

A Duty to Be Done

A DRAGON WARRIORS
Scenario for Conquest 2014

By Shaun Hately

It is mid spring and since the melting of the snows, your thoughts have turned to your old life as adventurers. Old life... that sums it up, more or less. You have not done anything that came close to being adventuring since you rescued the King's sister, Princess Elivia, from the clutches of the faerie, nearly a year ago. Since then you have not left the small Barony of Springdale. You have simply been too busy running it. Dispensing justice when needed – not that it's needed much with a population where everybody knows each other. Communicating by letter with other northern Lords about the need to ensure the border against raids from Thuland – where there haven't been raids from Thuland in decades now, the southern parts of Thuland are pretty much as civilised as the northern lands of Albion. You've been considering applying for permission to build a castle but mostly for reasons of prestige and to deal with unforeseen threats in the future. Lord Turquin has also been looking for a wife, a good dynastic match, but somehow it hasn't happened yet, and you're all beginning to think you may have to travel around a bit so he can actually meet some appropriate ladies rather than just exchange letters with other Lords about their daughters. But perhaps you are just looking for an excuse to get away for a while. Your steward says that you will have to do better than that. Just who is in charge here?

So when you are roused in the middle of the night by a frantic banging on the door of your Manor House, you dare to hope that something is happening that will at least break the monotony. But you are, to say the least, surprised at who is doing the knocking.

When you get down to the foyer, one of the servants has already opened the door to admit the knocker. A woman is standing there in armour. She seems familiar – and then you are shocked to realise who she is. This is Lord Turquin's sister, Lady Meradath Grensham. Most of you have known her since she was a little girl – she'd be nineteen now – and the site of her in armour and carrying weapons – she has a bow, and a long knife at her side – is surprising. She was raised to be a proper little lady, and the last you knew of her was last year when she was a Lady-In-Waiting to Princess Elivia. She looks at her brother.

"My Lord, I am commanded to place into your hands this missive and commission from the King's own hand."

Lady Meradath can explain the following facts to the party

- A year ago, she and the Princess, and two other Ladies In Waiting, were taken prisoner by elves (*Bitter Vengeance*). The party will be aware of this, as they rescued them.
- All of their guards were killed during their capture.
- On their return to the capital, the Princess convinced the King that she and her ladies should be given at least basic training in how to defend themselves.
- A few months ago, the Earl Montombre made representations to the King about the possibility of marrying Elivia to his eldest son and heir. Elivia was sent with her other Ladies-In-Waiting to Montombre's Castle for an extended visit – while the King is as keen on dynastic marriages as any Monarch, he was also interested in ensuring his sister would be happy with any match (at the moment she is still heir presumptive) and he wanted her to form her own opinion of Lord Gulliam Montombre – Meradath was reassigned to the Queen, due to the enmity between her father (Baron Grensham) and Montombre.

- About six weeks ago, reports began to filter into the capital about a well organised group of outlaws – mostly female – robbing travellers on the road through Jewelspider Wood, west of the village of Southwud, and just inside Earl Montombre’s fief. These outlaws were unusual in that they seem to have magic at their disposal – they seem to be able to befuddle people rather than harming them. They have been a nuisance, but not yet a major threat. But about three weeks ago, one traveller through the forest – a Knight in the service of King Hadric – recognised the leader of the outlaws as Princess Elivia! He knows her quite well. He hastened to the capital to report what he had seen to the King.
- The King has a dilemma. Elivia is apparently acting as an outlaw, and the King’s justice demands she be treated as such. But it is completely out of character for her, and makes very little sense – she has access to far more wealth than she could possibly be getting from her robberies. The fact that as far as he knew, she was staying at the Earl Montombre’s castle is also a mystery.
- In desperation, he has sent Meradath – as somebody both he and Lord Turquin trust – to Turquin, to ask for his help. He wants Turquin to find his sister and bring her in. Alive and unharmed, if possible, but he’s enough of a King to realise that if Elivia has, for whatever reason, turned to criminal activity, she may need to be treated as a criminal – a declared outlaw can be executed on the spot by the order of any noble, and even ordinary people may kill one who is fleeing justice.

Meradath has exhausted herself and ridden three horses to the point of exhaustion in riding north. She is no real condition to accompany the party having delivered her message.



Starting Points:

The characters have two potential starting points. The first is visiting the Earl Montombre, the second is visiting Southwud Village.

