

Umbar-dalad

“Under Umbar”

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Author's Note: This adventure is still in pretty rough draft form. It needs a significant overhaul to complete, and I keep running out of time, so I cannot promise it will ever be fully complete. However, since many have requested it even in rough format, I am including it “as is” with my apologies. If and when life and time permit, I will continue to “niggle” away at it, including revision for the Second-Edition-based version as some point. The updated versions will be found at the Ea RPG website <http://www.earpg.com> in the Númenor Project section of the site.

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Overview

This adventure was originally written for MerpCon II in 2005. This takes place in the Second Age 3320 at Umbar a year after the Fall of Númenor (Second Age 3319). The “Kingdoms in Exile”, namely Gondor and Arnor have not yet full formed. This adventure was originally designed to be played completely through in 4 sessions lasting approximately 4-6 hours each, with a group of 4-8 characters.

This adventure is designed to work with any game system set in J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle-earth, though statistics are provided specifically for Ea RPG d20 3.5 and ICE MERP 2nd Edition and Rolemaster 2nd Edition. Most game specific statistics are kept in separate sections at the end of the module. Where some sort of basic mechanics are needed to determine an event or action, generally simple percentages will be provided as a guideline for difficulty.

Player Overview

Umbar is the haven of the “Black Numenoreans” forming their “Realm in Exile” around the city state of Umbar. There is strife and some chaos all across the lands of Middle-earth, especially those near the shorelines that were severely impacted by the tidal waves caused by the sinking of the great island continent of Numenor. Many were forever drowned under the raging seas.

The player characters were in, or around, Umbar when the Isle of Gift Fell. They are members of the “Faithful” those Numenoreans who did not succumb to the lies of Sauron and the destructive pride of the now deceased Ar-Pharazon “The Golden”, ruler of the now shattered Numenorean Empire. The characters do not yet know what to do. Some were working as double

agent “spies”, gathering information and sending it onward to Faithful groups throughout the world.

A month ago a messenger was sent to Pelargir, the nearest outpost of Faithful. No word has yet come as to what they should do. Tensions are building. There are only a few of you left here, and it is getting far too dangerous to remain any longer.

Umbar is ruled by the “Black” Numenoreans, those who were loyal to Ar-Pharazon, and corrupted by Sauron's dark ways. The rulers of the town have posted rewards for the information and capture of anyone who is part of, or has aided in any way, the Faithful. The characters are making arrangements to get out of town soon, but they may already have waited too long...

Game Master Overview

The adventure was enjoyed by the participants, except for one “gotcha” that is specifically an issue for a convention setting, the core issue of beginning the adventure trapped in a dungeon with few resources. This adventure as it is written is problematic for the time constraints of a convention setting, however may be completely appropriate for a regular play-at-home campaign setting where time is less constrained and taking the time to problem solve under such rigorous circumstances is part of the fun. That being said, several suggestions are made to help keep the game play flowing so that the players do not become overwhelmed with frustration if they have a run of bad luck, or just down right bored.

This adventure is compiled from my various electronic and handwritten notes for this adventure as prepared (loosely) for MerpCon II.

The maps used are based on the older (now discredited) Iron Crown Enterprises *Haven of the Corsairs* Umbar city map, but modified for the earlier time period from some research. Some day I would like to overhaul the maps (the story shouldn't need to change) to fit the 2nd edition version that is supposedly better respected (but had far less ready details than this first edition). On first blush that might seem as simple as just replacing the old maps with the new, but the sewer system map does not fit and so needs to be reworked. Not an over onerous task, just something on the vast “to do” list for now. Feel free to do so yourself, and if you take the time to put it into electronic format (scanned or otherwise), please consider kindly sending the files to me for integration in future drafts of this module so that others may benefit. You can do so via the Eä RPG website.

Introduction

The sections of text in italics are to be read aloud to the players.

It has been nearly a year since The Fall of Númenor in 3319 of the Second Age. The one year anniversary of The Day of The Fall is only a week from today. It is now well into the Second Age 3320. It is now [September] (replace with correct Tolkien month name) 13th.

It has been a sad and trying time for the Elendili, The Faithful, with no word to this far land of Umbar if there were any survivors from the Fall of Númenor, no word about the fate of Elendil and the other Faithful since the cataclysm that befell the world nearly a year ago.

