



THE HALL OF FIRE

FAN WEBZINE

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AUGUST 2005

The Lord of the Rings - by New Line Cinema



GREETINGS, SALUTATIONS... HELLO ALL!

Here we are with Issue #21, getting ever so close to the magical #24, the two-year mark! This month marks the resumption of the *Lord of the Rings* RPG line with the release of the Helm's Deep Sourcebook. First available at Origins, it began shipping to the public on July 18 (I got both of mine on July 22). So far the reviews of the book are pretty much limited to complaints over it being a softback book and that it is half-and-half color/B&W -- nothing on content so hopefully we'll get a more meaningful review in the next issue for you.

Now don't forget, I am also sponsoring a new contest for the *Hall of Fire* where the winner receives a copy of the new Helm's Deep Sourcebook and a copy of *The Hall of Fire*, Year 1 CD. There are also second and third place prizes quite worth the effort. Guidelines are listed later in the issue, and remember the deadline is August 31!

Now on to this month's great issue! In this one we have for you optional rules for a Grief mechanic and some related Fan Flavour items, a treatise on the Lossoth, an examination of Dol Guldur, plus a whole lot more!

Here's to the release of Helm's Deep and happy gaming!

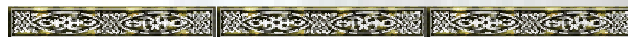
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Editor

THE MYSTIC HALL OF FIRE

The Unofficial Lord of the Rings RPG Webzine

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ADVENTURING IN

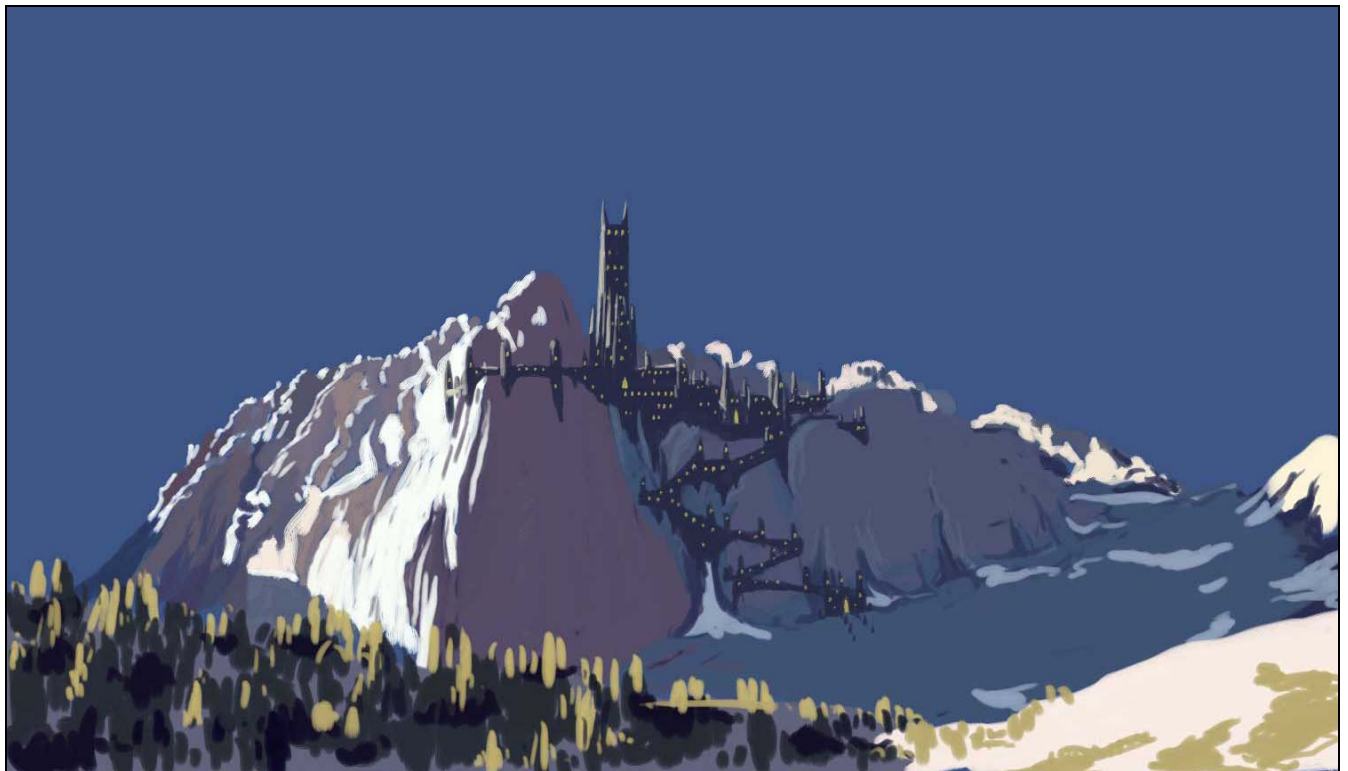
DOL GULDUR by Mathew Kearns (GandalfofBorg), pictures by Peter Merryman