If they visit the Earl Montombre, they will face a chilly reception. The Earl does not like the Grensham family – and takes the fact that Lord Turquin defeated him personally at the Fay Bridge Tourney a

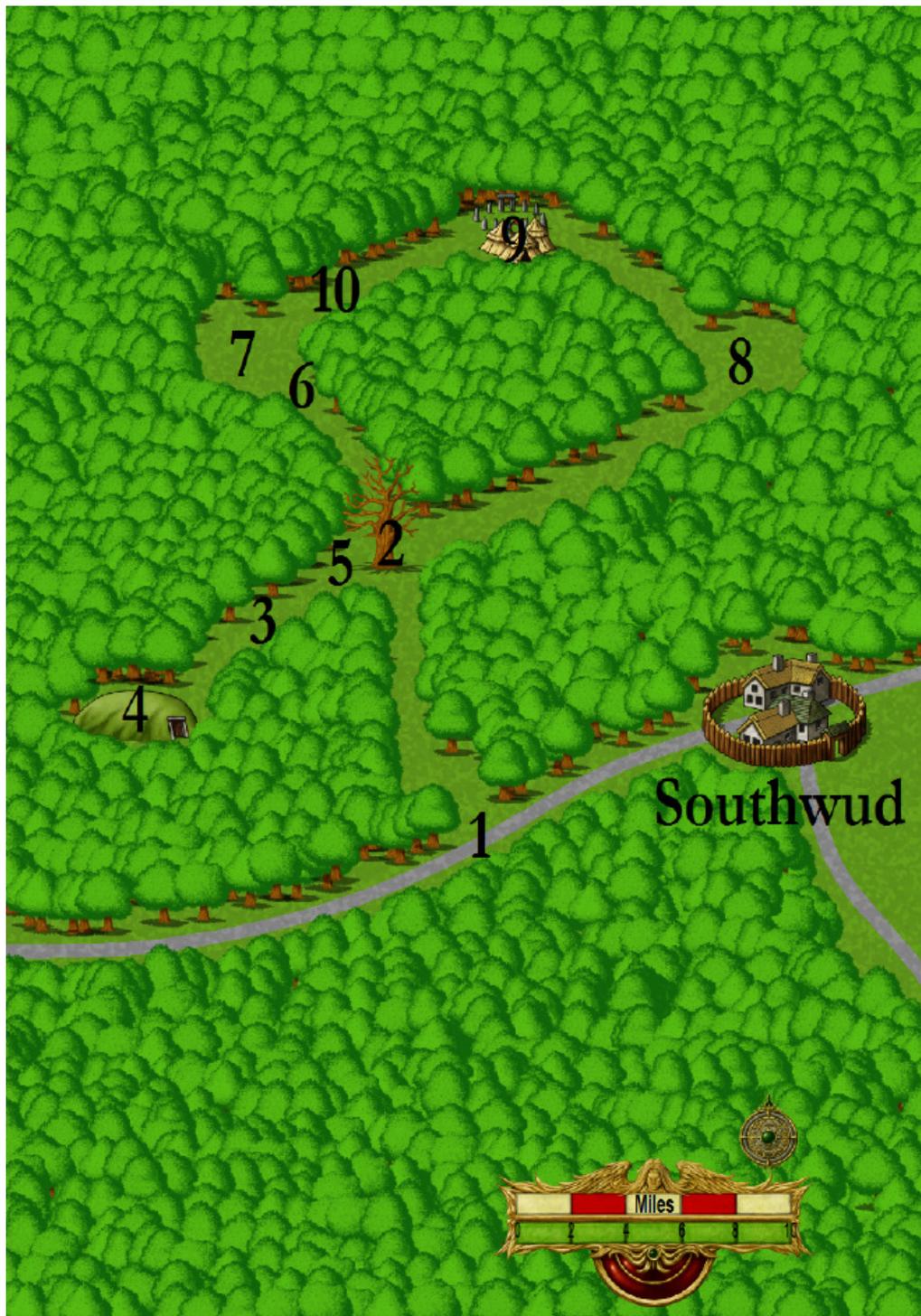
couple of years ago, very personally. He will be as civil as he has to be towards a fellow Lord, but the party should be made to feel very uncomfortable.

Montombre is not currently aware of the identity of the woman leading the bandits in the forest west of Southwud, and for the moment is not especially worried about the banditry. He has dispatched a couple of patrols to search the forest and will do more if the problem continues, but policing Jewelspider Wood has always been difficult. If he becomes aware that the Princess is the bandit leader, he will dispatch far more troops with instructions to capture her – she would make a wonderful bargaining chip for future negotiations with the King.

