



THE HALL OF FIRE FAN WEBZINE

ISSUE THIRTEEN
DECEMBER 2004

GIANT SIZE ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

The Grey Havens by John Howe

THE HALL OF FIRE

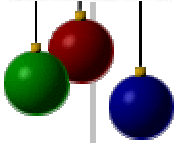


The Unofficial Lord of the Rings RPG Webzine

IN THIS ISSUE

GREETINGS	PAGE 2
ADVENTURING IN	PAGE 3-9
- Dol Amroth: Part IV – The Land and Sea	
IT'S ALL OPTIONAL	PAGE 10-22
- Three Rings for Elven Kings	
- The Effective Warrior	
- Fighting Creatures of Different Sizes	
HOSTILE HAUNTS	PAGE 23-28
- Creeping Horror – The Lair of Gorvorsang	
- Barrows of Tyrn Gorthad	
FAN FLAVOUR	PAGE 29
- New Racial Package: Dwarf of Aglarond	
- New Item: Symbol of Gimli's House	
- Mathom	
ALLIES AND ADVERSARIES	PAGE 30-32
- Nalin, Smith of the Caves; Gorvorsang	
FEATURED CREATURES	PAGE 33
- Greater Wights	
STEP-BY-STEP ENCOUNTERS	PAGE 34-40
- The Balrog versus the Fellowship at the Bridge of Khazad-dûm	
THE ROAD GOES EVER ON...	PAGE 41-51
- A Rescue on the Barrow-downs	
A FIELD GUIDE TO THE CREATURES OF MIDDLE-EARTH	PAGE 51-56
- Hell-hawks, Part III	
POSTMASTER	PAGE 57-58
- Q&A with the Hall of Fire	
CALLING ALL GAMERS	PAGE 59
WHAT'S OUT THERE	PAGE 60

CONTACT THE HALL OF FIRE AT: CODAWEBZINE@HOTMAIL.COM



GREETINGS, SALUTATIONS... HELLO ALL!

Greetings, Salutations... Hello All!

So begins year 2 in the life of *The Hall of Fire* and what can I say? We're doing it with a bang! This issue is our second "giant-sized" issue, but if you recall the last time we did that, the subsequent issues were all of the same size or a little larger. But I can definitely say that this is truly a giant-sized issue with part 4 of Tomcat's Dol Amroth series and expanded rules for the Three Rings, two Hostile Haunts, expanded rules and guidelines for dealing with creatures of different sizes in combat, part 3 of the Hell-hawks ecology, a new adventure, plus a **whole lot** more!

I'd also like to float an offer to everyone. If you're interested in having all twelve issues of the first year, along with their supplemental items, on CD, please contact me through the webzine or personal email. The cost would be negligible, something like \$3-5, which pays for the CD and shipping domestically and, of course, more for international shipping. I must stress that no profit whatsoever is being made by the webzine or anyone affiliated to it; it is just something special that'd I'd like to do for anyone who wishes to have it.

Once more I must say thank you to all of you readers who've been with us from the beginning and hello to all you newcomers picking up the webzine for the first time.

Here's to another great year of *The Hall of Fire*!

Matthew A. Kearns
aka GandalfOfBorg
Editor

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL!

ADVENTURING IN



DOL AMROTH: PART IV – LAND AND SEA

Dol Amroth - A headland of western Gondor, ruled as a hereditary principedom by the descendants of Galador during the last millennium of the Third Age. Dol Amroth takes its name from Amroth the former King of Lórien, who was lost at sea near the headland in TA 1981, only about a century before Dol Amroth was founded. Indeed, according to the tradition of his house, Galador's mother was Mithrellas, a Silvan Elf who had accompanied Amroth's beloved Nimrodel on her southward journey from Lórien.

Dor-en-Ennil - A coastland region of southern Gondor. Its name is Elvish for 'Land of the Prince', a reference to the Princes of Dol Amroth. Its boundaries are not entirely clear: the maps in *The Lord of the Rings* seem to show it some miles to the east of Dol Amroth, separated from that headland by an unnamed range of hills. Given its connection to the Princes, though, it seems implausible that it would be disconnected from their citadel, so the placing of its label on the maps is probably no more than a convenience. The most likely interpretation seems to be that the land of Dor-en-Ennil ran from coast to coast between the mouths of the Ringló and the Gilrain, to the north of the wide cape of Belfalas.

Belfalas - A promontory and fief of southern Gondor, lying between the mouths of the Rivers Morthond and Gilrain. Its chief city lay at Dol Amroth on its western coasts.

THE LAND OF DOR-EN-ERNIL

The Land of the Prince is a beautiful fief endowed with spectacular coastal rocks and cliffs, plentiful freshwater streams, and rugged highlands. It stretches from the foothills of the White Mountains in the north to the Bay of Belfalas in the south, encompassing all the territory between the Serni/Gilrain and Ringló/Morthond valleys. Like the Men who rule the province, it is a very special place.

GEOGRAPHY

Along the northeastern coasts of the Bay of Belfalas, land and sea continually interact. Powerful forces gave this region of Middle-earth remarkably diverse terrain, and the reshaping process is never-ending. To the west, the constant onslaught of crashing waves etches away at the multi-hued cliffs, while in the east the region's rivers carry the silt that forms an ever-expanding host of new islets and beaches.

The Origins of the Landscape

In the Elder Days, much of the coastland south of the Ered Nimrais (White Mountains) appears to have been submerged. Subterranean forces thrust the Belfalas coast sharply out of the sea, compressing the Ered Nimrais ever higher. The Elves living in the region attribute this to the cataclysm that marked the end of the primeval struggle between the Valar and the rebel Morgoth.



The lands between the Bay of Belfalas and the Ered Nimrais are comprised of granite igneous bedrock, overlaid with various sedimentary rocks — shale, limestone and sandstone. In some locales, the granite base still shows through, while in others the sedimentary stone has changed with time and pressure (metamorphosed), the limestone becoming marble, for example. The soil is fertile, as befits an ancient seabed.

The Coastline

Belfalas has a long, rounded, hilly and somewhat irregular coastline, stretching between the mouth of the Morthond and the Gilrain estuary. Steep cliffs and rocky coves dominate the western and southern coasts, where dozens of waterfalls tumble into the bay. Hundreds of sea-caves and scattered shoals punctuate these wild, windswept shores.

The eastern side of Belfalas is less precipitous. Sea-rocks are less common, and beaches are interspersed between the occasional marshes and the smaller coastal cliffs. Gentle breezes cool the rich manor-lands that lie along its edge.

The Promontory of Dol Amroth

The promontory of Dol Amroth is undoubtedly the most notable feature of Belfalas. Connected to the mainland by a very narrow neck of land, it juts westward into the bay, rising to form a natural fortress. Its long ridge culminates in a spit of land that marks the westernmost point in all of Belfalas. Galadriel chose this hallowed pillar of rock as the site for the bell-tower that became the Tirith Aear (S. "Sea-ward Tower").

The Hill of Amroth is actually the last peak in the line of coastal mountains that forms the main transverse ridge in the range locals call the Ered Tarthonion. Anyone approaching the Hill from the north or the south will see that it appears tilted, so that its spine runs downward toward the east (and Belfalas proper). Its rather sheer southern and western faces are virtually un-climbable, except along the main ridges. The northern side of the peninsula is less forbidding, but even there the cliffs reach considerable heights. Sedimentary deposits from nearby streams and the Morthond to the north formed beaches along the north shore, which gradually augmented the narrow shelf of rock on the bay shore. Fingers of rock reach northward from this side of the promontory, creating three excellent, natural harbors.

The Inland Reaches of Belfalas

Away from the coast, Belfalas is an undulating lowland which steadily rises into the foothills of the Ered Tarthonion (Mountains of Lofty Pines). Further inland, the hills give way to the jagged peaks, which run the length of the peninsula and divide Belfalas into two roughly equal halves. These mountains are an extended spur of the Ered Nimrais to the north. Although they reach a maximum height of only 6500', they present a considerable barrier to travel. Those heading across Dor-en-Ernîl can only avoid these heights by going the long way to the south along the coast or to the north through the 20-mile wide Lamedon Gap, or by using Cirith Dunrandir, the steep pass through the narrow center of the range.

The Rivers

Several rivers descend from the Ered Nimrais to the Bay of Belfalas. The Ringló (S. "Coldflood"), the main tributary of the mighty Morthond (S. "Blackroot"), rises in the highlands between northern and Dor-en-Ernîl. Its course marks the northwestern boundary of the Prince's fief. The border of the Land of the Prince follows its waters all the way to the bay. For its last thirty-five miles, the Ringló flows as part of the Morthond. It joins the Morthond's lower reaches at Glanhir and meets the Bay of Belfalas just below Edhellond, about ten miles (as the crebain flies) from Dol Amroth. At this point Anfalas (S. "Long Coast;" W. "Langstrand") lies across the river.

The Gilrain (S. "Star-wanderer") serves as Dor-en-Ernîl's eastern boundary. It separates the Prince's domain from the province of Lebennin. The town of Linhir, the focus of trade and settlement in Dor-en-Ernîl's more settled east, rises alongside the Gilrain at the point where it joins the Serni (S. "Stoney;" W. "Shingly;" aka "Sernui").

NOTE: *The Serni runs through the central plain of Lebennin, joining the Gilrain just before their common estuary feeds into the Bay of Belfalas. While shorter than the Gilrain, this river is more navigable (although the Serni's rocks block any large upriver traffic), leading some cartographers to consider the Gilrain, rather than the Serni, as the tributary stream. Common folk in Dor-en-Ernîl feel otherwise.*

All these rivers are relatively young, cutting deep valleys through most of the fertile footland between the White Mountains and the sea. Fed by the runoff from the Ered Nimrais, they are also swift and cool. In fact, the Morthond actually emerges from under the mountains, and its waters are notoriously chill. The Ringló arises from an icy mountain tarn that broadens into a cold marshy lake when the snows melt in the spring.

Once these four rivers reach the bottomland near the bay, however, their waters slow and their banks become less steep. At Linhir, the Gilrain runs into a shallow depression after passing the outlying spurs of the Ered Nimrais. A waterfall denotes the change, at the point where the waters pour out of a small, mere-filled canyon.



The Lands Beside Dor-en-Ennil

Dor-en-Ennil is flanked by four of Gondor's main regions. Anfalas lies to the west and Lamedon rises to the northwest, while Lebennin borders the Princely fief to the east. To the southeast, the island of Tolfalas (S. "Coast Island;" a.k.a. "Tol Falas") juts out of the Bay of Belfalas.

Lebennin's northern marches are like those of the Land of the Prince: wooded and extremely rugged, climbing toward the glistening spires of the Ered Nimrais. The area is, however, primarily an open plain, broken by the Serni, Celos/Sirith, and Erui river valleys. Flanked by the Anduin and the Gilrain, it is — as the name "Lebennin" signifies — truly the land of "Five Rivers."

Lebennin ends where the mighty Anduin, the "Long River" of Middle-earth, sweeps into the sea and divides into numerous streams, forming an immense delta, the Ethir. The Anduin, by contrast with the lower lesser rivers of this region, is old, and in its lower reaches runs slowly, with a broad flood plain on either side. But for its size, it would be fordable (and, of course, nowhere below the city of Osgiliath is the Anduin narrow or shallow enough to traverse without aid). Its meandering channels are known to change their courses following the annual spring floods. The yearly deluge, generated by melting snows from the north, transforms virtually the entire delta into a swamp. The Númenoreans who built Pelargir upstream realized Tolfalas is unique among the lands bordering the Bay of Belfalas, for it is the offspring of fire. Shaped largely by volcanic forces, its cliffs are hard and black and its central peak — the 3500' Amon Hithaeir (S. "Sea-mist Mount") — is an extinct volcanic cone. Tolfalas' rock is principally basalt, the hardened residue of primeval lava flows. Winding tunnels, formerly lava chambers, pit the mountainsides. There are scattered beaches along the rocky shoreline, but Tolfalas has no good harbors.

The Eastern Bay

The sea has geographic features no less than the land, and sailors ignore them at their peril. This is especially true in the Bay of Belfalas. The entire bay rests on the continental shelf, sloping gradually from the land and never attaining a depth below 500'. Where the shelf ends, the Great Sea (S. "Belegaer") begins. Off the coast of Belfalas, particularly in the west and south (such as in the area of the Dol Amroth peninsula), hazardous shoals dot the seascape. More rocks and reefs lie between Tolfalas and the Lebennin coasts, forcing any ships lacking experienced local pilots to skirt Tolfalas on its eastern side in order to easily reach the Ethir. Undersea steam fissures warm the waters surrounding Tolfalas, creating a unique niche for sea life.

THE CLIMATE AND WEATHER PATTERNS

Just as the interaction of land and sea has shaped the geography of Dor-en-Ennil, so it continues to govern the climate. Belfalas lies in a temperate zone, so the average temperature is warm. Moreover, the sea's proximity prevents seasonal fluctuations as wide as those found further inland. The upper river vales and the Ered Tarthonion enjoy slightly cooler temperatures owing to their altitude and distance from the sea. Overall, the result is a comfortable, almost ideal climate — a mild winter, prolonged spring and autumn, and a warm, dry summer. Precipitation is regular and nearly always sufficient for local needs. The massive peaks of the Ered Nimrais (S. "White Mountains") to the north catch clouds carried by winds from the sea, filling the several rivers flowing to the Bay of Belfalas, where the process begins again. Droughts are virtually unknown.

The peak storm season is late autumn, when cold air from the north crosses the barrier of the Ered Nimrais and collides with the warmer air of the Bay. Precipitation is also frequent in the spring, when warm air rises into the Bay area from the south.

The following chart, using the King's Reckoning calendar of the Dúnedain of Gondor, summarizes monthly weather in Dor-en-Ennil. Average temperature range (excluding unusual highs and lows), frequency of precipitation and typical wind speeds on land are given. Note the overlap of the Elven seasons with Dúnadan months.

WINDS, CURRENTS, AND TIDES

As is true elsewhere in northwestern Middle-earth, the prevailing winds in Dor-en-Ennil are westerlies. These steady breezes come from the Great Sea (S. "Belegaer") to the West of Endor, sweeping along the coast of Gondor. Wind direction is especially consistent in the Spring. Autumn often brings storms, which are particularly strong in the Bay, where no natural obstacles lessen their force. Storm velocities are always to be feared.

CALCULATING WIND SPEEDS

Calculate the wind speeds in the Bay according to the following table (percentages reckoned according to D100 roll). Note that 1.15 mph = 1 knot (nautical mile per hour).



Wind Condition	Normal Roll	Autumn Roll
Dead Calm (0-1 mph)	02	01
Light Wind (2-4 mph)	03-04	02-03
Moderate Wind (5-7 mph)	05-07	04-05
Strong Wind (8-18 mph)	08-09	06-07
Gale (32-54 mph)	10-11	08-09
Storm (55-72 mph)	12	10-11
Hurricane (73 + mph)		12

WAVES, CURRENTS, AND TIDES

Wind speeds significantly affect waves. On average, wave height (in feet) will equal half the wind speed (in mph). A combination of smaller waves, however, may yield a much higher compound wave. Along the coastline, the differing air temperatures over the liquid sea and solid land generate regular breezes by alternately releasing and absorbing heat. During the day, the breezes are seaward, while at night they are landward.

Occasionally cold, dry air builds up against the northern face of the Ered Nimrais, suddenly spilling over the mountains and surging down the narrow river valleys in a chill blast of awesome force. Trees shake, and the gales tear any loose thatch off roofs. The first folk living in the vales on the seaward (southern) side of the mountains named this wind the *Sorrach*.

Currents

The principal water current in the Bay of Belfalas is formed by warm water rising from the south and arcing along the Bay's shores in a counterclockwise motion. Gondorians call it the Southron Stream, since it is regularly used by both traders and Corsairs coming from Umbar and Harad.

Another major current results from cold water descending from the North. This stream invades the Bay in a clockwise motion, driving in from the Great Sea. Men in Dor-en-Enril refer to the current's path as the Road of Early Return, for it is typically used by Merchant vessels to speed the return voyage from Eriador or Lindon.

While currents in the Bay of Belfalas are never particularly predictable or forgiving, those in the western bay are especially hazardous. Even the dangerous waters off the southern tip of Belfalas are tame when compared to those off the Cape of Andrast. There, at the uttermost westerly tip of Gondor, the cold and warm currents pass near one another, creating vicious maelstroms and turbulent seas.

Tides

Typically, high and low tides each occur two times a day. Twice in each lunar month — when the moon and sun are aligned at the new and full moons — exceptionally great high and low tides (called spring tides) result. Similarly, exceptionally weak neap tides occur twice monthly, at the midpoints between spring tides.

As at sea and along the shores of unsheltered islands, normal tidal variations rarely exceed 1-2'. In shoal waters and narrow estuaries, however, the rise and fall is often far more dramatic. A 5' variation is typical around Dol Amroth, and in the estuary of the Gilrain/Serni the average variation is 9'. Tides must be accounted for in navigation and harbor operation, making harbormasters and guides invaluable friends of anyone relying on the local seas.

One should always remember some basic rules concerning tides. For instance, the best time to cross a shoal is at high tide. In addition, ships moored too tightly to a wharf at high or low tide may damage the mooring or, worse, themselves. Careless seamen may even lose a boat altogether, for a light vessel drawn up on a beach at low tide may be carried out to sea when the water rises.

PLANTS AND ANIMALS

Given its variety of terrain and wealth of water, it is hardly surprising that Dor-en-Enril is astoundingly well endowed with a wide range of plants and animals. Many are unique to the Bay of Belfalas, some providing riches, others invoking terror.

COASTAL LIFE

The southern coastlands of Gondor are fair and green, a delight to the senses, where one could long rest contented. For the most part the countryside is a mixture of cultivated fields and flowering meadowlands. There are scattered copses and a few larger woodlands of deciduous trees, principally elms and beeches. Well-kept orchards lie on many of the rolling hillsides. Patches of herbs grow wild in abundance (see 4.7).

White lilies are common throughout the tall grasses of the meadowlands. Here also grow two wildflowers of exceptional beauty known better by their Sindarin names. The mallos (W. goldsnow) are long-stemmed, with golden bell-shaped blossoms. Is it only a flight of fancy, or can the Elves really hear the bells of their ancient home across the Sea when the mallos are shaken by winds from the West? No mortal has ever heard the sound. The alfirin (Q. simbelmyne; W. evermind) have small snowy-white, star-shaped petals that remain in bloom year-round. Here they grow everywhere, though north of the Ered Nimrais they are more rare and usually found only on burial mounds. When struck by the rising or setting sun, they take on a golden hue.



Where the sea and land meet live creatures wedded to both for survival. Numberless gulls roost in the Belfalas cliffs, and swoop low over the bay plucking fish from the water. Rocky coves along the shore form tidal pools, inhabited by shellfish, crustaceans, sponges, and curiously fluted sea plants. Life advances and recedes with the Bay's tidal rhythms.

LIFE IN THE HIGHLANDS

The foothills and mountains of the Ered Tarthonion are heavily wooded. The lower vales are filled with deciduous trees, including cedars and oaks ideal for shipbuilding. At higher altitudes, where the soil is poorer, these give way to the mighty pines for which the mountains are named, tall enough for masts. The forest floor is carpeted with shrubs at lower altitudes and moss in the higher reaches. Only small areas of the Ered Tarthonion have been cleared by mountain folk or lumberers, and the Dúnedain plant at least as many trees as they cut.

Game animals flourish in the Ered Tarthonion. Magnificently horned stags bound through the foothills, a swift and elusive quarry. Wild boar offers a more dangerous pursuit. At bay, a boar is apt to turn suddenly on the pursuer, viciously slashing at any foolish enough to come within range of its deadly tusks. Sure-footed wild goats roam over the rocks and precipices of the higher mountainsides. Black bears also range through the woodlands. Although less powerful than their brown cousins further north, and peaceful by nature, they are tough opponents if threatened.

A few natural predators still survive in the mountains. Hawks circle over the mountain slopes, roosting in the limbs of the highest trees. Packs of wolves are known to inhabit the isolated interior. They live off deer and have learned to fear men, but may attack lone travelers during the winter when food is short. Mountain lions dwell on the rocky upper slopes. These are solitary hunters with excellent night vision, and have no fear of Men. While they prudently avoid large groups, they find Men easier to catch than their usual prey, the wild goats.

LIFE IN THE MARSHES AND RIVER DELTAS

Few areas of Middle-earth are home to such a profusion of life as the marshes and deltas of southern Gondor. This is particularly true of the Ethir Anduin, where spring floods regularly inundate the delta with a fresh layer of silt from the North, ensuring continued fertility. Other local marshes and deltas share many of the species, but the numbers and variety in any given wetland are generally modest when compared to the Mouths of the Anduin. Nonetheless, life in Dor-en-Ennil's marshes and river deltas is both plentiful and notable.

The major channels in the lower Morthond and Gilrain rivers are wide and deep enough to remain open to the sky and permit large ships to go upstream. However, the smaller branching waterways that interlace their deltas, and those of the region's lesser streams, often become dim tunnels canopied by the giant reeds rising on either side. Close-packed bulrushes line the spongy mud of the banks. There are few large trees in these wetlands, but some stands of moss-hung cypresses can be found around small lagoons on the firmer ground.

Waterfowl float on the streams, at times suddenly rising in colossal flocks and filling the air with their cries. Other birds are drawn by the swarms of insects that breed in the still lagoons and pose a significant threat to the health of Men. Myriads of fish fill the estuaries, where fresh and salt water meet. Closer to the Bay, on the sandy perimeter of the deltas and swamps, are clam beds and numerous burrowing crabs.

Several mammals make their home here as well. Water rodents scurry through the rushes, and wild pigs are perpetually rooting in the mud along the banks. Otters float down the area's streams, lying on their backs with fish or mollusk dinners resting on their chests. The water is warm enough for even reptiles to flourish. Snakes wrap themselves around the overhanging tree limbs, or glide silently through the water. Most are small and relatively harmless to men, but venomous Water Vipers and a few larger constrictors are serious dangers. Mud-turtles lie among tree roots or bury themselves in the shallows, with only heads protruding.

The Galenanca (S. "Green Jaws;" pl. "Gelinencai"), a crocodile-like reptile with an elongated and narrow snout, it is the largest marsh predator in the region. It grows as long as 16'. Armed with two powerful weapons, its toothy jaws and long tail, the Galenanca is well able to cripple prey with a single tail swipe, or suddenly emerge from below the surface of the water to seize an intended meal and drag it under. When the Galenanca lies in wait in the water, only its nostrils and eyes protrude, and it can dive swiftly to escape attack. Although this reptile prefers to remain near water, it can pursue prey on land with a short, surprisingly fast, burst of speed.

A Galenanca den will be dug into the earth along a riverbank, with its entrance below the water's surface, sloping upward to a dry chamber with an air vent. If prey is too large to swallow whole, the reptile will drag it back to the den to devour piecemeal; thus, some treasure may accumulate in the den. The Galenanca has good nocturnal and underwater vision, as well as a booming voice; its "songs" can be heard echoing across the marshland at night. Fish, waterfowl and pigs are the creature's normal diet, but it will not hesitate to supplement that with Men should the opportunity arise.

LIFE ON TOLFALAS AND THE COASTAL ISLETS

Volcanic ash typically creates quite fertile soil, and Tolfalas is no exception. The slopes of Amon Hithaear are richly carpeted with trees and shrubs. Although the shoreline appears more barren at first glance, lichen and weeds cling to the



huge chunks of black basalt that form most of the island's perimeter, and the few beaches are home to innumerable forms of burrowing life. A large oyster bed lies on the landward side of the isle in the shallows, no more than 30' down.

Although Tolfalas has been cut off from the mainland for millennia, it shares much of the same animal life. Wild goats, deer and pigs dwell in the tangled woods. Sea birds, to whom water is no barrier, roost as readily here as on the opposite cliffs of Belfalas. Nevertheless, the isolation of Tolfalas has permitted more exotic creatures to find a haven, and the lack of any permanent settlement by Men has forestalled possible extermination. Fat iguanas lounge on the rocky shoreline. Sea turtles use the beaches of Tolfalas as a spawning ground, coming ashore once annually to bury their clutches of eggs. Few eggs or hatchlings survive, since the other animals inhabiting the island regard them as delicacies.

Most feared of the island's inhabitants is the giant "Hunting Lizard" (S. "Anfarod-uitir" pl. "Enferyd-uitir; W. "Everseeing Longhunter"). A species of monitor lizard, they can grow to a 12' length and weigh 300 lbs. The Hunting Lizard has a long flexible neck, a forked tongue flicking in and out, and a disconcertingly intense stare. Its principal weapons are its powerful jaws and heavy tail; it is well protected by a thick scaly hide.

SEA LIFE IN THE BAY OF BELFALAS

The Bay of Belfalas teems with life in every imaginable variety. Vast beds of plankton drift in the sunlit waters, serving as food for schools of fish. Marine plants thrive on the Bay floor, along with crustaceans and shellfish. Larger ocean creatures find their way into the Bay, drawn by the ready food supply.

