

the Death of a Leader

An Adventure For The Lord of the Rings™ Roleplaying Game

AUTHOR: Madulian Snowmantle

'The Death of a Leader' is an adventure for The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game set in Eriador in the years leading up to the War of the Ring (TA 2930). It will challenge a group of four to five beginning heroes. A connection with the the Rangers of the North is a pre but a necessity. If the company consists of more than five heroes, or heroes with more than 5 advancements and/or superior weaponry, the Narrator should increase the number of opponents, their skill level, or their weaponry.

Background

The year is 2930. A powerful servant of Sauron, Durba, has been given the task to eliminate the line Chieftains of the Dunedain. This servant is wealthy and powerful. This servant has been given command over a group of 200 orcs and several trolls. Using middle men, Durba has been buying 'eyes' in the North of Middle Earth where the Dunedain are supposed to live. None of the hirelings know the true identity or location of whom they serve.

The characters enter this adventure just after a group of these hired eyes have spotted Arador, the Chieftain of the Dunedain, and directed him north towards a trap. After an initial encounter with orcs and Arador, the characters will meet these hired eyes. From them they will learn that a trap has been set for the Chieftain. Whatever the characters do, they will not be able to prevent this ambush. Upon arriving on the battlefield in the Coldfells, Arador will already be dead. One of the Rangers who was with Arador will ask the characters to retrieve the ring Barahir. After having retrieved the ring, that is an important family heirloom of the Chieftain, the characters will most likely return to Rivendell.

In the appendix of the Lord of the Rings you can see that Arador's son, Arathorn, will die two years later. If so desired, the narrator can use this adventure as a starting point to reveal the identity of Durba and prevent the death of Arathorn and his family. If they can succeed at this is up to the narrator. If you follow the books, Arathorn will die but his wife Gilraen and his son Aragorn will survive.

If the time period or the exact location do not suit your campaign, Arador can be replaced by any king or important nobleman who is against Sauron and could pose a threat if that line survived. Sauron knows that his preparations for another assault on Middle Earth will find its completion within a century or so. Therefore he will try to eliminate as much threats as he can before the time of the war.

Act 1: The Great East Road

The scene begins on the Great East Road and it must be around noon. A drizzle has been coming down all morning. The road is slicky because of the mud. The characters are travelling from Bree to Rivendell and are close to the Hoarwell River.

Scene 1: Orc Encounter

The characters appear from a small forest. Upon clearing the last trees they see the Hoarwell River. The bridge across the river is still more than 100 yards away. The sight might have quite enjoyable but two things disturb it. The rain and a group of 4 orcs that are halfway across the bridge. The orcs seem in a hurry and are running away from the characters to the other side. A spot TN 10 reveals that the orcs wear only leather armour, and carry a short sword at

their side. Depending on the characters actions several things can happen. The characters:

- **wait and observe:** the orcs reach the other side of the bridge. On the other side they leave the road at once and hurry north until they disappear in the forest on the other side. The orcs look back from time to time but won't see the characters.
- **sneak across the bridge and follow:** all characters must make a stealth test. The orcs look back several times and must make an opposed spot test. If the characters are not spotted, the orcs slow down after they have reached the forest and start following the road from a distance. Those characters that have stealth 4+ notice that the orcs are using that skill very well. If characters are spotted, the orcs break into run and follow the same path as described above.
- **charge:** the orcs are allowed an observe spot test TN 15 to notice the characters when they emerge from the forest. If the characters are not noticed yet, the orcs get another chance when the characters enter the bridge. The orcs have reached the other side and may test for observe (listen or spot) TN 10. If the characters are spotted, the orcs break into a run following the path as described above.

If the orcs are running for their lives, they will split up. Once out of sight, they will try to use:

- stealth to disappear
- natural terrain to hide their tracks like creeks, pools or rocky surface.

It is not essential that one of the orcs escapes but adds something to the tension among the players.

Orc Scout

These orcs are lousy fighters but fair scouts. On the breast of their worn leather armour a sign can be distinguished: a red background with a black anvil and white skull on top of it. If caught alive for questioning, they can only reveal that they are looking for a Dunedain leader called Arador. If there is a Dunedain or Elf among the characters, increase the difficulty for questioning by 5. If the optional rule for combat pacing is used (page 270 of the core rulebook), these orcs can be considered 1 success opponents. Except for their swords, they carry nothing with them of any value.

Attributes: Nimbleness 8(+1), Perception 10(+2), Strength 7(0).