Messengers were sent months ago to Pelargir by land, since all the ships that were not destroyed by the tumult caused by the destruction of Númenor, are now under very strict control of the Umbar City ruler the [Governor-General _____].

No messenger has returned yet. Though it WAS expected to be a long and arduous journey, there should have been some word received by now.

You are either a member of "[The Faithful]" also known as the [Dunedain], or you are a supporter of [The Faithful].

You are proud of your beliefs and heritage, but alas you can not speak of it openly in this grim city, for you are a now spy deep in the heart of the enemy's land.

You are in the port city of Umbar, where those of the [King's Men] who were not destroyed in The Fall now call home.

To be discovered as one of the Faithful would mean certain execution, as a traitor to the now-dead King Ar-Pharazon The Golden, if [Umbar City's Governor-General _____] or his men get a hold of you.

But that fate would be far better, than if one of the followers of the Black Enemy were to seize you, and offer you up for dark sacrifices in one of their hideous rituals to the ancient Black Foe, [Morgoth]! </i>

(at this point the GM can decide which of two premises listed below to use, Option 1 or Option 2, or split different party members between the options if you wish):

You are in Umbar because:

Option 1 for Beginning - Raid!

The PC's were part of a group of "faithful" under cover in Umbar placed there before The Fall to gather information, and help the causes of The Faithful. They were recently discovered (it appears there was a "double agent" someone who pretended to be one of the faithful, or assisted them who turned them in, but who that is, The Faithful do not yet know.

This betrayer may be one of the players. Who will intentionally allow him/her-self to be beaten, tortured and incarcerated with the rest of the group to maintain his cover, in the hopes that the group will reveal more information while in prison, that he can relay to the King's Men, up until their execution. At that point, one of two things will happen with the betrayer: A: the betrayer is supposed to be removed from the execution procession, and will then be revealed, or B: he will be strung up, but an archer is ready to shoot his rope (but the player doesn't know this, so might protest or some such). If the player doesn't escape with the group, however, this betrayer does not know that he/she will then subsequently be secretly tortured to death (since the King's Men have no respect for a dishonorable turn coat, and can't trust him/her), depriving this person of even the respect (and martyrdom that the rest of the group would get in a public execution). If no players want to accept this role, then go ahead and assign it to an NPC.

You have been part of a group of "Faithful" that has for many years been operating "under cover" in Umbar to gather information, and help the causes of the The Faithful in Numenor and abroad. You and other members of the Faithful and their supporters were recently captured in a late night raid by the Governor-General's Men.

Option 2 Beginning - Shipwrecked!

You were part of a group of Faithful who were lost at sea, en route from either Pelargir or The Grey Havens, to either Pelargir or Umbar, when the ship you were on was overcome, and you were thrown from the ship during the great tumult following the destruction of Numenor. Your life/lives was/were saved by sheer luck or maybe the divine help of ([Ulmo]?/ [Osse]?), and you were washed ashore near Umbar. You were subsequently picked up by Umbarian patrols and imprisoned.

Everything else flows about the same from that point onward, except that none/few know the city as well as if they were here because of option 1.

You are all now incarcerated in the prison dungeons of the city. During the middle of the night, the City's soldiers suddenly raided many of the homes of the [Faithful] and their supporters, some of those captured or slain were only slightly connected to the [Dunedain].

Many here now suspect that someone in the Faithful must have betrayed their people, there seems no better explanation for the thoroughness of the midnight raid.

You are split between several different cells in this underground detention facility. After an initial count by whispered voices you are able to determine that though many were captured, there are still many others not yet brought here.

It is possible of course, that they were taken to other cells, or slain, as you know was the fate of some few who had a chance to resist.

The question now is, what fate awaits those of you now captured?

You hear booted feet and heavy armor, accompanied by the sound of a gated doorway being opened somewhere down the hall.

Do you wait in trepidation for what is to come or prepare to spring into action?

The TRAITOR

There WAS a “double agent”, someone of the faithful or their supporters who turned them in, but who that is, the other Faithful do not yet know. This traitor to the Faithful may be one of the players or an [NPC]. Who will intentionally allow him/her-self to be beaten, tortured and incarcerated with the rest of the group to maintain his/her cover up until their execution, in the hopes that the group will reveal more information while in prison, especially about where the rest of the Faithful are hiding in and around Umbar, so that he/she can relay that information to the Governor-General's Men.