Sharks

Sharks are the ocean's omnipresent predators. Most confine their diet to fish, but at least one Shark is a confirmed man-eater. This is the Nimaearguth (S. "White Seadeath"), commonly abbreviated N'guth (pi. "Nimaergyth"). It typically grows to a 15' length, with a 21' maximum. Its principal attack is a bite with its multiple rows of teeth, which can easily shear off limbs. Merely colliding with the Shark can leave wounds, as its skin is covered with razor-sharp small projections. It is propelled by its tail, and must attack in swerving lunges, as it is unable to stop or back up. Its eyesight is fair, but in hunting it relies most on its excellent sense of smell. Blood in the water drives it into a "feeding frenzy." Its dreaded approach is often, but not invariably, signaled by the dorsal fin protruding above the water's surface.

Sea-Turtles

Sea-turtles are quite harmless, and fight with their beaks only if attacked. They are at their most vulnerable when they must come ashore to lay their eggs, being unable to move faster than a crawl on land. Normal Sea-turtles weigh up to 1500 lbs, although they swim with grace and move with inspiring ease. Their smooth, dark green shells camouflage and armor them, but their natural protection is insufficient in the face of determined hunters. Sadly, seamen from Harad regularly prey upon these noble animals.

Whales

Whales occasionally enter the outer perimeter of the Bay to feed on plankton. Only one variety, the Charothrond (S. "Hallmaw;" pl. "Cherethynd"), is capable of devouring larger creatures, having teeth instead of a baleen strainer. Its favorite food is the deep ocean Giant Squid. Whales are sometimes stranded on the shoals of Belfalas by storms, and are then cut apart and boiled down for their oil and bone. Cherethynd also contain valuable ambergris, a substance that forms around indigestible Squid beaks, and is highly valued in making perfume despite its naturally noxious odor.

Kraken

Kraken (S. "Belegaerog;" pl. "Belegaeryg;" W. "Great Sea-demon") are the most dreadful horrors of the ocean. Though the Charothrond is able to eat young Kraken, and while Fell-turtles reputedly slay some of these hideous creatures, the full-grown monster has no rival. It is said that they were created in the Elder Days by a lesser Vala of the sea corrupted into Morgoth's service. Whatever the truth, the Kraken have always possessed a malicious cunning and propensity for evil.

The Kraken's main body, two-fifths of its full 150' length, has no skeleton, but is instead a tough, resilient, rubbery cone. Two coldly intelligent, almost manlike eyes peer from the broad end, and below them sits a large parrot-like beak, in the center of the Kraken's tentacles. Four primary tentacles — each 90' long, with rows of suckers and retractable claws at the tip — are the first to snare prey. Twenty lesser 60' tentacles then grasp the seized victim and draw it toward the beak.

The Kraken travels by drawing water into siphons and expelling it at the mouth, generating a propulsion jet that moves it in reverse at extremely high speed. Its ordinary color is a luminous greenish-black, but it alters coloration at will, either for camouflage or as an expression of instinctual emotions such as anger and fear. If it needs to escape — which is rare unless the monster is young — it discharges a black inky substance to cover its retreat.

Kraken have been known to seize men from the decks of ships with their tentacles, and to crush the timbers of small merchant ships passing over their lairs. Kraken tentacles, even if cut loose, leave raw, bleeding sores on a victim's bare skin. Kraken feed on any sort of animal life they can catch and devour, and they love to shoot in reverse through schools of fish,

snatching dozens with their flailing tentacles. A Kraken can only be killed by damage to its main body; severing the tentacles only makes it mad, and the tentacles eventually regenerate anyway.

Kraken live mostly in the deep ocean, among their lesser relatives, the Giant Squid. A few, however, lurk in the rotting hulls of sunken ships in the Bay, amidst piled bones and treasure. Others have even found their way along underground rivers to inland lakes, demonstrating an ability to adapt to fresh water.

Fortunately for those who must brave the sea, Kraken rarely attain their mature size. A Kraken's voracious appetite often leads it to lose interest in the mating ritual and some devour their prospective partners before any eggs can be fertilized. And since a Kraken cares nothing for any life except its own, adults do nothing to protect their young against the Cherethrynd and Fell-turtles that avidly hunt them. Sometimes the Kraken even consume their own children. Thus, do the creatures of Darkness bring evil to ruin.

OTHER BEASTS OF THE BAY

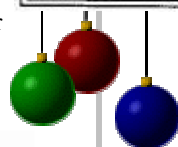
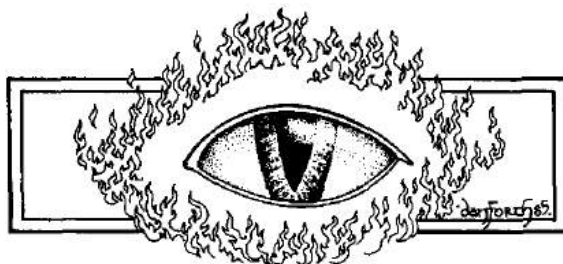
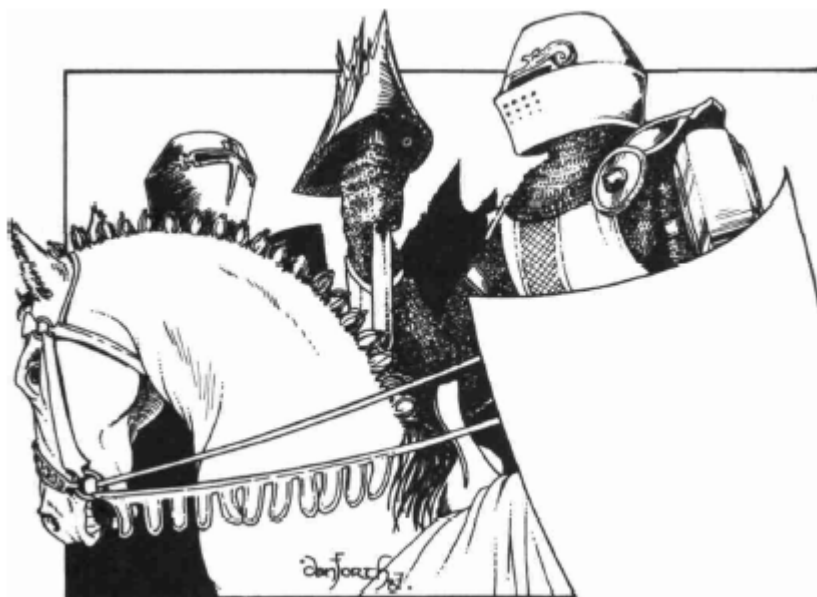
Sea-snakes are occasionally seen undulating through the waves. These marine reptiles attain a length of several feet. Some are harmless to Men, but the poisonous varieties possess extremely potent venom; for the poison of a few there is no known anti-venom. Much larger Sea-snakes, the legendary Sea-serpents (Sea-drakes), are rumored to inhabit the deeper ocean.

Rays take many shapes. They are usually harmless, although the huge and fearsome-looking Morchaithras (S. "Shadowhorn;" pl. "Morchaithrais") has been known to leap out of the water and clear over the deck of fishing boats as it performs its acrobatics, frightening inexperienced sailors almost witless.

Many Rays inflict horribly painful wounds with their tail stings in self-defense, often resulting in the victim's death. Electric Rays have small electric organs in their "wings," which deliver a shock strong enough to stun a man, but these creatures require quite a bit of time to fully recharge.

Dolphins are one of the few marine mammals encountered in the bay. When playful, cavorting through the water in their schools, they display but one side of their character. These highly intelligent animals have a sophisticated language and are capable of concerted defense against predators such as Sharks. Friendly to Men, Dolphins have been known to carry drowning sailors to safety, and wise mariners do them no harm.

This four-part article is an amalgamation of a few sources – ICE/MERP, The Encyclopedia of Arda, The Guide to Middle-earth, The Lord of the Rings, and some flavour of my own.





IT'S ALL OPTIONAL

THREE RINGS FOR ELVEN KINGS



“No Lady,” he answered. “To tell you the truth, I wondered what you were talking about. I saw a star through your finger...”

-- Sam Gamgee, *The Fellowship of the Ring*

“Three Rings for the Elven-kings under the sky”... with these nine words, J.R.R. Tolkien lays the foundation of his epic tale of the mighty Rings of Power and the One that ruled over them all. The professor created a mystique about these artifacts that were made by the hands of Celebrimbor and the Dark-lord, Sauron – objects of great, but not blatant, power.

In the Core Rule Book is a very subtle description of the powers that these rings contain. Decipher and the CODA system stresses the idea of ‘story-telling’ instead of defining a list of mechanics on how the rings ‘work’. The mystique is left in place and the Narrator has free reign on how he or she would like to use the Rings of Power in their chronicle. Some think this is best, as it does not put limits on the wondrous items and also keeps them from being ‘cheapened’.



Still, others think that the descriptions done by Decipher have defined these – the greatest treasures created since the Silmarils – as trivial and minor in power and might. I have to say I agree with both sides of the argument and I was a little apprehensive in putting pen to paper on this project. But, as all of the optional rules go, you may use what you want and leave the rest. I have decided to start with the Three – those created by Celebrimbor himself and were never stained by the Dark-lord’s touch.

The following is to be used in unison with the information given in the Core Rule Book (The Fellowship of the Ring Sourcebook, and The Two Towers Sourcebook), from here on out to be referred to as the CRB (FOTRS and TTTS), and the powers that are listed therein.

DESCRIPTION

The Three were made with the same purpose, to preserve all things unstained, and to enhance the wearer’s powers of understanding, making, and healing. Yet, each was unique in its appearance and had a individual purpose above all other powers imbued.

Vilya, the Ring of Sapphire, the Ring of Air, is made of gold and set with a single blue, star sapphire. Of the Three, Vilya is the mightiest. The ring is only visible to those that the wearer allows to see.

Nenya was the Ring of Water. It was a plain band of mithril, adorned only with a single adamant, a precious stone that was white in color and shone like a tiny star. The ring is only visible to those that the wearer allows to see.

Narya was the Ring of Fire. It was a plain band of reddish gold, adorned only with a single ruby that flared as fire upon the ring. Narya is only visible to those that the wearer allows to see.

The Three Rings were crafted by Celebrimbor to be worn and used by the Elves, or any being of great enough power. An individual that takes up one of the Three must have a minimum of 10 Advancements, a Bearing of 11 and Willpower of 6 to



be able to use any of the powers listed below. Anyone of lesser stature that wields the ring will not be able to perceive it for what it is and find it useless in his or her hand, though they may still be affected by some of the ring's general effects (i.e. extension of their lifespan, desire etc.)

Some powers listed below are automatic while others require a 'force of the wearer's will' to enable; these requirements can only be fulfilled by those that meet the above listed requirements. The requirements needed to activate a power of the rings are given in the manifestation section of each power. Narrators are to understand that the powers given in the CRB are unchanged or enhanced upon here:

GENERAL EFFECTS

The Three Rings have the following general effects and will affect any that may wield it:

Protect Itself – Has the power to protect itself by hiding from those not powerful enough to perceive it. To see the ring, a person must make a Bearing Test TN 15.

Manifestation: This power is automatic to any who look upon the ring or the wearers' hand.

Desire – Those of a weak will, shall become very attached to the ring and desire it above all other things. The ring has the ability to change its size to slip off a finger and to keep it contained the wielder must make a Bearing Test TN 12 once a week. This may at times require the use of Courage, but even the weakest willed individual would gladly spend it to keep such a treasure.

Manifestation: This power is automatic to any who possess one of the Three, but do not fill the Advancement, Bearing and Willpower requirements.

Extension of Years – The Ring has the ability to extend the life of any mortal who wears it 500 years or more. This extension of years causes great weariness and the ring will become a great burden. This affect is a reflection of the power Agelessness.

Manifestation: This power is automatic to any who possess one of the Three.

POWERS

'Frodo saw that Gandalf now wore openly upon his hand the Third Ring, Narya the Great, and the upon it was red as fire.'

-- *The Return of the King*

Preserving – The Three Rings were created to preserve all things unstained.

Greater Sanctum – Like the Magician Order ability, the Three may exert a Sanctum around the wearer that covers an area based on the chart below. If the wielder already has a Sanctum, the rings may either potentially extend the area of the Sanctum or allow the wielder to create a new one. The wearer may also subdue this power by making a Willpower test TN 12.

Manifestation: This power is automatic but the Sanctum area may only be as large as the strength of the wearer can manifest. See the chart below:

- 10 Advancements – ½ square mile per point of Bearing
- 15 Advancements – 1 square mile per point of Bearing
- 20 Advancements – 2 square miles per point of Bearing
- 25 Advancements – 4 square miles per point of Bearing
- 30 Advancements – 8 square miles per point of Bearing
- 35 Advancements – 16 square miles per point of Bearing
- 40 Advancements – 20 square miles per point of Bearing
- 45 Advancements – 40 square miles per point of Bearing (*Maximum*)

Greater Sanctum Power – Like the Magician Order ability, the Three grant Sanctum Power to the wearer allowing them to control the subtle magics of the land within their Sanctum. The wearer may also manifest some spell affects with the Three.

Manifestation: Use *Table 4.1: Sanctum Power TN's*, in the CRB on page 90, to manifest any control over the land.



Springtime – Like the spell, the ring conveys this effect over the entire area of the Sanctum though the wearer may will that the season change. To what effect in degree of change (i.e. how harsh the winter is) may be controlled by the wearer.

Manifestation: Bearing Test TN 15 to manifest and a Willpower Test TN 12 daily to maintain. This has the affect as having an active spell for as long as the wearer maintains springtime effects.

Veil – Like the spell, the wielder of a ring may put a veil around their Sanctum that allows no one to see in using *Farseeing* and imposes the –8 to any that attempt to Observe (Sense Power).

Manifestation: Bearing Test TN 12 to manifest and a Willpower Test TN 12 daily to maintain. This has the affect as having an active spell for as long as the wearer maintains a veil over the sanctum.

Misdirection – Like the spell, the wielder of a ring may weave a spell of Misdirection throughout his or her Sanctum to deter any unwanted from entering.

Manifestation: Bearing Test TN 10 to manifest and a Willpower Test TN 12 per hour to maintain. This has the affect as having an active spell for as long as the wearer maintains the misdirection effect.

Agelessness – The mightiest effect that emanates from the Three is the power to preserve all things around them – the wearer, the land, and the living things within their Sanctums. Time seems to slow down, if not cease entirely. This does not mean that the ring will make all those around it immortal, but it will ease the Elven desire to *Sail to the West*, and may even increase a mortal's lifespan by as much as 100 years (Narrator may decide should they have a mortal that lives or has lived within a ring's area of affect, i.e. Rivendell). Mortals are often uncomfortable after a period of time within the affects of a ring, feeling as if the world is moving on without them and that 'time has stood still'. Trees and plants are also affected by this agelessness and will grow lush and in great abundance.

Manifestation: Automatic, the wearer has no control over the power.

Note: The above-mentioned powers were not witnessed while Gandalf was in possession of Narya, although they were when it was worn by Círdan, and his protection of Lindon. It was said that Gandalf's movements were often hidden to the Great Eye so it can be assumed that Gandalf subdued the powers of Narya so as not to reveal it though he did use its power of Veiling.

Healing – The Three were created to heal and impart to the wearer the healing hand.

Healing Hands – Like the Edge, the ring imparts to the wearer the same effects as the Edge but the wearying effects of healing those in need are lessened. The wearer must make the Stamina test or lose one Weariness Level for every two Wound Levels the patient has lost. The TN is 5, +1 for every Wound Level lost. Anyone that possesses this Edge prior to obtaining a ring, glean only the reduced wearying effects.

Manifestation: Automatic

Healing Body and Mind – As stated in the CRB, the Three grant a +4 bonus to any Healing Tests and Inspire Tests.

Manifestation: Automatic

Resisting Darkness – The Three give the wearer a +4 bonus to resist the powers of the Shadow in any test that is needed.

Manifestation: Automatic

Making and Understanding – The Three were created to assist the Elves in creating and maintaining the things they love and in understanding those around them.

Lore and Understanding – the ring grants a +2 bonus to all Lore and Language Tests.

Manifestation: Automatic

Craft – the ring grants a +4 bonus to all Crafting Tests.

Manifestation: Automatic

Spellcasting – the ring grants to the wearer the Magician Ability, Spellcasting, and the wearer may choose new spells from the following specialties without knowing them prior (all spell prerequisites must still be met): *Beasts and Birds*, *Secret Fire*, and the following spell types based on the ring:



Nenya grants *Water* specialty spells and the wearer gains a +2 bonus to cast these spells.

Narya grants *Fire* specialty spells and the wearer gains a +2 bonus to cast these spells.

Vilya grants *Air* specialty spells and the wearer gains a +2 bonus to cast these spells.

Manifestation: Automatic; the wearer gains one additional 5 spell picks per each 10 Advancement levels. If the wearer was a Magician/Wizard prior to obtaining a ring, they will receive an additional 5 spell picks to add to their current allotment. The wearer will lose all abilities of a ring if they should ever attempt to use sorcery in any manner other than as a Counter-spell.

Empower – Like the spell *Word of Command*, the wearer of a ring is able to empower a spell and increase a chosen effect (i.e. range, duration, damage, etc.) once per day.

Manifestation: Need to have a minimum of 20 Advancements and then a Bearing Test TN 15 to empower the spell.

UNIQUE POWERS

‘Elrond wore a mantle of grey and had a star upon his forehead, and a silver harp was in his hand, and upon his finger was a ring of gold with a great blue stone, Vilya, mightiest of the Three.’

-- *The Return of the King*

When Celebrimbor had begun his work on the Three, hidden from Annatar, he was unaware but Manwë, the Vala, was watching him in his tasks. Though the Valar were not to again interfere directly within the bounds of Middle-earth, Manwë knew of the struggles that were still before the Free Peoples and he blessed the Three, as they were of no part of the making of Sauron. He commanded of Ulmo and Aulë to impart upon an individual ring a tool to help the Elves resist the Shadow that still remained within Middle-earth. Upon the third, he himself imparted a power and thus Vilya became the mightiest of all of the Three. These Unique abilities for the rings are listed below and it is to be understood that they supercede any similar ability listed above, they are not cumulative.

NARYA

Fires of the Forge – The wielder of Narya is able to heat the fires of the forge to great levels of heat, far beyond that of any natural forge. This conveys to the craftsman of adequate skill the ability to create greater metal works. Items created this way are considered to have been created by a craftsman with the abilities Masterwork, Preservation and Enchantment.

Manifestation: Bearing test TN 20 and then an additional Willpower test TN 10 per hour to maintain the forge.

Kindle the heart – Aulë, always feeling a bit of regret for the woes brought upon the world by his former servant – Sauron, blessed Narya to help kindle the fires of courage within those allied to the wearer to resist the Shadow. The ring may grant a +4 bonus to any test to all allies within 20’ per point of Bearing of the wearer, to resist the powers of the Shadow – or – it may restore 1-3 Courage (to their maximum) to any individual that the wearer chooses, including themselves. The wearer rolls 1d3 to determine how many Courage are restored.

Manifestation: Bearing test TN 15 and the wearer must then make a Stamina test TN 12 to resist losing one level of Weariness.

NENYA

Farseeing – As Ulmo courses through every part of the world, so it is that Nenya is able to reveal to the wearer places that are far distances away. The power has the same physical requirements as the spell but has no range restrictions.

Manifestation: Bearing test TN 15 and then an additional Willpower test TN 10 per minute to maintain the ‘farseeing’.

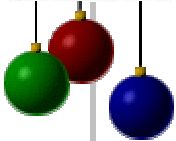
Reading the heart – Like the spell, the wearer is able to look into the eyes of another and read what is within their heart.

Manifestation: Bearing test TN 10 per individual ‘read’

VILYA

Foresight – The wearer is granted the Edge Foresighted and may attempt to foresee an event, one time per gaming session.

Manifestation: Bearing test TN 12 and then a Wits Test TN 12; if they already have this Edge, reduce the Wits test TN to 10.



Understanding – Vilya grants a +4 bonus to all Language and Lore tests and provides a +1 bonus to all tests that have Wits as their modifier (including Language and Lore).

Manifestation: Automatic

THE ONE RING

As all other Rings of Power, the Three are bound to the Ruling Ring though Sauron never had a hand in their making. Should Sauron retrieve his Ring, or another individual of great enough Bearing take it as his or her own, the wearers of the Three will immediately be known to the wearer of the One. The Ruling Ring's wearer may then attempt a Test of Wills against the wearers of the Three, gaining a +8 advantage to the tests. If the Ruling Ring is successful in the Test of Wills, the wearers of the Three will become puppets to the master Ring and its wearer – their minds being opened to the One and easily manipulated.

Note: The One Ring and its abilities will be given in more detail in an upcoming article of *The Hall of Fire*.

THE EFFECTIVE WARRIOR

Copyright, Jim Johnson, 2004

'...we now love war and valour as things good in themselves, both a sport and an end; and though we still hold that a warrior should have more skills and knowledge than only the craft of weapons and slaying, we esteem a warrior, nonetheless, above men of other crafts.'

— Faramir, *The Two Towers*

The Third Age of Middle-earth is a time of war, fear, and danger. Standing between the free lands of Middle-earth and the Shadow Lord and his foul minions are the stalwart warriors of the Free Peoples, from the front-line Rangers of Ithilien to the brave soldiers of Gondor, Rohan, Dale, Lórien, Mirkwood, and every land in between. Every warrior knows they must do their part to stem the coming tide of evil, for if any of them should fail, their homelands will fall.

Decipher's *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* allows you to play such Warriors – a dour Dwarf axeman, a lithe Sindarin swordsman, a Hobbit scrapper, or a valiant Rohirric horse-lord. This article is for you, the player of a Warrior bold and true. This article provides suggestions on creating your Warrior's background; effectively selecting skills, traits, order abilities, and spells (when appropriate); tips on advancing your Warrior; and ideas on how most effectively to play your Warrior hero.



Developing an Effective Warrior

'Now is the hour come, Riders of the Mark, sons of Eorl! Foes and fire are before you, and your homes far behind. Yet, though you fight upon an alien field, the glory that you reap there shall be your own forever. Oaths ye have taken: now fulfill them all, to lord and land and league of friendship!'

— Théoden, *The Return of the King*

While *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* core book provides general information on creating a Warrior, it does not go into a great deal of detail on the finer points of generating such a hero. Following are a number of tips and suggestions to consider when creating a heroic Warrior for your Narrator's adventures.

Creating a Background

Perhaps the most important aspect of your character, especially in a roleplaying-focused game such as *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game*, is your hero's background. Where is he from, who does he know, what are his goals and hopes and

dreams? What does he want out of life? You should have some idea in mind what the answers are to these questions when creating your hero.

You should work with your Narrator and fellow players when creating a background for your Warrior hero. The Narrator may have specific ideas on where heroes should be from, so that they fit best into her story ideas. You may find inspiration by talking to your fellow players and listening to what their ideas are for their characters. You might even be able to create a mutual history or share a past event with another player's hero. Perhaps your Ranger of Ithilien has a cousin serving as one of King Brand's men-at-arms. Maybe your fair Silvan archer-maiden has befriended a Beorning mercenary. Or, maybe your Hobbit caravan guard has a close ally serving on Bree's night watch. The possibilities are limitless; though do check with your Narrator before settling on a character background.

A good background for your character does not necessarily require a long written narrative, though your Narrator would almost certainly appreciate one. A simple list of ideas or even a thumbnail sketch of your hero's background may be sufficient. Sometimes it is more enjoyable to create your hero's past as he encounters new situations in your Narrator's chronicle.



Selecting Effective Warrior Statistics

Once you have some form of background for your character created and approved by your Narrator (if she requires such approval), you need to select statistics that most effectively represent your character's history and abilities. If your character is a Rider of Rohan, good scores in Bearing and Nimbleness prove useful, as does a high score in Ride. If you are planning to create a Silvan archer, make sure the character has a high Nimbleness and several ranks in Ranged Combat. Whatever the case, your hero's background should serve as the foundation for his statistics.

Attributes

The Warrior's primary function is to fight. He should take the front position in any battle your fellowship may enter. As a result, your hero should see a significant amount of combat. High scores in Nimbleness, Strength, and Vitality are most useful, if not necessary, for your hero. Having a clear character concept in mind will help you decide which attributes should be at high levels, and which ones you should designate as your favoured attributes. Remember that your character's *highest* attribute does not necessarily have to be one of his two *favoured* attributes.

Before choosing your attributes, you should have at least a general idea of what advancement path your Warrior may choose to follow once he begins to gain advancements.

Perhaps you want your Gondorian soldier to become a fearless captain of a company of troops. Advancements in Noble and Captain would be valuable, as well as ranks in Siegemcraft and Inspire. Maybe you want to create a silent, footsure Ranger. A few advancements in Rogue and Ranger will serve you in good stead, as well as a high Nimbleness and several ranks in Stealth and Track. If you want to create a farmer who only goes to war when necessary, a few advancements in Craftsman and ranks in an appropriate Craft skill would be what you are looking for.

