

# ESCORT THE WAGON TRAIN

## Setting

### Location

The road between Annúminas and Fornost Erain

### Date

10 *Gwirth* (early spring) TA 1110

### Weather

Cold (15°-45°), 40% chance of sleet or snow showers.

## Background

### Movement of the Royal Library

The Noirin family have been charged by the King with care of the Royal library and are currently in the process of moving many of the valuable books from the old library in Annúminas to the new building in Fornost. However, due to an unusual upsurge in orc raids this spring the family troops are busy scouring the hills to the northwest of their estates for a hidden orc nest and cannot spare the men to escort the latest wagon train. The Noirin have therefore approached the party offering them 2gp each a day to escort a group of three wagons containing precious and rare volumes from Annúminas to Fornost, a journey of 110 miles.

### Intrigue in the King's Council

Unknown to the House of Noirin the Tarma family is planning to use this as a chance to increase their standing in the King's Council by setting up an ambush by some local bandits, intending to discredit the Noirin enough to get them thrown off the council. The intention is to blame them for the loss of the valuable books, and throw in accusations of complacency in sending a few untrustworthy adventurers rather than their own troops as escort.

The Tarma family has been in contact with the bandits' leader, a Dúnadan named Darogàn for some time and have been secretly paying him small amounts of gold in order to harass their rivals. Darogàn is in fact the illegitimate son of a minor member of the Hyam family and is bitter about the treatment he received from his father. He is therefore more than happy to scheme with the Tarmas.

## Details

### The Venture

The assignment is offered to the party by Leratir, a captain in the Dagarím Noirin, who meets with them in *Peregrine's Stoop*, a popular tavern on the edge of Annúminas. He explains that the wagon train will take two days to travel from Annúminas to Fornost; the night will be spent in the village of Rood roughly halfway between the two settlements. It will take roughly ten hours to reach Rood from Annúminas and a further eight to reach Fornost the next day. The party's instructions are to stay by the wagons at all costs. In other words ensuring that the wagons reach safety is the priority not pursuit of some worthless highwaymen.

The books being transported are not of value other than as collectors' items. They are mainly obscure linguistic texts, or philosophical treatises, which are either highly embellished or well illustrated. Selling the texts would require a specialist contact in order to find the right sort of

collector, and one willing to increase their collection nefariously, since they are highly traceable – each volume bears the Royal Seal on the inside of the front cover. Leratir is happy to explain these details or at least make clear to the party that there would be little value in their attempting to make off with the books.

The reward offered is that each member of the party will receive 2gp as payment. Board and lodging at the inn in Rood has been arranged, along with provisions for the journey itself. Leratir is actually authorised to offer as much as 4gp each if pressed.

## The Ambush

The journey will be uneventful apart from a wagon or two heading in the opposite direction, until just before nightfall on the first day. At this time a group of six bandits will attack at a bend in the road around a low hill.

As the wagons round the hill a pair of armed horsemen in the road will confront them. A pair of archers on the hill will cover the two riders and another pair of bandits will spring from bushes to the rear. The bandits expect a quick surrender and will attempt to flee if things start to go against them, heading North towards their hideout in an abandoned hunting lodge. The archers have horses hidden behind the hill and will ride to the swordsmen and pick them up. The bandits can easily out run the characters, who are on foot.

They will take a day to reach their hideout during which time the party should easily reach Fornost with no further incident and report to the Royal Library. There they will receive the thanks of the librarian and also their cash from an agent of the Noirin family. While in Fornost they will discover that there is a substantial (10gp) reward for the capture of the bandit leader Darogàn and realise he fits the description of one of the mounted bandits. This should lead them to seek the bandit hideout.