If the traitor is not discovered before-hand, and if the players do not manage to escape, at the point of the PCs being sent to the gallows, one of two things will happen with the betrayer:

A: The betrayer is supposed to be removed from the execution procession just before the steps of the platform, and will then be revealed, or

B: He/she will be strung up as if to be hung with the rest, but a hangman's assistant is ready to cut the traitor's rope seconds before the players platforms drop beneath their feet. However the traitor does not actually know about this last second option, so might protest and blow his/her cover. Then at the last instant, in addition to his rope being setup to not break his neck on the initial drop.

If the traitor doesn't escape from the dungeons or the procession with the group, what this traitor also does not know is that he/she will later be secretly tortured to death (since the King's Men have no respect for a dishonorable turn coat, and can't trust him/her), depriving this person of even the “respect” and martyrdom that the rest of the group would get in a public execution). It is even possible they will turn the traitor over to the [Morgothian Priests] as a sacrificial offering.

If no players want to accept the role of the traitor, then go ahead and assign it to an NPC. Be very careful approaching a player, because once you reveal that there is such a role to be played, they will likely behave differently. On the other hand, a player confederate is much less likely to be suspected than an NPC in the group, so if you think you have a player who is mature enough to handle this complex role effectively, and might enjoy it, see what you can do to convince them. Or, you can just assign whomever you wish, and tell them in secret the way it is. Hopefully they will make the best of the role even if it is not what they would prefer to play.

Hang the Characters???

Yes. This is a tricky adventure, and success is NOT imminent, death is. Also, one of the trickiest parts to this adventure is balancing boredom and frustration. Starting out in a dungeon is a lousy situation, and some players handle it far better than others, not to mention a little bad luck on the roles trying to escape can really slow down the focus of the game.

There are a number of ways to try to make their initial dungeon entrapment more interesting. Use any of the NPCs in the cells to keep dialog and activities interesting. It is important to build tension and frustration to a fairly high level, but not so much that the players completely give up, there needs to be small little breadcrumbs of hope from time to time to sustain them. If the dice are cooperating, then just let it unfold naturally, however from play testing, sometimes a group might have some bad runs of luck, and the PC's aren't figuring out some of the solutions, then the GM should use one of the NPCs to make suggestions in the right direction to keep things flowing.

Second Age 3320

Numenor Fell Second Age 3319 lore does not clearly tell on exactly which day of that fateful year it was that Numenor Fell. This adventures is set somewhere between 3319 and 3320, GM's discretion. This all takes place a little less than a year after the fall of Numenor. It has been a sad and depressing time with no word of the fate of Elendil and the other faithful from Numenor to this far land of Umbar. Only now will one member of the faithful return from Pelargir with the news that the new kingdoms have been formed.

Timeline of events overview

S.A. 3319 - The Fall of Numenor

3320 - Gondor & Arnor kingdoms established by the Faithful.

3319-3320 the Dunedain of Umbar fall under Sauron's influence.

3441 Sauron overthrown and end of 2nd Age, beginning of the Third Age.

TODO:

Need to read/research the following:

Just post fall of Numenor events & locations.

Need names of leaders during 3319-3320 time period.

Need details on what happened around then, geographically, politically, etc.

Black numenorean strongholds post fall.

Pelargir.

Umbar

Lords of Umbar?

Ruler/governor/mayor of umba?

Keeps/castles/mansions of Umbar of note?

Harad

Kin Strife

Southern Gondor

Tail end of Akallabeth details of politics, forces, etc.

Tolkien Letters.

Fan Modules for relevant areas.

What races/professions appropriate?

The party, when they escape, once they make contact with one of their faithful contacts, they will find out that Elendil had survived The Fall and landed and created the kingdoms of Gondor and Arnor, and that all faithful should come there. Pelargir is the nearest location. Unfortunately, only this contact knows this so far, because he/she just returned from Pelargir with the urgent news.

