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1



INTRODUCTION

5

A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

6

Overview

6

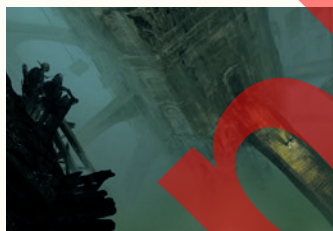
THE CITY AND THE MINES

7

A Tale of Years of the City

8

2

AND AT THE GATES,
THE TRUMPETS RANG

11

MORIA IN YOUR GAME

12

CAMPAIGN FOCUS

13

Searching for Treasure

13

Searching for Mithril

14

The Perilous Path

14

Vengeance

14

Questing for Ring-lore

15

MORIA & THE WIDER WORLD

16

Dwarves

16

Durin's Folk

16

Dwarves of Other Houses

19

Elves

22

Middle Men and Hobbits

22

Heirs to the Men of the West

24

A NAME OF ILL-OMEN

25

Rumours

25

RUNNING MORIA

27

Themes of Wonder

27

Themes of Sorrow and Fear

30

3



JOURNEYS IN THE DARK

33

INTO THE LONG DARK

34

The Company Underground

34

Journey Sequence

36

Event Resolution

36

Seeking and Finding

38

DESCRIBING MORIA

38

DRUMS IN THE DEEP

39

Eye Awareness in Moria

39

Hunt Threshold

40

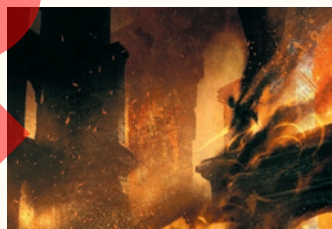
RANDOM CHAMBER GENERATOR

44

RANDOM ORC-BAND GENERATOR

49

4



FELL FOES

51

ORCS

52

Orcs of Moria

52

Orcs of Udûn

54

Orcs of Mordor

56

DWARVES

58

Slave Dwarves

58

Dwarven Haunts

58

THE BALROG OF MORIA

59

The Tale of the Balrog

59

Unanswered Questions

60

Alternate Banes

62

OTHER FOUL THINGS

63

Undead

63

Beasts

64

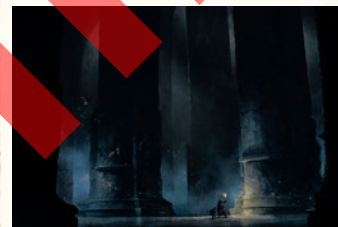
Marrow-eaters

66

Tappers

67

5

THE MANSIONS
OF THE DWARVES

69

THE DELVING OF THE DWARVES

70

Levels and Deeps, Halls and Gates

71

Wind and Water, Light and Food

71

Ways In and Out

71

Landmarks of Renown

72

The Dimrill Dale

73

THE DIMRILL STAIR

75

Background

76

Locations

76

Schemes and Trouble

77

THE MOUNDS OF AZANULBIZAR

79

Background

79

Locations

79

Schemes and Troubles

80

THE EAST-GATE OF MORIA

81

Background

81

Locations

82

Schemes and Trouble

84

Old Moria

86

THE FIRST HALL

86

Background

86

Locations

87

Schemes and Troubles

88

THE SECOND HALL
AND DURIN'S BRIDGE