## Notes

## NPCs

Name / #	Race	Lv l	Hits	AT	DB	S h	G r	Mele e	Missile / 2 <sup>nd</sup> ry	M M	Notes
Wagon drivers / 3	Northmen	2	25	5	15	N	N	45ss	-	10	
Darogàn / 1	Dúnadan	5	55	9	30	N	N	80bs	30dg	25	Bandit Leader. Broadsword of high q. +10 to OB, worth 20gp.
Bandit Archers / 2	Eriadoran	3	35	5	25	N	N	55ss	55sb	20	
Bandits / 8	Eriadoran	3	35	7	25	N	Y	60bs	-	15	6 remain at the bandit hideout while the ambush is underway
Leratir / 1	Dúnadan	7	80	13	40	N	N	95bs	50dg	20	+10 bs worth 4gp Captain of the Dagarím Noirin, acting as agent to the Noirin family in engaging a party of adventurers to protect the wagons.

## Maps

### Ambush



- a. **Horsemen** – as the wagons clear the corner two horsemen emerge from behind the bushes and block the road here. They command the wagons to halt and draw their swords.
- b. **Archers** – As the horsemen shout the two archers appear over the brow of the hill and train their weapons on the wagons.
- c. **Swordsmen** – At the same time two bandits break cover from these bushes at the rear of the wagon train. They are well concealed (-25 to perception).
- d. **Bandit escape route** – When they suffer a fatality the bandits will attempt to flee in this direction.

### Abandoned Hunting Lodge – Bandit HQ

The bandit HQ is an old hunting lodge in the woods roughly halfway between lake Evendim and the North Downs, and about 30 miles north of the town of Rood. The lodge was abandoned 50 years ago but although run down is still a grand imposing structure. The lodge once supported a number of permanent staff and could hold several visitors and entertain them in the evenings after a long day hunting and fishing. However in the 50 years since, it has become run down. The underground reservoir uphill has become fouled and no longer feeds running water to the villa, the bandits must fetch their water from the lake each day.

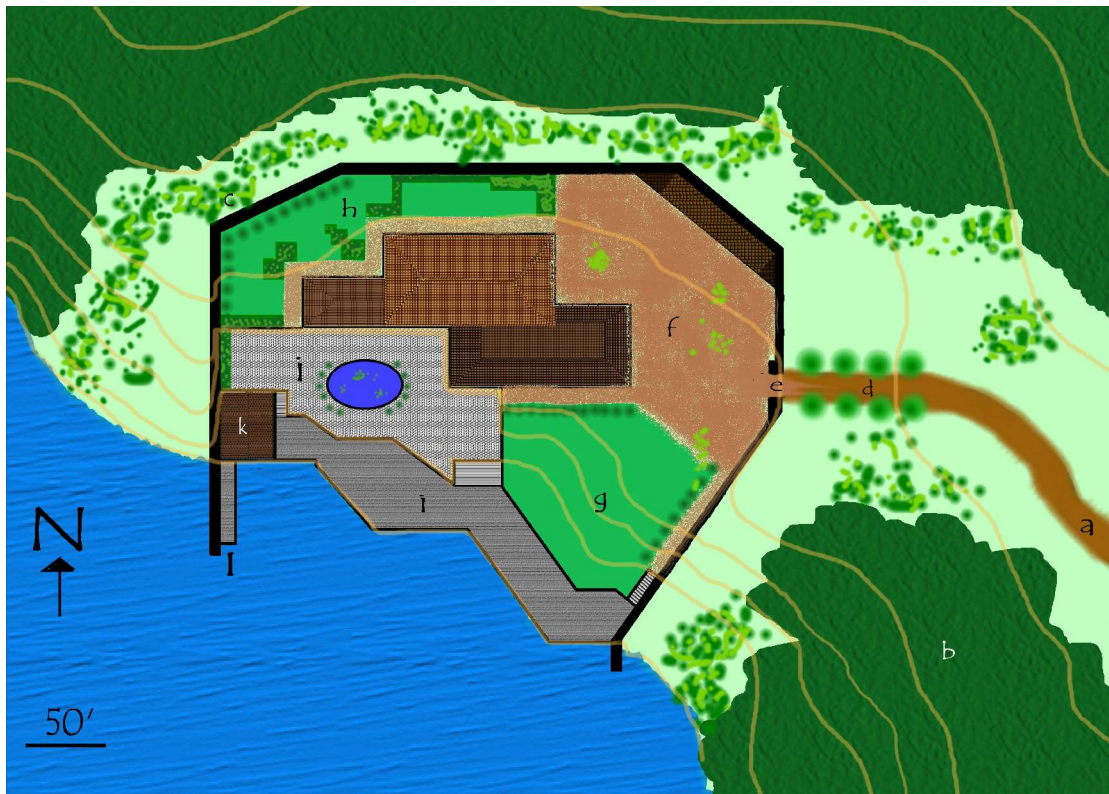
The bandit Darogàn discovered it two years ago, when fleeing south from a robbery on one of the lonely mansions between Fornost Erain and Bareketta. Soon after, he gathered a band of followers to settle there as it provides a central location to strike at many locations in Central Arthedain.