HISTORY

During the 11th Century in the Third Age, a darkness began to spread throughout Greenwood the Great, beginning in the south nearest both Mordor and the elf-kingdom of Lothlórien. The darkest and most evil area formed around a lone mountain, an extinct volcano, called Amon Lanc. With giant spiders spinning their great sticky webs and orcs multiplying, it is at this time the Wise believe the machinations of Sauron set forth the construction of Dol Guldur. The darkness spread northward, but the arrival of Radagast and the establishment of his refuge, Rhosgobel, in the great wood was too late to stem the tide against it; even the Woodland Realm in the far north of the forest is greatly pressed by the insurgence of evil.

The spreading of darkness throughout the wood slowed trade and travel though it to a trickle and men began to move away from its borders, renaming Middle-earth's largest forest Mirkwood. The submission of the forest to Sauron's shadow was just a first step in isolating Men of the East from those of the south and the north, and all Men from Elves and Dwarves. Worse yet, to herald Sauron's eventual return, the Nazgûl reemerged to do his bidding in the shadows, just out of sight of the still-powerful West.

Upon his return the next step was to remain in the background, pulling strings from Dol Guldur under a new guise as the infamous 'Necromancer.' Centuries passed with the Necromancer's dark influence in the shadows of the invasions from the Rhûn by the Balchoth and other great tribes of the Men of Darkness. Though a Nazgûl was thought most likely to be controlling things like the Witch-king in Angmar, Gandalf the Grey twice made extremely dangerous forays into the evil stronghold and barely escaped alive, uncovering the true identity of the Necromancer as Sauron and also discovering Thrain, father of Thorin.



It wasn't until TA 2941, almost a century after Gandalf's second visit, that the White Council gathered enough force to drive Sauron/the Necromancer from Dol Guldur, but unfortunately the fortress was left mostly intact. This strategic error on

the side of the Free Peoples allowed Dol Guldur to eventually be rebuilt under the watchful eye of the second greatest Nazgûl, Khamûl the Easterling. Once again darkness reigned over the forest of Mirkwood, in even greater power.

In its final years, the fortress was the base of operations for many incursions and skirmishes against Lothlórien. When the War of the Ring came about, the fortress was in full war-mode, sending waves of orcs, trolls, wargs, and other such beings at the defenses of the elf-kingdom. When all was said and done with the One Ring destroyed and the fall of Sauron, Galadriel set forth her greatest display of power, destroying the fortress and laying open even its darkest pits to the cleansing light of day. No more would this place be a stronghold of the Shadow or any other as the elves eventually annexed a portion of Mirkwood that included Dol Guldur and set an ever-vigilant watch that would remain as long as the realm would last.



NOTABLE FEATURES

Catacombs and Inner Chambers

Though the fortress of Dol Guldur appears to abide outside the mountain, in truth it is cut far into the depths of the earth, truly making it one of the most extensive constructed complexes in Middle-earth, Barad-dûr notwithstanding. Beneath the surface, tunnels, caverns, and causeways both natural and crafted wind for literally miles and miles. There are only two ways to enter these areas: the upper dungeon and the base of the great tower.