One of two reasons why group is in this predicament:

They were a group of Faithful, or friends of The Faithful, who were lost at sea during The Fall, thrown from the ships during the great tumult, but saved by the divine help of (Ulmo?/ Osse?), and washed ashore near Umbar. They wandered the wild lands for months and finally were subsequently picked up by Black Númenórean “King's Men” Umar patrols and then imprisoned. Everything else flows about the same, except that none/few know the city as well as f they were in

option 1.

during interrogation and torture, the torturer will have the PC on his stomach strapped down, and will threaten with a hot poker. Assuming the PC resists in the slightest, the torturer will gladly stick the hot poker in the middle of the PC's back right where it is very difficult to reach low down between the shoulder blades. What the PC does not know, failing an observation/perception check, is that the poker has a small ceramic token on the end, that is burned into the PC's skin. This token is slightly enchanted by the members of the Morgothian Cult, to make it possible to track the whereabouts of the PC anywhere within a 1 mile radius of a wizard or priest/priestess who knows to "sense" for such "markers".

There will be a couple of NPCs in the royal court who though not officially supporting the Faithful, are sympathetic to them (maybe a relationship developed between one of the PC's and NPCs?). This may be a brother and sister (young adult, 16-25 years oldish?), or a married couple (husband and wife).

Their names are _____ and _____.

The primary antagonist initially is the City Governor-General? mayor? duke? who will taunt, torture, and personally do harm to Faithful members, with relish. He has become heavily corrupted by following the Dark Ways of Sauron, but only those close to him actually know this, others have just observed a dramatic change in him in recent years from a reasonably fair and reasonable ruler (within the bounds of Ar-Pharazon's reason of course), to a cruel, unforgiving, hot-tempered, and irrational tyrant. His name is _____. He recently executed one of his advisers, with his own hand, in court, because the adviser questioned him on the sensibility of spending some of the over-extended city coffers on a gold statue dedicated to himself.

He will take each member of the party separately to be tortured and questioned (about 5 minutes game time max for each player) (including the traitor if applicable). The GM (or co-GM) will take each player away from the table to a private room for discussion. After the tyrant is finished questioning/torturing the characters (PC's and NPC's, including the traitor), he will

confront the now badly injured (mostly ability penalties more than hit points, but no one should have more than 50% of their hit points/health, but no less than 25% of their health) group and inform them that on the morrow, at sunset, they will be publicly executed. And according to him only the ones that come forth and reveal where other faithful are hiding and who they are, will be saved from this fate, even greatly rewarded. In fact, if just one steps forth (not counting the traitor of course), the entire group will be saved from execution (upon verification of the information of course).

He will then, looking gaunt, stressed, nervous, and worried, and sleepless on this morning, come by that following morning, and take one person at a time from the cell, and question (very briefly, without torture this time) them quickly asking if they wish to reveal the information. If they won't he'll quickly return them to the cell with the others. if they do give information (true or false) he will quickly dispatch scouts to verify the information (verified within an hour). If the information is false, he will have that character severely beaten to within an inch of his/her life. If it turns out to be true information, he will come to the group's cell, and single out that character as their savior. Remove the character and declare that he is free to walk the grounds for one week under "house arrest as a guest", then he will be shipped to Pelargir to be freed completely (supposedly). After he is gone, he will tell the group that he/she just bought the others in the group an entire day of respite. And that another will need to come forth to by more time, another day for the others, as well as freedom for the one that comes forth.

Meanwhile, the one who gave the true information will indeed be lead up to the courtyard, and fed well, given clean rich clothing, etc. Lulled possibly into a state of false hope. He/she will be setup with a locked private, but luxurious room (always escorted by 4 well trained and armed guards). During the night, a nasty insect of serpent will be let into the character's bed to attempt to poison him/her to death as a seeming accident. If that fails, his/her food will be slowly poisoned, first just seeming slightly ill with a cold/flu. But if continue to eat the food/broth/drink for more than 2 days, will eventually (failing resistance/saves) die of multiple organ failure within 1 week even if stops eating/drinking the poisoned food, unless the correct antidote found. Which would require the help of one of the "Faithful" to help him/her.

Meanwhile, if no one (besides the traitor) betrays any Faithful, the clock will quickly tick towards their imminent demise.