## Location

An overgrown trail leads from the surrounding grasslands through the hills to the west of the woods, to the lodge. The lodge itself sits on the shore at the northern end of the lake in a man-made clearing. The clearing is now ragged and shrinking. Younger trees skirt the edge of the woods and there are many straggly bushes and shrubs between the woods and the walls of the compound.

## Grounds

The Lodge is situated within a walled compound with a single entrance on the eastern side. The walls are 20' high and jut out into the lake at the shore, which drops steeply. Climbing the wall from the outside is **Very Hard** in most places but in two places to the north and north west is made **Medium** by the crumbling caused by the growth of the wild shrubs on the outside as they climb the old stonework.

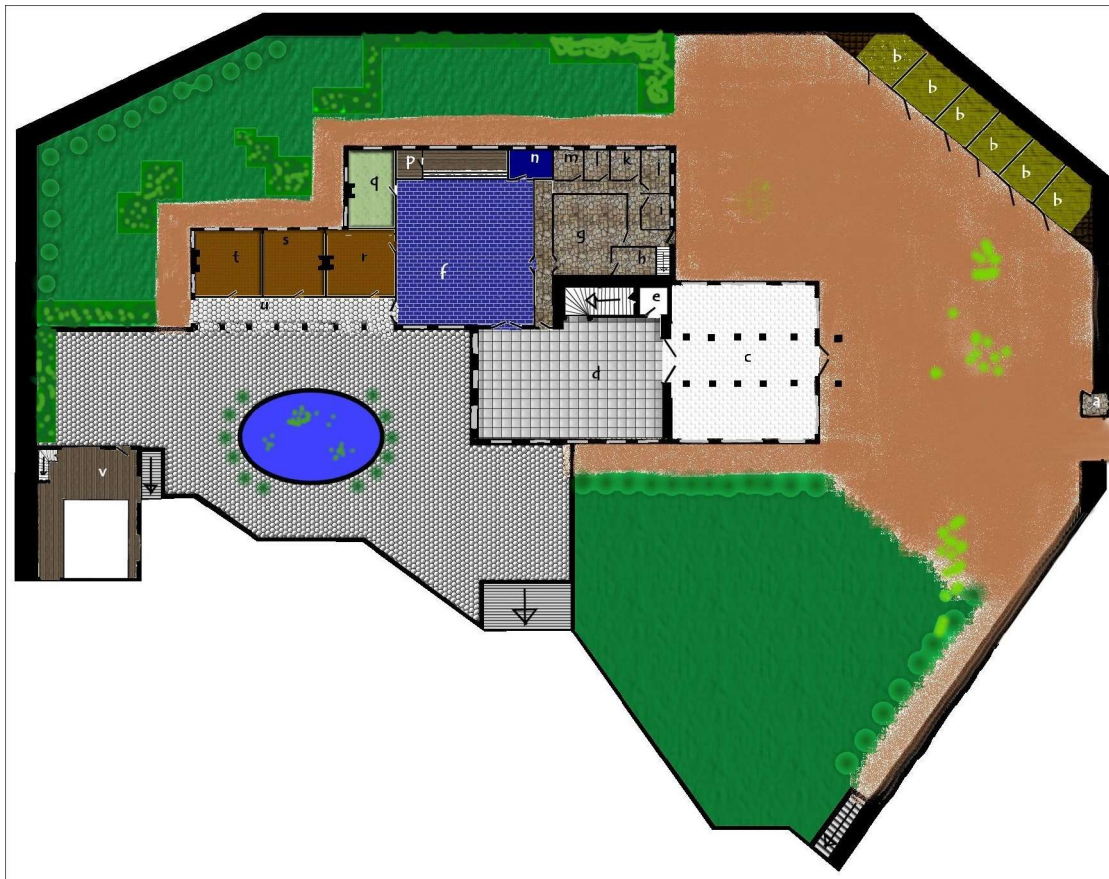


- a. **Road** – Here the rough track through the woods turns into a paved surface, now overgrown with grass and weeds between the slabs.
- b. **Woods** – The woods surrounding the compound are mostly tall old oaks and beech trees. Younger trees line the edges of the clearing with scrub and wild shrubs encroaching further. Many of the trees near the edge of the forest are tall enough to provide a view into the compound and most are **Light** to **Medium** to climb.
- c. **Crumbled Wall** – In two places to the north the encroaching scrub plants have reached the wall and begun climbing. This has not only damaged the wall and caused the top half to tumble, but also made it much easier to climb, since the climbing plants provide good handholds. The walls here are 10'-12' high and **Medium** to climb.
- d. **Avenue** – Here the road passes between two rows of tall slender beech trees. Designed purely for aesthetic reasons in the days of the hunting lodge here, they actually obscure the approach of anyone not using the road from the watcher at the gate.