There is a wealth of options available to you. You should select your attributes with the long term, as well as the short term, in mind. You will not be able to change your mind later once your attributes are set, and improving attributes with advancement picks later is an expensive endeavour.

Reactions

Most Warriors will likely choose Swiftess as their favoured reaction, as it is arguably the most useful reaction in combat. However, choosing Stamina, Willpower, or Wisdom are equally viable, depending on how you plan to develop your character. A good understanding of what direction the character will grow in should prove useful in selecting your favoured reaction. Favour the reaction you feel will best serve your Warrior in the long run.

Skills

Being a Warrior assumes you expect to get into battle and that you intend to do well in that battle. The Warrior's order skills include most of the useful skills a Warrior might use. You will probably want to decide which combat style your Warrior will prefer—Armed, Unarmed, or Ranged—and sink as many points as possible into that skill while at the same time not ignoring the others, so that you can have an effective Warrior in any type of combat. Also, be sure to consider where you may grow your hero. If you plan to make a Knight, a few ranks in Ride would be useful. If you intend the hero to become a Ranger, Stealth and Track would be good skills to put a few ranks in.

As with all other character generation aspects, having at least a general idea of what your Warrior may aspire toward will help you select order skills during character generation.





Racial Background Skills

Each starting hero gets six picks to spend on skills and/or edges, which represent the character's background before taking on an order. While you could select a background racial package from the core book, you should probably spend those six picks in a customized and specific fashion.

The skills a Warrior is most likely to use happen to be listed as order skills. Because of this, consider spending the six background picks in non-order skills and edges. Non-order skills a Warrior may find useful taking ranks in include Debate, Insight, Persuade, and Sea-craft (ideal for the water-borne Warriors of the West).

There are many edges related to combat, so you should consider taking one or two of them with these picks, especially since edges cost just one racial pick at this point, rather than two advancement picks later.

It is usually not an effective use of these six picks to select ranks in order skills or on Language or Lore skills. You will be able to select ranks in order skills with the 20 order skill picks, and you will gain a wealth of Language and Lore skills elsewhere during character creation. Therefore, it would be more effective to spend these six racial background picks either on skills that you will not be able to improve easily later, or on edges that enhance your hero's skills and abilities. (Read on for effective selection of edges.)

Language and Lore Skills

Taking your Wits score and multiplying it by three gives you a pool of skill picks used to select your Warrior's Language and Lore skills. Some Warriors, especially those who are frequently on the march in strange lands far from home, may need the ability to speak in more than one language. These Warriors may also possess a breadth of knowledge greater than average, even if only of their own people and culture. If your hero has a high Wits score, feel free to take a wide variety of Language and Lore skills, even if you only place +1 to +3 ranks in each skill. These racial skills are inexpensive to improve, so you should feel free to give your Warrior hero as wide a knowledge base as is practicable to reflect his background and station.



Order Skills

There are 20 order skill picks to spend among the previously mentioned order skills. You could simply select one of the pre-generated order packages, but since you have been completely customizing your character up to this point, you might as well continue to do so and spend those 20 picks in exactly the skills you feel would most benefit your hero. The only limitation you have to consider is that no zero-advancement character may have more than +6 ranks in any one skill. So you should feel free to assign up to +6 ranks in the one skill for which you feel your hero should be renowned. Spend the remainder of the points as you see fit, but do consider that a balance of skills is preferable to having just a handful of skills at high ranks. Order skills are inexpensive to improve, so feel free to spend those 20 picks liberally among the Warrior's order skills.

A note on skill specialties: Remember that you may select one free specialty per skill during character generation. The immediate +2 bonus a specialty provides to its related skill is a benefit you should not ignore. Whenever possible, select a specialty for each skill in which you spent at least one rank.

While you can spend skill picks on additional specialties, you will likely not need more than one specialty per skill as a starting hero. Concentrate more on spending the skill picks on skill ranks than on skill specialties. It costs just one advancement pick to select a new skill specialization, and there will be many an opportunity to do so as your Warrior gains advancements.

Free Picks

The last step of character generation is receiving five free picks and spending them as you would an advancement's worth of picks. You can gain more ranks in skills, buy additional edges, or improve your attributes. You cannot purchase additional order abilities with these free picks. The most effective use of these picks would be to spend them on skill ranks, increasing those skills you already selected, or taking a rank or two in a new skill or skills. Alternatively, you could spend the free picks on more edges, since there are so many edges that are useful in combat.



Order Abilities

The core rulebook provides five order abilities for the Warrior order. You will want to select one that either complements your hero's selected strengths or helps to shore up any weaknesses you built into your character. Let us look at the order abilities to determine which may be the most effective selection for your Warrior hero.

Battle-Hardened: This order ability is of limited use, unless you happen to play a Warrior who makes use of siege equipment or engages in the defence of large structures.

Evasion: This is an excellent order ability, especially if you expect to get into a lot of fights. The benefit it gives to dodging should not be discounted lightly.

Favoured Weapon: This is a useful order ability if you plan to have your hero use one specific type of weapon for the bulk of his adventuring days. It allows you to maximize your chosen Armed Combat or Ranged Combat skill faster than a hero without this ability.

Swift Strike: This order ability, useful for Armed Combat skills only, proves to be most useful as well. It grants you an extra combat action in combat, which may prove the difference between victory and defeat. It would be especially useful if your Narrator has specific house rules limiting the number of extra actions you may attempt in a round.

Warrior-born: The prerequisites for this order ability are high, though not unattainable for a beginning hero. The benefit it provides helps your hero in most any combat in which he finds himself engaged.



Traits

Now that you have selected your attributes, reactions, skills, and order abilities, it is time to add some flavour (represented by edges and flaws) to your Warrior and make him a truly unique hero of Middle-earth. You have several opportunities during character generation to select edges and flaws. With the six racial background picks, you may select one edge per pick. You gain one order edge from your order package, and you may select up to four flaws and receive either an edge or +1 skill rank in recompense. Finally, you may spend one or more of the five free picks at the end of character generation on edges. However, be sure to check with your Narrator as she may have set a limit on how many edges a starting hero may have at the beginning of a chronicle.

Edges

Many of the edges presented in *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* are combat-oriented. Some of them are better suited for a Warrior than others. Following are brief descriptions of several edges, highlighting their value to a Warrior hero.

Accurate: This edge is a must for any Warrior who uses a bow or other ranged weapon with any degree of regularity.

Ally: Warriors who prove themselves in battle tend to create allies with their comrades in arms. Consider taking this edge if your Warrior has seen battle and has worked side by side with others.

Armour of Heroes: This edge proves useful for those Warriors who do not wish to be burdened by heavy armour while in combat.

Bold: This is a handy edge to have, as almost all combat tests are physical tests.

Dodge: This edge is also of critical value to any Warrior. You should plan to pick this edge at some point early in your Warrior's career.

Elf-friend: Some well-traveled Warriors may have befriended any number of peoples or races, making this a useful edge, especially since you can expand it into an 'X-friend' edge, where 'X' represents any culture or group. (For example, you could choose Dwarf-friend, Hobbit-friend, or Friend of the Riddermark.)

Quick-draw: Sometimes the outcome of a fight depends on how fast you can bring your weapon to bear. This edge will help you out-draw your opponent.

Warwise: This is a key edge for Warriors as it gives you a +1 benefit to four separate skills, all for the price of one edge.

Weapon Mastery: If you want your Warrior to be respected or even feared for his prowess with a specific weapon, this is the edge for you.

Travel-sense: Some Warriors who have marched the length and breadth of Middle-earth defending the Free Peoples have the ability to never get lost. This edge represents that ability.



Flaws

Likewise, some flaws are better suited than others for a Warrior hero. Following is a short list and description of some ideal flaws for Warriors.

Arrogant: Some Warriors own the opinion that they are the last hope for the Free Peoples, and that anyone not part of their brotherhood is the lesser for it. If your character has this or a similar attitude, consider taking this flaw. Social skills, such as leading and ordering men, could prove difficult due to your stance.

Battle-fury: Warriors who engage in combat and find themselves lost in blood-lust and anger probably have this flaw.

Crippling Wound: Battle in the day and age of Middle-earth is a bloody, gruesome affair. There is little on-field medicine, and the remedies for battlefield injuries are not that advanced. As a result, ugly debilitating wounds can and do occur. If your character is a veteran of battle, or even just the victim of an unfortunate accident, this is a flaw you should consider.

Enemy: War and conflict breed enemies. Take this flaw if your hero has gained the hate of someone in specific.

Fealty: Most Warriors swear fealty to a lord or higher-ranked soldier. This is one flaw your character almost certainly has, though it is possible to create a mercenary bound to no lord or land.

Reckless: You rush in where others hesitate. This can prove to be either heroic or fatally foolish when done on the field of battle. Most combat situations involve physical tests, so this flaw could affect your character most of his life.

Slow Recovery: The ability to heal quickly is a trait many a soldier seeks; a character with this flaw does not possess such an ability. This could prove to be critical; a Warrior recovering from his wounds is one less soldier on the front lines, which makes the defences of Middle-earth that much weaker.



Advancement

As your Warrior gains advancements, you will want to improve his skills and abilities in such a way that he remains an effective and valuable member of your group of heroes. Having a plan of advancement (whether short term or long term) is a good idea, if only to get a gauge of the direction in which you would like to see your hero grow.

Multiple Orders

While *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* allows a Warrior hero to multi-order with any of the other eight basic orders, some of those orders are more complementary to the Warrior than others. Because the Warrior order has only a few truly useful order abilities, you'll probably want to multi-order your hero in order to for him to be most effective. Following are brief descriptions of how each basic order

might complement the existing Warrior hero.

Barbarian: If your hero is of a less-than-civilized people such as the Dunlendings or the Drúedain, taking advancements in this order would fit nicely for a Warrior hero. Ghân-buri-Ghân of the Drúedain and Beorn the wildman both represent the Barbarian\Warriors.

Craftsman: Some Warriors are merchants or artisans when they are not off fighting somewhere. A Warrior could spend his non-fighting days as a blacksmith, a jeweler, or perhaps a simple farmer. An advancement or two in Craftsman would serve to round out a Warrior hero of this type.

Loremaster: A Warrior who wished to be more worldly and knowledgeable would benefit from a few advancements in Loremaster. An advancement or two in this order would also be useful for the Warrior interested in learning the rare art of weaving the subtle magics of Middle-earth. Prince Faramir of Gondor, having been educated by Gandalf the Grey in his youth, could be created as a Warrior\Loremaster.

Magician: A Warrior interested in learning the arcane arts and exploring the subtle magic of the world would naturally benefit from several advancements in Magician.

Mariner: A Warrior who serves in the navies of Middle-earth rather than the armies would certainly benefit from several advancements in Mariner. Prince Imrahil of Dol Amroth, while primarily a Knight and a Warrior, likely has an advancement or two in Mariner.

Minstrel: Many people in Middle-earth are gifted musically. Some earn a modest living for their playing or singing. If your Warrior occasionally 'plays for his supper' or has a job as a bard when he is not at war, a few advancements in Minstrel would prove useful.



Noble: Many Warriors are of noble birth, some hailing from the larger cities and important holdings of Middle-earth, such as Minas Tirith, Rivendell, and Hobbiton. As a result, some would likely have an advancement or two of Noble. Boromir and Faramir, both sons of Gondor's Steward, are examples of Warrior\Nobles.

Rogue: A few Warriors may make burglary and trap-breaking their specialty when they are not at battle. Some may even be active practitioners of the roguish proceedings, plundering towns and holdings. A few advancements in Rogue would benefit the Warrior looking to supplement his income by shady means.

Elite Orders

A Warrior hero, whether multi-ordered or not, may aspire to achieve advancements in any of the elite orders presented in *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game*. Most of the elite orders are complementary toward the Warrior. Following are brief descriptions of how each elite order might work with a Warrior hero.

Archer: An Archer is simply a Warrior with a specific focus on ranged combat. This elite order is ideal for a Warrior leaning in that direction. We need no better example for a Warrior\Archer than Legolas Greenleaf.

Captain: Many Warriors rise in military rank and experience and eventually take command of a troop or army of their own. Boromir and Faramir of Gondor and Éomer of Rohan are all examples of Warrior\Captains.

Knight: Some Warriors are skilled enough to attain the exalted rank of Knight amongst their peoples. Prince Imrahil of Dol Amroth and King Théoden of Rohan are two shining examples of Warrior\Knights.

Ranger: The Warrior's order skills echo many Ranger-like aspects, so it is very easy to see a Warrior attain ranks in this elite order. Aragorn, son of Arathorn, and Prince Faramir of Gondor are two sterling examples of Warrior\Rangers.

Spy: A Warrior could serve his liege and country as a spy. A Warrior with several Spy advancements would be a formidable opponent, indeed.

Wizard: Very few Warriors attempt to take on the challenges of a Wizard's life, but this should not dissuade you from attempting to make such a character, if that is your desire. Either of the two Blue Wizards, Alatar and Pallando, could have had an advancement or two in Warrior.

Spells

If you decide to add advancements of a spellcasting order to your Warrior hero, consider selecting the following spells, ideally suited for such a Warrior.

Bane-spell: The +5 bonus this spell provides would prove most useful when the Warrior knows what kind of foes he will soon be facing.

Bladeshattering: This spell, when used in the heat of battle, could serve to dramatically switch the odds of victory to your favour. Suddenly depriving your opponent of their weapon is a tactic to be feared. However, this is a sorcerous spell, and may not be available in your Narrator's chronicle.

Blinding Flash: An opponent suddenly blinded may prove to be defenceless, which is an advantage in combat not to be ignored.

Guarding-spell: This spell is an excellent combat spell, bestowing significant combat-related benefits upon the caster or the caster's target.

Victory-spell: This is another good spell for use in combat, very similar to *Bane-spell* in usage.

Playing a Warrior

'[Boromir] was sitting with his back to a great tree, as if he was resting. But Aragorn saw that he was pierced with many black-feathered arrows; his sword was still in his hand, but it was broken near the hilt; his horn cloven in two was at his side. Many Orcs lay slain, piled all about him and at his feet.'

— *The Two Towers*

While no one person or article can tell you how best to play your character, the following guidelines may prove useful when playing your Warrior hero.

As a Warrior, your character's primary function is to engage in combat. Even if combat does not





always play a key role in your Narrator's chronicle, you will be ready to take the lead when the conflict eventually touches upon your fellowship of heroes. As the most skilled fighter in the group, it is you who will be relied upon to lead and help carry the day.

When engaged in combat, you should make yourself aware of any available defensive positions, the size and strength of the enemy's forces, the terrain, and anything else that may help you and your allies. Because your martial abilities probably surpass those of everyone else in your group, you should not hesitate to charge into battle against the more powerful foes or leaders, leaving the weaker opponents for your allies to clean up. You should encourage the enemy to 'gang up' on you. With your skills and armour, you can engage more opponents at once; it is far better for you to be attacked by 10 orcs than only six, leaving the others to attack your allies.

When not in combat, many Warriors engage in strategy meetings discussing tactics and troop movement. Some take less experienced fighters and help train them in the skills they will need to survive the next encounter. You may want to take advantage of any down-time in your chronicle and offer to help train the other members of your group, especially if many of them are liabilities in combat. Having more of your allies combat-capable increases the odds of everyone's survival.

Finally, in some cases, the Warriors of a group become that group's leader. If this happens to your character, you will need to decide what kind of leader to be. Do you want to be a hard-nosed, no questions asked leader, or perhaps a leader who leads by example? There are many forms of leadership, so you should consider the one that best suits your character and chronicle. However, be prepared for the fact that some characters do not take well to orders or a commanding presence. You will probably want to be judicious in your command efforts.

Conclusion

The Lord of the Rings contains Warriors of all shapes and sizes, from all walks of life, engaged in a desperate struggle against the forces of Shadow. Brave heroes such as Boromir, Faramir, Aragorn, Gimli, Legolas, Théoden, Éomer, and Éowyn battle the forces of Sauron and strive to keep their respective people free from despair and defeat. It is hoped that the advice detailed in this article will aid you in creating and playing interesting, exciting, and effective Warriors. Build your characters wisely and have them take their place among the bold and fearless warriors of the Free Peoples of Middle-earth!

FIGHTING WITH CREATURES OF DIFFERENT SIZES

by GandalfOfBorg

Can a Man parry an attack from a Cave Troll? Isn't there more to combat where a Huge creature fights a Small one besides bonuses/penalties to attack tests? Over the time that the RPG has been out, one of the most recurring subjects of debate has been combat between creatures of differing sizes. So I have decided to take it upon myself to put a little more thought into rules and effects of combat dealing with these issues. These rules deal with melee combat between two opponents (Armed Combat and Unarmed Combat tests). Also there are rules detailed for using different sized creatures on a hexagonal map when using miniatures.

NOTE: These rules deal with melee combat between two opponents (Armed Combat and Unarmed Combat tests).

- +/- 2 bonus/penalty for attack rolls against creatures of different sizes stands per the CRB. For everyone's clarification, the bonus/penalty only applies to the attack test, not to a parry or dodge attempt.
- Defenders can parry or dodge attacks from Aggressors that are up to 1 Size category bigger than them (e.g. Medium creatures can parry attacks from creatures up to the Size category Large); any larger disparity and the weapon or natural weapon is too large and creature too strong to resist the blow and only has the option to dodge.
- If a Defender parries an Aggressor that is +1 Size categories to it, he first must make a Superior Success or better in the attempt to guarantee that he holds onto his weapon when the blow was deflected. Because of the difference in size and inherent strength/power disparity due to it and unless parry result is a Disastrous Failure the Defender must, as well, make a Strength test with a TN equal to the Aggressor's Strength with a possible affinity from Acrobatics.
- If the Defender fails the Strength test, the Defender is either knocked down (prone) or knocked back a distance is equal to the difference between the TN and test result of the Strength test in feet and lands prone. The Defender may also suffer additional damage:

Knock-down Damage - 1d6 + Aggressor's Strength modifier damage

Knock-back Damage - 1d6 per 10 feet he was thrown back; If the Aggressor makes a Sweep maneuver, the Defender is knocked back an additional +3 feet per Success greater than Marginal

PARRY EFFECTS TABLE

<u>Parry Success</u>	<u>Effect</u>	<u>Strength Test Failure</u>
Extraordinary	No damage suffered from weapon; +2 affinity bonus from Acrobatics	Knocked down (prone) with no Knock-down damage
Superior	No damage suffered from weapon; +1 affinity bonus from Acrobatics	Knocked down (prone) with no Knock-down damage
Complete	No damage suffered from weapon	Knocked down (prone) with Knock-down damage
Marginal	No damage suffered from weapon; Drops his weapon (requires a Recover action to retrieve)	Knocked down (prone) with Knock-down damage
Failure	Normal damage dealt; Defender loses weapon (Narrator determines distance)	Knocked back and receives Knock-back damage
Complete Failure	Normal damage dealt; Defender loses weapon (Narrator determines distance)	Knocked back and receives double Knock-back damage
Disastrous Failure	Normal damage dealt; Defender loses weapon (Narrator determines distance), Narrator rolls 1d6 where a 1 destroys the weapon if without enchantments;	Knocked back and down and receives double damage (see rules above)



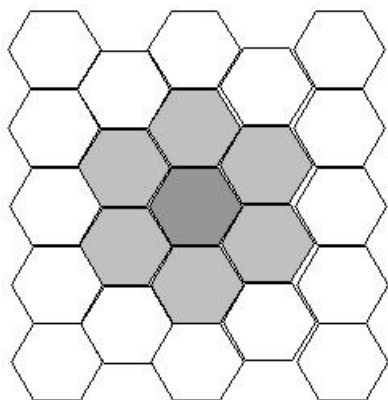
COMBAT ON HEXES

Due to the d6 nature of this RPG, I would very much encourage the use of hex maps for combat and my rules below reflect that. Each hex represents either 2 yards or 5 feet. Remember that the measurement listed in the Size table refers to the creature's biggest measurement of the three dimensions.

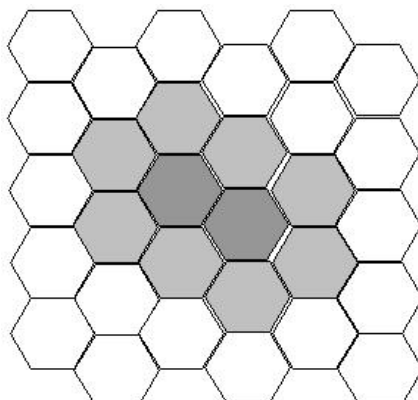
<u>Creature Size</u>	<u>Hexes Used</u>	<u>Reach</u>
Miniscule to Medium	1	1
Large	2	1
Mammoth	4	2
Huge	8	3
Gigantic	12	4
Titanic	16	5
Titanic + X	16 + (4*X)	5 + X

SAMPLE HEX REPRESENTATIONS

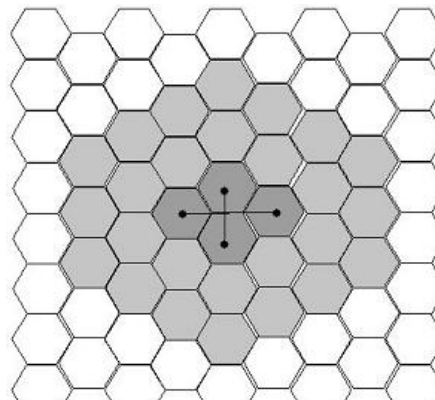
The dark gray-coloured areas denote the spaces filled by creatures of the denoted sizes. The light gray-coloured areas denote the extent of the creature's reach.



Miniscule to Medium



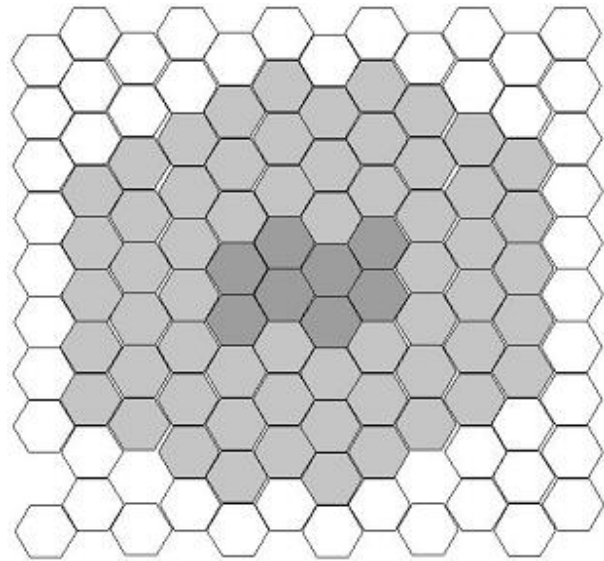
Large



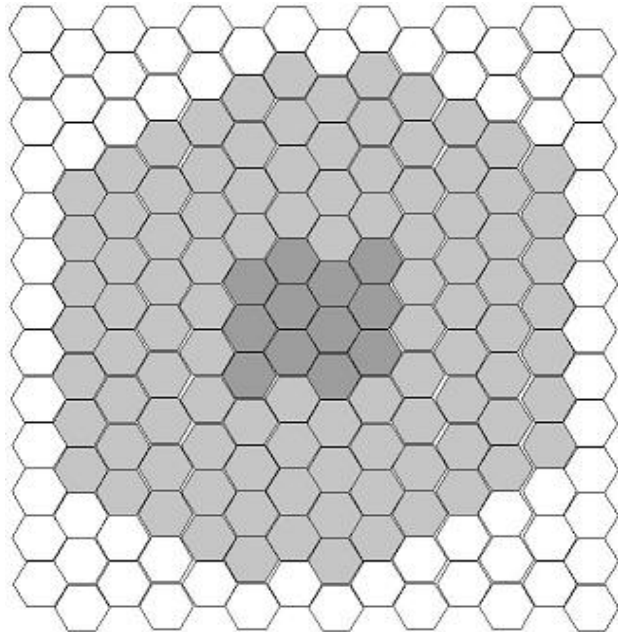
Mammoth



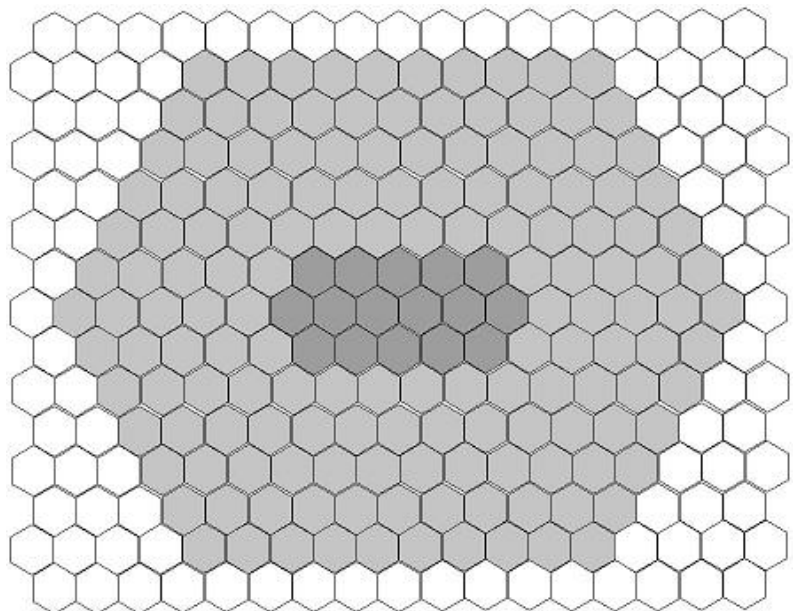
Huge



Gigantic



Titanic



HOSTILE HAUNTS

CREeping HORROR -

BLACK PIT OF GORVORSANG!



