

Extracts from the Journal of Irwin, First Mate of the Black Scab

Part I – Umbar

Herein begins our tale. I write it as I remember it, other versions may exist, but this is how I recall it, to me that is all that matters, for it is my own personal journal. If you have happened to come across this journal, perhaps you should not read on, or perhaps I meant you to come across it...

First, the background

Date Unknown

Mouth of River Anduin, Southern Gondor, 43 Days out of Umbar.

Supplies: Low

Morale: Reasonable.

Weather: Calm

The Bay of Belfalas is like a millpond. The Mouth of the River Anduin is shrouded in autumn mist. Cutthroat Jack spies a brief glimpse of a white sail of a Gondorian clipper from crow's nest. Captain Minardil orders deployment of *The Black Scab's* oars. A Quiet approach, grapples deployed, conflict begins. Some stiff resistance, the crew are bolstered by a Gondorian garrison. 6 *Black Scab* hands died taking the deck alone. Fight turns in our favour but from below strides an imperious Noldor Elf, dripping in sparklies, speaking words of mighty magic, he whips up the sea to 30 foot waves and invokes lightning from the sky. Nearly three-quarters of *The Black Scab's* hands are lost within 2 bloody minutes. Defeat looks inevitable, until an unseen half elf woman creeps up from below decks, picks up a fallen poisoned blade, strikes, and the elf falls, crying betrayal.

The Black Scab sinks beneath the now calming waters. We limp to shore on badly damaged Gondorian clipper, she is abandoned at shore as not Sea-worthy. Many spoils are had (see ships inventory elsewhere), most curious is an impossibly strong magic box, the key hangs around Elf's neck. We open the box, it contains a journal, maps, an old embroidered rag and some sparklies. Everythings in Elvish, we put it back and lock it.

Date Unknown

Mouth of River Anduin, Southern Gondor

Camped beside Anduin, no fires are lit, Sutnac hears a Gondorian patrol. Captain Minardil orders a force-march south by land to Umbar. On interrogation the duplicitous Half-Teleri Elf is called Niamh, she spins a tale, I forget the details, but it seems she is a less than willing companion to the Noldor (*Later note: The Noldor is called Thaeros*). The men speculate her presence caused *The Black Scab* to sink, its bad luck to have women on board. I say it had more to do with the huge lightning bolts.

Date Unknown

Southern Gondor

We are all uncomfortable force-marching south, and slow to get our 'land-legs'. Flint got sores on his foot, Anthrax offered to amputate it, which appears to be the cure for most things. The Captain is behaving strangely now we are on land so much, I've started to notice. He is deeply uncomfortable on land. Normally he's a 'firm but fair' sort, charismatic too, always first to lead a boarding party, cutting a swathe across a deck or threw the surf of a hostile beach, defying odds. The kind that lives, dies and is buried at sea. But like the other night when we heard the patrol, he seems to take far less risks on land. Don't think the others have noticed. I keep it to myself.

Date Unknown

Port District, Umbar

It is now late winter. Spoils from the elf-haul are all gone now, blown on wine, women and gambling. Captain Minardil pays an aging scholar to translate some of the Elven words in the Journal. Some information is gleaned. The Noldor, Thaeros, is a great smith or engineer who long ago journeyed to a distant land called Orin Rakatha, there he gave help to another Elf called Reef Silal of 'The Heights of Halmadon'. He used his skill to help them with a great treasure, though it is unclear whether he forged something of great power or beauty for them or perhaps created the means to keep it safe. The papers included clues of where it might be found and accessed, and also a map! The captain orders us to make a blood pact to find this treasure. From now on we call it 'The Great Elf Treasure'.

Date Unknown

Port District, Umbar

Word arrives that Priests of the Nazgul are recruiting for a war in distant Orin Rakatha. We must be charmed! Like many in Umbar not all the crew are keen to enlist under the banner of the Red Eye. The Captain makes the decision, - that we all must go, we obey. We take Niamh, the half-Teleri with us, she seems keen to be part of the crew.