- e. **Gate** – The gate has long since rotted away. Part of the old gates lies against the southern gatepost, a pile of rotting timber and rusting iron. The gate however is watched constantly by one of the bandits from the old gatehouse. From the outside his presence is **Hard** to detect during the day, but **Light** at night due to his lantern.



- f. **Drive** – The drive was once fine gravel edged with paving stones. Now the drive is overgrown and muddy with entire shrubs in several places.
- g. **Lawn** – This lawn slopes down towards the shore promenade, now weed ridden and edged with an untidy hedge.
- h. **Formal garden** – This part of the grounds was once a well laid out garden of formal lawns and hedges with trees against the back wall. Now the hedges are untidy and some of the trees are dead.
- i. **Patio** – The patio surrounds a deep pool once containing fish but now choked with weeds and stagnant water. The patio is in fairly good condition with some weeds poking through the stones near the edges.
- j. **Promenade** – The lower patio provides a pleasant promenade along the lake shore and is reached by a narrow (6') set of steps at each end and a broad staircase in the centre or by the sloping lawn. The promenade is about 10' lower than the patio so being observed from the house is impossible except at the eastern end.
- k. **Boathouse** – The boathouse lies at the western end of the promenade and can be entered by water - through the rotten doors – or three ways by land – from the patio to the upper floor, or the promenade or quay to the lower floor.
- l. **Quay** – The quay runs out from the western end of the grounds along with the 20' wall. Only the last 5' or so is visible from the house due to the terraced promenade.

#### Ground Level (O)



- a. **Gatehouse** – The gatehouse is a small room built into the bottom of the northern gateway. Two small windows look down the avenue from the eastern side of this 6' square chamber. One of the bandits is always stationed here. If they see anyone approach they pull a lever, which rings a bell in the butler's room (O.j) alerting the rest of the gang. It takes the gang 20 rounds to get ready and cover all the various entrances and windows.

