

# ADUNAPHEL'S WAGER

*Dol Guldur, 30 years before the War of the Ring*



Adûnaphel was a predator. She collected men. Or, to put another way, she collected notches on her belt. She particularly liked men who were interesting, famous, or powerful.

Adûnaphel was the seventh Nazgûl, and the only female. Adûnaphel spent most of her time with Khamûl, the second Nazgûl and highest-ranking after the Witch King. Although she regarded him as her own, it didn't prevent her having adventures on the side. Khamûl loved her and no other. He didn't like her hobby, but there wasn't much he could do about it. He knew what she was doing and grumbled about it a good deal.

Khamûl and Adûnaphel were often assigned together. When they reoccupied Dol Guldur, ten years after being driven out by the White Council, Khamûl was made the Lieutenant of Dol Guldur, and Adûnaphel went with him.

Some time later, Adûnaphel was commanded to go to a distant eastern fortress. She did not want to live in the East, and she did not want to be away from Khamûl. She went to Barad-dûr to plead with Sauron to change his mind, but he would not.

Shortly after, she returned to Dol Guldur with written orders that Dol Guldur was permanent assigned location. She looked pleased with herself. Very pleased.

“How did you persuade him to change his mind?” Khamûl asked her.

“I begged. I pleaded. It didn’t work. I made a tremendous fuss about not wanting to go. He was unmoved. I knew I couldn’t change his mind. But I also knew he didn’t like arguing with me, and was looking for a way to make me shut up.

“So I offered to wager him for it. If I lost the bet, I would have to go to east, with good humor and not a word of complaint. If I won, he would have to pay my price. I’ve wagered him before, when we butted heads over something. I always lose, and end up having to do what he wanted me to do in the first place. But it turns a conflict into a game, and I enjoy thinking up the wagers.

“The odds were long, maybe twenty to one. But I was happy with the wager because it was an improvement over twenty to zero I named a high price, to compensate for the long odds. Sauron didn’t think there was any real chance he would lose, so he agreed.

“Well, even though the odds were long, fortune smiled on me, and I won the bet.” Adûnaphel looked pleased.

“He didn’t want to pay. He tried to get out of it. He offered to pay me something else. He refused to pay me at all. He got angry and yelled at me. But I was firm. I told him, if he welsed on a bet, it would be like breaking his word. And he broke his word to one of his own people, and word got out, then we wouldn’t trust him anymore. So he really had no choice. He had to pay.

“What was your price?” Khamûl asked.

She rocked back on her heels with satisfaction, grinning. She was as pleased as a serious collector who’s just bagged the crown jewel of his collection.

“I made him spend the night with me.” said Adûnaphel, smiling happily.



“I wouldn’t have thought the fear of breaking his word would faze him that much.” said Khamûl. “If it’s not secured

by an oath, he doesn't take promises all that seriously."

"Okay, it did take a little more persuasion than that. I also said that I knew he was old, and I knew what age can do to men's virility, so if he was unable to comply, I totally understood." Adûnaphel looked pleased with herself. "He said, 'FINE!', grabbed me by the arm and demanded, "Where's your room?" Then he proved I was wrong about him."

Khamûl clenched his teeth, but said nothing at first.

"So. What was he like? Do you prefer him to me?"

"Stop it. You have nothing to be jealous of. It's like this. The more experience someone has at something, the better they are at it. And I'm not all that sure he's ever done it before."