Date Unknown

Lastgate Woods, Orin Rakatha

Having travelled by strange paths and portals in Barad Turgul colours, we are garrisoned in the Lastgate woods. The numbers of the crew are bolstered up to 20 with half-orcs and a mage from Angmar, we don't mix well.

Date Unknown

Lastgate Woods, Orin Rakatha

This land is strange, we have skirmishes with the Dymwan who are Necromancers who seem to nearly have overrun this land, the tide seems to be turning though (*Later note: It is near the end of the Dymwan Wars*). We constantly encounter strange creatures called Hordelings - the mists are to be feared.

Date Unknown

Lastgate Woods, Orin Rakatha

Many of the new half-orc recruits have died. Only a couple remain. Whilst camped we reveal our plan to the new recruits – to desert from Barad Turgul and look for the 'Great Elf Treasure'. They refuse, so we butcher them. We forge the mages journal to make it look like we were taken by the mists, before they were killed. We hope we get away with it

Date Unknown

Rabb Plains, Orin Rakatha

Still managing to eek out an existence as bandits and highwaymen raiding caravans. The Captain has struck a deal with a similar group of Towerless, to combine and raid larger caravans

Date Unknown

Rabb Plains, Orin Rakatha

Tonight something took place that may define us for the rest of days (*Later note: It did!*). Woken roughly from our sleep, we were betrayed by Captain Minardil. He had struck a bargain with the leader of the Towerless, he would take the magic box and key and seek the 'Great Elf Treasure' himself, the Towerless would keep us. Minardil demanded the key from me, but remembering our old gambling tricks I palmed the key and managed to swallow it. Bluffing incompetence (easily done). I claimed to have lost it long ago. Unable to find it he left with the box under his arm and a wry grin nevertheless.

Date Unknown

Rabb Plains, Orin Rakatha

The Towerless dressed us in our old Barad Tirlgul tabards. They sold us today to some Easterlings acting on behalf of the Dye-Fer-Dyne. They are brutal, just as we would be if the shoe was on the other foot. There seems to be a big trade in enslaved tower members in the East, they sell you back to your own tower, especially Barad Tirlgul and Halmadons Heights.

Good news, I passed the key today! After a bit of a clean and polish I give it to Anthrax and we have resolve to rotate it around our group to keep it safe. The box is very magical indeed and we hope the Captain cannot open it without the key.

Date Unknown

Eastern Orin Rakatha

Much time has passed in the slave pits. Our strength is waning. We do not know whether it is best to be bought back by Barad Tirgul or not. What if our treachery is exposed? The guards mutter about some attacks on the Slavers operation

Date Unknown

Eastern Orin Rakatha

Liberation. A group of Heroes from 'The Valley' have been smashing up the Slavers operation. Our guards are called away to fight elsewhere. Unguarded, Cutthroat Jack picks the lock with tools he has been fashioning for such an occasion. We are free!

Date Unknown

Maegnor Swamp, Western Orin Rakatha

We have followed the setting sun to the west, away from the patrols of Barad Tirgul. Life is harsh in this land, we fear the rising mists, we resolve to join a tower. This day on the brink of a great marsh we meet the Kalid for the first time. We try to join, a skirmish breaks out, we flee. But not before they inadvertently mention that 'the Valley will take any old rabble'. We resolve to

travel to the Valley lands and seek entry, I feel a sob story about how they liberated us coming on....

We are:

Me	First Mate	Corsair/Black Numenorean, Iron Guard
Sutnac	Bosun	Half Orc, Brethren
Anthrax	Ship's 'Surgeon'	Half Orc, Dark Path
Jack	Crow's Nest	Corsair, Wolfhold Scouts
Pyre	Seaman	Corsair, Iron Guard
Flint	Navigator/Seaman	Corsair, Brown School
Nobbe	The Cabin Boy	Corsair, Wardens
D'Archon	Navigator/Seaman	Corsair, Wardens
Niamh	Cook	Half-Teleri, Green School