88

Background

88

Locations

89

Schemes and Troubles

90

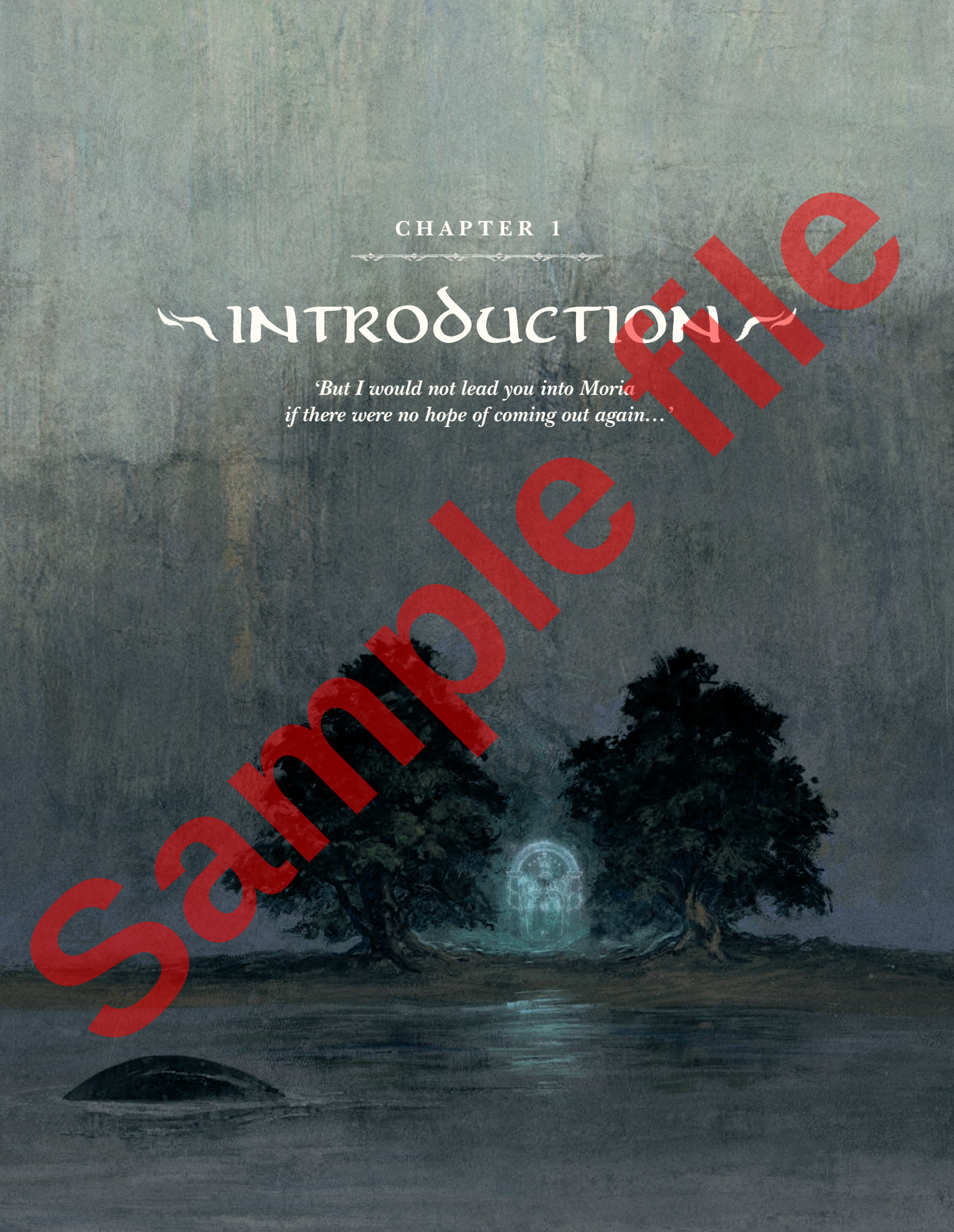
THE LAST REDOUBT OF THE DWARVES	92	West Moria	140	appendix	178	PLANNING A MISSION	200
Background	93	THE IMPERISHABLE HALL	140	BALIN'S EXPEDITION	178	Set the Mission Objective	200
Locations	94	Background	140	Playing the Expedition	178	Choose Your Allies	201
Schemes and Troubles	95	Locations	141	I TOO ONCE PASSED THE DIMRILL GATE	182	Set the Band's Composition	201
The Dwarrowdelf	96	THE LOST CITADEL OF THE RING-SMITHS	143	2849 — The Search For Thráin	182	Set the Eye Awareness Score	201
THE CAVES OF THRYM THISTLEBEARD	96	Background	143	2980 — Aragorn's Journey	183	Set the Hunt Threshold	202
Background	96	Locations	145	ON MITHRIL	185	Begin the Mission	202
Locations	97	Schemes and Troubles	147	Species of Mithril	185	UNDERTAKING MISSIONS	202
Schemes and Troubles	100	THE DOORS OF DURIN	149	Mithril Enchanted Rewards	186	Exploring Moria	202
THE KING'S HALL	100	Background	149	MORIA MAGICAL TREASURE INDEX	187	Making Rolls	203
Background	100	Locations	149	DWARVES OF NOGROD AND BELEGOST	188	Endurance Checks and Injuries	204
Locations	100	Schemes and Troubles	151	Description	188	Fatigue Saving Throws and Fatigue Conditions	205
Schemes and Troubles	103	The Deeps	152	Typical Names	189	Adjusting Burden	205
THE CHAMBER OF MAZARBUL	104	THE ARMOURIES OF THE THIRD DEEP	153	Cultural Traits	189	Becoming Weary	206
Background	104	Background	153	Backgrounds	189	Managing Inspiration	206
Locations	105	Locations	153	Virtues of the Dwarves of Nogrod and Belegost	190	Suffering Shadow	206
Schemes and Troubles	106	Schemes and Troubles	155	SOLO play IN THE LONG DARK	191	Managing Eye Awareness	206
THE VAULT OF URUKTHARBUN	107	GOBLIN VILLAGE	156	RECLAIMING KHAZAD-DÛM	191	Reclaiming Treasures	207
Background	107	Background	156	Joining Balin's Quest	191	SOLO TOOLS	208
Locations	107	Locations	156	How it Works	191	The Telling table	208
Schemes and Troubles	109	Schemes and Troubles	159	YOUR SOLO ADVENTURER	192	The Lore table	208