- b. **Stables** – There are six large stables but only four are used by the bandits which is why usually no more than seven go out on raids (Darogàn will never share a horse except in dire emergency).
- c. **Foyer** – This splendid hallway has a white marble floor and a series of columns supporting a graceful arching roof. Sadly most of the windows are now broken, and the floor is grubby and wet in places. The front doors also badly rotten, though the bandits have rigged a bar, which will be in place if the alarm is raised. The bar will take 3-6 rounds of strong attacks to break through. When the alarm is raised 4 bandits stand here. The archers will take up positions by the windows covering the driveway to the gate; the other two will stand either side of the door ready to spring on anyone who breaks through the door.
- d. **Reception hall** – A large and airy room lit well by huge windows during the day. And floored with large marble tiles. A stairway leads up to the gallery above. If the alarm is raised then two bandits stand near the doors ready to attack anyone unfriendly that enters from the foyer.
- e. **Cloakroom** – A small room intended for storing guest's cloaks as they enter the lodge. Within the gloom it is clear from the smell that some sort of animal once lived in here but no longer. It is a **Hard** perception roll to see a small but valuable (5sp) silver brooch lying in the filth in one corner, having long ago fallen from the owner's cloak.
- f. **Main Hall** – This once grand banqueting hall boasts a blue marble floor and an exit to the veranda along the south of the house. In case of alarm two bandits will be in here to defend the rear entrance or to run around in an attempt to surprise those attacking the front door. The northern end of the hall contains a raised stage for musicians, etc., which is now suffering from dry rot. There is a 50% chance that anyone heavier than 100lbs will fall through the boards and end up with 1-10 hits of damage. The hall is mainly filled now with garbage and junk, piled here by the bandits when clearing the upper floors of the house. This includes damp rotting carpet, broken furniture and so on, and also kitchen waste.  
The western doors are both shut and the locks are rusted making picking **Sheer Folly**. The keys are lost and the doors are still solid. It would take 5-10 rounds to break through.
- g. **Kitchen** – This large kitchen contains a large fire and stove to the northwest, which is lit constantly by the bandits, as it also heats part of the house. There is also a large, solid L-shaped work surface in the centre, and a pair of sinks along the north wall. In the northeastern corner is a dumb waiter travelling up to the first floor servery.
- h. **Storeroom** – this large storeroom contains the bandit's food supplies. It is lined with shelves, dry and fairly cool.
- i. **Staff bathroom** – This once formed the staff's bathing facilities. A large tub and sink remain here though there is no longer running water.
- j. **Butler quarters** – One of the bandit's remains here listening for the alarm from the gatehouse. There is a fairly comfortable chair and a rough bed, also a lit fire. The rickety cupboard in the south corner appears to contain nothing, but in fact has a secret compartment, which is **Very Hard** to detect among the mould and damp. Should the alarm be raised the bandit rushes out to shout up the stairs and rouse the others then stands guard at the service entrance around the corner with Darogàn. Darogàn, waits here so that he can attempt to flank would be attackers, but mainly so that he can run for his horse if things look bad.
- k. **Staff bedroom** – The three staff bedrooms each contain a pair of damp and rotten old pallet beds, and a pair of small chests. These were long ago broken open by the bandits, and these rooms are not used.
- l. **Staff bedroom** – see k.
- m. **Staff bedroom** – see k.
- n. **Bathroom** – The main bathroom for guests was once luxuriously appointed. It is now dirty, smelly and damp.
- p. **Storeroom** – There is nothing in here except a pile of broken crates and assorted refuse. It once held props and instruments for the stage shows.
- q. **Study** – The Study is only accessible by either breaking down the door or smashing through the windows including the supports for the thick glass panes. The bandits

haven't bothered because the room looks bare through the windows, except for a few books on the bookshelves. These books are not real however and in fact act as the cover for a hidden safe. The safe is intact and **Very Hard** to open, but unfortunately holds little of apparent worth save a few scraps of parchment which strangely shows no signs of age. In fact there are 5 sheets of Rune Paper V – worth 2gp each, or usable by anyone with knowledge of Imbed spells.