Dungeons

The Upper Dungeons can be accessed from the great avenue of 999 Steps. This small tower is where the captains of the guard reside and where “processing of prisoners” occurs, and below them in the Lower Dungeons is the location of the jail pits.

Watchtower

This small tower is the second highest tower of the fortress, but has a commanding view from the pinnacle, giving the round-the-clock watch the ability to keep an eye on the surrounding lands out to about 20 miles in any direction.

Main Hall

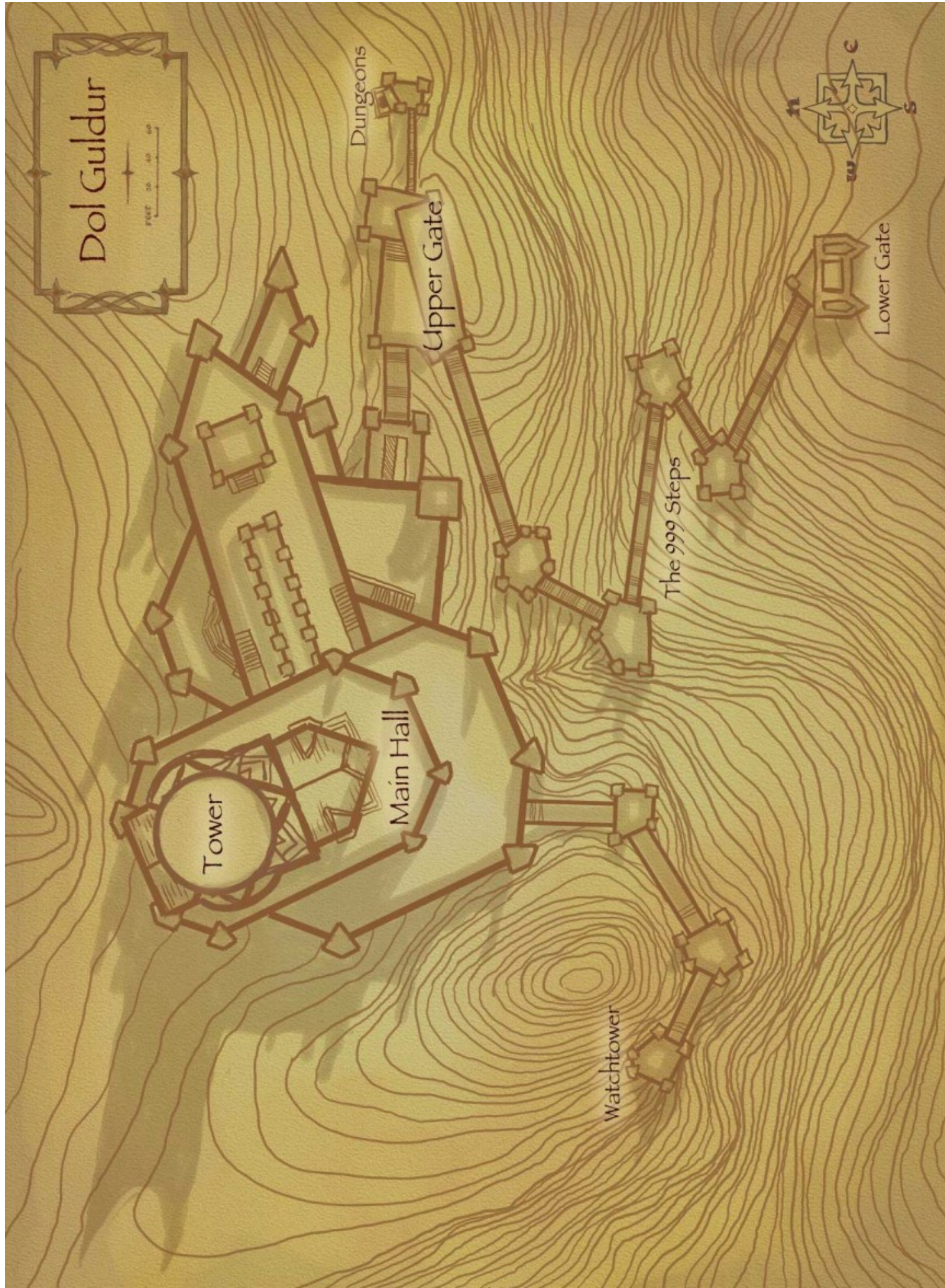
The commander rules from this portion of the stronghold; it is also the war-room. A large library of tomes and scrolls is stored here: information about the enemy and maps of the surrounding areas, including some pertinent ones concerning the eastern lands.

