

The Watch Campaign

Session 19

08 February 2015

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In hindsight, we think we could have asked more questions about this Bedrick fellow. It's about three in the afternoon, when we take a gamble and decide to follow the hobbit tracks. Given our recent failure to find Farrolok's lair, we actually follow these tracks remarkably well. Bedrick (if it is Bedrick) seems to have a wolf or a large dog with him. It seems likely the wolf is a companion creature, rather than stalking Bedrick. The tracks take us away from the town into coppiced wood. About an hour later it's starting to get a bit darker. When suddenly...

There's an all mighty crashing sound as Adam, Melcor fall into a hole. Are very badly hurt. Yorgill lands on top of them. It's not a hole. It's actually a trench that has been covered with leaves, bracken and snow. It's a very large trench, roughly 8-10 feet deep, and about 5 feet wide. There are also spikes at the bottom. Sharp and pointy.

Beyond the 'moat', and about fifty yards away over a slight rise we can hear the sounds of barking. Melcor and Adam scramble out on that side. The rest of us join them, and begin to creep closer to the sound. We see a hobbit carrying two axes, standing next to a giant wolf (5'6" at the shoulder!) with glowing red eyes - he easily sees through our pathetic attempts to hide. He identifies himself as Bedrick and asks us (not impolitely) to leave. Without any further explanation we do as he asks. The retreat is distinguished by Yorgill impaling himself in the pit, but eventually we get out of sight.

Amatlo says that the plan is that once we're out of sight, we double back and take down Bedrick. Flay nods sagely and continues to make a list of Amatlo's questionable decisions: 1) Ignore Duke's advice to come to Ferrenden immediate; 2) Kill the prisoners; 3) Attack the hobbit without declaring themselves as members of the watch.... It's not looking good for the new sergeant.

We return to the moat and notice that the wolf is on the prowl on the far side. We hit on a scheme to entice it over the 'moat' to us where we can despatch it discreetly. With the wolf removed, we can then move in and attack the hobbit when he's alone. He's tough, but tough enough to deal with all of us.

Nerull creeps up to the hole to put this plan into action. She hides in the snow. The wolf does seem to notice her. Then the wolf heads back toward the farmhouse. As Nerull continues to wait she sees a post at the top of the hill, looks like a flag pole. A way for Bedrick signal if it's safe for his co-conspirators to move in?

Nerull dresses up an *unseen servant* in Amatlo's spare trousers and jumper, and gives it a sword to hold. The unseen servant advances, in an ostentatious manner in the hope that it attracts the wolf's attention. The rest of the party creep up close to the pit. The wolf returns and spies the party, although the pit still separates us from it. The unseen servant is then sent

up to the pit edge. The wolf growls at the unseen servant, but doesn't cross. The wolf's attention is divided between the unseen servant and Amatlo.

Nerull casts *dancing lights* above the unseen servant, and gets it to advance toward the wolf in a menacing fashion. The wolf lunges at the unseen servant. It jumps over the pit, destroying the unseen servant and landing on our side of the pit. Yorgill fires his bow, and hits it with an arrow. The combat kicks off. Flay engages in melee and inflicts much damage before being heavily mauled and brought to the ground. Adam eventually manages to take the beast down.

We're just putting ourselves back together and administering potions when Jools spots the hobbit creeping down toward us on the far side of the pit. Amatlo fires crossbow without giving warning. But he misses him. Obviously a warning shot. The hobbit leaps the pit and attacks Adam! He misses. The fight is joined. A Doom spell is resisted.

Jools can't get into the combat. Looks around for reinforcements. We surround the hobbit. He takes down Flay, but then throws away one of his axes. Caius rushes into help Flay and gets cut down by the hobbit as well. Furious fighting ensues as Melcor, Adam and Yorgill continue the melee. Jools shoots into melee. Hits Melcor. Then Yorgill takes a massive swing and takes out Melcor. He kills him with no hope of resuscitation. Oh dear.

Jools puts another arrow into the hobbit. But the hobbit takes down Yorgill. And then takes down Adam. This just leaves Amatlo and Nerull as the last ones standing! Is this a hobbit or the terminator? Amatlo shoots with his crossbow. He's still coming! Finally, Nerull launches a *burning hands* which is enough to bring him down. There's much significant healing. Meanwhile Jools has gone over the rise to investigate Bedrick's home.

Jools surveys a hobbit hole. She searches for traps along the way, following the path down to the courtyard. She notices the tracks in the snow avoid a large woodpile, and assume that it's trapped. Paw prints head into an out building, evidently where the wolf lived. Most of the tracks head to the main entrance of the building. Jools enters slowly. The hallway within is a bit of a mess. A lamp is burning. She can see axes, cloaks, boots, bundles of untidy crap. There are four doorways off here. She goes through the first door on the left to the living room, where there are two large chests. She unlocks them. Within is a large ship's lamp. Could it fit atop the flag pole? To signal? Beyond a partition are stacks of cloth and lamp oil. Jools unwraps a lens for the lamp. Curious.

Jools searches the bedroom. When she opens the wardrobe, there's an ominous click, rapidly followed by a second click and then a boom. It all goes black for Jools.

Meanwhile, Amatlo has ascertained that there's nothing magical on either Bedrick's body or that of the wolf. Fay tends to Melcor's corpse. His bow is magical, now seems to belong to Yorgill. Eventually they all go to the hobbit house, and after some searching they find the unconscious Jools in the bedroom. She had been knocked out by a poisonous vial. A secret door behind wardrobe leads to a 5 ft by 10 ft room. Inside is a small chest, some barrels and boxes and a couple of small battle axes. We search for more traps.