At Southwud, characters will be able to talk to Diego Castellan, a once-successful merchant of Algandarve extraction (and secretly a fourth level sorcerer), who is resting in the care of the wise woman of the village (Daffodil Maree, a second level Mystic, and the local Priestess of an order of Druids almost extinguished from Albion – yes, classically, Druids are more typically Elementalists in DW games, but the order is in severe decline, and little training happens anymore, so many of its remaining priests tend to be those who did not need formal training for their magic).

Diego is the only man known to have been injured by the bandits (something that happened, because he cast a *Shadowbolt* spell in Princess Elivia's direction, his rank being high enough to have allowed him to successfully resist the (special version of the) *Command* spell which is normally being used to persuade people to simply leave their valuables on the ground and continue on their way. He was shot down in a hail of arrows and was surprised to have woken hours later bandaged and covered with leaves. He had also had a *Ring of Psychic Chains* placed on his left hand – a perceptive character may notice it as it is obviously made of gold and bears an emerald – an odd item for a man who had been robbed to still have. He knows what it is, and that it is the reason why he can no longer cast spells. He has consulted with Daffodil who has almost convinced him to let her remove his finger, but not quite.

Diego fled Algandy a couple of years ago, barely escaping with his life after falling foul of Father Allesandro (see *Friends or Foes*) and his inquisition. He is terrified of the idea of anybody in authority (such as Lord Turquin) discovering he is a sorcerer. He will identify Anarchos and Merek as potential spell casters, but unless they make it obvious, they could just be unusual priestly types. He has also extracted such a strong oath from Daffodil not to reveal his secret, that she will not do so. If he becomes convinced they are unlikely to see him burned at the stake, he will ask if anybody can help him by casting a *Dispel Magic* so the ring can be removed, and in exchange will take the characters back to the precise point in the forest where he was ambushed.



Location 1

This is where Diego was ambushed. He will explain that he was walking next to his donkey cart, which was loaded with barrels of fine spices when he suddenly came across a woman standing in the road. If asked to describe her, he will be able to give a description that could be the Princess Elvia, although it is far from certain – she was deeply in shadows, and she was wearing odd clothing – some sort of glamer on it. He had the impression there was somebody standing next to her, but cannot describe them at all. And when he realised a spell was being cast on him and he retaliated with a *Shadowbolt*, arrows seemed to come out at him from all over the place.

There is little sign of the ambush remaining – a skilled tracker will find some evidence though, and will detect a path into the forest to the north – the signs are extremely tenuous, and are only visible at all because of the fact that the donkey cart had to be moved through the area.

Location 2

As the PCs enter this clearing, they will come across the sight of a man's decapitated body lying next to a tree stump on one edge of the clearing. The felled tree to which the stump belongs lies next to it.

And that is what he was until only a few months ago. His name was Chaster of Birkhed and he was one of the Earl Montombre's serfs who fled into the forest after stabbing one of Montombre's soldiers when they tried to molest his sister. He was declared outlaw, and when the patrol of soldiers, now located a little north of here, came upon him camped in this clearing, they seized him. They forced him to cut down the tree to create a block for his own decapitation and used his own wood axe to execute him in a very messy and brutal way.

Chaster was a good and decent man, and he had become friendly with the Okeman (see *Bestiary*, p57) who is the tree that dominates this clearing. This ancient Okeman (his name is 'Father of the Forest' – or at least that is the closest rendering in Elleslandic) has been slowly rousing himself but has become active too late to save Chaster. He will become active now in the presence of the PCs who will suddenly hear one of the loudest bellows they have ever heard echoing from behind them and will see the man-like tree (or tree-like man) raging in grief. It is an awe inspiring sight. Father of the Forest knows who killed Chaster, although he does not know why, and he has no quarrel with the PCs, although if they attack him he will defend himself. He wants them, however, to follow the soldiers along the southwestern path and to kill them. He cannot do it himself as he is now so ancient and bound to this particular place, that he cannot leave the clearing.

Because he is bound to this place and because he spends most of his time in a deep torpor, he cannot reveal too much about what else is in the forest. He can say there is a stone circle somewhere to the north ("Older than I am.") and that either of the northern paths will probably take the characters there eventually. People (if asked for clarification, he can say 'Elves and Men') pass through his clearing from time to time. Going north, they used to take the west path, but now take the east. That's all he knows.