On the northern plains of Eriador and the southern-most reaches of Angmar, sit the Dol Gormain, three small, flat-topped hills. In the early years of the Dúnedain kingdom of Arnor, settlers inhabited the area in three small towns that lay on the southern slopes of the hills. The townsfolk's hopes were that their towns would grow in prosperity sitting along the northern trade routes, as they did, just like their southern neighbors flourished in Bree. When the Witch-king came to Angmar and the wars of the north began, the towns of Dol Gormain were the first to fall, their people fleeing to the south.

The hills had little strategic value and would have been forgotten in history but for the presence that settled in the area in Third Age 1575. Vorsang of the brood of Shelob followed her hunger north after her mother forcibly drove her out of the Mountains of Shadow. The area of Dol Gormain, and the ruins that were there, proved to be an ample lair for her to make her abode.

Note: Narrators may feel free to move the Lair of Gorvorsang to any area that they would like; they will only need to adjust her history accordingly. For more information on Gorvorsang and her history, see her write-up in the *Allies and Adversaries* chapter of this issue.

Location 1: The entrance to Gorvorsang's lair. Narrators may describe the external surrounds as their story dictates and may stock the surrounding area as they please. The map shows the entrance to a crypt or mausoleum but feel free to change it to whatever you wish. It is suggested that Lesser Giant Spiders have come into the ruin above Gorvorsang's lair – in her 'undead' state, the Spawn of Shelob does not care that her lesser kin are present. In fact, she uses them as sentries and soldiers and they report to her any news of her surrounds.



Location 2: A large pit opens in the ground as if it collapsed in, but yet the rubble - large chunk of rock, wood and other debris - seems to be pushed up and out, littering around the hole. There is a terrible stink that emanates from the hole and any creature that approaches must make a TN 10 Stamina Test or suffer negative 1 penalty to all tests while they remain in the area.

A careful Search TN 15 will reveal a series of thick rope-like strands that string down from the top of the hole to the base of the tunnel below. These strands were spun here by Gorrorsang and though they are not sticky, they will vibrate if anything of size Small or larger moves over them. The vibrations alert her and her minions to the presence of the intruders. The strands can be cut but require 5 points of damage from a slashing weapon. Trying to cut the strands will cause them to vibrate, unless the individual can make an Armed Combat TN 30 attack against the strand.

Once down into the hole, the characters will need some source for light as darkness pervades all. From their light source, they will see that a tunnel off of the pit slopes 20° downward towards the west. They will also notice that the skeletal carcasses of small animals, rodents and birds also litter the pit.

The players proceeding down will find that three passageways split off the main tunnel at 20' (to **Location 5**), 40' (to **Location 3**), and 45' through a pit that drops straight down into the darkness (**Location 6**). To overcome the pit, the characters will need to make a Jump TN 15 test or have some other means across (i.e. rope).

Location 3: To take the north passage toward **Location 3** will lead to a dead end. At the far end of this passage the players will come upon a grisly sight of what appears to be a desiccated dwarf body, its hands still clawing at the rocky wall.

The longer they remain in this area the more their danger will increase, as the Greater Giant Spiders in **Locations 4 and 5** will converge on the party. They will approach, one on the ceiling, one on the floor, and attack the characters. They will try to snag a victim in a web and then quickly drag him or her off to their respective nests. If the characters are overwhelming them, they will retreat back to their nests.

The players will find the treasures possessed by the dead dwarf only of use if they are a dwarf themselves – or if they wish to haul it off to sell. The dwarf wears a suit of Chain armor that was crafted by a Master Craftsman and it is Preserved. It will absorb 8 points of damage. He also has a small purse of 12 sp and 8 SP.

Location 4: The main passage that leads back towards the outside ends its westerly direction here. The chamber opens to about 15' in height and rises towards the back at a 30° slope. The characters will find the remains of many desiccated bodies littering about the floor. It is hard to determine what they may have been without cutting away the webbing that is tightly woven about them. If the time is taken, it will be determined that most of the carcasses are animals (i.e. deer, goats, etc.) but two are the bodies of what were probably men or elves. Turning east and going down a slight slope, the passage continues into the darkness.

In the upper reaches of the western wall is a large nest where a Greater Giant Spider lives. It will approach the characters using the ceiling to quietly get an advantageous position. It will also draw upon the strands of webbing that run the lengths of the tunnels, alerting its comrade and Gorrorsang of the presence of food.

If the characters prevail against any foes, and they take the time to search the chamber Search TN 15, they will locate an old scabbard that houses a fine Dúnedain blade that is of master-crafting and preserved. It has some minor enchantments tied to it and grants a +2 to Armed Combat and damage rolls versus all allies of the Shadow. If the characters look any further and they score a Search TN 20, they will find a pile of remains that cover a small gem that sits within a metal ring approximately 4" in diameter. The gem is enchanted with a Create Light spell that the wielder can activate whenever they make a TN 12 Willpower test.

Location 5: If the players decide to take the first passage toward **Location 5**, they must go down a 45° slope that is littered with broken rock and bone. The players must make an Acrobatics (Balance) TN 15 or fall forward and land on the ground in **Location 5**. The first to fall is immediately set upon by the Greater Giant Spider in the chamber that will be clinging to the ceiling. It will drop down and bite into its victim attempting to paralyze them for food later. As it fights against the characters, it will draw upon the web strands that alarm the lair in hopes of drawing its comrade or Gorrorsang herself to its aid.

Location 6: This pit falls 28' from the main passageway above, through the lower, to end up in a large sticky trap set up by the mistress of the lair. Any that fall from above will need to make a Nimbleness, Swiftness, or Acrobatics TN 20 test or end up trapped within the spider web. If they succeed, they have grabbed the side of the pit before they fall and will need the aid of their comrades to get them out.

The victims of this trap are solely for Gorrorsang and she will rush forward from her hole, deliver a lethal bite, and draw her prey back into her nest. The trapped character will need to make a Strength TN 30 test to break free and perform any actions.



Location 7: The nest of Gorvorsang is like a grisly museum of her horrid pleasures. Being 'undead', she no longer has the needs that a living spider does and that includes eating, but that does not stop her from taking victims. Any that enter her tunnel (including her living spider companions), whether coming down the steps from **Location 4** or falling into the pit of **Location 6**, she will attack and attempt to kill with her dreadful poison. The bodies of these victims she then props up around her, in her webbed nest, so that she might admire like trophies.

By the time the players have come upon the lair there are over 58 bodies that hang, sit, or stick throughout her nest. The smell is absolutely awful and any that enter the cave must make a Stamina TN 15 test or suffer a -3 penalty to all actions as long as they remain. This odor has permeated her bloated mass and will move with her and cause the same effects wherever she is.

Notes to Narrator: The chamber of Gorvorsang has been inhabited by her for the number of years dependent upon the year of your chronicle from 1575 T.A. Due to this, the treasures that may lie within could be quite numerous. It is suggested that any other treasures to be obtained by the players should be at the Narrator's discretion to stay fitting to their game.

Gorvorsang, her history and her stats are listed in the Allies and Adversaries section of this issue. The Greater and Lesser Giant Spiders that live within and without her lair are listed on pages 27 and 28 of the *Fell Beasts and Wondrous Magic* book or page 295 of the *Core Rule Book*. Narrators may feel free to increase the abilities of these creatures as they see fit to stay in line with their game and to present a challenge to their players.

BARROWS OF TYRN GORTHAD

After the dissolution of Arnor into its constituent kingdoms, the kings and princes of Cardolan would inter their bodies in barrows or burial mounds along with their families upon their death. The most extensive and famous are those of Tyrn Gorthad or the Tower Hills, just west of Bree. At the time that the Witch-king of Angmar was making his war upon the remnants of the North Kingdom of the Dúnedain, he sent a dark plague throughout the lands, killing many. Then to cause further disarray, he allied himself with the Hillmen of Rhudaur and sent evil spirits into the barrows to inhabit the corpses of long-deceased Dúnedain royalty, desecrating their remains and spreading the pestilence of fear and decay to the surrounding lands. This article outlines one small grouping of barrows found near the East-West road on the way to Bree.

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

As being around any barrows that have been tainted by the sorcerous effects of the Witch-king, the land feels evil and barren; elves can palpably feel the evil done to the land while Men, especially Dúnedain, have the feeling of great uneasiness with the hairs on the back of their neck standing on end. When the barrows are encountered, the characters must make a TN 10 Willpower test versus Fear to remain near the site along with additional environmental modifiers also apply (see table below). The Fear effects will last until the characters depart the area and are compounded with any Fear effects suffered by encountering the Barrow-wight. This entire area would be considered a Dark Stronghold for the abilities and effects from the Greater Wights.

Table 1: Environmental Modifiers

<u>Effect</u>	<u>TN Modifier</u>
Day	-2
Night	+0
No moon	+2
Sky is overcast	+1
Raining	+2
Snowing	+2

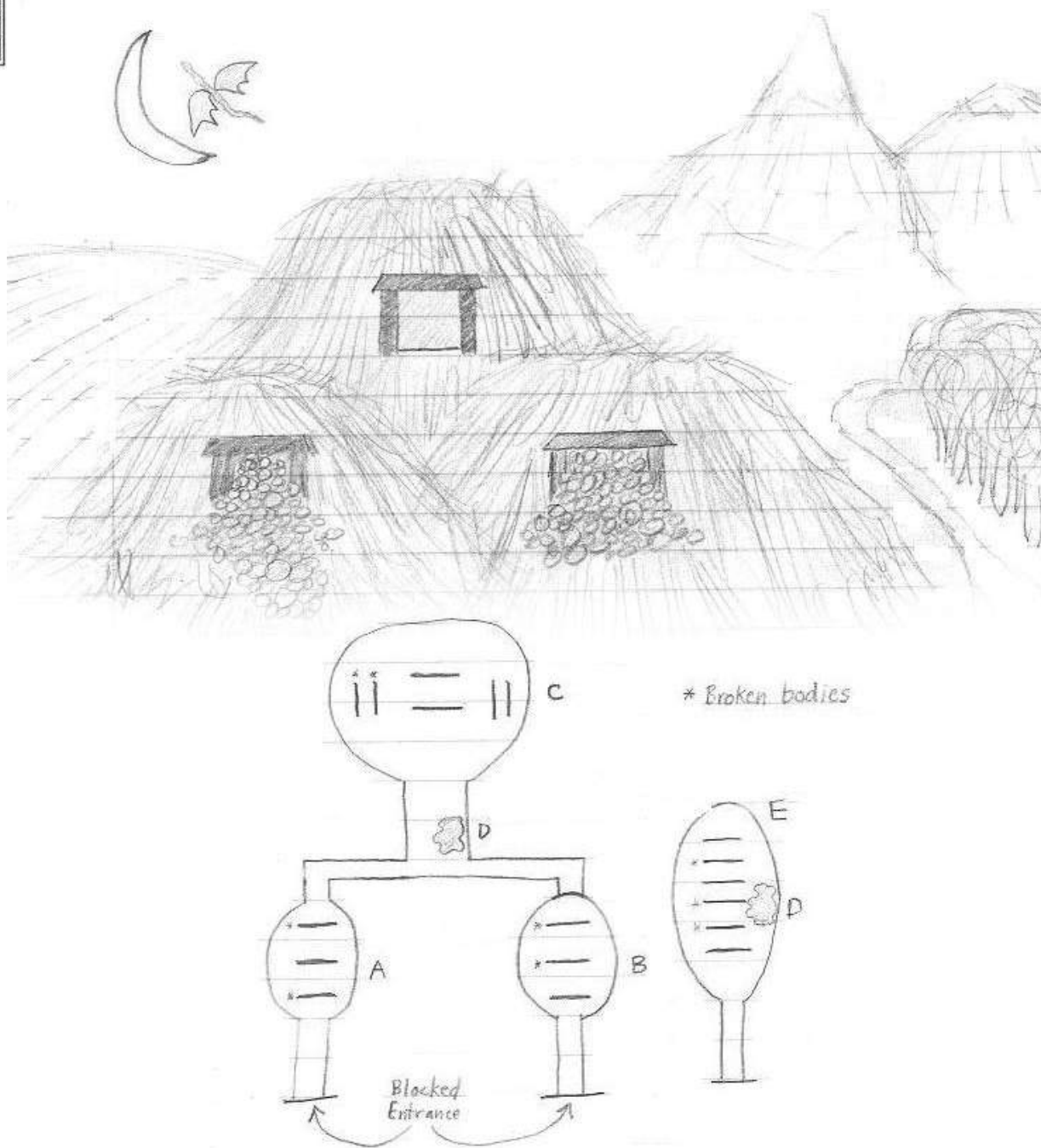
INVESTIGATING THE BARROWS

Outside the Barrows

As depicted in the picture there are three mounds with entrances with the bottom two both broken open yet rubble fills the entrance and the top entrance looking very old and mossy but intact. If a character makes a TN 10 Stonecraft (Stonecarving) test followed by a TN 10 Lore: History (Cardolan) test, he can determine that the top barrow is newer than the two bottom barrows and a Superior Success or better on the Stonecraft test will reveal that the top barrow was made differently than the two bottom ones while on the Lore test will reveal that the construction wasn't done by Dúnedain. A TN 10 Observe (Sense Power) test is required when using Sense Power to discern there are actual sources of power and evil nearby other than just the land itself. All wights should be given Sense Power and a +5 bonus for tests to notice the



approach of any PC's; see section 'Barrow-wights Reaction' if the Barrow-wights make a successful Observe (Sense Power) test.



Upper Barrow (Top Level)

The door to the barrow is intact and made from a single stone of about six feet wide and four feet high. The door can be opened with a TN 15 Strength test and a maximum of three people can attempt to open it using a combined test. Using staffs, poles, or iron bars to help pry it open will give an additional +2 to the attempt for each one used along with 25 XP to the character who thinks of it. Only upon an Extraordinary Success of opening the door will the wights within not be aware of the attempt. Upon entering the barrow, PC's must make a TN 12 Willpower versus Fear test.

Inside is a tunnel that goes for about 15 feet and is five feet high before widening into a large chamber that is 30 feet in diameter and ten feet high. In here are the remains of six bodies upon funeral biers dressed in very rustic garb; three are broken. A TN 5 Lore: Group (Hillmen) or TN 10 Lore: Realm (Rhudaurs) test will distinguish the garb of these people to be



that of the evil Hillmen who allied themselves with the Witch-king. There are no items denoting wealth or identification of who resides here except on the far wall that has a plaque with a rough inscription on it. The language is difficult to understand; a Language: Black Speech test to read it, as it is a mixture of the two written in characters of Westron. If it is translated, the inscription says: "Hergot, King. The West-men fell before me like leaves in the wind and their blood stained the grass."

The other item of note is a large hole in the floor on the right side of the chamber as it is entered. It is about ten feet in diameter and drops down about 15 feet. There aren't any rocks or anything else within the barrow that a rope could be affixed to if the PC's want to descend below.

Lower Barrows (Bottom Level)

The doors to these barrows were initially made of a single stone, but they were destroyed; by what is indiscernible. Rubble spills out of the entrance and completely blocks the entrances. A successful result of a TN 15 Stonecraft test would reveal that the two barrow entrances were identical before their destruction.

Entering either barrow requires a TN 12 Willpower versus Fear test. Beyond the rubble of each entrance is an identical tunnel about 20 feet long and five feet high opening into identical chambers that are about 20 feet in diameter and 10 feet high. They have 3 funeral biers each with 3 bodies upon them. Each has one body that is untampered with and the other two are broken like those in the top barrow (the barrow maps denote which). The bodies are wearing white gowns over scale mail with some jewelry about their fingers and necks with silver circlets on their heads. They also have swords and daggers that, with a TN 10 Smithcraft (Weaponsmith) test plus an affinity from Lore: Group (Dúnedain), look to be well-maintained blades with serpentine devices upon their hilt and crossguard distinguishing them as ancient Númenorean make. The one unbroken body in each of these chambers is a Barrow-wight (see section 'Barrow-wights Reaction').

The left barrow has a passage that extends farther into the hill while the right one ends in a wall. The passage that leads out intersects with a larger passage going to the left that opens into a very large chamber and a smaller, almost identical passage opposite it. The larger passage looks well-made, but there is a larger portion of rubble and dirt. Looking up there is a hole in the ceiling (about ten feet up from the floor) about ten feet in diameter.

The huge chamber at the end of the large passage is about 50 feet in diameter and 20 feet high in the center. There are two large, ornate biers upon a large, raised stone in the center of the chamber; the bodies are unbroken. There are also two smaller biers on either side; the bodies on the left are broken while those on the right aren't. The bodies are clothed in the same white gowns, wearing similar jewelry, but apparently much more expensive. The two bodies in the center wear gold crowns, one larger than the other. The body with the larger crown also wears chain armour with plates. Each body has a dagger of similar make as those found in the other two chambers and the armoured body in the center also is girded with a longsword. All devices that would have the prince's name inscribed upon them have it scratched out as if to curse his remains.

BARROW-WIGHTS REACTION

Outside the Barrow

Upon the approach of PC's to the site, each wight will receive a chance to sense them coming. If half or more are successful, all will know in less than a minute. A Greater Wight will cast Veiling Shadow and the others from the lower barrows will exit the barrow mounds through the upper barrow and proceed to cast Evoke Fear to scare any steeds away and Slumber upon the party. The Veiling Shadow will cover most of the area and into the outer tunnel portions of the barrows. Any who succumb to the Slumber spell will be taken back to the barrow, laid upon the biers in the great chamber, killed in ritualistic fashion, and turned into wights of lesser power under the control of the Greater Wights.

If the PC's manage to remain undetected until they attempt to clear away the rubble of the lower barrow entrances, the same reaction from above will be enacted.

Upper Barrow (Top Level)

If the PC's are heard opening the upper barrow's door and enter the chamber, three Barrow-wights will appear; these three will only appear if the upper barrow is entered. An Observe (Spot) TN 10 test is required to see three hideous, ghostly figures arise from the ground and become absorbed into the three unbroken bodies. Some creaking and stretching like taught rubberbands can be heard as the undead flesh wraps around the remains of the unbroken bodies. Once the noise stops, it will be initiative. These Barrow-wights will cast Blast of Sorcery to close the tomb behind the PC's, Evoke Fear, and then attack with Unarmed attacks. After about a minute (10 rounds), one Greater Wight and 1d3 Barrow-wights from the lower chambers will ascend through the hole in the floor. The Greater Wights and the others that came with it will attempt to subdue the PC's with the Slumber spell, taking any that fall asleep away, leaving the rest to fight with the three from the upper chamber. The Barrow-wights in the upper barrow have Unarmed Combat: Brawling +6 in addition to their other skills.



Lower Barrows (Bottom Level)

If the PC's manage to remain undetected until they attempt to clear away the rubble of the lower barrow entrances, the same reaction from 'Outside the Barrow' will occur.

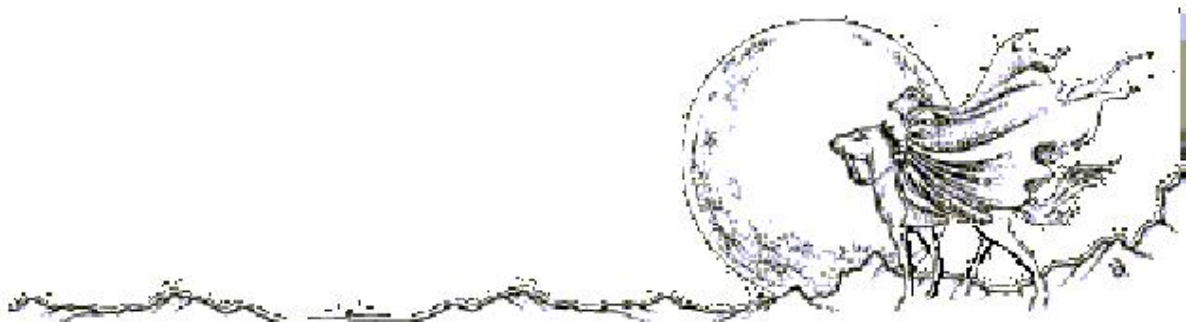
If the PC's are detected upon entering the main chamber, similar sights and sounds are discovered as in 'Upper Barrow (Top Level)' on the appropriate funeral biers. The two Barrow-wights on the right side will cast Evoke Fear and prepare to attack using the blades the bodies while the Greater Wights cast Slumber and recovering any who succumb and then Veiling Shadow and Shadow of Fear to aid the others. In about half a minute 1d6+3 rounds, all the Barrow-wights from the two small lower chambers will join the melee. The Barrow-wights that have daggers also have the Dagger specialty for Armed Combat: Blades.

TREASURES

In the lower chambers there are obviously plenty of valuables and all of it is cursed with the same curse as if it came from a dragon's hoard. Only these items are not:

- Scale armour from the broken bodies. These are mastercraft items with an enchantment laid into them so they won't rust or break down over time.
- All longswords and daggers with the serpentine devices. These blades have minor enchantments of +1 attack and damage vs. Nazgûl, orcs, and trolls, mastercraft, and preserved.
- The prince's longsword. This blade is also mastercraft and preserved, but has much more power and lineage to it granted with the Bane-spell vs. Nazgûl in addition to +2 attack and damage vs. orcs and trolls.

A TN 20 Search or TN 25 Observe (Spot) test in the main chamber along with a TN 15 Lore: History (Cardolan) test will discover the prince's actual identity. This means a character had found within the corpse of the prince a signet ring that went undiscovered by the Hillmen who desecrated the barrow. Who the prince is, is up to the Narrator to fit into his chronicle.



FAN FLAVOUR

NEW RACIAL PACKAGE

Dwarf of Aglarond

Following the renowned Gimli, son of Gloin, you trekked to establish a small realm within the Caves of Aglarond or known as the Glittering Caves by the locals. Works of your people here are known best by the Rohirrim, whose most venerable fortress, Helm's Deep, resides just outside your gates.

Appraise (Gems) +2, Armed Combat +1, Craft (Jewelry) +1, Debate (Bargain) +1, Edge: Craftmaster

NEW ITEM

Symbol of Gimli's House

The Symbol is a large globe of the purest crystal with three golden hairs set against a small plate of mithril. These hairs are one of the last vestiges of Galadriel and her influence in Middle Earth. She gave them to Gimli at their parting when she bade him make a request of a gift of the elves of Lórien. He vowed to her that they would be placed as such and serve as both a symbol of his house and as an eternal sign of friendship between it and the elves. From his humbleness and sincerity, Galadriel smiled and foretold of Gimli's future wealth yet freedom from greed.

The Symbol of Gimli's House grants him and his heirs (as it resides in the dwarf colony in Aglarond) these special effects:

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Friendship | - Friends (Elves of Lothlórien), Ally (Galadriel) |
| Freedom of Greed | - Negates the effects of the Grasping flaw, regardless of source |
| Breeds Gold | - The owner gains +1 rank to the Hoard edge for every 20 years in his possession. |

MATHOM by Camdin

“... for anything that Hobbits had no immediate use for, but were unwilling to throw away, they called a mathom.”

- Concerning Hobbits, *The Fellowship of the Ring*

The word ‘mathom’ is a Hobbit term. Used in the vernacular by the little folk, the word refers to any bits of bric-a-brac that accumulate in all homes. Although of no use usually to the giver, a given item may have some sentimental value or provide a sense of comfort by its presence alone. However, some mathoms have a more sinister, magical air about them. The subtle magic of Middle-earth can work in strange ways. Darker magic and lesser shadows can become imbued into mundane items if such items are left at places in which great evil or tragedy has occurred. These are items that have been irrevocably cursed by long exposure to ancient evils.

One who comes into possession of such an item is loathe to be rid of it, and will seek to keep it in his possession at the expense of more sensible things. Mathoms can be found in most ancient treasure hoards, or buried in the barrows of the ancient kings of the North. When one comes into possession of a mathom, he must immediately succeed on a TN 10 Willpower test or come under its spell. From that day forward they will always keep the mathom close by, as close as possible, and they are compelled to gaze upon it at least once a day. The owner's thoughts are always on the mathom, and the distraction of it causes him to suffer a -1 penalty to all tests. If the mathom is removed from the owner's possession, he becomes obsessed with finding it. He suffers a -3 penalty to all tests. A successful TN 10 Willpower test or spending a point of Courage can reduce this penalty to -1 for one day. At the Narrator's discretion, becoming obsessed with a mathom may give the owner a point of Corruption. Every 1d3 days, the owner of the mathom can make a TN 10 Willpower test to finally overcome the spell. A TN 10 Inspire or Persuade (Charm) test made by someone else provides the owner with a +2 bonus to his next Willpower test to overcome the power of the mathom.