THE FORTRESS OF MALECH	111	THE LEDGE OF WOE	160	Crafting Your Player-hero	192	Fortune and Ill-fortune Tables	210
Background	111	Background	160	Adventuring Among	192	Milestones	211
Locations	111	Locations	160	Balin's Expedition	192	BATTLES	212
Schemes and Troubles	117	Schemes and Troubles	162	YOUR BAND	193	Aspects of a Battle	212
The Mountains of Moria	118	THE UDÛN-TEMPLE	163	Readiness	193	Encountering Fearsome Foes	213
THE REDHORN GATE AND THE CITADEL OF BARAZINBAR	119	Background	163	Dispositions	193	Beginning the Battle	214
Background	119	Locations	164	Personalisation	193	Clash Sequence	215
Locations	119	Schemes and Troubles	166	Conditions	194	Duels	217
Schemes and Troubles	122	The Mines	168	Improving the Band	196	Other Actions in Battle	218
THE MOUNTAIN GALLERIES	124	THE DEN OF FORGOTTEN STARS	168	Roleplaying Your Allies	196	The End of the Battle	218
Background	124	Background	168	SHARED SHADOW PATHS	196	COUNCILS	219
Locations	125	Locations	168	GATHERING ALLIES	197	JOURNEYS	219
Schemes and Troubles	129	Schemes and Troubles	172	Your Starting Band	197	Pathfinding Checks	220
TARLOCH'S HALL	130	THE BALROG'S THRONE	172	Gifts	197	Solo Journey Events	220
Background	130	Background	172	Quirks	198	Returning to Your Safe Haven	223
Locations	130	Locations	172	Names	199	FELLOWSHIP PHASE	223
Schemes and Troubles	133	Schemes and Troubles	174	FOUNDATIONS OF STONE	175	Fellowship Interruptions	224
The Road	134	Background	175	Background	175	Improving Allies	224
THE HALLS OF THE ROADWARDENS	135	Locations	175	Locations	175	New Undertaking:	224
Background	135	Schemes and Troubles	177	Schemes and Troubles	177	Reclaim a Safe Haven	224
Locations	135	THE GREAT WEST CAVE	137	Background	137	New Undertaking: Recruit Allies	225
Schemes and Trouble	136	Background	137	Locations	137	Spiritual Recovery	225
THE GREAT WEST CAVE	137	Locations	137	Schemes and Troubles	139	for the Solo Player	225
Background	137					THE END OF ALL THINGS	225
Locations	137					Balin's Fall	225
Schemes and Troubles	139						



