

## TROBRIDGE PLOTS

## 1. THE DARKNESS BELOW

SCOPE: long-term, background plot  
 MAPS: Trobridge & Environs, Trobridge

SYNOPSIS: The Ebon Cabal has agents across the reaches of Northern Ærchelton. Always wretched, the activities of the Dark Fidelity in the Seven Shires are particularly reprehensible: a plot is already afoot to plunder the countless burial cairns of the Winding Woods of corpses with which to create an army of undead. This plot is made all the more dangerous, since most of the cairns are occupied by fallen warriors who died at the hands of the goblins who swarmed the region in the First and Second Goblin Wars (~640 to ~840 FE); if re-animated, these undead soldiers will represent a formidable threat.

While the Ebon Cabal is ultimately behind this threat, the planning and execution of the project is lead by Nolron, a demonic Lordling who dwells under the Ironhenge in the Ferric Hills. Through a small outpost of Cabal agents in the ruined Temple to Delgorion (in the Winding Woods), he orchestrates the stages designed to bring his undead army into being and slowly dominate the region.

STAGES: Initially, Nolron has few resources: a half-dozen Banecreed headquartered in Delgorion's Furrow (a small escarpment into which a former temple of Delgorion is nestled). They report to Seledriel, a female nolardi sorceress who operated previously in Esonia. Seledriel operates between this hidden outpost and Trobridge, where she is seeking to make connections with The Velvet Hand (mostly for information regarding the region's underworld, the identities of local Weavers or Shirewards, and lore regarding the burial cairns in the Winding Woods).

Her subtle plan is to recruit the inadvertent aid of the seedier elements of Trobridge and the surrounding communities, locate the burial cairns, and bring the contents to Delgorion's Furrow. There, her underlings will prepare suitable corpses for ^transport^ to Ironhenge, where they will be re-animated. The undead created will initially garrison Ironhenge's bowels, but Nolron plans to eventually send cadres out to raid small hamlets and mining villages within the Ferric and Dim Hills, slowly gaining control of the region by dispersing or eradicating the local population.

## TWISTS:

- \* Nolron is also the name of a famed Ældûn captain who fell in the Battle of Ashenwick during the First Goblin War. Long before Delgorion's Furrow had been scratched, Nolron "Blade-weaver" McOlsham commanded a division of mixed human and demardi warriors, and is locally regarded as one of the greatest heroes to have ever lived. As the legend goes, Nolron's Rangers were ordered to form a defensive perimeter within the Shortwood, where Nolron's superiors believed a formidable goblin wave would erupt.

Nolron disagreed, believing instead that the goblins would target the strategically located village of Ashenwick, bordering the north-east corner of the Winding Woods. Mustering his Rangers in the Shortwood as ordered, he marched his charges by night to the far outskirts of Ashenwick and formed a half-mile-long line of archers and pikemen to meet the onslaught that he believed would come.

The Ældûn captain's bid proved fortuitous when the lines of goblin halberdiers marched forth out of the fog surrounding Ashenwick. The battle was quickly joined, and the farmlands surrounding the village ran thick with with goblinoid blood; Nolron took the offensive and pushed the goblins back a full mile ere the sun reached its peak.

Yet the endless goblinoid horde continued to fall on the blades of the defenders, until the Rangers, weary of battle, sent runners for reinforcement. Either those runners failed in their charge, or reinforcements could not be found, for as the sun fell and long shadows were cast from the surrounding woodlands, Nolron's Rangers began to give the ground they had won during the morning's war-play.

By sunset, the Rangers were within a quarter mile of Ashenwick's stockade wall. Nolron, in the thick press of war-frenzy, bid his serjeants send squads into the doomed village to evacuate the peoples and scorch the settlement so

as to destroy what the wicked foe might plunder. Mindful of their captain's urgency, Nolron's lieutenants swore a blood-oath to fight to the last at Nolron's side in an effort to buy the village what time they could.

Thus did Nolron and his companions stand fast, hewing asunder goblinoid flesh as it rose before them. Many goblins did Nolron strike down that day, with his Ardic blade ^Ograliar^ (AR: "Goblin-hewer") shining cruelly in the fading light of the falling sun.

Sadly, Nolron and his band sometime fell to the tenacious wave set against them. But his stand had not been in vain, for reinforcements did arrive to garrison erst-while doomed Ashenwick, and they sang fierce blade-songs in the face of the rushing enemy. By midnight, Ashenwick was safe. It had not been put to the torch, and its apparent conquerors had been beaten back passing well. But the village would have been lost, had it not been for Nolron's defiant stand.