ALLIES AND ADVERSARIES

NALIN, SMITH OF THE CAVES

RACE: Dwarf, Durin's Tribe (Dwarf of Aglarond~)

RACIAL ABILITIES: Animal Aversion, Craftsmanship, Firestarting, Hardness of Body, Hardness of Mind, Healthy, Stout

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 4 (+0), Nimbleness 5 (+0), Perception 9 (+1), Strength 9 (+1)*, Vitality 9 (+1), Wits 10 (+2)*

REACTIONS: Stamina +1*, Swiftiness +1, Willpower +2, Wisdom +1

DEFENCE: 10

ORDERS: Craftsman (Smith)

ORDER ABILITIES: Refuge, Speedy Work

ADVANCEMENTS: 4

SKILLS: Appraise (Gems) +5, Armed Combat: Polearm (Mattock) +2, Craft: Jewelry +7, Debate (Bargain) +5, Language: Khuzdul +6, Language: Rohirric +3, Language: Westron +6, Lore: History (Dwarfs of Durin's Tribe) +5, Lore: Race (Dwarfs, Orcs) +4, Lore: Realm (Aglarond, Erebor, Moria) +3, Observe (Spot) +5, Persuade (Fast Talk) +4, Smithcraft (Goldsmith, Sivlersmith) +7, Stonecraft (Gemcutting) +6

EDGES: Craftmaster, Doughty, Hardy, Hoard 3

FLAWS: Proud, Rival (Nili)

SIZE: Small (5 Wound Levels, 1 Healthy)

MOVEMENT: 3

HEALTH: 10

COURAGE: 3

RENOWN: 0

GEAR: Gem-working tools, metal-working tools, forge (refuge), mattock, dwarven chain, 100 GP of items for sale with prices ranging from 2 SP to 5 GP

* Favoured Attribute or Reaction

~ see Fan Flavour for further information

DESCRIPTION

Nalin was young at the time of the War of the Ring, just beginning to learn the noble craft of gemsmithing and the making of jewelry. At the time of the appearance of the emissaries of Mordor came to the mountain, whispers began to spread there and in Dale about the fabled dark times and their possible return. Largely unconcerned with these tidings Nalin continued with his work and apprenticeship.

During this time, he and his best friend, Nili, studied and worked together where their combined talents produced, as appraised by some of the finest craftsmen, very promising works. Unfortunately, some months before war broke out at the Long Lake, the two had a falling out as Nili's pride and boasting began to swell as he started opening claiming that he was the sole source of the creative inspiration and crafting prowess behind their works. When the war came to their doorstep, just as everyone else, they took arms to defend Erebor and Dale. In the aftermath, Nalin couldn't bear to stay at the Lonely Mountain any longer from both having to deal with Dili's big mouth and the loss of so many friends and loved ones and so took up with Gimli's expedition to the south and set up his new forge and shop at Aglarond. Life is good for Nalin now, but, even though his ire is still raised at the thought of Nili and he wouldn't admit it to anyone, he misses his friend very much.

GORVORSANG (Q. Dread Black Poison)

RACE: Shelob's Spawn

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 11 (+2)*, Nimbleness 10 (+2), Perception 8 (+1), Strength 12 (+3)*, Vitality 10 (+2), Wits 8 (+1)

REACTIONS: Stamina +4*, Swiftess +4, Willpower +2, Wisdom +2

DEFENCE: 12

MOVEMENT: 24

SKILLS: Armed Combat: Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs) +9, Climb +7, Craft (Webs) +8, Intimidate (Fear) +8, Jump +6, Language: Understand Black Speech +3, Language: Understand Westron +4, Observe (Spot, Smell) +7, Run +5, Stealth (Hide, Sneak) +6, Track (Smell) +5

SPELLS: *Bladeshattering, Evoke Fear, Fog-raising, Holding-spell, Misdirection, Shadow of Fear, Slumber, Spellbinding, Veiling Shadow*

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Armour (5), Greater Webs, Icy Touch, Natural Weapons (Fangs 1d6+6, Claws 1d6+6) Poison (Can choose deadly or sickness), Stench, Undead Stamina, Vulnerability (sunlight, 2d6 per round)

SIZE: Mammoth (7 Wound Levels, 3 Healthy)

HEALTH: 12

COURAGE: 3

RENOWN: 15

TN EQUIVALENT: 15

* Favoured Attribute, Reaction, or active Order

UNIQUE SPECIAL ABILITIES

Greater Webs - She is able to weave thick and sticky webs. Cutting the strands requires 5 points of damage from an edged weapon. Pulling one apart requires a TN 20 Strength test or TN 25 for someone completely wrapped up. She can weave a web 5'x5' as a full round action (Craft (Web) TN 10).

Icy Touch - For every round of contact, the victim loses 2 points of Strength and Vitality, When wither attribute reaches 0, the victim falls unconscious for 2d6x10 minutes. Lost points are regained at the rate of 1 in each attribute per 10 minutes - or in full when the victim awakens or upon the application of a *Healing-spell*.

Stench - Similar to her forbear, Govorsang gives forth a terrible stench that overwhelms any who draw near. Any who approach within 10 yards must make a TN 10 Stamina test or suffer a -2 penalty to all tests.

Undead Stamina - Gorrvorsang need never eat or drink, takes only half damage from physical attacks, and heals all injuries at five times the normal rate. Further, she does not have Weariness Levels and need never make a Stamina test to resist Weariness for any reason.





DEADLY POISON

Type: Injury
 Onset: 1 minute
 Potency: +10 TN
 Treatment: +10 TN
 Effect: 2d6 points of damage
 Secondary effects: None
 Stages: 10

SICKNESS POISON

Type: Injury
 Onset: Immediate then 1 minute per stage
 Potency: +10 TN
 Treatment: +10 TN
 Effect: Reduce Strength and Vitality by 1d6+2 immediately. Reduce each by 2 additional points at each stage increment. At 0 in either attribute, the victim falls unconscious, though continues to lose points. Lost points return at the rate of 1 per hour after all stages have run their course.
 Secondary effects: Half the reduction (1/2d6+1 at onset, 1 point per stage) described above.
 Stages: 10 after immediate effect.

IN THE GAME

Born of Shelob in the early years of the Third Age, Vorsang was driven from the heights of Cirith Ungol by her mother. Like a shadowy fear, she moved north up the mountains but was unable to find a habitable place that would provide her never-ending hunger for sweet meats.

So it was that Vorsang left the Mountains of Shadow and continued north into the Eryn Muil, on to Mirkwood, and then even farther north until she at last stopped in the western highlands of the northern Misty Mountains. Over her long migration, she gorged herself upon Man, Elf and Dwarf, as well as the occasional Orc or any wildlife that might wander into her nests. She grew large and more dreadful and began to adapt herself to the colder climes of the north. It was the Elves who named her for it was they that were to drive her from her home in Mirkwood and then from the hills of the Misty Mountains. Her hatred for the Eldar became all-consuming and she took great pleasure whenever she was able to capture any one from the wandering companies.

In 1575 T.A., Vorsang came to the attention of the Witch-king of Angmar after she had taken up residence in the ruins of an old Dúnedain town in the conquered lands of Rhudaur. She holed herself up inside an old burial mound and tomb of those folk and made the once sacred ground unholy. Being a dark creature of Ungoliant's brood, she had no cares for the struggles of the Free Peoples and the Dark Lord, just in her desire to kill and drain the blood of the living. So when the Witch-king came to entreat with her to make a new ally in his struggles against the Dúnedain and the Elves, she forcibly drove him out of her nest. The Witch-king retired back to Carn Dûm to wait and see if some new opportunity would arise for him to seal a deal with the great spider.

Years went by and Vorsang began to create a brood of her own and these horrible children began to range across the northlands, from Arthedain to Rivendell. King Argeleb II of Arthedain sent emissaries to Elrond to request a joint effort made by Elves and Men to locate the source of the spider plague and to end it. Elrond readily agreed and over the next twelve years, a union of Elves and Men worked together sweeping the lands of the terrible brood of Vorsang until at last they came upon her horrible nest within the ancient tomb. The Great Spider did battle with Man and Elf deep inside her hole and many did she slay, but inevitably, it was Vorsang that finally met her doom. The warriors left her slain body deep inside its hole and they quickly left the area as it was unclean and stank of death. The King and Lord Elrond thought that that was the end of the horror...

The Witch-king, having heard of the great spider's death, began to work his dark sorceries within his fortress in the north and with them drew an evil, powerful Fell-Spirit into the realm of Arda. He commanded the dark essence to take up its form within the dead shell of Vorsang, animating the corpse of the spider into a foul abomination. The Witch-king had finally made an ally out of the dreaded spider and now uses 'her' to again threaten the lands of both Elf and Man! She has been renamed – Gorvorsang, the dreaded black poison!



FEATURED CREATURES

GREATER WIGHTS



ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 14 (+4)*, Nimbleness 8 (+1), Perception 12 (+3)*, Strength 12 (+3), Vitality 10 (+2), Wits 11 (+2)

REACTIONS: Stamina +7, Swiftiness +4, Willpower +6*, Wisdom +4

DEFENCE: 11

MOVEMENT: 6

SKILLS: Armed Combat: Blades (Longsword or Short Sword or Dagger) +6, Intimidate (Fear) +6, Language: Understand Westron +4, Language: Black Speech +4, Observe (Sense Power, Spot) +8, Stealth (Hide) +8

SPELLS: *Blast of Sorcery, Command, Evoke Fear, Sense Power, Slumber, Shadow of Fear, Veiling Shadow*

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Icy Touch, Turning, Undead Stamina

SIZE: Medium (5 Wound Levels, 1 Healthy)

HEALTH: 15

COURAGE: 0

RENOWN: 10

TN EQUIVALENT: 17

UNIQUE ABILITIES

Turning - By killing a living person in a ritual that takes five minutes uninterrupted, the person's corrupted spirit will rise the next night, becoming a wight under the command and will of the Greater Wight.

DESCRIPTION

Greater wights look the same as lesser Barrow-wights, but are able to retain a more human appearance when the evil spirit occupies its chosen body.

HISTORY

These wholly evil and ghastly spirits are the most powerful of the terrifying essences that the Witch-king let loose upon the North Kingdom of Arnor and its remains.

HABITAT

Along with the lesser spirits, they inhabit the sacred burial mounds, fields of the dead, and other dark evil places. The areas where their evil takes root is infected by the spread of fear.

SOCIETY

They are very powerful spirits and exert their power and command over lesser powers and use them to the evil ends as designed by the Witch-king.

USAGE

Greater Wights are most aptly used against large parties of PC's where they can command a host of Barrow-wights or lesser evil spirits to waylay them or become a nasty surprise upon a group of treasure-hunters or those on quests.



STEP-BY-STEP ENCOUNTERS

THE BALROG VERSUS THE FELLOWSHIP

by Taliesin (Malcolm Wolter)

There's been a lot of debate about whether or not the CODA Balrog is powerful enough in game terms. People can (and do!) argue all day about how their own characters would do against the fiend, but there's only one real benchmark for Durin's Bane's efficacy—the Fellowship of the Ring. So I recreated the Battle at the Bridge of Khazad-dûm to see what would happen in an actual game. I didn't have a dog in this fight, mind you. I just tried to account for all of the myriad modifiers, as well as the likely actions of each of the characters (assuming they didn't "Run!" as Gandalf instructed them in the book and the movie) and let the dice fall where they may. How would they fare, if they tried to go toe to toe a demon of the ancient world?

I conducted two tests, the first of which had some significant problems and holes—enough to invalidate the outcome, in my mind. So I set about running a second test, informed by kindly feedback from some of the stalwarts from the official Decipher board: Tomcat, Ineti, Newyn and Son of Estelmo (thanks, people!). I then implemented their feedback on the second test into this final version.

Methodology

I used the Fellowship stats as provided in the *Fellowship of the Ring* sourcebook. However, the stats for the Balrog of Moria, as well as the Fear rules were taken from the *Moria* sourcebook, since that is the latest, and presumably definitive, version.

I captured every move as I made them, so I could check and re-check all of the modifiers. This was quite tedious, mind you. Since I hadn't run the game in some time and wasn't intimately familiar with all the characters, I had to constantly check and recheck every action through four different books to make sure I was capturing all the applicable modifiers. In my opinion, this is a big strike against Decipher (well, in addition to that whole total-abandonment-of-the-game thing). Really, it's a little unreasonable to expect someone to remember and account for all this stuff—unless one enjoys spending several hours in real time to run a few seconds of game-time combat.

I used a computer dice-rolling program to generate all the dice rolls to save time. Dice rolls are indicated in the formulae with an asterisk (*).

I've tried really hard to capture everything, but wouldn't be surprised if someone finds something that still slipped through the cracks, modifier-wise. However, it's useless to argue *tactics*. Any number of tactics could have led to any number outcomes and that way lies madness.

The Fellowship was played to its utmost offensive capability, given the conditions, and even beyond that exhibited in the book or movie (in both of which they just *ran*), to test their true mettle against this awesome foe once and for all.

Assumptions

The book tells us Gandalf was "already weary" when the Fellowship encountered the Balrog. Indeed, since the Fellowship had no comfort since leaving Rivendell, and had toiled through snow and many other hardships, it is safe to assume all of the Fellowship were a bit worn out. We will call the Hobbits and Boromir Tired (-2 for all tests) for game purposes. Gandalf is Weary (-4 to all tests) after his magical exertions in Balin's Tomb. We shall also assume that Legolas is Hale (because of his Elven-sleep racial ability), and that Gimli and Aragorn are merely Winded (-1) due to the Hardness of Body racial ability and Warrior's Heart edge, respectively.

Aragorn is carrying Andúril, per the book.

I also ruled that characters have to spend a point of Courage to attack the Balrog, per the *Core Book* p.53. The rule does not specify attack types, so I assumed that the characters so fear the Balrog's wrath, that they must spend Courage once at the beginning of the round, whether attacking with sword, bow, or spell. In Boromir's case, I ultimately decided blowing the Horn of Gondor is not an attack.

It is assumed that all characters start with all of their Courage although this is by no means certain in the book, given all their recent trials.

A word about parrying: The Core Book says that, "with a successful Armed or Unarmed Combat test (Parry), the defender thwarts the incoming attack and avoids all damage". However, in recent months one of the games reps on the official Decipher site as indicated that even if the Parry fails, the Parry result is used to determine the attacker's degree of success, not the defender's Defence value. Still, I don't believe this interpretation has made it into the official clarification docs. Therefore for this example, I used the Parry rule as originally stated.

I also used the optional rule on page 217 of the *Core Book* to limit multiple actions per round to twice the character's normal action allowance, adjusted for edges, like Swift Strike. I'm not going to allow more than six actions in a six-second round in my game.

It is assumed that the Balrog has to close with the Fellowship after surprising them, as per the book and movie. It was arbitrarily decided this would take 2 Actions.

And with that, we're ready to rumble!

ROUND 1 - TERROR ROLLS



Balrog's Terror ability is "always on" at $(22 + \text{Specialty } 2 + \text{BRG } 10)/2 + \text{Stronghold of Fear and Darkness } 4 + (*)$. At the beginning of the each round, the effects of Fear are determined before aught else.

Balrog: Automatic Terror $(17 + \text{Stronghold of Fear and Darkness } 4 + 7*) = 28$

Gandalf: Willpower TN 28 $(8 + \text{Strong Willed } 2 + \text{Narya } 4 + \text{Weary } -4 + 9*) = 19$. Spends 2 Courage to make this a 25. Gandalf is Panicked (-2 to all tests for the rest of the combat).

Aragorn: Willpower TN 28, Roll 3d6 to resist Terror, due to Air of Command ability: $(6 + \text{Resolute } 1 + \text{Strong Willed } 2 + \text{Valour } 4 + \text{Winded } -1 + 10*) = 22$. Spends 1 Courage to make this a 25. Aragorn is Panicked (-2 to all tests going forward).

Boromir: Willpower TN 28 $(3 + \text{Valour } 4 + \text{Tired } -2 + 8*) = 13$. Spends all 4 of his Courage to make 25. Boromir is Panicked (suffers -2 on all tests going forward).

Legolas: Willpower TN 28 $(5 + 5*) = 10$. Legolas spends 4 Courage to make it a 22. "Ai, ai!" he wails. "A Balrog! A Balrog is come!" Legolas is Unnerved (no action for 1 round, -4 to all actions going forward).

Gimli: Willpower TN 28 $(4 + \text{Resolute } 1 + \text{Winded } -1 + 6*) = 10$. Gimli spends 4 Courage to make 22. Gimli is Unnerved (no action for 1 round, -4 to all actions going forward).



Frodo: Willpower TN 28 (4 + Resolute 1 + Tired -2 + 7*) = 10. He spends all 4 of his Courage to make 22. Frodo is Panicked (suffers -2 on all tests going forward).

Sam: Willpower TN 28 (1 + Tired -2 + 7*) = 6. Sam spends all 5 of his Courage to make 21. Yet he he is Panicked (suffers -2 on all tests going forward).

Merry: Willpower TN 28 (1 + Valour 4 + Tired -2 + 7*) = 10. Merry spends all 4 of his Courage to make 22. Panicked (suffers -2 on all tests going forward).

Pippin: Willpower TN 28 (0 + Tired -2 + 6*) = 4. Pippin spends all 4 of his Courage to make it a 16. He is Unnerved (No action for 1 round, -4 to all actions going forward).

Before Round 1 gets underway, all of the hobbits have spent all of their Courage, as has Boromir.

ROUND 1 - Actions by Order of Initiative

Balrog Initiative: Automatically wins initiative through surprise.

The Balrog spends his first two actions moving, closing the distance with the Fellowship.

Boromir Initiative: (4 + Panicked -2 + Tired -2 + 12/4*) = 16

1st Action: Panicked, Boromir blows the Horn of Gondor hoping against hope to slow the Balrog's advance.

2nd Action: Intimidate (Majesty): (9 + Specialty 2 + BRG 1 + Courage 3 + Panicked -2 + Tired -2 + Horn 4 + 4*) = 21.

Balrog resists with Willpower TN 21: (12 + BRG 8 + 6*) = 26. No fear!

Boromir fails to Intimidate the Balrog! He is out of Courage, so he cannot attack!

Legolas Initiative: (7 + Unnerved -4 + 10*) = 13
Legolas, Unnerved can take no actions this round. He's frozen in fear!

Aragorn Initiative: (4 + Panicked -2 + Winded -1 + 11*) = 13
1st and 2nd Action: Spend 1 Courage to Charge the mammoth-sized

Balrog TN 8: (10 + Specialty 2 + Nim 2 + Protector 2 + Warrior Born 2 (Spend 1 Courage) + Bold 5 (Spend 1 Courage), + Warwise 1 + Andúril 2 + Charge 1 + Panicked -2 + Winded -1 + 6*) = 30.

Balrog attempts to Parry TN 30: (14 + Specialty 2 + NIM 2 + 7*) = 25. No parry.

Aragorn achieves an Extraordinary Success (22) and does max damage of 17 + STR 2 = 19 (x 1.5 for Charge) = 28. Balrog takes 28.

Aragorn's 3rd Action: Attack Balrog TN 8: (10 + Specialty 2 + Nim 2 + Protector 2 + Warrior Born 2 + Warwise 1 + Andúril 2 + Panicked -2 + Winded -1 + 7*) = 25.

Balrog attempts to Parry TN 25: (14 + Specialty 2 + NIM 2 + Warrior Born 2 (Spend 1 Courage) + MultiAction -5 + 8*) = 23. Spend 1 Courage to make this a 26, Andúril is parried!





Aragorn's 4th Action: Attack Balrog TN 8: $(10 + \text{Specialty } 2 + \text{Nim } 2 + \text{Protector } 2 + \text{Warrior Born } 2 + \text{Warwise } 1 + \text{Andúril } 2 + \text{Panicked } -2 + \text{Winded } -1 + \text{MultiAction } -5 + 3^*) = 16$.

Balrog attempts to Parry TN 16: $(14 + \text{Specialty } 2 + \text{NIM } 2 + \text{Warrior Born } 2 + \text{MulitAction } -10 + 7^*) = 17$. Andúril is parried!

Aragorn's 5th Action: Attack Balrog TN 8 $(10 + \text{Specialty } 2 + \text{Nim } 2 + \text{Protector } 2 + \text{Warrior Born } 2 + \text{Warwise } 1 + \text{Andúril } 2 + \text{Panicked } -2 + \text{Winded } -1 + \text{MultiAction } -10 + 8^*) = 16$.

Balrog attempts to Parry TN 16: $(14 + \text{Specialty } 2 + \text{NIM } 2 + \text{Warrior Born } 2 + \text{MulitAction } -15 + 3^*) = 8$. No parry. Aragorn has a Superior Success (8)! Andúril gives STR 2 + 9*. The Balrog takes 6/34. Durin's Bane has lost one Healthy level!

Aragorn's 6th Action: Attack Balrog TN 8 $(10 + \text{Specialty } 2 + \text{Nim } 2 + \text{Protector } 2 + \text{Warrior Born } 2 + \text{Warwise } 1 + \text{Andúril } 2 + \text{Panicked } -2 + \text{Winded } -1 + \text{MultiAction } -15 + 8^*) = 11$. Aragorn has a Complete Success (3)! Andúril gives STR 2 + 9*. Balrog takes 6/40.

Aragorn has stopped the Balrog's charge, and spent a total of 4 Courage. Balrog has taken 40 points total, and lost one Healthy Wound Level.

Gandalf Initiative: $(4 + \text{Weary } -4 + \text{Panicked } -2 + 6^*) = 4$

Gandalf uses Favor of Fortune to re-roll Initiative. He rolls 10 this time for a total of 8.

Gandalf casts Flame of Anor. Since he's already maintaining a Create Light spell, he suffers a -3 to the Stamina roll.

1st and 2nd Actions: Spend 1 Courage to cast spell Weariness TN 10. Stamina roll: $(4 + \text{MultiActive Spell } -3 + \text{Weary } -4 + \text{Panicked } -2 + 8^*) = 2$. Gandalf spends 1 Favour of Fortune to re-roll, for a total of 4. He spends 2 Courage to make this a 10. He casts the spell—barely. Gandalf rolls Short Ranged Attack TN 8: $(5 + \text{Specialty } 2 + \text{NIM } 2 + \text{Panicked } -2 + \text{Weary } -4 + 8^*) = 11$. A Complete Success (3).

The Balrog is out of actions he cannot dodge (which I believe is the proper way to escape this particular spell, since Gandalf has to make a Ranged Attack). The spell deals 20/60. He spends 1 Courage on Wizardly Power to double the damage, for 40/80! The Balrog has lost two Healthy levels.

Gandalf is out of Courage!

3rd Action: Gandalf draws Glamdring and tries to Intimidate the Balrog $(12 + \text{BRG } 5 + \text{Narya } 4 + \text{Beacon of Hope } 2 + \text{Stern } 2 + \text{MultiAction } -5 \text{ Weary } -4 + \text{Panicked } -2 + 9^*) = 23$!

Balrog tries to resist Willpower 23: $(10 + 10^*) = 20$. The Balrog hesitates! Narrator rules all attacks against it will receive +1 next round!

4th Action: Gandalf tries a TN 10 Inspire test: $(12 + \text{BRG } 5 + \text{Narya } 4 + \text{Beacon of Hope } 2 + \text{MultiAction } -10 + 5^*) = 18$. A Superior Success. Narrator rules all Armed Combat tests will be at +3 in the next round!

Sam Initiative: $(0 + \text{Panicked } -2 + \text{Tired } -2 + 11^*) = 7$

Sam does not have any Courage left. Unnerved, Sam can't take any actions this round.

Gimli Initiative: $(3 + \text{unnerved } -2 + \text{Winded } -1 + 6^*) = 6$

Gimli, Unnerved can take no actions this round. He's frozen in fear!

Frodo Initiative: $(2 + \text{Panicked } -2 + 6^*) = 6$

Frodo does not have any Courage left. He cannot attack the Balrog. He can only watch, terrified. He moves across the bridge, watching breathlessly.

Merry Initiative: $(0 + \text{Panicked } -2 + 6^*) = 4$

Merry does not have any Courage left. He cannot attack the Balrog. He follows Frodo across the bridge and watches, helpless.



Pippin Initiative: $(0 + \text{Unnerved } -4 + 7^*) = 3$

Pippin does not have any Courage left. Unnerved, he can't take any actions this round.

At the end of Round 1, the Balrog has taken 80 HP, yet is Healthy. None of the Fellowship has taken any damage, but the hobbits, Boromir, and Gandalf have spent all their Courage. Legolas and Gimli have 1 courage each. Aragorn only has 2 Courage left! The Balrog has 4 Courage remaining!

ROUND 2 - TERROR ROLLS

Balrog: Automatic Terror $(17 + \text{Stronghold of Fear and Darkness } 4 + 9^*) = 30$

Gandalf: Willpower 24 $(8 + \text{Strong Willed } 2 + \text{Narya } 4 + \text{Panicked } -2 + \text{Weary } -4 + 8^*) = 16$. Gandalf is Unnerved. He can take no actions this round and all future tests are at -4.