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

*'But I would not lead you into Moria
if there were no hope of coming out again...'*



In days of old, Men and Elves and Dwarves built great cities and fortresses against the Shadow. Their names passed into legend — Nargothrond and Gondolin, Nogrod and Belegost, vanished Númenor — while their ruins lie drowned beneath the western sea. Of all those mighty works, only one survived to the Third Age. Khazad-dûm! Khazad-dûm! Next to it, the cities of Gondor are but newly built! Even the oldest trees in Fangorn do not recall a time when the Dwarves did not toil under the mountain. Ancient are the halls of Durin.

For it was Durin, called Deathless, who began the Dwarrowdelf, and Durin's heirs who dug deep and carved a city under stone. Their work began thousands of years ago, and though other hands and minds joined in the task, it is Durin's kin, the Longbeard Dwarves, who have the chief claim to Khazad-dûm. To them, Moria is more than a bulwark against a hostile world, more than a source of wealth, more than a city — it is home, and they will never, ever forget it.

But they cannot go there. They cannot return.

For though Khazad-dûm was the eldest and greatest of the fortresses of Elves or Men or Dwarves in Middle-earth, it was not the eldest or greatest fortress in the land — for in the north, the Enemy had raised yet taller walls, and built nightmare halls greater than the Dwarves could dream. The castle of Angband was mightier yet, and when that fortress fell, horrors of the Enemy fled south to escape the wrath of the Valar.

They hid beneath the roots of the mountains.

And, many centuries later, when the Dwarves dug too deep, they woke the slumbering horrors.

They woke Durin's Bane.

And the city fell.

The Dwarves fled, and ever since have wandered the world, dreaming of the day when they could return to the halls of their forefathers.

For what is broken can be remade.

A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

But most of the Orcs of the Misty Mountains were scattered or destroyed in the Battle of Five Armies. The Eagles report that Orcs are gathering again from afar; but there is a hope that Moria is still free.

For a thousand years, a shadow has lain on Moria. Durin's Bane forced the Dwarves to flee, and the ruins of the holy city of Khazad-dûm were occupied and defiled by Orcs and Goblins. The Dwarves tried several times to retake their city, most notably in the War of the Dwarves and Orcs following the murder of King Thrór, father of Thráin, by the Orc-chief Azog, but they met only with bitter failure.

Then came the Battle of Five Armies. The host of Goblins that issued forth from the Misty Mountains included many from Moria. As everyone knows, that battle ended in a hard-won victory for the Free Peoples, and a great many Orcs were slain including Bolg the son of Azog. Suddenly, the noisome holes and Orc-pits of the Misty Mountains were nearly emptied of foes. Mount Gundabad was silent. Goblin-town was diminished (and the Great Goblin slain). It was safe to cross the High Pass again.

What, they whisper from the Iron Hills to the Blue Mountains, of Moria? How many of Moria's usurpers had perished at Erebor? Might it be possible, the Dwarves mutter, to retake Khazad-dûm, or at least reclaim some of its lost treasures?

Dáin Ironfoot, the King under the Mountain, has set his face against retaking the city. He alone once looked beyond the shadow of the gate, and he alone sensed something of Durin's Bane. There is work enough to be done in Erebor,

declares Dáin, so he forbids his followers to attempt to reclaim Khazad-dûm for now.