Reactions: Stamina +1, Swiftiness +2, Willpower 0

Defence: 10

Move Rate: 6

Orders: Rogue

Order Abilities: Fleet Footed

Advancements: 0

Skills: Armed Combat: Blades (Short Sword) +2, Armed Combat: Natural Weapons +2, Language: Westron +3, Observe +6, Run +5, Stealth (Sneak) +4, Track +4,

Edges: Keen-nosed, Night-eyed, Tireless, Dodge

Flaws: Craven, Hatred (Dwarves, Elves)

Special Abilities: Armour (tough skin, 1), Curse of Daylight, Natural Weapon (claws, 1 point)

Health: 8

Scene 2: Dunedain Encounter

Regardless of whether the characters are back on the road or travelling cross country, they will meet a group of two Dunedain Rangers. Should the characters still be following the orcs, then the Rangers will ambush the orcs and kill them before the characters can interfere. The Rangers wear supple leather armour, dark green hooded cloaks and soft leather boots. Both carry a longsword and a longbow and their faces have been painted in camouflage colours. The Rangers will be neutral towards the characters. Primarily they want to know if and how many orcs the heroes have seen and where they were going. After a minute or so, two more Rangers silently appear next to the others. If an Elf or Dunedain is present among the characters, they will instantly recognise the tallest of the newcomers as Arador, Chieftain of the Dunedain. If not, he introduces himself as Wanderer. Just like his companions, he carries a longsword, dagger and longbow.

Arador's presence is soothing and any friction between the characters and the first two Rangers is quickly removed. Arador will also ask of the characters have already had lunch. If not, he offers them lunch. If the heroes accept, Arador quickly locates a spot where everybody can be seated dry. During lunch, most of the conversation will seem light but Arador tries to figure out who the heroes are, where they are going, and if he can trust them. If he decides

to trust them and knows where they are headed, he will reveal that orc scout parties are looking for something in the east of Arnor. So far they have been escaping the Dunedain. Arador has learned that their hideout is located in the Misty Mountains north of Rivendell so that is where he is headed. As the characters are heading for Rivendell, Arador asks if they can deliver the following message to Elrond: "I am going to the Coldfells to scout for the hide-out of the orcs who are searching these lands."

After the lunch, Arador departs in north eastern direction with his three companions.

Act 2: An Important Discovery

The characters have been informed that there is a small village, Halthro about half a day travel from the bridge across the Mitheithel (Hoarwell River). As you are near the Trollshaws, that is one of the safest places to stay. If the heroes decide to continue to that village, they will arrive there during twilight. The village is already in sight several hundreds of meters south of the road when heroes become aware of a small campfire about a hundred meter north from the road.

Scene 1: Campfire

If the heroes visit the campfire they will encounter four men there. Even in the light of the fire it is obvious that these men don't take care of themselves very well. All have ragged looking long hair and beards and their clothes look dirty and badly taken care off. And their personal hygiene isn't all they don't take care of very well. Also the campsite is disorderly and the fire is smoking more than one would normally expect. All the three men do when the characters get closer is glance in their direction once and free their weapons from their sheaths. It may look menacing to the untrained eye but anyone with weapon skill six or higher can see these are not professionals except for one, who is most likely the leader. The men remain seated and initially don't react when spoken to. After half a minute or so of silence, the leader tells the characters to be off. They are not welcome here. The men will answer no questions and remain more or less civilized in their attempts to usher the heroes on their way to the village. Only when the heroes decide to ignore the four men and build their own camp next to their camp, will they start to threaten with and use violence. If the heroes leave, nothing else will happen.

Scene 2: Halthro

Halthro is very small village. In total there are about thirty houses surrounded by a wooden palisade. Most of the houses are made of wood and are in a fair condition. There are two partially stone buildings. The first belong to Bergond who is the wealthiest man in town and also the mayor. The second partially stone building belongs to the Hergu family who belongs to one of the founders. Surrounding the village are several fields where farmers from the village keep their crops. No farms lie outside the palisade because of the danger from the nearby Trollshaws. Long ago many visitors came to Halthro and the residents were good and happy folk. Nowadays the Great East Road is rarely used and the inhabitants have grown distrustful of strangers. Strangers can setup their tents within the palisade but that is about all the hospitality that is being offered.

Before the characters can enter Halthro, they must first convince the two guards to be allowed entrance. Almost any story will do. Showing any sign of hostility towards the guards will keep the gate blocked. One of the guards now gets Igond, the son of Bergond, who will take care of the characters unless it is more than two hours after sunset. Igond is an enthusiastic youth of about 16 years who gladly tells about Halthro and the heroics deeds of his forefathers who protected this village from Troll attacks. If the characters want to resupply, they can ask most villagers during daytime.

When asked about the strangers who are camping on the other side of the road, the inhabitants will say that these are miscreants must up to no good. No one who is not aligned with the trolls sleeps outside. The four men arrived this afternoon. They came to Halthro for food but that is it. As long as they pose no threat and pay for their food, the inhabitants of Halthro will not bother them.