- r. **Reading room** – Rotten bookshelves now line the walls of this unused Reading room. The door to the veranda lies broken and rotting and the wood block flooring is damp and warped.
- s. **Living Room 1** – The two living rooms have been open to the elements for many years. The once finely polished wooden floors are now damp, dirty and warped beyond repair. The doors are rotten and hang broken off their hinges, and most of the glass in the windows is smashed. The fireplaces are blocked. In this room the bandits have been storing firewood in the south-western corner, as it is less damp than the western living room.
- t. **Living Room 2** – As above, but this room has a large pile of broken and rotten furniture in the south-eastern corner, which smells strongly as if a fox or some such has been living in it until fairly recently.
- u. **Veranda** – This covered walkway lays a step above the patio (see Grounds.i) and runs alongside it from the Great Hall to the formal garden. The columns spaced every 6 feet or so along the southern side meet a graceful arching ceiling.
- v. **Upper boathouse** – The upper level of the boathouse is reached from the Patio. The remains of a hoist once used to lift boats out of the water for maintenance hang limply from the roof beams. A half repaired boat lies upside down here on supports. It would take about a day for a skilled worker to make it fit for use again, given suitable tools and materials. A determined search of the cupboards and shelves would reveal amongst the rotten and cobweb covered contents a few well-made tools that are still in good condition. Two large saws, a smaller saw and a plane would together fetch about 9sp.

## First Floor (+1)



- a. **Guestroom** – This room was one of the guest rooms used either by friends of the lodge owner or his younger children. It is now used by one of the bandits. A low bed lies in one corner and a small chair and table in another. Under the bed are a small chest and a metal box. Both are locked, the keys held by the bandit using the room. The box is heavy and clearly contains a fair amount of cash. It is **Very Hard** to pick the lock but once open it contains 1gp, 23sp, 573cp, 784hc, 943qc and a small brooch worth 3sp. The chest is **Medium** to open and contains mostly clothes but also a small, well-crafted pocketknife worth 250cp.
- b. **Guestroom** – This room is home to two of the bandits and contains two beds under each of which is a small chest. Both are **Hard** to pick open, and contain: 1) 2gp 11sp 604cp 854hc 1028qc, some clothes and a small silver horn worth 15sp. 2) 1gp 32sp 421cp 756hc 1212qc, clothes – including a pair of gloves (size 320) that are extremely



well made and keep the wearers hands warm without affecting manual dexterity, and an ornate clasp for a cloak worth 8sp.

- c. **Guestroom** – This room is occupied by the two archers (who are in fact brothers). There is a pair of beds in opposite corners and a large table with a pair of chairs. Three bows lie against the wall when they are not alert and in use a number of spare bowstrings and quivers lie nearby. Under the table is a single large chest, **Hard** to open, which contains the brothers' clothes and loot. The loot consists of 4gp 45sp 762cp 1103hc 1875qc, a set of fine tools for fletching (which give a +5 bonus to that skill) and a small leather pouch containing 8 small emeralds worth 1sp each.
- d. **Guestroom** – A single bed is in one corner with a low table opposite. A long flat trunk lies under the bed containing clothes, 1gp 14sp 670cp 1450hc 1143qc, a leather helm (size 315), and an old short sword. Unknown to its current owner the sword is in fact Númenórean in origin and confers a +10 bonus and is worth around 8gp. This is **Easy** to discern to a knowledgeable person.
- e. **Gallery** – this gallery looks down onto the reception hall below with a 3' rail running around the balcony. The walls show some evidence that paintings used to be hung there, but do so no longer.
- f. **Roof garden** – This roof garden shows many signs of neglect with the planter at the back wall overgrown and untidy. If the weather is fine 2 or 3 bandits rest here in the sunshine joking and chatting.
- g. **Upper hall** – In poor weather the bandits gather here to plot, joke and eat, as the hall remains dry and clean. The walls are lined with a number of stuffed mounted animal heads and large fish (pike and such like), presumably trophies of the original occupants. Most are getting a bit moth eaten and mangy looking but a few might raise 2 or 3sp if sold. The south-eastern corner contains a neat stack of swords belonging to the bandits, where they can grab them as they run to the stairway if the alarm sounds.
- h. **Bathroom** – this is the main bathroom used by the bandits and is still fairly clean though like the rest of the lodge it has no running water.
- i. **Stairway** – This stair leads up to the top floor. The door lock still works but nobody has the key.
- j. **Upper kitchen** – This is a small servery intended for serving meals when the Upper Hall is used. The bandits use it for snacks but usually roast a large animal in the kitchen downstairs then bring it up using the dumb waiter.