Tower

The top of the tower over the Main Hall is the rookery of the Nazgûl’s preferred mode of transportation: the Hell-hawks. At one time, it was also the private council room and quarters of the Necromancer. Any mage of sorcerous nature that commands this fortress can consider the entire area in and around the mountain to be his refuge with the tower’s quarters at the center of it all.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

1. You are involved in a march from Lothlórien to lay siege to Dol Guldur, either at the behest of the White Council or during the War of the Ring. Characters can either be individuals in the fight or participate as commanders of units in battle for mass combat.
2. Just east of the Anduin about a mile between Dol Guldur and Lothlórien a great sink hole is discovered. You are sent to investigate the meaning of this. Is it some underground horror attempting to reach the surface? Is the Shadow attempting to sneak its way into Lothlórien by bypassing the river altogether? Could the menace from the Misty Mountains have awoken once again?
3. A new power has arisen in the south of the Greenwood. You are sent as emissaries to determine the nature of the self-described Necromancer in the name of the other kingdoms of Free Peoples.



PEOPLES OF MIDDLE-EARTH – LOSSOTH OF THE FORODWAITH (WILD MEN)

by GandalfOfBorg



“These are a strange, unfriendly people, remnant of the Forodwaith, Men of far-off days, accustomed to the bitter colds of the realm of Morgoth... The Lossoth house in the snow, and it is said that they can run on the ice with bones on their feet, and have carts without wheels.”

The Return of the King, Appendix A, The Númenorean Kings, (ii) The Realm in Exile, The North-kingdom and the Dúnedain

STATS AND/OR RACIAL PACKAGES

Attribute Modifiers: See below

Racial Packages:

Armed Combat +1, Ranged Combat (Thrown) +1, Survival (Northern Wastes) +1, Track +1, Weather-sense +1, Wary

Speech: Local native tongue (Lossoth), and sometimes Westron. Tolkien wrote that the exiled Númenoreans found the Common Speech “in use along the coast-lands from the Mouths of Anduin to the icy Bay of Forochel in the North” (*The History of Middle-Earth*, Volume XII: *The Peoples of Middle-earth*, p. 32).

History

In the Elder Days before the fall of Beleriand, a mysterious people called the Forodwaith inhabited the frozen northlands of Middle-Earth, dwelling in the shadow of Angband, the dark realm of Morgoth. Though they did not serve him, they did not dare fight him either. The origins of the Forodwaith can only be guessed at – perhaps they were distantly akin to the Edain, like the ancestors of the Eorlings, perhaps they were a race of “Wild Men” like the Easterlings who overran Hithlum in northern Beleriand, or maybe they were a mixture of different races of Men. All that is known for certain is that much of their ancient homeland perished beneath the sea with Beleriand and Angband. The Lossoth are certainly descended from the remnant of the ancient Forodwaith. Throughout the Third Age they lived along the Ice Bay of Forochel, beneath which lay the ruins of Thangorodrim, Morgoth’s mountain stronghold cast down by the Valar in the War of Wrath. The Lossoth came to be wary of the evil carried by icy winds across the bay, and they feared to travel by boat over the cursed waters.