#### NOTES:

- \* Nolron himself is buried in one of the mounds scattered throughout the Cairn Highlands. Nolron the demon Lordling is especially mindful of this, and he seeks the corpse of the mortal Nolron as a crowning prize; it is the Lordling's plan to re-animate Nolron as the general of his undead army.
- \* Nolron's long sword, Ograliar, was lost after his valiant stand. Some say the weapon is buried with him, most others believe it to be gathering dust in the treasury of some goblin king, never to be used against goblinoids again. Regardless of its location, the blade is truly remarkable:

The blade is of Mithrilde (AR: "Bright Steel"), reaching a full three-and-a-half feet in length. The hilt is wrapped in thread-of-gold, with a ruby set in the pommel. Naming runes are etched along the blade, as is the sword's command cry ("Aluviel el Tilidaïn," referencing Aluviel, who was, at the time of the blade's forging, the Queen of the Fey Court; she has since departed for the Lasting Realm). The sword is variously known by its true name, "Ograliar," as well as its common monikers, "Nolron's Cleaver," "The Defender of Ashenwick," and "The Goblin-foe."

When loosed from its scabbard, it glows dull red when goblinoids are within 50', and it can communicate telepathically with its wielder the direction and number of goblinoids it senses.

When battling normal foes, it behaves as a normal sword of Mithrilde (i.e., +2D). When set upon goblinoids, however, the blade's true powers are revealed: Ograliar is +1D vs. Goblinoids, and, on any critical strike, it transfers the number of Wound Points inflicted to its wielder. When struck, then, the wielder subtracts any transferred WPs before his own. Any additional WP are temporary, lasting for as long as the current engagement, but there is no limit to the number of WP the wielder may gain in this fashion. For this power to work, the wielder must be of Virtuous or Conscientious disposition. In the hands of any other, it functions simply as a normal Mithrilde long sword.

As a side note, Nolron the demon lordling also searches for Ograliar, in an effort to capture it against its future use against the goblin hordes he has amassed under his banner. Therefore, Banecreed encountered in the Winding Woods seek the blade as a secondary goal; Seledriel is also attempting to ferret out clues as to the weapon's location.

## 2. THE STOLEN MOUNT

SCOPE: short-term adventure plot

MAPS: Trobridge & Environs (south-central), Trobridge

SYNOPSIS: The prize mount belonging to a knight travelling through Trobridge is stolen from its stables. The knight is Meliar D'ornal D'nath, a member of an unknown order. He is pompous and rude, and he swaggers about, bullying peasants for information regarding the whereabouts of his lost medium warhorse, even accusing those he asks for aid of hiding the truth or being guilty of stealing the horse themselves. His contempt for the local populace overflows, and he sulks about in condescending anger over his loss whilst staying in the House of Ghon (Area #12 of the Trobridge map).

STAGES: Meliar loses his mount less than a week after arriving at

the House of Ghon in Trobridge. Since the mount is gone from the inn's stables, Meliar badgers his innkeeper into launching a search of no less than the entire town the morning when he discovers the loss. He even goes as far as to give one of the stableboys a black eye in his rage. The innkeeper, Marvis Ghon, does all he can to aid the knight, gathering some of his men and a few volunteers of the city watch to search for the missing mount both within and just outside the town. But these efforts prove fruitless--the horse is simply not to be found.

In the meantime, Meliar continues to cast about--aggressively--for information. He refuses to accept another mount, and he now stays at the House of Ghon, essentially sulking and reacting with contempt to anyone who tries to help him.

Marvis is sponsoring another foray to find the mount, this time into the Winding Woods, which is as far as a warhorse might travel in the two days since his disappearance. The party may choose to join Marvis and his men on this jaunt. Marvis will help to outfit PCs with light armour and mounts if necessary; if the PCs prove worthy, they might be invited to join Marvis' houseguard of 10 personal retainers (who act much like "ranch hands").