## Second Floor (+2)



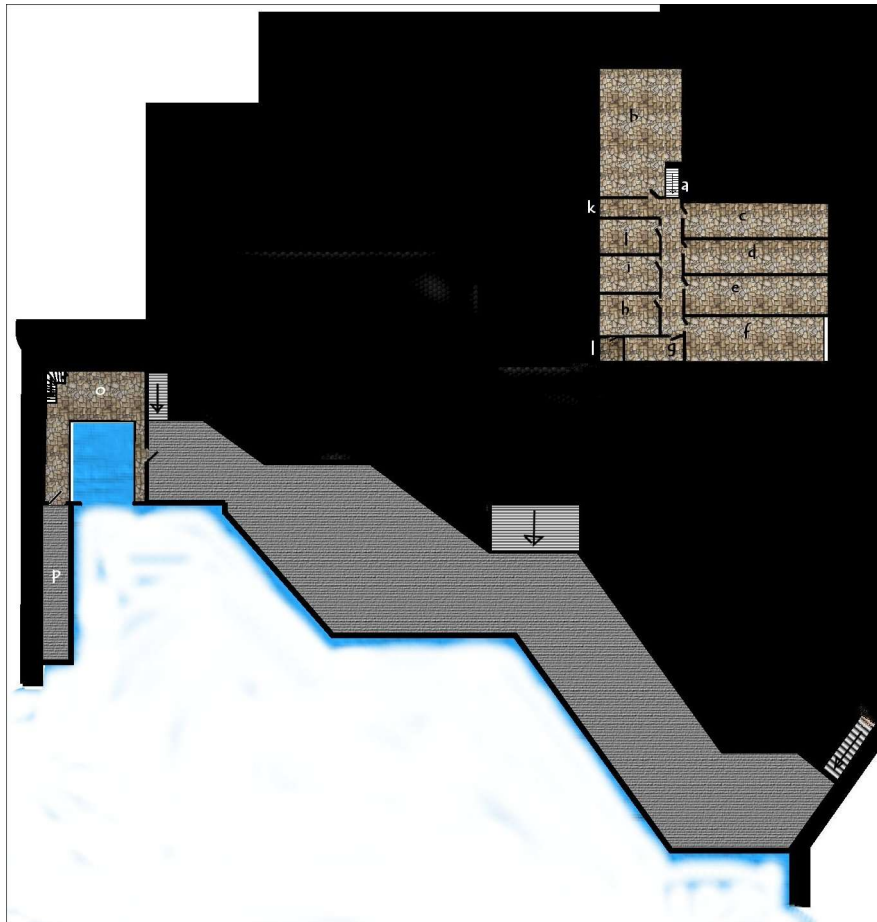
- a. **Hallway** – This wide hallway has a wood floor, which makes very loud footsteps. It is **Hard** to sneak along here in boots.
- b. **Library** – Formerly a library this room contains only empty, dusty bookshelves.
- c. **Music room** – A number of stands for musical instruments lay empty and gathering dust in the old music room. There is also a store of firewood kept here by the bandits for use in heating the upstairs rooms.
- d. **Living room** – Formerly the private living room of the owners of the lodge, this room is now occupied by Darogán. A large heavy desk stands near the fire. The drawers

have been forced open in the past and so nothing valuable lies in them. However one contains a leather bound book with a lockable clasp; **Hard** to pick or **Light** to break off. This is Darogàn's diary and would make very interesting reading to anyone interested in opposing the Tarma family's power mongering efforts in the King's Council as well as incriminating Darogàn himself in a number of recent highway robberies. The diary details a number of meetings that took place in secret in Fornost between agents of the Tarmas and Darogàn.

The few books on the bookshelves are collections of stories about old villains and bandits. One lies open on the desk along with a collection of notes cross referencing the various locations and dates in the different books all concerning the possible locations of the hideout of the notorious bandit of the eighth century, Denglas.