Father of the Forest

ATTACK	27	Claws (d8+2,7)
DEFENCE	18	Armour Factor 7(spears,swords,etc),4(axes,flails,etc)
MAGICAL DEFENCE	3	Movement 10m (20m)
EVASION	4	
STEALTH	13	-
PERCEPTION	4 (normal)	
Health Points:	12,11,10,9,8,7	Rank Equivalent: 2nd

(Ref 9)

Location 3

The characters will encounter half a dozen soldiers wearing the livery of the Earl Montombre walking towards them up this path. One seems seriously wounded.

It should be noted that the execution of Chaster of Birkhed was more or less legal. He was a declared outlaw, and as representatives of Earl Montombre on lands that are within his fief, these soldiers had the legal right to summarily execute him. But they've also just killed the man they found hiding in an old barrow at Location 4, and that was cold blooded murder. They will not mention this unless they are asked questions that lead them towards it – perhaps asking about the soldiers wounds.

These are evil men, no doubt about it. It was simply convenient to them that they had the legal right to kill Chaster, because they probably would have done it anyway. So the characters may feel no moral compunction in ending their lives – but the legal situation is at least worthy of comment and consideration.

Soldiers (6)

ATTACK	13	Sword (d8,4)
DEFENCE	8	Armour Factor 3 (Chain Hauberks)
MAGICAL DEFENCE	3	Movement 10m (20m)
EVASION	4	
STEALTH	13	-
PERCEPTION	4 (normal)	
<i>Health Points:</i>	12,11,10,9,8,7	Rank Equivalent: 2nd

(Ref 10)

In addition to their equipment, they are carrying a finely bound book of holy scripture and a large bronze crucifix adorned with garnets. It would be worth about 100 Florins.

Location 4

The characters emerge into what is almost a clearing. Trees grow over the top of a mound, which looks like a small barrow. That's exactly what it is, although the body they will find within the tomb is much more recent. Outside the barrow is an anvil and a crude blacksmiths forge – all cold and unused for some time.

The barrow has only one room, and it has been outfitted like a small cottage. There is a straw pallet bed, a table – and in one corner of the room a very robust iron cage with an elaborate and complicated latching mechanism. On one wall, there is a series of tally marks chalked with twenty five lines followed by three circles, followed by twenty five lines, followed by three circles, in a recurring pattern. Many of the early chalk marks have been crossed. A character of reasonable intelligence can probably identify this as a crude calendar, marking the full moons.

Lying in the middle of the floor is a large middle aged man, wearing something that resembles a monk's habit. He is not long dead and has been stabbed repeatedly.

His name was Osgood Ironsmith, and he used to be a blacksmith in Erincester. About a dozen years ago, he was bitten by a boar during a hunt, and it turned out to be a wereboar. Osgood contracted lycanthropy. When he realised this, he sought out the life of a hermit in the forest – he was a deeply religious man who saw what had happened to him as a judgement and he also did not wish to hurt anybody. He used his skills as a smith to build the cage he locks himself into around the time of the full moon each month – the latch cannot be manipulated in his boar form.

When Montombre’s soldiers came upon him a little while ago, he did nothing to provoke them, but they saw his crucifix and decided to take possession of it. When Osgood objected, they killed him.

If they haven’t already killed the guards, they may decide to do so now – the wounded man may be a lycanthrope and they are all murderers. They will be able to catch up with them at Location 5.

Location 5

This location only becomes relevant if the characters have not previously killed Montombre’s guards. In that eventuality, they will come upon five of them here, all badly wounded, having retreated from the attack that greeted them when they reentered Father of the Forests clearing. They will try to persuade the characters to join them in an attack on the Okeman. It is up to the characters to decide how to proceed.

Soldiers (5)

ATTACK	13	Sword (d8,4)
DEFENCE	8	Armour Factor 3 (Chain Hauberks)
MAGICAL DEFENCE	3	Movement 10m (20m)
EVASION	4	
STEALTH	13	-
PERCEPTION	4 (normal)	
<i>Health Points:</i>	5,4,3,2,1	Rank Equivalent: 2nd

(Ref 10)

Location 6

in the middle of the path here, there is a framework, in the shape of a capital letter A made of sticks – it is about seven feet tall and blocks the path (although it is easy to go around it). The sticks are oaken staves, and hanging from the horizontal bar are a crows feather, the skull of a squirrel, and a small rope made of braided grass.

A Hunter or other woodsman, may be able to identify this as an elven marker of some sort, although the meaning will elude them. It actually warns of the presence of the Hobgoblin and his band in the next clearing.