In TA 1974, the Lossoth briefly entered into the saga of Middle-Earth. Arvedui, Last King of Arthedain, fled into the frozen north after the fall of his last stronghold. Though wary of outsiders, the Lossoth pitied the starving king and sheltered him. The next year Círdan of the Grey Havens sent ships from Lindon to rescue Arvedui. The Lossoth chief smelled trouble brewing on the winds and begged the king not to board the fleet, but Arvedui ignored the warning. He rewarded the Lossoth chief for his kindness by giving him the Ring of Barahir with a promise that one day it would be ransomed by the Dúnedain people for a great price. The Lossoth chief’s instincts proved canny, and Arvedui died when his ship sunk in the stormy bay, taking the *Palantír* of Annúminas with him. True to his word, however, sometime between TA 2951 and 2980, the Dúnedain Rangers of the North ransomed the ring from the Lossoth and returned it to Aragorn. It was this ancient ring that Aragorn gave to Arwen as a token of their betrothal.

Thereafter the Lossoth passed out of the recorded lore of Middle-Earth, but they surely remained in Forochel into the Fourth Age and beyond. Lossoth characters in the Third or Fourth Ages might get involved in chronicles that deal with the evil remnants of Angmar and Carn Dûm, Angband’s lingering darkness in the Ice Bay, or the Orcs of the North at Mount Gundabad.

Lands

After the First Age, what remained of the northlands beyond the Grey Mountains was called Forodwaith in remembrance of the ancient Men that once inhabited the region. The Lossoth dwelt all along the coastline of the Ice Bay of Forochel, which contrary to its limited placement on the maps included in most versions of *The Lord of the Rings* actually extends farther north as a much larger body of water. Indeed, few Lossoth probably ever visited the bay’s tiny southern inlet containing the Forochel label on these maps. They mostly lived on the great cape that circles north around the bay. The region called Forodwaith extends an unknown distance to the east, possibly even to the Northern Waste north beyond the Withered Heath. The Lossoth apparently did not exclusively stay in the Cape of Forochel, and from time to time they likely established hunting camps across the expanse of Forodwaith. How far to the east, no lore exists to say.



The topography of Forodwaith consists of flat, desolate tundra. The ground is hard and unsuitable for any kind of agriculture. Only scrub brush can grow in the permafrost soil, providing a very limited amount of berries or nuts. The climate is sub-arctic, uniformly cold with typically strong, chilling winds. Summer, brief and mild, comes late to Forochel, but it does not really come at all to the Northern Waste beyond. The farther one travels east of the Ice Bay or north of the Grey Mountains, the climate becomes harsher and more arctic.

Physical Description

It is difficult to know with certainty what the Lossoth look like. If their Forodwaith ancestors were akin to the ancient Edain and Northmen then the Lossoth are likely tall and broadly built, with light-colored hair and eyes. Certainly living in the arctic for so many thousands of years would favor this coloring in their genotype, even fairer and lighter than the famously blond Rohirrim. On the other hand, if the Forodwaith were more akin to the ancient Easterlings then they may be shorter in build and more swarthy in coloring. It is more likely that the Lossoth are a mixture of races and physical types. In the chaotic centuries after the fall of Beleriand, many peoples sought refuge for a time in the remaining northlands. Surely some of every stock of Men merged together, and those who stayed there became the Lossoth. Thus, it is possible that Lossoth of many different colorations may be found, blond hair and black, blue eyes and brown, pale skin and lightly swarthy.