As chieftain of the Longbeards and heir to Durin, Dáin's claim on Khazad-dûm is the strongest — but if he is unwilling to take this chance to strike while the Orcs are scattered, then surely anyone with courage and sharp axes may do so! Dáin's words bind his kin, but not other Dwarves and other treasure-hunters.

This, then, is the state of Moria in the Year 2965 of the Third Age, as far as any Dwarf or Man knows. It is a time when the Orcs are weakened, and when a band of heroes — or burglars — could enter the city and perhaps hope to come out again.

But what neither Man nor Dwarf knows is what waits beyond the Shadow of the Gate.

OVERVIEW

Moria is staggeringly ancient and complex; the work of making and remaking the Dwarrowdelf is never done. Therefore, this guide focusses on one section of the city's history, the years around 2965 when the Free Peoples risked entering the dreaded mines, on expeditions seeking treasure, vengeance, or the lost secrets of the Dwarves. The last of these expeditions, of

course, was the attempt by Balin son of Fundin to reclaim the city — that expedition began in 2989 and is outside the time period covered by this guide (in the spirit of *The Lord of the Rings*, it is covered in an appendix — beginning on page 178).

Even before the Battle of Five Armies, a few brave travellers did risk entering Moria. The Wizard Tharkûn, called Gandalf or Mithrandir in other lands, went searching for Thráin son of Thrór in the darkness of the mines; it is also known that Aragorn entered Moria in his errandries. Others must have taken the Moria-road in times of need.

The assumption of this guide, then, is that the Player-heroes are either trying to travel through Moria, or are part of a small expedition into the ruins. The prospect of retaking the city or fully exploring the mines is beyond the scope of even a full campaign.

- ◆ This *Introduction* describes the history and shape of the place now called Moria.

- ◆ *And At The Gates, The Trumpets Rang* discusses several groups interested in Moria in the present era. These groups might be Patrons or rivals to the Player-heroes.
- ◆ *Journeys in the Dark* contains a set of Journey rules adjusted for underground exploration, as well as Moria-specific Eye Awareness rules.
- ◆ *Fell Foes* lists the Orcs and other enemies that may be found in the city — and rules for risking an encounter with Durin's Bane.
- ◆ *The Mansions of the Dwarves* is the largest part of the book, describing Landmarks and hazards in the various regions of Moria.
- ◆ The *Appendix* describes the largest expedition to brave Moria, Balin's expedition from 2989 to 2994, and magical treasures that might be found in Moria. It also presents a new playable subculture of Dwarves, the Dwarves of Nogrod and Belegost.

THE CITY AND THE MINES

"There must have been a mighty crowd of Dwarves here at one time," said Sam, "and every one of them busier than badgers for five hundred years to make all this, and most in hard rock too! What did they do it all for? They didn't live in these darksome holes surely?"

"These are not holes," said Gimli. "This is the great realm and city of the Dwarrowdelf."

'Moria' means 'Black Pit' in Elvish, and this name passed into common usage so long ago that few recall its origin, or that it was never intended to refer to the whole complex. The Dwarves, always being precise about such terms (and quick to take offence when they are misapplied) draw a distinction between the *Mines of Moria* and the *Dwarrowdelf* or City of the Dwarves.

The tale began in the First Age, when — as the song relates — Durin woke and walked alone. Durin was the eldest of the Dwarves. It was he who discovered the sacred lake of Mirrormere, and he who first began to dig and build beneath the mountains. Over many centuries, and with much labour of the Dwarves, Durin's first hall grew into a great city. This city, the Dwarrowdelf, lies mostly beneath Mount Silvertine (Celebdil, in the Elven tongue), on the eastern side of the Misty Mountains.

Tunnels and mines extend out in many directions from this city, reaching so far west that the Dwarves built a road under the mountains, connecting it to a gate in the west near the Elven kingdom of Hollin.