Location 7

This clearing is occupied by a goblin band lead by a Hobgoblin. They are not actually hostile, which is the why the Elves and bandits are simply avoiding them, but they will certainly defend themselves if

they need to. If talked to, they will tell the party that the bandit camp is to the east near the 'Old Henge'.

Hobgoblin

ATTACK	16	Sword (d8,3)	
DEFENCE	10	Armour Factor	1
MAGICAL ATTACK	17		
MAGICAL DEFENCE	7	Movement	12m (25m)
EVASION	4		
STEALTH	23	-	
PERCEPTION	13 (darksight)		
<i>Health Points:</i>	12	Rank Equivalent:	4th

(Ref 10)

Goblins (10)

ATTACK	13	Sling (d6,3)	
DEFENCE	7	Armour Factor	1
MAGICAL DEFENCE	5	Movement	12m (25m)
EVASION	5		
STEALTH	21	-	
PERCEPTION	13 (darksight)		
<i>Health Points:</i>	8 each	Rank Equivalent:	1st

(Ref 9)

Location 8

At this location, the characters will find half a dozen abandoned carts, and an enclosure containing five horses, three donkeys, and two oxen. They all show signs of being cared for.

Location 9

The bandit camp.

The bandits are lead by an Elven sorcerer called Shiningmoon. There are six elves and nine humans – the humans are all people who (like Princess Elivia) who is one of them – have been touched by elves – a year ago when she was taken into... wherever it was she was taken she became highly susceptible to elven control.

Shiningmoon has no idea she is a human Princess. She is simply a woman they found riding through the forest and they took her in as they take in others who have wondered among them. Elivia has no memory of being a Princess, though if she is reminded of it, she will want to return home. And Shiningmoon will allow her to – she does not want a quarrel with the humans and their King. But this all presupposes talking happens. Will they be that lucky? The elves do not consider what they are doing in robbing travellers wrong. They see it as simply taking tolls from humans who pass through

their forest. They have avoided hurting anyone except to Diego and that was only because he cast magic in their direction. They treated his wounds and left him safe.

Shiningmoon (8th Rank Sorcerer)

ATTACK	13	Sword (d8+2,6)	
DEFENCE	7	Armour Factor	0
MAGICAL ATTACK	23		
MAGICAL DEFENCE	13	Movement	10m (20m)
EVASION	4		
STEALTH	16	-	
PERCEPTION	8 (normal)		
<i>Health Points:</i>	12	Rank Equivalent:	8 th
<i>Magic Points:</i>	28		

(Ref 12)

Elves (6)

ATTACK	27	Bows (d6+1,5)	
DEFENCE	18	Armour Factor	2
MAGICAL DEFENCE	3	Movement	10m (20m)
EVASION	4		
STEALTH	13	-	
PERCEPTION	4 (normal)		
<i>Health Points:</i>	9 each	Rank Equivalent:	1st

(Ref 9)

Humans (9)

ATTACK	11	Bows (d6,4)	
DEFENCE	5	Armour Factor	0
MAGICAL DEFENCE	3	Movement	10m (20m)
EVASION	3		
STEALTH	12	-	
PERCEPTION	4 (normal)		
<i>Health Points:</i>	9 each	Rank Equivalent:	1st

(Ref 9)

Location 10

A similar arrangement of sticks to that seen at Location 6.

Hadric, Second of that Name, By the Grace of God of Albion, King,

To our Trusty and Well Beloved Cousin, Turquin, Baron of Springdale, Greeting:

We, reposing especial Trust and Confidence in your Loyalty, Courage, and good Conduct, do hereby lay upon the following task.

Be it known that Her Highness, Elivia, Princess of the Blood Royal, is declared outlaw within the Realms of Albion. Be it further understood that the King hath no desire to see any harm come to his beloved sister, if any alternative can be found. You are hereby commanded and requested, alongside those of your fellows in who you can repose your utmost trust and discretion, to make your way to the vicinity of Southwind on the borders of the Jewelspider Wood, and to find and take custody of the said Princess. The justice of the Realm being paramount, you are empowered to treat the Outlaw as Outlaw if no other choice presents itself to you, but it is the King's desire if possible, that his Sister be returned to him in safety.

Your utmost discretion is paramount beyond all other considerations.

Given under my seal at my Court of Ongar-On-High, on the Twenty Ninth Day of Oster-Monath, in the Holy Year 998.

By His Majesty's Command!