There are two small pouches inside. One contains 8 gold rilks and 29 silver aruns. The other pouch has an old silver necklace and a pendant. We can't find anything else that incriminates him, or any other writing.

Flay inspects the post. The lantern can be hung here. It would be visible for about 12 miles. We have yellow/orange, green, blue, and red lenses. This is obviously a code signal the alert 'Skarra' and his conspirators as to whether the coast is clear. We have to decide which signal will be the most likely to lead them into our trap. With no clue as to which lens we need, we decide that green is the most likely. It was on top of the pole when we arrived.

We move the bodies, and prepare our trap for the evil elven supremacists.

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It snows in the night. We work to fill in the trench, and reset the trap successfully. Well done Nerull and Jools. We lay an ambush. Jools in the trench. Adam in a nook at the top of the rise. Flay and Amatlo in the house. Caius in an illusion of the woodpile. Yorgil in the wolf house. Nerull is going to be refilling the lantern disguised as a hobbit.

Just after dusk, Jools sees the bridge lever move and hears the sound of very faint footsteps. Adam sees a figure and gives the signal that Flay sees. Nerull comes out in hobbit's clothing. The figure stalks out of woodland and stands at the top of the rise, 15 feet from Nerull now. Jools pokes her head out to get a clear shot at the figure.

The figure remains motionless for several minutes just looking at Nerull. She returns to the house and opens the door. The figure doesn't come toward the door but instead approaches the door to the wood shed (where Yorgill is). Nerull notices that figure has a whistle in its mouth.

Figure pushes the door a little way, but doesn't open. Nerull sends a ghost sound into the wolf house. A low growling sound. The bloke slams the door and looks at Nerull, realising that he isn't a hobbit. He blows on the whistle and legs it. Everyone gives chase. As he runs, Nerull buries a hand axe, in his back. The illusion of the wood pile vanishes, and Caius leaps out and stabs him (poorly). Jools shoots at him, misses. Adam shoots him.

Eventually Caius takes him down with a magic missile spell. Flay assumes there are others out there and he carries on down the path looking for the scout's confederates. Flay reaches a horse tied to a tree. Flay calms the horse, and leads it back. The horse seems to have been alone.

The body (a young elven mail) has nothing incriminating on him, nor any magic paraphernalia.

We head down to where the horse was tied up. Adam finds some more horse tracks, galloping off toward the town. Adam takes the horse and pursues. We don't bother to track just head to the town. Flay runs on ahead. When Adam reaches the village he searches for tracks around the closed gate. He sees about half a dozen horses that seem to have skirted around the village. Now we must track. Presumably they have to stop and camp at some point. Their horses can't keep going in the dark, so even on foot we have a chance of keeping pace. The bad guys take the track toward the Nyr'Danr road. There's a village called Geldon a couple of miles. We give chase.

At the Nyr'Danr road the tracks split up. Two ride toward Nyr'Danr and three toward Hornwick. We head to Hornwick. Our horses are there and if we can get the bad guys there, there might be a chance to get back to Geldon by dawn. The tracks seem to continue to go straight to Hornwick. We scout around to see if they've just ridden straight through.

Nerull and Yorgill walk back to Ferrenden, get a horse and then ride after the others to Hornwick.

Meanwhile, the rest of us discover that the horsemen did not stop in Hornwick... they went straight down to the Shire. We pick up our horses that we left in Hornwick and then pursue them down the Shire Road. Leaving a note for Nerull and Yorgill we continue down the road. Flay is getting progressively angrier. He feels as though they have failed the Duke by letting these people slip through their fingers. After about four hours of travelling down this road Yorgill catches up with us.

We ride through the cold, cold night.

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It is around dawn, and we have reached the junction where the road splits between the Shire (south) and the Shire Wood (to the west). Horses turn off east, and leave the road. They are now about three hours ahead of us. Jools rides into a ditch. The horse is injured so we're forced to abandon it. After a while we come to a fairly swollen river.

Our quarry tried to cross this river when they reached it. Flay notices that only two of them made it. After a few minutes searching, 50 feet downstream, we find a horse and rider. They are very dead. But they are on the other bank. We throw a rope across the river and then *animate* it to get across.

The body we find is another elf. We search him and his horse's saddlebags. We find survival equipment, camping gear, food. We can't get our horses across the river, so we're faced with a decision: should we follow on foot? Jools is in a very bad way, so we agree that it's best that she rests here and then takes the horses back to Hornwick later. Yorgill will also remain. The rest of us to follow on foot after the remaining horsemen.

We soon notice that one of the remaining two horses was injured on landing, and is now slowing the two riders down. We can see a couple of mounds in the snow. We find the bodies of two horses and another elf. He has had his throat slit. So have the horses. Adam doesn't see any tracks leading away from here. That's odd. Pass without trace? Druids don't leave footprints....

Therefore all of the visitors to Bedrick's home have been accounted for apart from one - and he was undoubtedly the ringleader... and a rather black-hearted ringleader at that. We take all the bodies and head back in the direction of Rew. Back in Hornwick by the evening.

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Go back to the Lodge, and return to Hornwick. Bormane, the Knight of Ferrenden, finds us in the tavern in Hornwick. He wants an explanation as to why we murdered Bedrick. He seems quite cross. Bormane insists that he come with us back to Rew, with his squire and the Friaress. Amatlo agrees.

We arrive back at Rew in the evening and have interview with the Duke. Flay apologises for failing to apprehend the ringleader and for the death of Melcor, but Torman seems satisfied. Bormane does a lot of harrumphing, but is overruled by his duke.