Aragorn: Willpower 24, Roll 3d6 to resist Terror, due to Air of Command ability: $(6 + \text{Resolute } 1 + \text{Strong Willed } 2 + \text{Valour } 4 + \text{Panicked } -2 + \text{Winded } -1 + 7^*) = 17$. Aragorn spends 1 Courage to make this a 20. Aragorn is Unnerved. He can take no actions this round and all future tests are at -4.

Boromir: Willpower 24 $(3 + \text{Valour } 4 + \text{Panicked } -2 + \text{Tired } -2 + 3^*) = 6$. Out of Courage, Boromir is Unmanned! He flees across the Bridge of Khazad-dûm!

Legolas: Willpower 24 $(5 + \text{Panicked } -2 + 8^*) = 11$. Legolas spends his last Courage to make this a 14, but is nevertheless Unnerved! He can take no actions this round and all future tests are at -4.

Gimli: Willpower 24 $(4 + \text{Resolute } 1 + \text{Panicked } -2 + \text{Winded } -1 + 7^*) = 9$. Gimli spends his last Courage to make this a 12, but is nevertheless Unmanned! Gimli follows Boromir across the Bridge.

Frodo: Willpower 24 $(4 + \text{Resolute } 1 + \text{Panicked } -2 + \text{Tired } -2 + 5^*) = 6$. Out of Courage, Frodo is Unmanned! He's right behind the others!

Sam: Willpower 24 $(1 + \text{Courage } 3 + \text{Unnerved } -4 + \text{Tired } -2 + 4^*) = 0$. Sam is Unmanned! He follows the others!

Merry: Willpower 24 $(1 + \text{Valour } 4 + \text{Panicked } -2 + \text{Tired } -2 + 10^*) = 11$. Out of Courage, Merry is Unmanned! He's right behind the others!

Pippin: Willpower 24 $(0 + \text{Unnerved } -4 + \text{Tired } -2 + 7^*) = 1$. Out of Courage, Pippin is Unmanned! He's right behind the others!

ROUND 2 - Actions by Initiative

Balrog Initiative: $(2 + 8^*) = 10$. Spends 2 Courage to change this to 16.

1st Action: Proud and full of hate Balrog recognizes Gandalf by his challenge as a Maia. Decides to attack TN 16 $(12 + \text{Size mod})$ the Grey Wizard with his flaming sword $(14 + \text{Specialty } 2 + \text{NIM } + 2 \text{ Warrior Born } 2 + 7^*) = 27$

Gandalf, Unnerved, cannot parry.

The Balrog scores an Extraordinary Success! His fiery sword strikes for max damage STR $8 + 24^* + \text{Fiery } 6^* + \text{Armour of Heroes } -2 + \text{Narya } -4 = 32/32$. Gandalf is Injured -3.

2nd Action: The Balrog attacks the wizard TN 16 with his fiery whip: $(14 + \text{Specialty } 2 + \text{NIM } 2 + \text{Warrior Born } 2 + 8^*) = 28$

Gandalf, Unnerved, can do nothing.

The Balrog scores an Extraordinary Success! Gandalf is entangled!

Gandalf, Unnerved, cannot escape.



3rd Action: Balrog attacks entangled Gandalf TN 16 again with sword! $(14 + \text{Specialty } 2 + \text{NIM } 2 + \text{Warrior Born } 2 + 8^*) = 28$. Gandalf, Unnerved, cannot parry or dodge! The Balrog scores an Extraordinary Success! His fiery sword strikes for $\text{STR } 8 + 24^* + \text{Fiery } 2^* + \text{Armour of Heroes } -2 + \text{Narya } -4 = 32$. Gandalf takes 32/64. He is Incapacitated (-7).

Gandalf, Unnerved, cannot escape.

4th Action: Balrog attacks entangled Gandalf TN 16 again with sword! $(14 + \text{Specialty } 2 + \text{NIM } 2 + \text{Warrior Born } 2 + \text{MultiAction } -5 + 7^*) = 22$. The Balrog spends 1 Courage to make this a 25. Gandalf, Unnerved, cannot parry or dodge! The Balrog scores an Extraordinary Success! His fiery sword strikes for $\text{STR } 8 + 24^* + \text{Fiery } 2^* + \text{Armour of Heroes } -2 + \text{Narya } -4 = 32$. Gandalf takes 32/96.

The force of the killing blow sends the mutilated White Wizard into the abyss!

Balrog still has 1 action, and 2 Courage left. He turns to Aragorn.

5th Action: Balrog attacks Aragorn TN 16 $(12 + \text{Size mod})$ with his terrible swift sword $(14 + \text{Specialty } 2 + \text{NIM } + 2 + \text{Warrior Born } 2 + \text{MultiAction } -10 + 7^*) = 22$. Aragorn, Unnerved, can't defend. A Superior Success: His fiery sword strikes for $\text{STR } 8 + 17^* + \text{Fiery } 2^* + \text{Armour of Heroes } -2 = 25$. Aragorn takes 25 HP and is Dazed -1.

6th Action: Balrog attacks Aragorn TN 16 $(12 + \text{Size mod})$ with his terrible swift sword $(14 + \text{Specialty } 2 + \text{NIM } + 2 + \text{Warrior Born } 2 + \text{MultiAction } -15 + 4^*) = 14$. Spends 1 Courage to make this a 17, a Complete Success. Aragorn, Unnerved, can't defend. The Balrog's fiery sword strikes for $\text{STR } 8 + 10^* + \text{Fiery } 2^* + \text{Armour of Heroes } -2 = 18$. Aragorn takes 18/43 HP and is Injured -3.

Legolas Initiative: $(7 + \text{Unnerved } -4 + 11^*) = 14$

Legolas, Unnerved, can take no actions this turn.

Aragorn Initiative: $(4 + \text{Panicked } -2 + \text{Winded } -1 + 10^*) = 11$

Aragorn, Unnerved, can take no actions this round.

Balrog has 1 Courage left, and has taken 80 HPs. Aragorn is Injured and has but 1 Courage left.

Boromir, Gimli, Sam, Pippin, Frodo and Merry reach the opposite side of the bridge. They can only look on in horror.

ROUND 3 - TERROR ROLLS

Balrog: Automatic Terror $(17 + \text{Stronghold of Fear and Darkness } 4 + 3^*) = 24$

Aragorn: Willpower 24, Roll 3d6 to resist Terror, due to Air of Command ability: $(6 + \text{Resolute } 1 + \text{Strong Willed } 2 + \text{Valour } 4 + \text{Unnerved } -4 + \text{Winded } -1 + \text{Wounded } -5 + 8^*) = 11$. Aragorn spends 1 Courage to make this a 20. Aragorn is Unmanned! He turns to flee across the Bridge of Khazad-dûm!

All of the others are Unmanned and continue to run.

ROUND 3 - Actions by Initiative

Balrog Initiative: $(2 + 6^*) = 8$.

1st Action: Attacks TN 16 $(12 + \text{Size mod})$ Aragorn with his flaming sword $(14 + \text{Specialty } 2 + \text{NIM } + 2 + \text{Warrior Born } 2 + 8^*) = 28$. Aragorn, Unmanned, can't defend. An Extraordinary Success, the Balrog's fiery sword strikes for $\text{STR } 8 + 19^* + \text{Fiery } 5^* + \text{Armour of Heroes } -2 = 30/73$. Aragorn takes 32/64. He is Near Death (-9).

2nd Action: Attacks TN 16 $(12 + \text{Size mod})$ Aragorn with his flaming sword $(14 + \text{Specialty } 2 + \text{NIM } + 2 + \text{Warrior Born } 2 + 8^*) = 28$. Aragorn, Unmanned, can't defend. An Extraordinary Success, the Balrog's fiery sword strikes for $\text{STR } 8 + 19^* + \text{Fiery } 5^* + \text{Armour of Heroes } -2 = 30/103$.

Aragorn is dead!



Conclusions

One possible outcome to an epic encounter. Can anyone doubt the CODA Balrog's might now? Heh. Ol' DB smashed the CODA Fellowship in about fifteen seconds. Someone suggested that the Balrog could have resisted Gandalf's Flame of Arnor spell by using the Power special ability. But a close read of the ability's description reveals it costs one action. Unfortunately, the Balrog used all of his available actions closing with the Fellowship and parrying Aragorn's desperate onslaught.

So how *does* one defeat a Balrog? The Balrog can't be invincible because, in the book, Gandalf bests him single-handedly, armed with Glamdring. So why did Gandalf fare so poorly here? I think, if I were to do it again (and I'm not gonna do it again!), I'd rule that Maia don't need to observe the "spend 1 Courage to attack a terrifying creature" rule, which is an optional rule anyway. I mean, it makes sense for mortals and perhaps even Elves to have to do this (judging from Legolas' terror during this scene in the book), but I think the peer-to-peer status of Gandalf and the Balrog would eliminate the need for the Courage check.

With this one minor ruling, which is not even a house rule, just a Narrator's call on an existing optional rule, it would probably be very simple to simulate the events in the book exactly. Or at least their outcome. Ultimately, it's hard to imagine how one could faithfully recreate the epic one-on-one battle between Gandalf and Durin's Bane in any game. I mean, there's *lots* of falling, then fighting up the Endless Stair, and the final struggle on the peak of Zirak-zigil. This would clearly require many, *many* rounds of combat, and the fundamental structure of the CODA system, as well as most other RPGs I've ever seen, don't support this kind of extended melee. I mean, it took me a few hours to meticulously work through three measly rounds of combat here, can you imagine how long it would take to work through hours, or days, of combat? On the other hand, perhaps some sort of combat-oriented extended test could be devised to simulate this clash of titans.

Another simple tweak one could make is to give Gandalf—and any Maia by extension, including the Balrog—more Courage. I think "Courage" is some what of a misnomer anyway in the CODA system: Since Courage is a reserve of secret power that can be used to boost any skill, not just Combat or related skills, it sounds more like what Tolkien describes in the books as Will. The game designers probably used the label "Courage" because "Will" is too close to "Willpower" and would be confusing. If my thesis is right, then clearly a Maia should have more Courage than any mortal—much more. In fact, in the game, Gandalf the Grey has as much as Aragorn. Another post suggested that First Age Noldor should start with much more Courage than Third Age Elves. I completely agree and would extend this courtesy to Maiar, in fact giving them even more than First Age Noldor since they are, in effect, immortal beings of immense power. Only the Valar are more powerful, and their power is without measure in game terms. Give Gandalf more Courage—say at least 12 (a holy number among the Eldar)—eliminate the requirement for him to have to spend Courage every round to merely attack, and one could recreate the Battle of the Endless Stair—it just won't last as long as described in the book!

Alternatively, a Narrator could rule that Gandalf's selfless act of self-sacrifice could result in an immediate replenishment of all of his spent Courage. Of course, that wouldn't help with the wizard's weariness—already pushed to the edge of normal endurance by events before the Balrog even appears on the scene.

Then there's the school of thought that says true Maia vs. Maia combat is beyond the scope of the game, or any simulation. For the same reason Decipher doesn't provide stats for the Valar or Sauron, the struggles of angels and demons in their unbridled might and fury is beyond the experience of mere mortals and best left to the abstract.

Again, my test is just one possible outcome, but it's hard to imagine another one. The point of the exercise is not to simulate the events in the book. The point is to determine the relative might of the CODA Fellowship and the CODA Balrog. Seems pretty clear that, when played properly, Durin's Bane is more than a match for the Fellowship and just about any party out there, unless it's composed entirely of munchkins. If your gaming company can easily defeat the Balrog, it's clear that the West would have a much better chance sending *them* on the Ring Quest. They're obviously a lot more powerful than the Fellowship.



THE ROAD GOES EVER ON...

A RESCUE ON THE BARROW-DOWNS

by Neal Hyde



This chapter is intended as an introduction for players of *Decipher's Lord of the Rings Role-Playing Game*. Set in the village of Bree in the year 2941 of the Third Age, it assumes that characters have two or fewer advancements.

A RUINED EVENING

Lightning flashes in the windows and thunder rolls in the distance, but the laughter and music of the Inn of the Prancing Pony, as well as a hearty fire and a pint of beer, keep the setting merry. Rhymen Butterbur and his cook, Aine Sandheaver, are busy providing food and drink for a larger-than-average crowd. A thick mutton stew bubbles in the kitchen and its aroma mingles with the heavy pipe smoke that hangs over the common room.

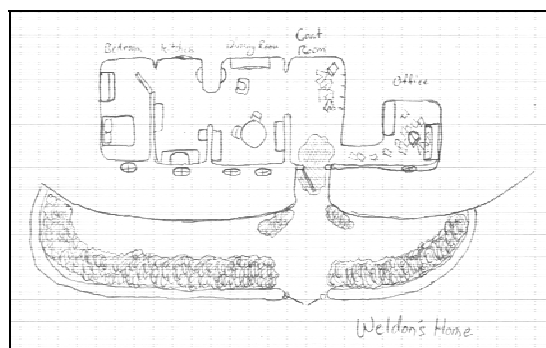
Suddenly, the front door slams open and a tall, thin, rain-soaked Hobbit runs into the room and hops on your table.

"There's been a kidnapping!" he screams, and promptly faints with a thud onto the table.

PCs that succeed at a Renown test for Duster Proudfoot (see Appendix for full stats) will recognize the dripping and unconscious Hobbit. Once Duster is brought back to consciousness, he will tell them that he went to visit his cousin to discuss a spot of business and found the door to his home wide open. Inside, he found Weldon's office in disarray and blood on the floor. After that, he ran to the Prancing Pony as quickly as his small legs could carry him.

Duster announces a reward of 15 Silver Pieces for the safe return of his cousin. He will offer half as much for the return of Weldon's body. Once the group has established that they will help, Duster will lead them to Weldon's home.

The PCs may not require a reward. If so, grant them +1 Renown at the conclusion of the adventure for their generosity and heroic spirit.



Hand out *Player Handout #1: Weldon's Home*.

WELDON'S HOME

If a PC succeeds with a Renown test for Weldon Proudfoot (see Appendix for full stats) he/she will know that Weldon Proudfoot is a well-regarded dye merchant in his mid-60s. He often travels outside the hedgerow walls of Bree to trade and seek new dyes. He

is also known to do a little treasure hunting, and is rumored to spend time in the dangerous Barrow Downs.

Weldon Proudfoot lives in a typical Hobbit dwelling dug into the side of Bree Hill. Soft light glows through several round windows set into the grassy slope and the open doorway.

The narrow front garden is a riot of colorful flowers, many of which are collapsed in the mud. The front door to the home is open and a puddle of rainwater is collecting inside the entryway.

The Cloakroom

The entrance to the home leads directly to the cloakroom. Several well-made Hobbit-sized coats and cloaks are torn from their hooks and lay on the floor. Many sets of Man-sized muddy boot prints mar the clean floor. A round opening to the left leads to the dining room, kitchen and bedroom. A smaller round opening to the right leads to Weldon's office.

The Living Area

The dining room, kitchen, and bedroom are decorated simply and comfortably. The rooms are unremarkable and undisturbed.

The Office

The office is in a state of chaos. Parchments, papers, books, and maps lay about as if the room were struck by a tornado. Rainwater, ink, mud, and blood combine with the paper strewn about the floor to make a sticky and difficult mess to walk in. Weldon's desk is open and the contents scattered about as well.

A shelf on the wall opposite the desk contains map scrolls, some of which are still in place, but most are part of the muck on the floor.

A Search TN 10 test of the office reveals a small dagger hidden under the papers on the floor. The blade is splashed with blood and bloody Hobbit-sized fingerprints can be seen on the hilt. Upon seeing the blood, Duster identifies the dagger as Weldon's.

If the PCs take the time to put the maps back in their labeled places on the shelf, they will discover that all are present except for one that covers the Barrow Downs.

If the PCs explore outside in the garden, they discover similar boot prints to those in the



cloakroom and office, although, they are rapidly being erased by the falling rain. The prints continue to the lane, and, in the mud, the PCs can see the tracks of a handcart. If the handcart tracks are followed, they lead to Bree's main road and then become lost in the mud.

The PCs should deduce that Weldon was indeed kidnapped and that whoever took Weldon wanted to know about the Barrow Downs and probably left in that direction. There are three gates in Bree, but only the West Gate and the South Gate would allow the kidnappers easy access to the Barrow Downs.

THE WEST GATE

The West Gate leads to the road from the Shire and is not as well traveled as the South Gate.

Approaching the West Gate in the rain, it first appears that it is unmanned. However, a cloaked figure emerges from the darkness of the makeshift gatekeeper's shelter and brightens his lantern.

"Who goes there?" he cries and pulls back his cloak to reveal a stout club.

The gatekeeper is a young Man who is in a mood to match the foul weather. Once he determines that the PCs are not ruffians or beggars he will relax and answer any questions. He has not had to open the gates for anyone that night, going in or out, and he hasn't seen anyone or anything suspicious.

THE SOUTH GATE

The South Gate is Bree's busiest. However, in the night's rain, it is closed and securely braced.

Your party is alone on the dark street leading to the South Gates. The South Gate itself is shut and braced with a stout beam. A small lean-to stands a few feet off the road against the hedgerow. Inside, a grizzled old man in a woolen cloak tends a small but inviting fire against the pouring rain. He looks up as you approach and waves in a friendly manner.

The guard of the South gate, an old warrior who has taken the relatively soft job of gatekeeper, remembers Feyroth and his associates well. He opened the gates about two hours before for seven Men pulling a handcart laden with a large trunk. One of the men seemed to stagger as he walked, but the gatekeeper chalked it up to too much of Butterbur's ale.

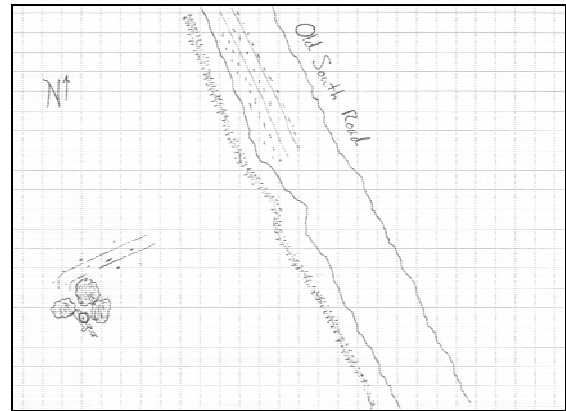
LEAVING BREE

Feyroth and his gang left Bree via the South gate and followed the Old North Road south. The PCs can follow their tracks with a Tracking TN 10 test for a while but then the tracks stop.

Off the Road

If the PCs take their eyes from the Old North Road, they can make a Observe (Spot) TN 15 test to see where Feyroth and his gang pulled the cart off the road and hid it among a small stand of trees.

From the cart, the PCs can more easily pick up the trail with a Tracking TN 10 test.



As they follow the tracks westward, the land is filled with rolling hills and grassy plains, punctuated by small stands of trees, and the mist becomes thicker. However, the closer they get to the Barrow Downs, the grass becomes shorter and fewer trees are seen.

THE BARROW DOWNS

As you enter the Barrow Downs, the rain slackens, and then finally stops. However, you find yourselves surrounded by a dense mist that limits your vision to a few dozen feet. The ground becomes increasingly rocky and barren, covered occasionally with patches of pale and sickly grass, and the tracks become very difficult to follow. The stench of rotting meat is carried on the wind and makes breathing difficult.

On the Barrow Downs, each PC must make a Willpower TN 10 test vs. the fear generated by the evil place.

The Climb

The PCs soon find themselves on the edge of a sharp scarp face of a down. The edge seems to come out of nowhere and the lead PC should make a successful Observe (Spot) TN 10 test to avoid falling.

You find yourself on a precipice, looking down a steep scarp face with bottom lost in the swirling mist. The white, chalky rocks of the cliff leave few handholds to grasp. The tracks end at the face, and you know the kidnappers went down this way, but it doesn't look easy.

The scarp is only about 50 feet tall, but the mist obscures the bottom and makes it appear much greater. The PCs must make 2 successful Climbing tests, a Climbing TN 10 test, to get down the steep, crumbly rock intact. Those who fail suffer

a short fall but will be able to make a grab for another handhold.

The Luckless Thug

As the PCs follow the tracks deeper into the Barrow Downs, they come upon a destroyed makeshift shelter by a brackish pool surrounded by stunted trees and fed by a narrow spring.



Give out Player Handout #2: A Divergence of Tracks.

As you follow the increasingly difficult-to-find tracks, deeper into the Barrow Downs, you come upon a brackish pool surrounded by stunted trees and fed by a narrow spring that bubbles up from the ground with a sulfuric odor. You can easily see that a small makeshift shelter of branches has recently been destroyed. A few bloody strips of cloth lay torn and shredded on the ground. The prints of wild dogs are all around you.

A Tracking TN 15test reveals that the set of footprints divides here. One set of footprints remains at the pool, near the shelter and then go off to the South, followed by the dogs' prints. The larger group of footprints, six men and one Hobbit, move on to the Southwest. To follow these over the rocky terrain requires a Tracking TN 20 test.

While the PCs investigate the area, they may hear the barking and howling of dogs and a faint cry for help in the distance (a Difficult (15) Observe (Hear) test) to the South.

If the PCs follow either the single man's prints or the sounds, they will travel for a few hundred yards before coming upon a set of decrepit ruins and a wounded man.

As you follow the man's prints, the sounds of barking and growling grow louder. A few hundred yards of travel bring you before a set of decrepit ruins. A wounded man with dark straggly hair and a scarred face stands on the few remaining stones of a wall, fending off a pack of bloodthirsty wild dogs with a club. Seeing you, he begs for help.

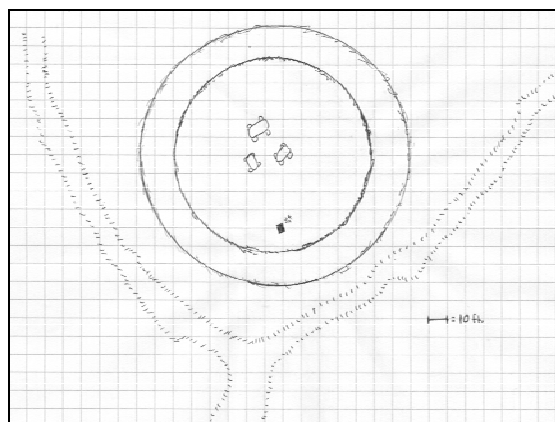
If the PCs enter the area, the wild dogs attack.

Once free of the menacing dogs, the man collapses to the ground. His legs and arms are bloody from multiple bites, but his greatest wound is in his abdomen. The man, who gasps that his name is Urian, struggles for breath and is near death. He will lose for 1d6 Health every minute unless the PCs can stabilize him.

Urian is extremely grateful to the PCs for rescuing and scornful of his master, Feyroth. He will gladly tell the PCs anything they ask. He will tell the PCs that Feyroth is the brutal leader of their little band. He knows that Feyroth and Urian and the others kidnapped Weldon so they could use his knowledge of the Barrow Downs to find the lost Barrow of Harslan (if a PC makes a successful Lore: History TN 15test, give them *Player Handout #3: The Ballad of Harslan*). Urian also knows that Weldon told them that the Barrow of Harslan was located at the top of a down, at the joining of two dry riverbeds. Urian believes Feyroth is after the palantir of Amon Sûl.

If the PCs have been able to stabilize Urian, they must make the choice of what to do with him. If they leave him, he will die. The PCs must choose between sacrificing Urian or to bear him as a burden. Should the PCs choose to leave him behind, or not offer any healing aid if they can, it will add a point of Corruption to their characters.

OUTSIDE THE BARROW OF HARSLAN



Give out Player Handout #4: Outside the Barrow of Harslan.

As the PCs follow the trail of Feyroth's thugs, or following the dry riverbed, the Barrow of Harslan appears out of the gloom.

The Barrow of Harslan appears suddenly out of the gloom, as if it were waiting for you to arrive. This rounded hill with a flat top and standing stones is perched on the edge of a scarp at the junction of the two riverbeds. It's covered in the same short grasses





that populate the Barrow Downs. Its sides are steep but scalable.

The PCs can climb the Barrow of Harslan with a Climbing TN 10 test.

Once the PCs approach the top of the barrow, they notice the dim light of a small fire near the standing stones. Feyroth has left a guard at the entrance to the barrow.

In the center of the broad, flat, top of the Barrow are three pair of large, gray, capped standing stones arranged in a circle.

You notice the dim light of a small fire at the southern end of the barrow. A guard sits at the entrance to the barrow and he has lit a small campfire for warmth and comfort against the cold and darkness. The guard, a thin and sickly man, huddles next to the fire and grips his rusty short sword tightly. He jumps at every sound and never ventures far from the little area illuminated by the fire.

The entrance guard is frightened and will flee screaming into the barrow to alert Feyroth if confronted by more than one opponent.

Near to the fire is a set of narrow stone stairs leading down into the barrow. The stairs disappear into the darkness and unless the PCs have frightened the guard into the barrow, no sound can be heard from below.