At some point a message will be sent by the royal couple helping the faithful, that the duke/mayor has found some information on a few key locations of the Faithful and their identities, and will begin rounding them up around 2 hours before the group is schedule to be executed. The message will include the details and names, as a means of verifying to the group that this is indeed a

real threat. Now the party has to worry not only about themselves, but all of the 30 or so faithful in the area that have been exposed (there's a handful of a dozen or so not on the list that some in the party realize, whether they discuss that with the group or now is important to note, since there is a traitor in their midst still, one way or another). In addition, the tyrant is planning to slaughter on site all those that harbored these faithful as well as the faithful themselves, rather than take them prisoner. The royal couple is trying to figure out a way to get word out to these potential victims, but the court has been recently locked down as of this morning, so only internal messages are currently possible at this point.

Fortunately, about 6 hours before their execution (shortly after high noon) the royal couple will begin to put into motion a plan to attempt to save the group.

3 escape options/chances here:

1. If a member of the group properly/successfully inspects the fecal/waste hole (about 4"x4") that dumps about 20' down into the city sewer, they will discover that the iron lining and holding the floor in place there (about 2' thick) has corroded, and can be broken with high difficulty strength check or repeatedly bashing with something (like stone, etc.). It's a 20' drop/fall to the sewer, which is about 10' deep at this point, though disgusting). However, though it washes out to the river/sea, there are multiple gratings barring the way downstream that are impassable. However, upstream they can eventually find a grating that is weakened enough to break through and then follow the sewer out of the dungeons into the city itself, and eventually come up through some other buildings. This is a French style very limited sewer only in the higher nobility quarter of the city, but much like described in Victor Hugo's unabridged *Les Miserables* Chapter: _____ Pages: _____ Edition: _____. Then the party is on their own to A: escape, while B: notifying the other Faithful about their being exposed and the imminent attack (there will then be a debate between some wanting to setup an ambush, and those wanting to flee (separately from the group)).
2. There is a cell not far from the one the group is contained in. This is the cell the party members were questioned and tortured in (their screams only could be heard). Some of the party members (roll to see which ones noticed) may have noted some stairs leading down, and a slight pleasant breeze. This actually leads to a cliff face over looking the river/sea? There is a portcullis type door/grating at the bottom of the stairs overlooking a level platform about 10' long and 5' wide, but the keys are actually hanging to the right of the

tunnel entrance leading down from the torture chamber to this landing in the torture chamber. It is a 150' fall onto submerged rocks (fatality). And about 100' above is the "ground level" of the court/castle. There is however, a hoist mechanism here, on a 10' long crane like arm that can swing out, and has a cable, crank hoist, and a blood-spattered one-man simple chest harness (max capacity 200 pounds for the harness, max capacity 500 pounds for the hoist/cable). This was used to torture some (and sometimes kill), but dangling victims out over the cliff, then suddenly dropping them, then suddenly stopping (sometimes the cable has been known to break inadvertently doing that), and then reeling them up to give them a chance to "confess". Other times victims were simply dropped/pushed off the cliff, or eventually allowed in the harness to free fall to the rocks and to their subsequent death. Sometimes they would just dangle the hapless victim in the water doused in blood, to attract the man-eating fish/monsters/sharks to chew away at their legs, etc. The group can discover this information if they question the torturer who sleeps in a room just off to the side of the torture chamber. The cable is long enough to allow this (the full length of the cliff with about 20' more cable to spare), but the current/waves are extremely difficult to master to get away from the rocks and out to where swimming is more manageable. Additionally, there is the danger of large man eating fish/sharks/monsters to contend with. The nearest shore is about 500' to the _____ (upstream? downstream? north? east?, etc.). There are no guards overlooking this cliff fortunately. But the landing area is the beginning of a small boat launch, so there will be activity to contend with in broad daylight. And of course plenty of water traveling vessels that might happen by and wonder at the motion on the cliff.