Originally, the Elves of Hollin used 'Moria' to refer to the mines and the long road from the West-gate to the city of

the Dwarrowdelf; after its blazing lamps were put out and the city plunged into darkness, the word was used for the whole city. Thus, up until the Year 1800, 'Moria' had a much more limited meaning, and could not be applied to the city proper. After the uncovering of Durin's Bane, all was shadow and fire.

From East-gate to West-gate, the realm of Moria spans some forty miles. The mines run north from the city about twenty miles, and south for another ten or so, but the caves and shafts twist and writhe, so it is hard to reckon the full extent of the city.

The Dwarrowdelf extends vertically as well as horizontally. The Dwarves took the level of the East-gate as the reference point for reckoning heights within the mountain, and called this the Level of the Gates or the First Level. The floors above that line are referred to as 'levels' — thus, one floor above that baseline is the Second Level, two the Third Level and so on. Anything below that level is considered part of the Deeps — one below is First Deep, two below is Second Deep and so forth. The city extended to the Twelfth Level and the Ninth Deep, but tunnels and outposts went far higher and deeper.

A TALE OF YEARS OF THE CITY

THE FIRST AGE:

- ◆ Khazad-dûm is founded by Durin I, Father of the Longbeards. It endures and prospers, even as the world beyond its doors is wracked by war and upheaval.

THE SECOND AGE:

- ◆ **CIRCA 1:** A Balrog of Morgoth flees the wrath of the Valar, and hides under the mountains.
- ◆ **C. 20–60:** The Dwarves ally with Men of the Anduin Valley. This friendship endures for many generations of Men, and the Dwarves build great cities and forge weapons for their allies.
- ◆ **40:** Dwarves fleeing the destruction of the western cities take refuge in Khazad-dûm. These Dwarves are not of the line of the Longbeards, and there is some grumbling and strife between the kindreds. Still, the city's prosperity grows.
- ◆ **C. 750:** High Elves settle in Eregion. They build the city of Ost-in-Edhil and establish the land of Hollin. They trade with the Dwarves of Khazad-dûm for *Mithril*, and the two peoples become close friends. Together, these Elven-smiths and the Dwarf-lords become the greatest craftsmen to ever dwell east of the Sea.
- ◆ **C. 1000:** The citadel of West Moria is established.
- ◆ **C. 1500:** The Elves study ring-lore with the aid of a disguised Sauron, and reach the height of their achievements. They forge the Rings of Power.
- ◆ **C. 1600:** Sauron makes the One Ring, and war begins. Dwarven tradition insists that Celebrimbor gave Durin the first of the Seven before the One was forged; other tales hold that Sauron captured the Seven along with the Nine, and gave them to the Dwarves in an attempt to bewitch them.
- ◆ **1697:** Eregion is destroyed; the doors of Khazad-dûm are closed and the city besieged for a time. The Dwarves block up most of the entrances to their realm. The confederation with the Men of the Anduin is broken, and the kingdoms of Men are destroyed and scattered.
- ◆ **1701:** Sauron is defeated by the Númenóreans and driven from Eriador. He continues to control the East, beyond the Great River, while Númenor commands the coasts. Caught between two great powers, the Dwarves ready their defences. Moria is fortified.
- ◆ **2251:** The Nine Ringwraiths appear for the first time.
- ◆ **3262–3319:** Sauron is captured by the Númenóreans. He seduces their leaders, and Númenor is destroyed.
- ◆ **3320:** The realms of Númenor-in-exile, Arnor and Gondor, are founded.

- ◆ **3441:** The Last Alliance of Men and Elves defeats Sauron. A small army of Dwarves led by Durin IV joins the fray. Isildur claims the One Ring.