PCs entering the barrow are confronted with a Willpower TN 15 test to resist Fear.

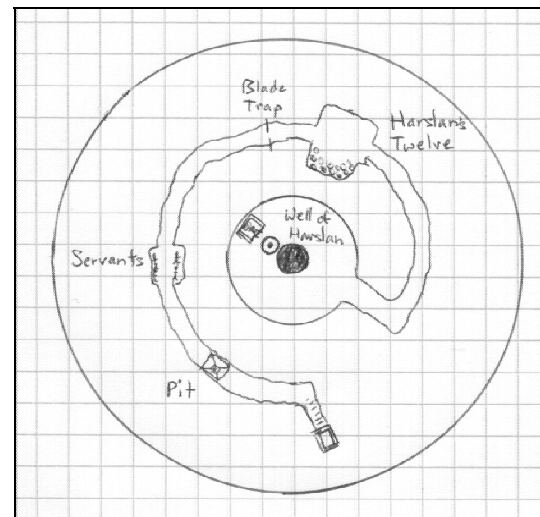
Near to the fire is a set of narrow stone stairs leading down into the barrow. A large carved square stone, obviously the cover for the stairs, lies inches away. The stairs disappear into the darkness below.

As you enter the barrow, a cold chill forms in the small of your back and runs up your spines. You know, without a doubt, that Evil lies within.

INSIDE THE BARROW OF HARSLAN

The narrow stairs come to a hallway that curves and descends to the left, with enough room to move two abreast. The low ceiling will prove difficult (+2 to all physical actions) for anyone over 5 feet tall.

When you enter the barrow, you find that the narrow stairs descend for about twenty feet and terminate at a hallway of made of rough-hewn stone. Thick wooden timbers support the roof and are carved with the images of horses, game animals, and fighting men. The hallway curves and descends to the left, with enough room to move two abreast. The low ceiling is difficult for anyone over 5 feet tall.



Murals

As the PCs enter the barrow, they come across murals painted on the walls depicting Harslan's life and death.

As you enter the barrow, you come across murals painted on the walls depicting the life and death of Harslan of Eriador. However, the murals have been defaced. Long, jagged claw marks are raked across the images. Despite the vandalism, you can still make out the story.

If the PCs have not yet identified the barrow as the barrow of Harslan, they can do so now with a Lore: History TN 12 test, with a +3 modifier.

Blade Trap

A blade trap is located a few feet beyond the Murals. A trigger set into the floor activates a swinging blade carefully hidden in the wall. A Observe (Spot) TN 20 test allows the PC to see the trigger for what it is. There is a 50% chance per PC that they will trigger the trap and be struck by the blade (2d6+5 damage).

Harslan's Twelve

A small rounded alcove set apart from the hallway contains the skeletal remains of Harslan's warriors.

A small rounded alcove set apart from the hallway contains the skeletal remains of Harslan's warriors who perished in his noble defense of his people. The bodies stand at attention, lashed to the wall by thick leather cords. They wear the armor and carry the weapons they possessed in life. Broken swords, cleaved shields and helmets, and shredded mail are on or near the fallen heroes. The bodies of the Twelve show obvious signs of their violent demise, and yet the standing figures retain their nobility, even in death.

If the PCs count the bodies, they will find 13, not 12. The Barrow-Wight that occupies the tomb is hiding here, disguised by its corpse-like appearance. It will remain hidden until after the PCs leave, and then it will attack them from behind. If discovered, the Barrow-Wight will attack in full fury.

Most of the weapons, armor, and other items in the area are so badly damaged that they are worthless to the PCs. There are, however, a few items that can be made use of:

- 2 Dunadain daggers: Damage 2d6+2*; Parry Bonus: +0; Size: 1lb
- 1 Numenorian steelbow: as written in LOTR Core book [page 205], the bow has no string and requires a special string to be used. A steel wire must be manufactured specifically for the bow, a Difficult Smithcraft (Weaponsmith) test.
- 1 Dunadain spear tip: Damage 2d6+3*; this is only the tip of the spear and will require a stout stave to be fully useful. Without the stave, its damage is 2d6+1.
- 1 Numenorian helm: Weight 4 lbs; Damage Absorbed 7 (to head only); this beautiful helm, fashioned after an eagle in flight, is especially strong and light. Its distinctive shape provides a +2 to Intimidate vs. minions of The Enemy.
* +2 to Armed Combat vs. all of serve Sauron and Mordor, +3 vs. supernatural foes (including Barrow-Wights)

The Tomb of Harslan

Further down the narrow hallway is the final resting place of Harslan's body. The tomb is round, approximately 40 feet in diameter.

When the PCs reach the tomb of Harslan, Feyroth and his thugs are already there.

As you approach the tomb of Harslan, you see flickering torchlight and hear grunts and curses. You have little doubt that your quest is near an end. The tomb is round, approximately 40 feet in diameter. Opposite the entrance to the tomb, sits the desiccated body of Prince Harslan on an ornately carved wooden throne. Like his Twelve, he wears the tattered remains of his armor, still stained dark with dried blood, but on his head is a band of gold. On his lap lay the shards of his sword.

In front of Harslan, on a marble pedestal approximately two feet tall, is a black crystal globe. The globe is approximately two feet in diameter and rests in a depression in the pedestal.

Five tall, armed Men are attempting to use a crowbars and ropes to free the black orb from its resting place. One, who stands a full head taller than the others, wallops one of the men on the back of the head and commands him to pull harder.

A short, stout Hobbit, bound with crude ropes, lies dejectedly in the floor near the throne. Fear is in his eyes.

The Rescue

To rescue the Weldon and stop Feyroth from securing the palantir, the PCs must confront Feyroth.

During the confrontation, Siarl, the Barrow-Wight makes its move. It creeps up behind the PCs and attacks them while they are engaged in combat.

When attacking, the Barrow-Wight will howl its terrifying chant:

Over dark and moldy bones,
Under gray and wretched stones,
Watch I and guard and keep,
Hated, loved, would-be King,
No hand shall touch nor disturb,
My ever-living deadly scourge,
Damned be you and damned be I,
Your flesh shall rend, bleed, and cry,
In this tomb forever mine.



Chapter Rewards

After the PCs recover Weldon and stop Feyroth, they return to Bree as heroes. Weldon will pay the party the amount agreed upon by Dustor for their services.

Renown Rewards

The PCs may receive the following Renown rewards:

- Saving Weldon's life: +2
- Thwarting Feyroth's plans in the Barrow of Harslan: +1
- Destroying the Barrow-Wight: +1
- To those PCs that did not take a single item out of the barrow, the Rangers of the North have spread the word among themselves that your honor is above reproach. This results in a Renown 5 score to each of you, when dealing with Rangers. Also, Fethian (a chief of the Rangers) seeks each of you out as you linger around the Breelands. He offers to you a weapon of your choice in deepest thanks for preserving the burial items of his long ago ancestor. You have the choice to either enter a single weapon on your character log at this time, or you can wait one full calendar month to record a master craft weapon. It will take one month for Fethian to have his craftsmen forge master craft weapons.

Experience Rewards

The Primary Goal of the chapter is the rescue of Weldon Proudfoot, with all his associated parts still attached. If the PCs are successful in bringing Mr. Proudfoot back to Bree Healthy, Dazed, or Injured, award the party 200 points. If he is Wounded, Incapacitated, or Near Death, award the party 175 points. If Weldon Proudfoot is killed in the course of the chapter and the PCs can return his body to Bree, award the party 125 points.

The Secondary Goal of the chapter is stopping Feyroth from acquiring what he believes to be the palantir of Amon Sûl. If Feyroth is captured or killed and the palantir remains in the barrow, award the party 150 points. If Feyroth escapes, but without the palantir, award the party 100 points. If Feyroth escapes with the Palantir, award no points. See the Appendix regarding the true nature of the palantir.



APPENDIX TO A RESCUE ON THE BARROW-DOWNS

THE PALANTIR OF HARSLAN

The palantir found in the Well of Harslan is a fraud. The wise of Middle-earth realized that the minions of The Shadow of the East would never stop looking for these powerful items and so faux Palantirs were spread across Middle-earth to complicate their efforts. Faux palantirs are replicas of the originals, created by Dwarven stonemasons to mimic the physical appearance of palantirs, but they possess no magic. Any magician or wizard who approaches the faux palantir will see it for what it is: dead stone.

LOOTING THE TOMB

Unlike other fantasy games, the PCs in The Lord of the Rings role-playing games are expected to behave as heroes, even when faced with temptation. Inside the Barrow of Harslan the PCs can recover a few items of value, but they should keep in mind that it is a tomb of a great and noble hero who perished defending his people. They consecrated it and considered it sacred ground and the PCs should enter it with that in mind. It is not a dragon's hoard to be plundered at will.

However, that does not mean they should leave empty-handed. If the PCs take an item with a noble purpose in mind – defending the innocent, defeating the Shadow of the East, as a gift for a loved one, etc. – it may be taken without negative consequences. If the PCs motives are simple greed or the acquisition of power, then the items will do them ill.

All characters that remove items from the Barrow of Harslan will have dreams regarding the objects in questions and will live through the last mortal moments of the last owners. For those who took the object in a “good” way, it will signal the approval of the previous owner and the dreams will occasionally return allowing the dreamer to explore an ancient day.

However, for those who took the objects in a “bad” way, the dream signals the disapproval of those long gone. The dream will leave the dreamer tired, with one level of Weariness. The dream will return within one fortnight until the object is returned to the barrow, even if the PC no longer possesses it.

As stated in the adventure, there is another benefit to leaving the dead with their possessions. To those PCs that did not take a single item out of the barrow, the Rangers of the North have spread the word among themselves that their honor is above reproach. This results in a Renown 5 score to each of them, when dealing with Rangers. Also, Fethian (a chief of the Rangers) seeks each of them out as they linger around the Breelands. He offers to them a weapon of your choice in deepest thanks for preserving the burial items of his long ago ancestor. They have the choice to either enter a single weapon on their character log at this time, or they can wait one full calendar month to record a master craft weapon. It will take one month for Fethian to have his craftsmen forge master craft weapons.

NPCs

WELDON PROUDFOOT, WEALTHY HOBBIT DYER AND ADVENTURER

Attributes: Bearing 9 (+1), Nimbleness 11 (+2), Perception 7 (+0), Strength 6 (+0), Vitality 10 (+2), Wits 8 (+1)

Reactions: Stamina +2, Swiftiness +2, Willpower +3, Wisdom +1

Skills: Appraise (Dyes) +4, Armed Combat +1, Climb +2, Craft: Dye-making +6, Debate (Bargain) +3, Games: Chess +2, Inquire +2, Insight +1, Language: Common +5, Lore: Realm (Breeland, The Shire) +4, Lore: History (Breeland, The Shire) +2, Observe (Spot) +3, Ranged Combat: Throw +4, Search +1, Weather-sense +2

Ability: Six Meals A Day, Small Folk, Soft Footed, Sure At The Mark, Tough as Old Tree Roots, Place of Trade, Masterwork

Edge: Curious, Bold

Flaws: Stiff-Necked

Renown: 10 (known as an wealthy dye-maker and part-time adventurer)

Note: At the time the PCs meet Weldon, he has is Dazed (-1) from a blow from Feyroth, as well as Tired (-2) from the forced march to the Barrow of Harslan.

Weldon Proudfoot is successful dye merchant and part-time adventurer. He spends much of his time outside Bree's hedge walls looking for coloring agents for new and attractive dyes. It was this wanderlust that led him to look at other things while out and about and he has developed a reputation for “sticking his nose where a Hobbit with his sense ought not to put it.” He is kind and generous and known around Bree as a person of influence.

Weldon is short and stout, even for a Hobbit. He wears his graying hair long and tied in a neat ponytail. He favors fancy clothes with rich colors and walks with a silver-headed cane of Dwarven manufacture. Weldon is a calm and jolly Hobbit who always has a joke.

**DUSTOR PROUDFOOT, HOBBIT MERCHANT AND COUSIN**

Attributes: Bearing 7 (+0), Nimbleness 12 (+3), Perception 7 (+0), Strength 8 (+1), Vitality 10 (+2), Wits 8 (+1)
 Reactions: Stamina +2, Swiftiness +3, Willpower +3, Wisdom +1
 Skills: Appraise (Cloth) +4, Craft: Weaving +6, Debate (Bargain) +3, Games: Chess +2, Inquire +2, Insight +1,
 Language: Common +5, Lore: Realm (Breeland, The Shire) +4, Lore: History (Breeland, The Shire) +2, Observe
 (Spot) +3, Ranged Combat: Throw +4, Search +1, Weather-sense +3
 Ability: Six Meals A Day, Small Folk, Soft Footed, Sure At The Mark, Tough as Old Tree Roots, Masterwork
 Edge: Craftmaster, Friends, Travel-Sense
 Flaws: Fey
 Renown: 10 (known as a wealthy merchant and cousin of Weldon)

Dustor Proudfoot is one of Bree's more successful merchants. He purchases cloth from many of Bree's women and is known as an excellent weaver in his own right. Dustor partners with his cousin Weldon to dye his fabrics and then they sell the products in Bree, The Shire, and more outlying regions.

Dustor is the opposite of his cousin in all appearances. Where Weldon is short and stout, Dustor is tall and lanky. Dustor keeps his curly flaxen hair trimmed short and has even been known to shave it off in the warm summer months. Dustor favors simple clothes, even at celebrations, and often wears his traveling clothes because they are well worn and comfortable. He is a nervous Hobbit and prone to fits of panic.

FEYROTH, HALF-ORC SERVANT OF SARUMAN

Attributes: Bearing 8 (+1), Nimbleness 8 (+1), Perception 8 (+1), Strength 10 (+2), Vitality 8 (+1), Wits 6 (+0)
 Reactions: Stamina +2, Swiftiness +1, Willpower +1, Wisdom +1
 Skills: Appraise +2, Armed Combat: Axe +4, Conceal +3, Guise +2, Inquire +3, Intimidate +3, Language: Black Speech +2, Language: Orkish (Isengard), Language: Common +5, Lore: Race (Men, Orcs) +2, Observe (Spot) +4, Persuade +3, Run +1, Search +1, Stealth +5, Survival +2
 Edge: Furtive, Night-eyed 1
 Flaws: Arrogant, Fealty (Saruman)
 Health: 9
 Gear: Battle axe (2d6+5 Damage, +0 Parry), chainmail corselet (5), dark cloak (+1 to Stealth)

Feyroth is an imposing figure who carefully hides his true parentage. His sallow complexion and narrow pupils mark him as one of Sauruman's half-breeds, but he has managed to keep this secret on his errands.

Feyroth appears as a tall and rugged Man, but his skin is pale and somewhat greenish in tint, as if he were ill. His hair is long, greasy and unkempt and he prefers to wear his cloak whenever possible. Feyroth is a cruel bully and will not hesitate to harm any who cannot fight back. He also knows the cost of failure on his errands and will do anything to avoid that fate.

URIAN, LUCKLESS THUG

Attributes: Bearing 5 (+0), Nimbleness 9 (+1), Perception 7 (+0), Strength 10 (+2), Vitality 7 (+0), Wits 7 (+0)
 Reactions: Stamina +4, Swiftiness +1, Willpower +0, Wisdom +0
 Skills: Armed Combat: Club +2, Language: Westron +3
 Gear: Club (2d6+2 Damage, +1 Parry), strips of cloth bandages, ragged and torn clothing, two days travel rations
Note: Urian is Wounded (-5 Penalty) and bleeding out rapidly (1d6 Damage per game minute until Healing is applied).

BARROW ENTRANCE GUARD

Bearing 4 (+0), Nimbleness 8 (+1), Perception 7 (+0), Strength 6 (+0), Vitality 4 (+0), Wits 8 (+1), Stamina +0, Swiftiness +1, Willpower +0, Wisdom +1
 Defense: 11
 Health: 4
 Armed Combat +3, Observe +2, Run +4
 Gear: Rusty short sword (2d6+2 Damage, +0 Parry), leather armor (2), torch

FEYROTH'S THUGS (4 MEN)

Attributes: Bearing 6 (+0), Nimbleness 7 (+0), Perception 7 (+0), Strength 8 (+1), Vitality 8 (+1), Wits 6 (+0)
 Reactions: Stamina +3, Swiftiness +1, Willpower +1, Wisdom +1
 Abilities: Adaptable (+2 to Stamina)
 Armed Combat: Clubs or Blades +3, Climb +1, Intimidate +2, Jump +1, Language: Common +4, Lore: Realm (Breeland) +2, Observe +3, Ranged Combat: Bow +2, Run +1, Survival +2
 Edge: Dodge (+3 to Dodge tests)



Flaws: Arrogant, Weak-Willed

Gear:

Thug 1- Chipped longsword (2d6 +4 Damage, +1 Parry), chainmail corselet (5)

Thug 2- Short-sword (2d6+3 Damage, +0 Parry), leather armor (2), small shield (+3 Parry/ -5 Ranged Attacks)

Thug 3- Club (2d6+2 Damage, +1 Parry), leather armor (2)

Thug 4- Club (2d6+2 Damage, +1 Parry), shortbow, 12 arrows (2d6+2 Damage)

These low-rent thugs were recruited by Feyroth for this misadventure and are kept in line by his bullying and threats. They care nothing for others, even others in their group. Feyroth's thugs are dirty and foul-looking Men who don't bother to hide their taste for casual violence.

SIARL, BARROW-WIGHT

Attributes: Bearing 12 (+3), Nimbleness 8 (+1), Perception 8 (+1), Strength 12 (+3), Vitality 10 (+2), Wits 10 (+2)

Reactions: Stamina +5, Swiftiness +4, Willpower +4, Wisdom +3

Skills: Armed Combat: Blades (Longsword) +6, Intimidate (Fear) +6, Observe (Spot) +5, Stealth (Hide) +8

Special Abilities: Burned by Daylight, Icy Touch (-2 pts Strength & Vitality per contact)

Spells: Bladeshattering, Create Light, Evoke Fear, Fog-raising, Forgetfulness, Holding-spell, Misdirection, Slumber, Spellbinding

Siarl is the undead spirit of Harslan's slayer. At the end of the battle, Siarl and Harslan engaged in single combat and Siarl was killed, but not before delivering a mortal blow to Harslan. The Witch-king of Angmar chose Siarl to guard the Barrow of Harslan for his utter hatred of Harslan and all living creatures.

Siarl appears as a desiccated corpse dressed in tattered armor, rotting robes, and wears an iron crown upon his moldy brow.

As a Barrow-Wight, Siarl may be reduced to 0 Health, but he is still not dead. The fragments of his body will continue to function on their own and his spirit will still haunt the Barrow. The only way to truly destroy Siarl is to place him in direct sunlight, at which time he will scream horribly, shrivel, and die. Leaving the Barrow open to the sun will break the sense of evil about the barrow.

Narrator's Note: PCs using the weapons found in the barrow (the daggers, spear point, and bow) gain a +3 to Armed Combat when using them against Siarl.

WILD DOGS

Attributes: Bearing 4 (0), Nimbleness 6 (0), Perception 7 (0), Strength 6 (+0), Vitality 6 (+0), Wits 2 (-2)

Reactions: Stamina +0, Swiftiness 0, Willpower 0, Wisdom 0

Health: 6

Skills: Armed Combat: Natural Weapons +3, Intimidate (Fear) +1, Jump +2, Observe (Smell) +3, Run +4, Survival (Downs) +3, Track (Scent) +3

Special Abilities: Natural Weapons (Bite 1d6+1), Pack Fighting*

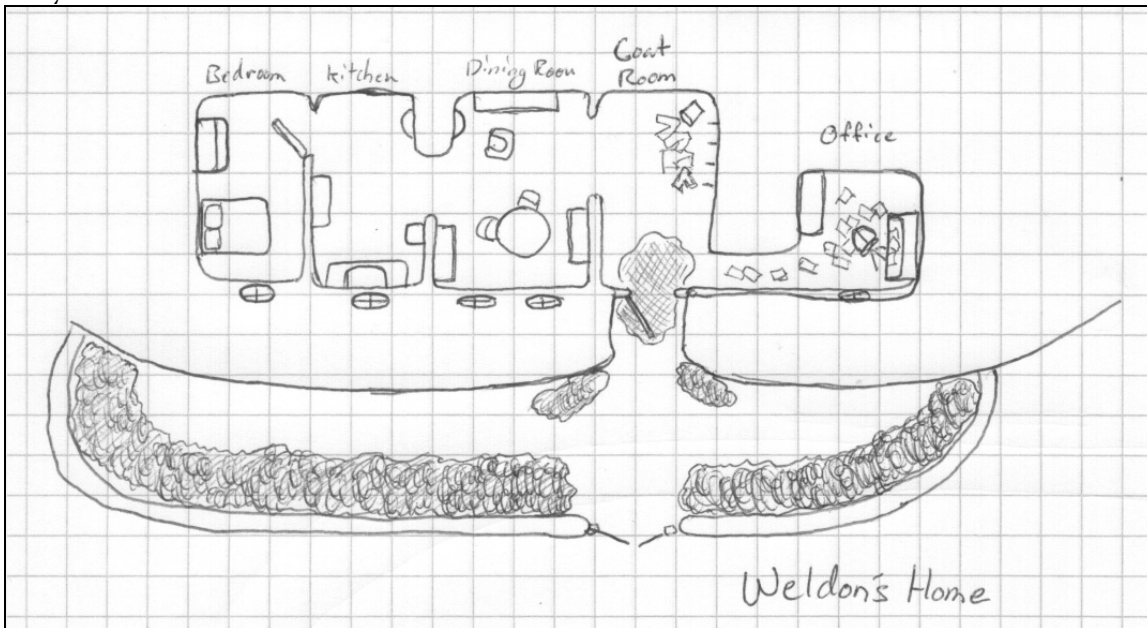
*The dogs will attack two or more at a time, delivering blows to drag the victim down and then to kill.

Wild dogs are large canines that were once domesticated but have become feral and wild. They roam the area in packs, much as their ancestors, the wolves, used to. They have dark coats and run in packs of up to thirty. Wild dog packs are matriarchal and always run by a dominant female.

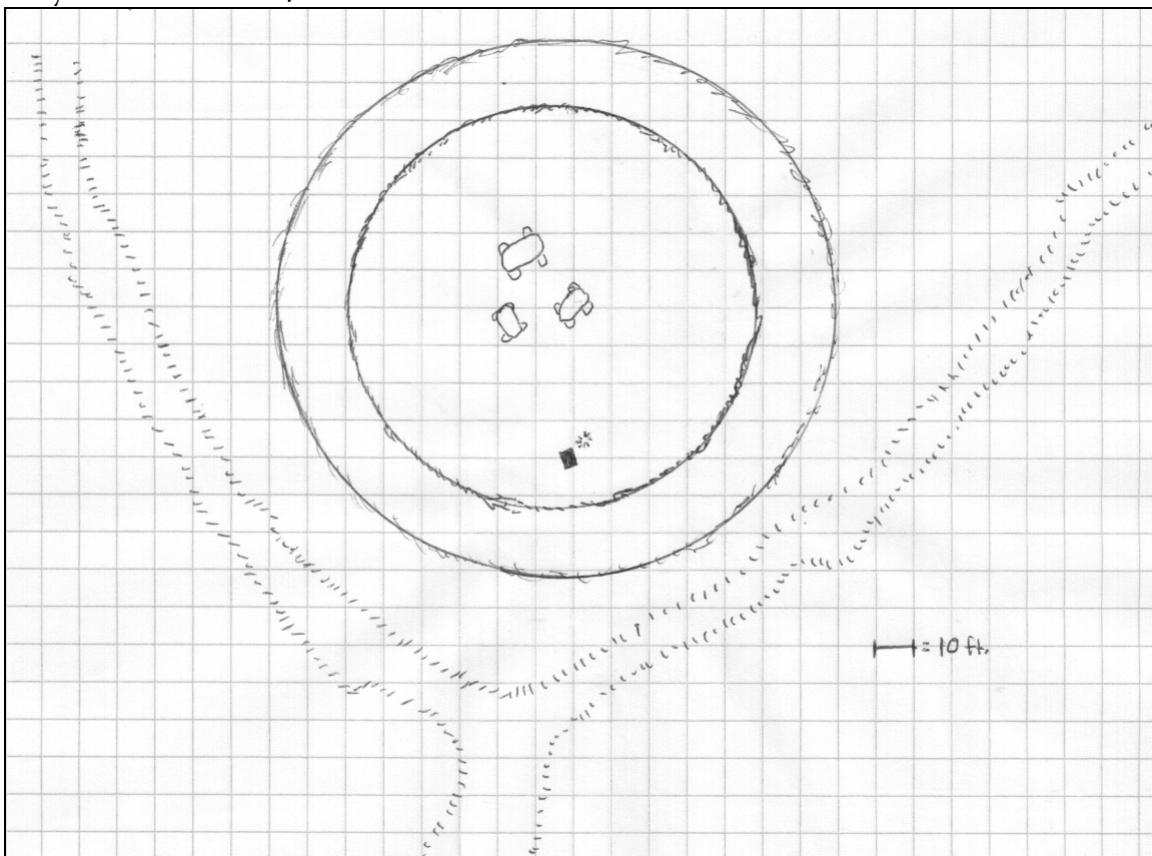
The following Handouts will need to be printed and available to give to your players. They are not in order so make sure you match the Handout number with the story chronology.