3. If the party doesn't figure out/make use of either of the two above options, the final desperate option, will be a diversionary tactic, with the royal couple directly involved (and thus they will have to go with party once being exposed, and they do NOT want to do this). As the group is being marched out to the execution (now too late to save the 50 or so faithful and the 25+/- supporters that have been slaughtered, and the group gets to see their bodies piled up in the execution area, lined up face up, so all the characters can see the faces of friends, family, etc. slaughtered, maimed, hacked, including women and children. The tyrant will be gloating, secure in his triumph. While the characters are frustrated and horrified at their failure to save the others. The tyrant in his arrogance only put 10 guards around the group. And these guards turn out to be the royal couple's guards who have also brought spare weapons for the characters (short swords, parrying daggers, etc.). Right after the tyrant gives his gloating speech, with the characters all on the hanging platform 10' above the

ground, with their necks in the nooses, and hands tied, the two executioners (with hoods on?) will whisper to each player (and observant player may recognize the voice(s) as coming from the royal couple) as the noose is being fitted, to be ready, when the floor falls, the ropes will break, and they will find a weapon at their feet. They (the characters) will need to quickly cut their bonds, and then follow the ten guards (and the two executioners) to the courtyard door to make an escape. Then the royal couple, with the help of 10 guardsmen loyal to them and not the tyrant, will create a diversion. There are 4 tyrant loyal guardsmen armed with pikes on the courtyard ground at the main (escape) gate, 2 such guards at the dungeon entrance the characters just came from, with 4 more tyrant guardsmen on each of the (4?) walls lining the courtyard 30'? 50'? above, armed with crossbows?bows? and swords. In the effort to escape most of the royal couple's guardsmen will likely be severely injured and/or slain (since they are the most immediate threat being fully armed and armored the tyrant will want his guards to target them first, then to finish off the "faithless rabble" meaning the Faithful) though of course there is a high risk of a PC/NPC in the group being injured and/or slain as well, but try to mitigate any such successful attacks as debilitation rather than slaying injuries during this stage. The group with the guards will need to fight through the closed, but unlocked gate. Then run into the city and away. Bells, and trumpets will sound within 1 minute after the group's escape. The group will have 5 minutes (keep careful watch of the time) to disperse and "disappear" into the city before the tyrant's reinforcements, including archers, cavalry and foot soldiers arrive (a force of more than 50 men in the first 5 minutes, then a second wave of 150 additional men within 30 minutes). All of the gates to the city will be closed within 15 minutes of the bells/trumpets, and the city walls heavily manned. The royal couple will turn out to be the "executioners" in the (hoods?) and will be with the party escaping (while keeping their hoods on during the fight in the courtyard). During a break in the action, while the group tries to decide what to do next, the royal couple will wish the group good luck and then disappear as quickly as possible with any remaining guards, leaving the players to their own devices, but with one final warning (if they discussed the remaining 12 faithful that hadn't been discovered yet) that somehow the tyrant already knew there were 12 more (or however many the group discussed up to 12) faithful in the city (and any information that would lead to their apprehension was already disseminated and being acted upon). This means the group needs to warn those remaining twelve who have not yet found out about the slaughter of the other 50 only 2 hours ago. As well as escape themselves from the vast city.

At this point, if there are enough players to warrant it (more than 8 or so), it will be strongly advised to split the group up into smaller groups so that they are not all captured together, and because different faithful are at different ends of town, so splitting up will make it so that they can more quickly find/warn more of the hidden faithful (whether escape option 1,2, or 3). Try to divide the parties as evenly as possible. If the groups split, try to have at least one NPC in each group. Before the groups disembark, make sure that someone (if all else fails, an NPC) makes arrangements on where and when to meet back up outside of town, for the final leg of their journey, to escape to (Pelargir?).

At this point the players will go to separate tables, and continue their separate adventures.

Different players will have different information as to who they know as Faithful underground, including hide outs, helpers, and the Faithful themselves.

Remember the time lines for the tyrant's attack if the players escaped via escape option 1 or 2. Since his men will already be setting up for the attacks. If the players only escaped by option 3. Then the tyrant will be setting into motion attacking those he's found out about. Plus the traitor may still be in the group.

Lords leave Pelargir council to become kings of Haradrim near Umbar, rebelling against Elendil's sons....

Pelargir rebelled against Ar-Pharazon during the lead up to the Akallabeth and was not damaged during the tumult. Pelargir makes a great goal to get to for safety by sea or land.

NPCs to be rescued by PC's that are on the _____'s list to round up.

Some are grouped together, so this doesn't mean that the PC's have to track each and everyone done separately per se. With the NPC is also the primary, secondary, and tertiary (if applicable) where they might be found).