THE THIRD AGE:

- ◆ **861:** The North-Kingdom of Arnor is divided into three lesser realms.
- ◆ **C. 1300:** Orcs attack the Dwarves in the Misty Mountains. The realm of Angmar arises.
- ◆ **1409:** Angmar invades the North Kingdom.
- ◆ **1636:** Plague ravages the land, and many Dwarves perish in the cramped confines of the mountain.
- ◆ **1975:** An army of Men of Arnor, Gondor and Elves defeat the Witch-king at Fornost.
- ◆ **1980:** The Balrog awakens and slays Durin VI.
- ◆ **1981:** Náin I, son of Durin VI is slain. The Dwarves flee. Moria is lost. King Thráin I escapes, bearing Durin's Ring.
- ◆ **1999:** Thráin I founds the Kingdom under the Mountain.
- ◆ **C. 2480:** The Orcs expand their fortresses in the Misty Mountains, under the direction of Sauron. They inhabit Moria and defile its halls. Moria becomes known as a place of uttermost dread and terror.
- ◆ **C. 2700:** Azog the Orc-chieftain claims Moria.
- ◆ **2770:** Smaug the Dreadful conquers the Kingdom under the Mountain. Thrór flees, carrying with him Durin's Ring.
- ◆ **2790:** Thrór returns to Moria and enters it. He is slain on the doorstep by Azog the Orc, and branded as a beggar.
- ◆ **2793:** Thráin II son of Thrór gathers all the Dwarves and begins a great war upon the Orcs. They sack many Orc-lairs.
- ◆ **2799:** The battle of Azanulbizar (Nanduhirion in the Elvish tongue) in Dimrill Dale. The Dwarves are victorious, but at great cost — fully half their number are slain, including Náin III of the Iron Hills. His son Dáin slays Azog. Thráin II argues they should enter Moria, but Dáin and the other Dwarves gainsay him — they have lost too many to dare the deed, and a shadow still lies upon its halls.
- ◆ **C. 2810:** Thráin II and his followers, including his son Thorin and his lieutenant Balin, wander Middle-earth and eventually settle in the Blue Mountains.
- ◆ **2841:** Thráin II and some of his followers, including Balin, attempt to return to Erebor. They are waylaid in Mirkwood, and Thráin is captured by servants of the Necromancer. He is imprisoned in Dol Guldur, and Durin's Ring is taken from him.
- ◆ **2848:** Gandalf enters Moria in search of Thráin; he passes from the East all the way to the West-gate, but finds no sign of the Dwarf.



- ◆ 2850: Gandalf finds Thráin in Dol Guldur.
- ◆ 2941: Thorin and company return to Erebor; the Dragon is slain and the Kingdom restored. Many Orcs are slain in the Battle of Five Armies, including Bolg son of Azog. The White Council attack Dol Guldur and drive out the Necromancer; there is no sign of Durin's Ring. Dáin Ironfoot becomes King under the Mountain as Dáin II.
- ◆ 2949: Bilbo receives Gandalf and Balin at Bag End.
- ◆ 2965: After the deaths of so many Goblins at Erebor, some heroes risk entering Moria once again. **The Present Day**, for purposes of this guide.
- ◆ 2980: Aragorn son of Arathorn returns from his errand-ries in Gondor and Rohan, and dwells for a time in the forest of Lórien. Afterwards, he enters Moria by the East-gate.

- ◆ 2989: Balin leads an expedition to reclaim Moria. After a few messages reporting good news, no word ever comes back to Erebor.
- ◆ 2994: Recorded Death of Balin in the *Book of Mazarbul*.
- ◆ 3018: The creature Gollum enters Moria to hide from the Elves and the forces of Sauron.
- ◆ 3019: The Fellowship of the Ring passes through Moria. Gandalf the Grey destroys Durin's Bridge and slays the Balrog.

This, then, is the tally of the years of Moria — for more than six thousand years, it was the mansion of Durin's folk. It was abandoned a thousand years ago, and has been the abode of Orcs for almost as long. In the Fourth Age, it may be that the Dwarves at last reclaim their mansion, likely under the reign of Durin VII, last of his name.