Scene 3: Nightly Visit

If the characters decide to keep an eye on the four men, they will discover that

orcs are coming to the men during the night. The orcs arrive from the road and leave north. In total three orc patrols will arrive. If the characters decide to observe only. Upon interfering the men and orcs will attack. The orcs are identical to the ones described in Act 1. The statistics for the regular men are the same as for the Dunlendings in the Core Book. The leader is described below. Any of the men will surrender upon reaching health level Wounded or worse. They are hirelings and have no desire to die yet. At the first sign of danger, the leader will try to flee into the night leaving his men to their fate.

Upon questioning the men, the characters will learn that these men are paid servants of the Enemy. They were to locate a man called Arador or Wanderer with a specific description. Once found, a pigeon was to be released with the location and heading. They met him this morning and convinced him to go to an area north of Rivendell where an army will be ready to ambush him.

It is essential to the adventure that the characters learn from the hirelings at the campfire that they have sent Arador to his death. If the characters decided not to keep an eye on the campsite during the night, try to setup something during the night that might give the characters a reason to venture out during the night and visit the camp.

Leader Men

Attributes: *Nimbleness 8(+1), Perception 7(0), Strength 10(+2).*

Reactions: *Stamina +1, Swiftness +1, Willpower +1*

Defence: *11*

Move Rate: *6*

Orders: *Warrior*

Order Abilities: *Evasion*

Advancements: *2*

Skills: *Armed Combat: Blades (Short Sword) +6, Observe +3, Run +3, Stealth (Sneak) +3, Track +2*

Edges: *Weapon Mastery, Dodge*

Health: *9*

Act 3: The Great Hunt

The character now have to find Arador before it is too late. Whatever they do, it will be too late. The trap will be sprung and Arador killed. If the characters had been present, they would most likely have been killed. They will get their fight though but a little more down to scale with a group of orcs that are running home with the ring Barahir.

Scene 1: Hunt for Arador

No matter how fast the characters travel to catch up with Arador, they will arrive too late. The distance equals about 75 miles through mostly hilly and wooded terrain. They will be travelling close to the Trollshaws if they take the shortest route. It is assumed the characters arrive on the battlefield during daylight. The carnage is obvious and dozens of orcs and one hill-troll lie dead on the ground. Between the dead orcs the characters will find the bodies of Arador and his three companions. All are dead except for one. He is incapacitated and hovering on the edge of consciousness. He confesses that he played dead after he saw Arador fall. The last remaining orcs have taken all belongings of Arador including his sword and the ring Barahir. The last is a precious family heirloom and must be taken back to Rivendell. The rangers ask the characters if they want to catch of the last 10 orcs and retrieve the ring.

Scene 2: Hunt for orcs

It is not difficult to follow the trail left behind by the orcs and a hill-troll. The orcs have a head start of half a day. A Track test TN 5 will do in this muddy ground. After several miles a Track test TN 10 will reveal that the hill-troll leaves the orcs. If the hill-troll is tracked, it leads to a cave where the troll is resting and recovering from its wounds (he is Injured). It will fight to death is challenged but does not have the ring Barahir. Use the hill-troll description in FB&WM.

The orcs, who have the ring had decided to make camp before sunrise to hide from the vile sun. If the characters did not take too much time at the battlefield, they can catch up with the orcs before sunset. They are resting in a thickets of trees. If not, they will have to hunt orc through the darkness of the night. The company consists of seven orc scouts (of which 5 are already Injured and thus have become 1 success opponents), five regular orcs from the Core

Book (2 Injured and 1 Wounded), and an orc leader. The orc leader carries Arador's belongings.

Orc Leader

Attributes: *Nimbleness 7(0), Strength 9(+1).*

Reactions: *Stamina +2, Swiftiness +1*

Defence: *10*

Move Rate: *6*

Orders: *Warrior*

Order Abilities: *Favoured Weapon (Scimitar)*

Advancements: *2*

Skills: *Armed Combat: Blades (Scimitar) +6, Armed Combat: Natural Weapons +4,*

Edges: *Keen-nosed, Night-eyed*

Flaws: *Craven, Hatred (Dwarves, Elves)*

Special Abilities: *Armour (tough skin, 1), Curse of Daylight, Natural Weapon (claws, 1 point)*

Health: *9*

Scene 3: Rivendell

At the battlefield the wounded Ranger will try to convince the characters to take Arador's body with them when they go to Rivendell. During the next day, before sunset, the characters will encounter a group of elves from Rivendell who are led by Glorfindel. They are looking for Arador. Upon receiving the bad news, the elves will take over the burden from the characters and carry Arador to Rivendell. In Rivendell the characters will have to tell their story and they will be honoured for their deeds.

Rewards

A point of renown should be awarded to all characters. Even though Arador did not survive, they rescued his body and retrieved the ring Barahir. Each character should also get 300XP for this achievement.