#### TWISTS:

- \* The mount is not a medium warhorse, but actually the ^shape-changed^ form of one Relion McCloud, one of several heirs-apparent to the Opal Throne of D nmoor.
- \* Meliar is not a knight, but actually a disguised bounty hunter. Meliar belongs to The Fallen of Serinthe, a terrorist group that blames the Opal Throne for the loss of Serinthe, the former Esonian capital, to the maurading army of the Court of Narcross, in the Bandit Fiefs, just over two years ago. Meliar captured Relion and had him ^shape-changed^ to a medium warhorse so that he could keep his bounty with him and not raise suspicion. Obviously, The Fallen of Serinthe hopes to use Relion as a leveraging point against D nmoor in an effort to seek redress.
- \* Meliar is in Trobridge in pursuit of Seledriel Cilinov, a nolardi sorceress connected to the sack of Serinthe. It is believed that she provided the Court of Narcross with crucial information that led to Serinthe's demise, and she is Meliar's bounty. Meliar does not realise that Seledriel is an agent of the Ebon Cabal.
- \* Relion, the warhorse, did not simply escape (though he would if possible). Instead, he was sequestered by agents of the Ebon Cabal. These agents, led by Seledriel, know why Meliar is in Trobridge, and their plan is to distract him from executing any action against Seledriel by stealing away the false knight's captured bounty. Meliar is not aware of this sub-plot.
- \* When Relion was kidnapped, his corral fence was sundered to allow him to be removed easily from his confines. The fence was mended with a ^weld wood^ spell, and observant PCs searching the corral for clues may note the tell-tale marks left by this spell (rather like a wooden "seam" that joins the fence where it had been broken). Noting this subtle clue requires the Spellcraft NMS.

#### NOTES:

- \* Relion is currently "stabled" at Arnley, a human/demardi village located in the northern Torn Highlands. There, he is warded by Ebon Cabal agents, who actually have cover identities within the community.

If Relion can be reverted to his normal form, he will explain to his rescuers the nature of his capture at Meliar's hands, the friction between D nmoor and The Fallen of Serinthe (essentially, it was not D nmoor's job to help Esonia, since that once-province of the  ld n Empire declared its independence from the Opal Throne in 994 SE).

Relion proves to be a capable adventurer--he is third youngest of seven siblings and not likely to ascend to the Opal Throne, so he practiced as a bard. If invited, he will remain with the party and may eventually provide a valuable link to  ld n's nobility.

- \* The journey north-west into the Winding Woods ends after a day, where Marvis' party (possibly with the PCs) stops at the southern fringes of the Baal Swamp. In the surrounding area,

the party may encounter bands of hunting goblins; bandits who alternately seek to plunder burial cairns, waylay travellers, and conduct their own fights with the goblins. The PCs may discover a few cairns themselves; they are free to explore them, and some of these burial sites may contain clues of the Dark Fidelity's evil deeds (missing corpses, or perhaps a more blatant clue, like a brooch pin in the likeness of a snake's tongue).

### 3. NOT FAR FROM THE TREE

SCOPE: short-term adventure plot  
MAPS: Trobridge & Environs (One Cairn)

SYNOPSIS: Trobridge was founded around ~845 FE, toward the close of the Second Goblin War. The site itself marks one of the bloodiest battles waged by the men and demardi of the region against the goblinoid hordes. After the battle, an orchard of trees was planted, and each tree was a sapling of The One Tree of Gloronel, located far north in the Fey Court of Ru'a'Teledain. Since that time, the orchard has been a lasting symbol of unity between the men, ardi, and demardi of the region.

Last month, a party of ferardi from a clan in One Cairn, sent word to Trobridge that they had located a formerly lost burial trove belonging to a ferardi captain who fell in the First Goblin War. As a sign of respect, they wish to mark the site with a single sapling from The One Tree. To do so, they need seeds from the orchard in Trobridge. In order to properly consecrate the site, the sapling must be planted before the next moon (six days hence).

STAGES: Danrubel, the Lord of Trobridge, is glad to grant the ferardi's request, but this late in the harvest, he lacks the resources to send a train the 40 some miles north-east to do so in the time required by the ferardi. He therefore opts to commission a party to transport the sapling (with all due pomp and circumstance as representatives of Trobridge) to the ferardi clan at One Cairn, oversee the planting and consecration, and return as ambassadors of good will.

Unfortunately, Danrubel cannot supply mounts (as most available are currently employed as caravan beasts), though he can help equip the party with mundane items.

#### TWISTS:

- \* The burial site is actually located in the highlands north-east of One Cairn, and it is populated by a small cadre of druids and their retainers (the ferardi's clan village is about 10 miles away).

Whilst relatively tame, the area is still wilderness. Unbeknownst to the ferardi, their preparations at the site have disturbed a small pack of hornbears (carnivorous bear-like mammals with birdlike heads with horns and sharp beaks). The hornbears have already attacked and slain two ferardi druids, though their corpses have been found, none of the ferardi know what killed them. Of course, the PCs must defeat or drive out these foes before the site can be properly consecrated.

#### NOTES:

- \* The defeat of the hornbears will bring great honour to the PCs, who will be treated as brothers by the ferardi clan.

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