Player Handout #1: Weldon's Home



Player Handout #4: Outside the Barrow of Harslan





Player Handout #2: A Divergence of Tracks



Player Handout #3: The Ballad of Harslan

THE BALLAD OF HARSLAN

Harslan was born the third son to a noble of Eriador in the mid-Third Age. Raiding Orcs killed his older brother, the heir, and his father. His stepbrother, Delthorn, was next in line the line of succession, but he was cruel and Harslan was much more beloved by his people. His father's advisors encouraged Harslan to vie for the title and soon an army of supporters flocked to his banner.

Harslan desired to settle the succession without bloodshed but Delthorn would not give up his claim, despite the fact that he had little support among the people or the nobles.

At last the two armies met on the field of battle outside the largest city of their realm. However before they engaged in battle, a great army of Orcs swept down from the East and began to slaughter the people. Harslan parlayed with Delthorn, begging him to evacuate the people to safety. Harslan then chose twelve knights and attacked the Orcs.

Harslan and his Twelve fought valiantly and the Orcs were checked for time. Eventually they were cut down, but not before the army of Orcs lost their nerve and retreated, leaving his people safe.

Harslan's people returned to the battlefield and retrieved the bodies of their heroes. Under Delthorn's leadership, they created the Barrow of Harslan to honor their would-be noble and his Twelve, who sacrificed themselves so bravely. Delthorn, now a changed man, placed his crown upon Harslan's head before the Barrow of Harslan was sealed.

It is rumored that among the possessions that were placed in the Barrow of Harslan was a palantir capable of seeing into the North, the lands of Angmar.



A FIELD GUIDE

TO THE CREATURES OF MIDDLE-EARTH

HELL-HAWKS: PART III

"Down, down it came, and then, folding its fingered webs, it gave a croaking cry, and settled upon the body of Snowmane, digging in its claws, stooping its long naked neck."

-The Return of the King

IV: For the Narrator

Incorporating Hell Hawks into Your Campaign

Hell Hawks can make great additions to your adventure or campaign. They can be encountered singly, in pairs (i.e. breeding pairs) or as large groups (i.e. in rookeries). They can also be encountered when acting as a mount for a major NPC nemesis in your campaign. A Hell Hawk encounter can be a major plot point, or a minor skirmish. There is little challenge in finding an appropriate way to use them. The biggest challenge is making sure that they are used on a level appropriate with your PCs abilities. In other words, it's probably not a great idea to throw your PCs into the middle of a Hell Hawk rookery unless it's pertinent to the storyline you've created, and you have a pre-conceived escape route for them, should they be cunning enough to find it. Furthermore, these critters, in some ways, may be a cure for (what I've come to call) "Dragon Fever". I've been involved in campaigns where adventurers are obsessed with confronting or witnessing Dragons (they are, after all, probably one of the most intriguing fantasy creatures ever conceived). Unfortunately, such obsessions often lead to a bunch of dead PCs. Hell Hawks superficially resemble dragons in many ways. Throwing one of these creatures at a Dragon-hungry party may give them a small taste of what it's like to be confronted with something as fearsome as a Dragon. They'll perhaps realize that if they have trouble dealing with a Hell Hawk (which is no where near as powerful as a Dragon), they should perhaps reconsider plunging into every possible Dragon lair they come across looking for treasure and fame.

Hell Hawks in Game Terms

A. Special Abilities/Weaknesses:

Hell Hawks are creatures that have been embraced by the Dark Lord, and under his guidance and training have become fowl, hateful beasts (even if not captive). The following Special Abilities and Weaknesses apply to *all* Hell Hawks. Keep in mind that juvenile Hell Hawks are slightly less powerful than the average Hell Hawk, while alpha males during the breeding season may be slightly more powerful. These differences are detailed in the descriptions below.

Natural Armor (+3)

Multiple Attacks (Talons, Maw)

Natural Weapons (Talons: 2D6+2, Maw: 2D6)

Flight

Mount: Steady (in captive individuals only)

Mount: War-trained (in captive individuals only)



*“Soon it appeared as a great winged creature, blacker than the pits in the night.”
-The Fellowship of the Ring*

Blacker than Night: Hell Hawks are able to fly deftly even on the darkest of nights, during which time they are almost imperceptible to travelers. They are also able to conceal themselves on overcast days as effectively as they are at night. This makes them incredibly difficult to see when in flight, and they can cross great expanses without anyone knowing they are there. Thus, even when a Hell Hawk is heard overhead, it is unlikely that a traveler will see it. For a PC to see a Hell Hawk in flight (unless it is swooping very low to the ground and extremely obvious) he/she must make an Observe (Spot) test (TN 15 in open habitat; TN 20 in an enclosed habitat, such as forest with a dense canopy). Furthermore, an Observe test cannot be attempted unless the PC hears the Hell (Narrator’s discretion). The potential results are as follows:

<u>Success</u>	<u>Effect</u>
Extraordinary	The adventurer who rolled to achieve an Extraordinary success sees the Hell Hawk immediately.
Superior	The adventurer who rolled to achieve a Superior success sees the Hell Hawk in 1D6-3 rounds (zero being the lowest).
Complete	The adventurer who rolled to achieve a Complete success sees the Hell Hawk in 1D6-1 rounds (zero being the lowest).
Marginal or worse	The adventurer who rolled to achieve a Marginal (or worse) success has no idea that the Hell Hawk is nearby. If desired, the Narrator may now choose to employ the effects of the <i>Stealthy Predators</i> Special Ability listed below.

Stealthy Predators: Hell Hawks are able to employ stealth when hunting individually, which makes them incredibly difficult to spot. This ability, however, is only available to Hell Hawks that are actively searching for prey, or attempting to attack someone by stealth as individuals. This ability is not applicable to groups of hunting Hell Hawks or Hell Hawks caught by surprise. Before a Hunting Hell Hawk Attacks: The beast makes an opposed Stealth (Sneak) test against the target’s Observe (Spot) test with the following results:

<u>Result</u>	<u>Effect</u>
Hell Hawk is Successful	If the Hell Hawk is successful in surprise attacking its prey, the prey animal (or the PC) may not take any action during the first round of combat. During that first round, the Hell Hawk may also roll an additional 1D6-1 when determining damage for one attack (and natural weapon) of its choice.
The Target is Successful	The Target sees the Hell Hawk before it can successfully ambush him/her and gains a +2 to its defense score during the <i>first</i> attack from the beast.

Instill Fear: Upon first witnessing a Hell Hawk, all those that have seen it must make an Opposing Willpower test against the Hell Hawk’s Intimidate (Fear) skill. Use Tables 9.20 and 9.19 on pg 233 of the Core Rulebook. The test must also be performed at the start of each subsequent encounter with a Hell Hawk (but *not* at the start of each round during a single encounter).

Warned of Their Presence: Hell Hawks have a particularly foul odor associated with them. Although this odor is not potentially incapacitating, as in Dragons, it still may warn a traveler that he or she is approaching a Hell Hawk rookery. Adventurers who are nearing a rookery may roll an Observe (Smell) test (TN 10) to determine if they notice the unpleasant aroma.

<u>Success</u>	<u>Effect</u>
Extraordinary	In the event of an Extraordinary success, the PC smells that Hell Hawks are nearby and receives an additional +1 to any Stealth skill test for 1D6 rounds, should he/she attempt to move about unnoticed.
Superior	In the event of a Superior success, the PC smells that Hell Hawks are nearby and receives an additional +1 to any Stealth skill test for 1D6-2 rounds, should he/she attempt to move about unnoticed.
Complete	In the event of a Complete success, the PC smells that Hell Hawks are nearby and receives an additional +1 to any Stealth skill test for 1D6-3 rounds, should he/she attempt to move about unnoticed.
Marginal or worse	The adventurer does not smell that Hell Hawks are nearby.

"But now the dark swooping shadows were aware of the newcomer. One wheeled towards him; but it seemed to Pippin that he (Gandalf) raised his hand, and from it a shaft of white light stabbed upwards. The Nazgûl gave a long wailing cry and swerved away; and with that the four others wavered, and then rising in swift spirals they passed away eastward vanishing into the lowering cloud above; and down on the Pelennor it seemed for awhile less dark."

-The Return of the King



Aversion to Servants of the Secret Fire: All Hell Hawks (but especially captive individuals) have been manipulated over years by the Dark Lord to be evil. Because his hand has tainted their evolution as a species, Hell Hawks are particularly susceptible to attacks from Servants of the Secret Fire. Thus, Wizards and Magicians with the Secret Fire spell specialty have an exaggerated effect on Hell Hawks. Servants of the Secret Fire automatically obtain a +1 to *all* skill tests regarding combat against Hell Hawks, or Weariness tests involved in casting spells against these animals.

B. Types of Hell Hawks that May be Encountered

JUVENILE HELL HAWKS — Juvenile Hell Hawks look similar to adults, only smaller. These individuals are often males that fledged two or less years prior. They often have not been accepted into a rookery and have been forced to leave their natal rookery by the alpha male (to avoid competition). It maybe possible that, after time a juvenile Hell Hawk may grow strong enough to enter a rookery by (1) defeating the current alpha male in combat or (2) showing immediate subordination to the current alpha male. It should be noted that females are less likely to be forced from their natal rookeries. The reason for this is not understood. Regardless, those juvenile Hell Hawks that are encountered in the wild will most likely be male.

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 6 (+0), Nimbleness in air 8 (+1), Nimbleness on Ground 5 (+0), Perception 8 (+1), Strength 8 (+1), Vitality 8 (+1), Wits 4 (+0)

REACTIONS: Stamina +1, Swiftness in the air +1, Swiftness on the ground +1, Willpower +0, Wisdom +1

DEFENCE: 11 (in the air), 10 (on the ground)

HEALTH: 9

SKILLS: Armed Combat: Natural Weapons (Maw, Talons) +5, Intimidate (Fear) +2, Observe (smell, spot) +6, Stealth (Sneak; in flight only) +8

SIZE: Large (6 wound levels, 2 of which are *Healthy*)

TN EQUIVALENT: 15

SPECIAL ABILITIES: All special abilities listed previously are available to juvenile Hell Hawks when applicable.

AVERAGE HELL HAWKS (Captive individuals, Wild subordinate male/female, or non-breeding individual) — These individuals are non-dominant adults, and are an example of what is most likely to be encountered by researchers during a surprise encounter. Captive Hell Hawks that are encountered also fall into this category.

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 6 (+0), Nimbleness in air 12 (+3), Nimbleness on Ground 6 (+0), Perception 8 (+1), Strength 9 (+1), Vitality 9 (+1), Wits 4 (+0)

REACTIONS: Stamina +1, Swiftness in the air +3, Swiftness on the ground +1, Willpower +0, Wisdom +1

DEFENCE: 13 (in the air), 10 (on the ground)

HEALTH: 10

SKILLS: Armed Combat: Natural Weapons (Maw, Talons) +6, Intimidate (Fear) +3, Observe (smell, spot) +7, Stealth (Sneak; in flight only) +9

SIZE: Mammoth (7 wound levels, 3 of which are *Healthy*)

TN EQUIVALENT: 15

SPECIAL ABILITIES: All special abilities listed previously are available to juvenile Hell Hawks when applicable.



"Suddenly the great bow of Lórien sang. Shrill went the arrow from the elven-string. Frodo looked up. Almost above him the winged shape swerved. There was a harsh croaking scream, as it fell out of the air, vanishing down into the gloom of the eastern shore."
-The Fellowship of the Ring

ALPHA MALE HELL HAWKS (or Any Females During the Breeding Season) — These individuals represent large alpha males or females during the breeding season. Alpha males are larger and more dominant than average males. They have proven themselves superior to their contemporaries and their statistics reflect this. Females during the breeding/nesting season are protecting their young and, thus, more aggressive and formidable than they are under normal conditions.

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 6 (+0), Nimbleness in air 13 (+3), Nimbleness on Ground 7 (+0), Perception 10 (+2), Strength 10 (+2), Vitality 10 (+2), Wits 4 (+0)

REACTIONS: Stamina +2, Swiftess in the air +3, Swiftess on the ground +2, Willpower +1, Wisdom +2

DEFENCE: 13 (in the air), 10 (on the ground)

HEALTH: 12

SKILLS: Armed Combat: Natural Weapons (Maw, Talons) +7, Intimidate (Fear) +3, Observe (smell, spot) +8, Stealth (Sneak; in flight only) +10

SIZE: Mammoth (7 wound levels, 3 of which are *Healthy*)

TN EQUIVALENT: 15

SPECIAL ABILITIES: All special abilities listed previously are available to juvenile Hell Hawks when applicable.

C. Associated Equipment

Captive Hell Hawk Harnesses and Battle Armor: Captive Hell Hawks are adorned with this armor when it is known that their riders will be flying into battle. It begins with a wool blanket laid directly on top of the beast's back that is then covered by a large swath of chain mail, which covers the animal's back, lower neck, upper tail and sides. On top of this chain mail is laid the more cumbersome plate armor. This consists of many thick steel plates, connected with metal rings, that covers portions of the animal's neck, flanks and sides. The plate armor and chain mail are secured to the beast by thick leather straps fastened across its underbelly. Another piece of thick steel is formed to the Hell Hawk's head and connected to the riding bit and reigns used by the rider during battle. This "helmet" is adorned with spikes. Furthermore, spiky collars are fastened around the ankles of the beast, which act as offensive weapons when the Hell Hawk attacks with its talons.

Damage: 1D6 per foot (in addition to the damage inflicted by the talons)

Parry Bonus: +0

Size: Mammoth

Damage absorbed: 7 (chain and plate armor combined)*

Weight: More than you and a bunch of your friends can carry

Cost: Unavailable to anyone not in league with the Dark Lord's Minions

* -3 to creature's nimbleness modifier both in flight and on the ground

POSTMASTER

Q&A WITH THE HALL OF FIRE...

This is where you, the readers and players, can ask us questions about our opinions on the game and rules, the content we've created, etc. Send your emails to the address listed on the last page of the webzine. If you have questions for any in particular, staff or guest writers, please make sure to highlight that in your correspondence.



Your answers from last month were really my over-the-top PC and have given me lots of write the next adventure in our campaign (after to a close). I'm writing again as there are a few more the Rogue/Ranger character in my group is very and he wants some boots that simulate the Elf Racial human tailor/magician were to try enchanting boots they not naturally as attuned to magic as elves. So I decided that him then the maximum bonus would be +2. How does this sound?

helped me deal with things to mull over while I two years its finally going to come things I thought of since last month: balanced and has a wonderful roleplayer Ability "Lightfootedness". Now I ruled that if a would not get as high of a bonus because humans are if he could find a human craftsman able/willing to do this for

Now the highest bonus to any spell-like ability given to weapons is from what I've seen +5 basically the bane bonuses on weapons like Orcrist, Glamdring and Sting. Aiglos seemed to be a special weapon to me as I attributed the +10 to hit orcs and +5 to all other foes as a bane +5 vs. orcs stacked with a +5 heroic all around modifier because Gil-Galad was the high king and had been in so many battles that the weapon just developed this wonderful bonus over his long life. I was wondering if there were any suggestions that you could give on magical items that are not along the lines of those listed in the book, like clothing-type items. The elven cloaks are clothing but I kind of had an idea that maybe you could magically simulate or give heroic bonuses to things that simulate edges. I guess for example gloves that give bonuses to climb or grapple or something. Boots that could simulate the mist of speed spell for the person wearing them. I guess I ask mainly because I wanted to give special items to my group but wanted to try to veer away from combat- oriented items. That seems to be very potent but I would rather my characters have something useful that maybe doesn't help them bash more orc skulls. I did see a few in the *Hall of Fire* but I guess I wanted to get your take on the items simulating edges.

Finally, the fighter read about heroic items, and wondered why his sword had not developed a heroic ability yet, as he has been in two major epic battles and fought an evil Maia king that I made up for a Elf-Dwarf alliance to have to destroy or risk peril to their nations. My feeling is that he doesn't need these kinds of bonuses in the weapon since combat tests wont help him, and his Inspire and Intimidate tests are more than enough to cower most enemies or bring hope to his allies. I was wondering if you had any ideas on some other bonuses I might give the sword, because I'm trying to think of things appropriately defined and personalized to the character that will not create even more imbalance. Thanks again for the great response.

- Floyd Haywood

1. Enchanting Items

Giving items enchantments is great but there are a few things to consider. First, I agree with your assessment in granting up to only a +2 bonus as the Racial Ability itself is quite powerful in that it gives a bonus to Run, Acrobatics (Balance), and Stealth while giving a equal-valued penalty to those attempting to track the person. Something of this nature would be VERY rare and probably a unique item.

Second, in my opinion, the craftsman should create an entirely new set of boots instead of just putting an enchantment on a pair that has been already made. This is so the magic of the craftsman's intent can be weaved into the object(s) allowing for the more powerful enchantment to be a part of the creation as opposed to just "laying on hands" to apply the powers.



Finally, I have an idea for a sample house rule for enchanting crafted items. Make the bonus size dependent upon the craftsman's skill test's success. If you have the craftsman make only one test and want to allow up to only a +5 bonus, give the item a +1 bonus for each success level he achieves on the roll. If an Extraordinary Success is achieved (+4 bonus) then allow one more skill roll and if he makes another Extraordinary Success, the item will get the +5 bonus. If the Craftsman makes an extended test, it should have 5 stages and each Superior Success or better grants the +1 bonus, but if none of the tests achieve that, the item gains the minimum of a +1 bonus.

2. Magic Items

First thing to remember and remind your players, items in this world may have special powers and/or grant bonuses, but the characters wouldn't really know that and what they specifically were as magic in Middle-earth doesn't lend itself to articulation like it does in D&D games. There are no spells for identifying enchantments and such; the best a person could know is using Sense Power and know how powerful an item's aura would give off, if the PC rolls well enough. Imbuing edge effects in my opinion is an interesting idea and would be along similar lines of enchanting items with spells, but I would have some caveats. First, the item must be made from scratch with the intent of imparting the particular power. Next, the character crafting the item must have the edge himself because he is weaving his own personal essence into each item he makes. Third, depending on the circumstance, a Narrator may decide that if an edge is imbued into an item, the character who creates it loses the edge but doesn't gain any additional advancement picks from it. This would be akin to what Sauron did when he imparted his essence and power into the One Ring. Last, I'd use fate as a restriction to the item's use such as only heirs to a certain house, the effects can only be used if the previous owner has passed away, or the person who is destined to be the savior of the town of Gorthal can use the item. These caveats help preserve the uniqueness of the subtle magic in the world and prevent craftsmen from churning out magic items left and right like in a factory. See the Fan Flavour in the next issue for a couple examples that I have devised, Boots of Argalad and Brooch of the House of Morgil.

3. Heroic Items

Well as we already know, the player is constantly looking for every edge, bonus, and advantage he can and I understand your feelings about this, but would still suggest just giving it to him, especially if you decide to employ some of the suggestions I made last month. The bonuses for Heroic Items aren't much and his combat abilities are so great, they wouldn't make a difference. But if you still decide not to, here are a few suggestions to make the sword still a worthwhile possession:

- A sword is just a sword until you give it a name. If heroic items didn't have names, how else would their bonuses work without invoking the power of the weapon's name. That gives it a start to becoming truly famous in the likes of Glamdring and Orcrist. Even if the sword didn't have its own inherent heroic bonuses, using the rules for invoking the power of words could still be appropriate.
- Make it an heirloom. No true hero would give up the sword his dead father gave him on his dead bed or if it was found in a treasure hoard and previously thought to be destroyed upon the death of an ancestor in combat.
- Give it a purpose. There is no way anyone could get into the ancient tomb without having the sword that slew the beast that guarded it.
- Other skill bonuses. Bonuses from the item could affect social skills such as Debate (Negotiate) or Persuade (Charm).

Heroic bonuses and powers are also a great substitute for giving out XP. In the PbP that I run, I have given out essentially bane bonuses against specific creatures to some characters' weapons because they scored many Extraordinary Successes and performed extreme acts of bravery and valour. But remember, just because a character participates in an epic battle or have killed hundreds of orcs doesn't always mean that a weapon should get a bonus (it doesn't happen to those common foot soldiers who happened to live too), the bonuses should come because of the story a character participates in: he faced down a powerful opponent and lived to tell the tale, that he did heroic and valourous deeds, etc.

GandalfOfBorg



CALLING ALL GAMERS!

57



Interested in submitting...

- A mini or side adventure?
- Racial/Personal Development or Order/Professional Development packages?
- New creatures, or fell beasts?
- New Orders or Elite Orders?
- NPC's?
- Weapons, equipment, or magical items?
- Fan Art?



If so, write to us for details on submission at: codawebzine@hotmail.com with “Fan Content” in the subject line. Please include your name and/or pseudonym (handle/online identity) and email address(es) with which one of our editors may contact you.

Please note that if you would like to submit a mini-adventure, Decipher will not consider it for publishing. Please do not directly submit your items to us without prior approval.

Fancy yourself a writer and would like to contribute to the webzine?

If so, write to us at codawebzine@hotmail.com with “Writer” in the subject line. One of the editors will get back to you with details about writing for **THE HALL OF FIRE**.

If you would like to post an advertisement for:

- A local or online RPG that you are hosting
- An RPG convention or tournament
- Or any events pertaining to The Lord of the Rings RPG or Star Trek RPG by Decipher

Write to us at codawebzine@hotmail.com with “Ad” in the subject line along with your advertisement. The advertisement is to be less than 100 words and a graphic to go with it no more than 1" x 1"

CREDITS AND CONTACTS

All pictures and graphics were obtained from Decipher and New Line Cinema or from sources on the Internet. No claim of ownership is made through their use here.

CREW

MATTHEW KEARNS, EDITOR, WRITER
ultimac@hotmail.com

DOUG JOOS (TOMCAT), WRITER, LAYOUT
uvonbek@yahoo.com

JOSH KAPFER (REPTILEJK), WRITER
jmkapfer@uwm.edu

JIM JOHNSON (INETI), GUEST WRITER

CAMDIN, GUEST WRITER

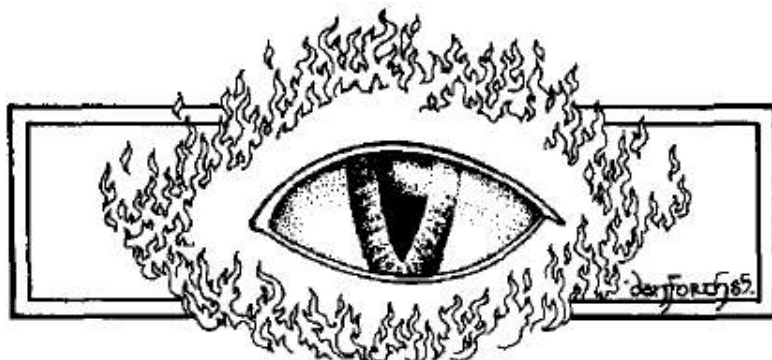
MALCOM WOLTER (TALIESIN), GUEST WRITER

NEAL HYDE, GUEST WRITER



WHAT'S OUT THERE

This is a list of websites along with Decipher's official websites. We have found they supply useful information to *Lord of the Rings* gamers.



DECIPHER'S LORD OF THE RINGS RPG HOME

<http://decipher.com/lordoftherings/rpg/index.html>

DECIPHER'S LOTR RPG BOARD

<http://forums.decipher.com/viewforum.php?f=44>

DECIPHER'S LOTR RPG SUPPORT DOCS

<http://decipher.com/lordoftherings/rpg/support/index.html>

THE HALL OF FIRE WEBZINE SITE

<http://halloffire.inspiring.us>

FAN MODULES FOR MIDDLE-EARTH

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/fan-modules>

THE MAD IRISHMAN

<http://www.mad-irishman.net>

RPG TOOLS FOR DECIPHER'S CODA GAMES

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/rpgtools/>

THE SLAVE PITTS OF BARAD-DUR

<http://www3.sympatico.ca/smaugrob/lotrmain.html>

THE STEWARD AND THE KING

<http://www.stewardandking.net>

THE TOWER HILLS

<http://homepage.mac.com/jeremybaker/towerhills>

VALINOR

<http://sauron.misled.us>

This is an unofficial fan webzine created for players of Decipher's *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* and the world of Middle-earth created by J.R.R. Tolkien. There is no affiliation between the creators of this webzine and Decipher, Tolkien Enterprises, or any other related corporation. All material is either direct from Tolkien sources, Decipher, opinion, or has been created for the said purpose of roleplaying in the world of Middle-earth. Some images are used herein for the purpose of adding flare to the webzine, but are owned by varied sources mentioned in the Credits on the last page. **THIS DOCUMENT IS NOT FOR RETAIL SALE AND INDIVIDUALS MAY PHOTOCOPY AND PRINT FOR THEIR PERSONAL USE.**