Hill-men warriors will wait for the companions to approach, or after a few minutes they will quietly climb the hill themselves in search of the source of the disturbance.

The companions may try to stop them and engage them socially before things turn deadly. If combat erupts, the statistics for Hill-men warriors can be found in *The Heart of the Wild*, page 115. There are 12 warriors (plus a maid, see **Among the Hill-men** on the following page), but of varying health and ability, accompanied by six Savage Wolfdogs. However, as soon as one Wolfdog or Hill-man is killed, Cynbal, their Chieftain, orders his men to stop fighting. Enough bloodshed and tragedy has occurred in these hills and they cannot afford more losses now. (If one of the Hill-men dies, it will be either Heilyn, Sul or Utthecar.

SAVAGE WOLFDOGS

The dogs of the Hill-men of Gundabad have been bred with Wild Wolves to increase their ferocity. Fully grown, they are tenacious beasts, easily pitted against predators twice their size. Sometimes, their savage nature is difficult to deal with, as they may easily harm a child if unwittingly provoked.



Savage Wolfdogs:

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL	
2	
ENDURANCE	HATE
10	2
PARRY	ARMOUR
5	2d
SKILLS	
Personality, 2	Survival, 1
Movement, 2	Custom, 0
Perception, 3	Vocation, 0
WEAPON SKILLS	
Bite	2
SPECIAL ABILITIES	
Seize Victim	Great Leap

Weapons:

WEAPON TYPE	DAMAGE	EDGE	INJURY	CALLED SHOT
Bite	4	10	14	Pierce

AMONG THE HILL-MEN

In all accounts of history and lore, the Hill-men of Gundabad are described as a hateful and wicked folk (see also the description for Angmar in *Rivendell*, on page 48). Their forefathers served the Witch-king in Angmar, performing many vile and murderous acts, and were almost annihilated when the Morgul-lord was defeated by an alliance of Elves and Men. The warriors encountered by the companions belong to a tribe descending from those Hill-men who escaped the wrath of their enemies by hiding east of the Misty Mountains, in the Vales of Gundabad. They dwell in a nearby cluster of primitive shelters, more dens than houses, and are a malnourished, easily angered lot. The more unfortunate among them are stunted or otherwise deformed, the result of decades of inbreeding.

Here follow the description of the group of Hill-men encountered by the companions. With the exception of Essylt (a girl) and Forgall (an old man), they are the best

warriors of the tribe (their wives and children remained at home). If the player-heroes can somehow make allies out of the Hill-men, they can turn the tide of hundreds of years of history and redeem them from their ill-favoured past...

Cynbal the Chief: The leader of the pack. Cynbal is rugged and weather-worn, yet pallid from living in the darkness under the hills. His brother Heddwyn the Seer and most of his tribe were lost in a tragic cave-in last year, leaving Cynbal in charge of raising his nieces and nephews and providing for their grieving mother. As of late, his patience is waning; too many nights dealing with children and not enough time in spirit-Warg form. He talks in a low, jarring voice while pointing two scabrous fingers at anyone he addresses. Cynbal's main concern is always the preservation of his kin.

Fráech: The second-in-command. Fráech is a warrior of great strength and skill with a spear. He brazenly shows awful scars on his left arm: the evidence of a bear attack. He is not well-spoken and is unable to write, but if he is caught in a good mood, he may recount the tale of the night he killed the beast by ripping its muzzle apart and stabbing it through the heart. He will recall the great feast that lasted many days afterwards. To end his story, he will bare his teeth in a wicked grin while stroking the fur cape wrapped around his torso and jabbing his spear into the air.

Fráech has never married, but he is quietly interested in the Chief's eldest niece: the fairest Hill-maiden he has ever seen.

Bedwyr: Protector and personal bodyguard of the Chief. He is never caught without his spear and a thick wooden shield displaying the carved image of a Savage Wolfdog's head: the chosen symbol of the tribe. He wears a black iron cap matching his equally dark eyes, while his beard is full and untamed, covering the birth deformity of his jaw. Bedwyr is a fiercely loyal cousin to Cynbal and is easily driven to rage when he perceives that the chief's life is threatened. That is why he is the preferred choice to take the Chief's niece as a wife.

Heilyn, Sul and Utthecar: Three scraggy men carrying shields and blades. These are the Chief's younger brothers serving as the tribes' scouts and look-outs. They are agile and keen-eyed and are able to command their dogs

well. They are similar in appearance and age, yet easily distinguished by their embellishments: one wears an armband of teeth, another a bright green tunic, and the other a large helm masking his countenance.

Daga and Nantha are the names of their Savage Wolfdogs – male and female. Nantha recently had a litter of pups who are resting safely at home in the dens.

Gwal: Small and simple, Gwal is Cynbal's disfigured son, born of his youngest sister who died of blood-loss in childbirth. He was a child of pity and disconsolation, for no one else would give her offspring. His one eye droops while the other one raises; one ear is deaf while the other never formed; one hand has six fingers while the other has two. As for his legs and feet, they work better than those of others. Therefore, Cynbal uses Gwal as an errand-rider, to run hotfoot to the dens and warn the wives of looming hazards.

Durthacht and Madacht: Twin sons of the Chief. These burly men carry extra-long iron spears, self-made using a crucible, moulds and hammers as taught to them by their uncle. In fact, they wear many pieces of iron jewellery such as rings, bracelets, and clasps. Even their helms are shod with layered plates, sections, and ornaments, making them the most elaborately designed of the tribal headgear.

Their beards are forked and plaited for convenience when they eat or speak. Durthacht is missing fingers while Madacht is blind in one eye.

Forgall: Cynbal's venerable father. In his lifetime, Forgall has witnessed the diminishing of his folk. Many have died of disease, weak bones, flooding, and in squabbles with their enemies. He believes all of this has been brought on because they have parleyed with River-folk traders, Beornings, Woodmen and other Men of the Anduin Vales who have dared travel as far north as the Black Hills. "Werewolves and Goblins make better friends," he always says, his eyes red and feral.

March: Sprouting son of Madacht. Only recently has March joined the men on their outings. He is half the size of his father, but wears a heavy iron helm and carries a broad sword. He is eager to kill his first large mountain goat for its horns; but if he could slaughter a bear? Why, then he would be as famous as Fráech among the tribes and his father would be very proud!

Taredd: Crazed and unstable warrior. Of all the tribe members, Taredd is the cruellest, acting more like a wild wolf than a Man. He wears no helm, leaving his unkempt hair to poke in every direction, filled with needles and thistles. His clothes are ragged and stained by the blood

