

A treacherous Mind

An adventure for The One Ring by O. Nygard

Hobbiton fonts by Nancy Lorenz

Comments and suggestions at boningen.org

The story thus far

Last episode ended at Black Tarn, with the riverfolk angered by the betrayal of humans. The player-heroes were given a dark bronze hook, said to be the enchanted lure that caught **Firial** and trapped her in her guise as a fish. If the player-heroes wish for the people for Rhosgobel to be forgiven by the River Maidens, they must see to it that **Baldac** - the offender - is brought before justice.

The Council

At the return to Rhosgobel, there will be an assembly held to determine what actions are to be taken. As a GM, you shouldn't rush the council too much. Allow the player-heroes a day or two of rest and perhaps they will call the assembly themselves.

Should the players choose to confront **Berengar** - he will listen to what they have to say, and then gather the council. There is no way that the player-heroes can confront Baldac, as he left for the woods as soon as the pcs returned home. However, this information will be withheld by Berengar until the Council is over.

Baldac

During the Council, Baldac is nowhere to be found. If his whereabouts are brought into question, Berengar will defiantly claim that he - and none else - will speak for his house.

The village Elders

The Council plays out as a normal Encounter Phase, relying heavily on persuade; however inspire, awe and courtesy may also be used. Below, the most key obstacles are listed. However, depending on the situation more or fewer obstacles may arise. For each obstacle the player-heroes overcome, one of the village elders will be persuaded.

Grimtjarn of Hopper House, who has been lodging the pcs during their stay in Rhosgobel, asks the player-heroes to introduce themselves. It is only by knowing someone's name and merit that the truth of his words may be judged.

Havelgun the miller asks the pcs to tell what happened with the trout, questioning details and any hard-to-believe parts. The key to win Havelgun is to persuade her that the fish was actually a Rivermaid in guise.

Faring of Southern House is skeptic and curious about the River Maidens. Couldn't it all be just a trick, a work of glamour and fey-magic? Did the pcs actually see when the hook was removed, or could they have been deceived?

Ranhild the Astute talks slowly like she balances each word on a silver scale. She cares for but one thing – if the misdeed was intentional or just an unfortunate accident. Surely, a fine young man like Baldac would have no interest in hurting the Riverfolk. Couldn't one say that the tarnfolk brought this misfortune upon themselves, as no honest people would use disguises.

Convince Berengar. Berengar is the most ill-humored of the elders, and now his tempers are flaring. Long enough has he be sitting silent, as foreigners slander his family in front of this noble council. No more will he tolerate this insolence. Haven't his house showed them the utmost hospitality during the long winter months? Were they not at his home during turnday? Wanderers. Rogues! Coming to Rhosgobel to sunder and divide. If anyone's to blame, is it not them?

The outcome of the council

Only after the hearing is over will Berengar tell that Baldac has left Rhosgobel. If there's any truth in the accusations, he fears that Baldac has fled in order to escape justice.

However, Berengar might not admit this right away. Instead, if the player-heroes failed to convince him, he won't come clean until the next day. In addition, for each elder that wasn't convinced, an additional day will pass before the pcs learn the whereabouts of Baldac.

When this time has passed – five days at the most – all elders, including Berengar, realize that there was truth in the allegations made about Baldac.

The council will come to the conclusion that Baldac must be found, and brought to the trial of the Riverfolk. The player-heroes are asked to do this. **Heva** – Baldacs twin sister – will accompany them, to ensure that no harm comes to her brother and, if necessary, convince him to surrender. Heva is a fine hunter, so she can also aid the pcs by tracking her brother.

The search for Baldac

The trails of Baldac disappear into the dark of Mirkwood. Depending on how fast the council reached its verdict, and how soon it was held, Baldac may have a head start of two or more days.

To track him down, the players must make fatigue-tests against Travel as usual. However, as they have little idea where he's heading, they may not use Lore to shorten the trip or facilitate the tests.

For each great success the pcs roll the fellowship gains one day. However, each misfortune will increase the distance to Baldac with one day.

The party must keep on making fatigue-tests until they either catch up with Baldac, or lost his tracks forever.

Should the fellowship fail to catch Baldac, they will find his remains: he was slayed by trolls and eaten.

Should the fellowship close in on Baldac, they will catch up with him as his camp is ambushed by trolls.

The Trolls

As the fellowship eventually finds the fleeing Baldac, he is ambushed by trolls. The trolls wound him and bring him to their lair, where they intend to cook and eat him. Heva urges the players to save her brother, and might even try to do so alone should the player-heroes hesitate too long. If the fellowship hasn't freed Baldac at daybreak, he will be dead.

There are three trolls: **Boulderbroad**, a stocky pig-eyed troll with a disfigured right arm but a massive left; **Longsnout**, tall as the fir trees, with saucer-eyes and snakelike fingers; and **Lichenmane**, short and scrawny with beautiful golden hair and a hideous face. Lichenmane is carrying the unconscious Baldac, in a filthy bag over its shoulder.

It is advised that the pcs try stealing Baldac unnoticed.

Baldac

Once Baldac is freed, the player-heroes might want to question him. When they do, let them ask questions freely and respond freely, but require them to make a skill test each time to see if Baldac wants to cooperate. When the pcs have failed twice, Baldac will tell nothing more of use. Should his sister have been killed during the journey, the pcs are only granted one failure.

The information presented below should be given to the players, approximately one paragraph for each successful question.

Baldac was given the hook by a hunter, whom he met in the woods.

Baldac had met the hunter before on several occasions.

The name of the hunter is **Marek**, or at least that's how he is known to Baldac.

The hunter gave Baldac the ill-fated advice to try to catch the enchanted trout of Black Tarn, using the bronze hook, as it would bring prosperity to his family.

The hunter said that he had foreseen the fall Rhosgobel, and that all who lived there would be slayed under a massive army pouring out of the forest. All families would perish, or live into eternity as slaves to their hideous masters. Only Baldacs family

would be saved, could he catch the fish. Instead they would remain their own masters as the rest of Rhosgobel fell, standing strong as the evil army washed like tide towards the walls of their homes. Then, they could rebuild Rhosgobel. Cut down the trees to build palisades no army could climb. Conquer the woods. Dam the river, forcing it to do the biddings of man! All this could be accomplished, if only he tried. And who wouldn't prefer such a glorious fate, to the doom of his brethren?

Back at Black Tarn

At the Black Tarn, spring has arrived. A warm mist cloak the water, and white swans drift on the murky waters like ships blow by winds unknowns to man. If the fellowship brings Baldac here, the swans will slowly drift towards shore, while the player-heroes feel more and more drowsy. Then, out of the lake comes Myr, her gold red hair gleaming like a crown of ancient power. Solemnly Baldac removes his clothes, and walks into the water. Halfway, he hesitates, turning to the shore.

Think not ill of me, sister. I never had your strength, nor your wits. I had only fear: the fear of not sufficing when dire times came. You were always the better of us. You...

As the swans circle around him, he drops into the water, the dark face of the tarn swallowing him.

Think not ill of me.