- e. **Bedroom** – Darogàn's quarters. There is a large bed and a chest (**Very Hard**) containing: his clothes, a pair of +5 bracers (size 330); a dagger +5, +10 when thrown; a ring of stealth which adds +10 to sneaking or stalking manoeuvres; 12gp, 48sp, 260cp, 890hc 1500qc; a large but flawed ruby worth 25sp; a silver necklace and matching earrings that are worth 15sp at present but if restored slightly would fetch up to 30sp. Darogàn's +10 broadsword stands resting against the wall by his chest when he is not in a state of readiness.
- f. **Bathroom** – Darogàn's private bathroom
- g. **Bedroom** – Darogàn's second in command uses this room. Under the bed in the corner is a large metal box, **Hard** to open, containing 3gp, 29sp, 304cp, 459hc, and 907qc. A chest under the window contains his clothes and a shortsword of ordinary make.
- h. **Bathroom** – Used by the occupant of g.
- i. **Bedroom** – The remaining two bandits sleep here. One has a small chest containing clothes and a pair of leather leg greaves (size 310) and a metal box. The box is locked (**Hard**) and contains 2gp, 18sp, 129cp, 804hc and 914qc. The other bandit has a larger chest containing clothes; a fine scabbard for a broadsword that is worth 250cp, and a smaller chest, which is locked (**Hard**), and contains 39sp, 248cp, 603hc, and 1108qc.
- j. **Bathroom** – Used by the occupants of i.

## Cellar Level (-1)



- a. **Stairs & corridor** – The stairs are slippery and dark. Those moving without care have a 20% chance of slipping and tumbling down the stairs. Resolve on the fall attack table with a +5 OB. The corridor is unlit and quite dank.
- b. **Fuel store** – This large room contains a large supply of coal, but most of it is now rather damp, which is why the bandits prefer to use wood from the forest.
- c. **Wine cellar 1** – The Wine cellars each contain four long rows of now empty shelves, sufficient to hold hundreds of bottles of wine. All are now empty and covered in dust.
- d. **Wine Cellar 2** – see c.
- e. **Wine Cellar 3** – see c.
- f. **Wine Cellar 4** – see c. Also, in the dark and gloom, it is a **Hard** perception roll to realise that this room is actually a few feet shorter than the other three wine cellars. There is a secret cupboard at the end – again Hard to find and open. It is mostly empty but in one corner is a small black box containing a silver ring with a small round ruby, which is a PP multiplier x2 and worth 20gp.
- g. **Small store** – Once used to store meat and other perishables this room is now damp and has a large puddle in one corner.
- h. **Main store 1** – There is a pile of broken barrels in this room and a faint smell of decayed food. A few rats scurry around away from the light when any enters.
- i. **Main Store 2** – Again this room merely forms the home for a nest of rats.
- j. **Main store 3** – The door to this room is shut and the lock rusted. However a few solid attempts to break it down will break it down easily. The room however contains nothing but a foul smell and some stagnant water.
- k. **Corridor end** – The corridor here is roughly finished, as if some extension work to the cellars was abandoned.
- l. **Secret vault** – Located in the main store (h), this **Very Hard** to detect door is locked and **Hard** to open. It is also trapped; delivering a pinprick of 3<sup>rd</sup> level tranquilliser that

sends the attempted thief to sleep. The trap is **Easy** to detect and **Medium** to disarm. The vault is mostly empty but again a few things were overlooked when the lodge was abandoned. A pair of composite bows rest in one corner, one is quite rotten, the other is in good condition and is of such fine construction it confers a +5 bonus and weighs only 3 lbs. A small box hidden in the dust and cobwebs in one corner contains 10gp and 25 sp of Gondor's coin.

- o. **Boathouse dock** – The lower floor of the boathouse is reached from the promenade or the stairs from the upper floor. There is also an exit to the quay. A sunken boat lies rotting in the water, preventing any boat from entering from the lake.
- p. **Quay** - A small rowing boat lies tied up at the quay, occasionally used by the bandits to catch fish in the summer. It will comfortably hold 3 men but can safely hold 5 without sinking.