Map of Average City or Settlement



Society and Economy

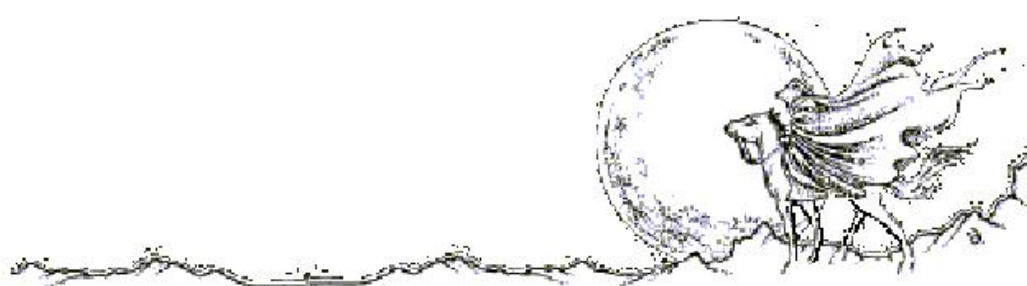
Like the Sammi of northern Scandinavia or the Aleuts of northern Siberia, the Lossoth manage a marginal existence in a harsh, frozen environment. They have maintained the same way of life for thousands of years: hunting seals on the shores of the Ice Bay, fishing by line and spear through the ice, and probably pursuing herds of reindeer or some similar species native to the arctic of Arda. The Lossoth are well-adapted to life in the frozen north. They live in houses made of packed snow, probably like igloos made by the Inuit of northern Canada. They could travel across open fields of deep snow

on shoes made of bone, like primitive skis. They transport themselves and their goods from settlement to settlement on carts without wheels, probably sleds or sledges pulled by thick-coated dogs like the peoples of northern Siberia use. This is our best evidence that the Lossoth are only semi-settled.

The Lossoth certainly live in small kinship groups, each under their own chief, moving around Forodwaith and establishing seasonal camps whenever an older camp is exhausted of resources. The more powerful Lossoth clans may maintain multiple camps across Forodwaith. Though the Lossoth are not politically unified under a single ruler, they share a common language, lifestyle, and cultural tradition. Their existence is simply too marginal to permit the Lossoth to fight each other. Occasionally one Lossoth clan might quarrel with another over a hunting ground or fishing flow, but their society could not sustain any level of conflict approaching war. The Lossoth existence depends on communalism and cooperation. As a result, there is likely to be a great deal of egalitarianism in a Lossoth camp. The gap between high and low station is probably slight, with headmen and followers working side by side. Chiefs and hunters are almost always male, but women may be accepted in a wide range of roles—especially when there are not enough men to fill them.



Lossoth technology is very primitive by the standards of most other peoples of Middle-earth. When Arvedui and his men arrived, the Lossoth greatly feared their weapons. It is possible that they had never seen steel armaments before, or had only experienced them in the hands of orcs or other fiends of Angmar. Lossoth tools and weapons are made exclusively out of bone and stone. They have no way to mine or forge metal, and there are no trees to speak of from which they could acquire wood. They acquire bone from seal ivory, from reindeer antlers, and maybe even from whales that they might occasionally be able to harpoon in the Ice Bay. They gather flint—a stone that is wickedly sharp when filed to an edge—from the stony coast or from digging in the earth when the permafrost softens a little in the brief summer season. Common Lossoth weapons are primitive spears (bone harpoons), maces (bone cudgels), and knives (flint blades attached to bone handles). Bows and swords are likely unknown to them. Despite their primitive technology, the Lossoth are not without commodities for trade. The Lossoth camps certainly engage in a vigorous trade with each other, shuttling their surplus meat and other necessities on sledges across the tundra in exchange for luxuries like fur, fat, ivory, and whale or seal oil. Traders from southern Middle-Earth, while extremely infrequent, would be readily welcomed for their goods that simply cannot be produced in Forodwaith. In return, the unique fur, ivory, and oil of the Lossoth would fetch a handsome price in the markets of Bree, Esgaroth, and Gondor.





IT'S ALL OPTIONAL

GRIEF by GandalfOfBorg and Issachar

Forlorn and lost in his sadness, Mindol holds the lifeless forms of his wife and children. He is overcome by his bereavement and sees naught but red -- the color of blood. After burying his family, he rides off to join his fellow Gondorians in battle, seeking to destroy his enemy or die in the attempt.

In the world of Middle-earth, as in ours, death and savage brutality are dealt to all, even the most innocent. Especially when the innocent are victims, these displays are hard to bear. Grief caused by the loss of loved ones (family or friends), failing one's duty, or breaking an oath can cause a person to lose a bit of himself and his humanity, creating new flaws in his character. In CODA there are character traits that represent both a person's failings and his devotions. Grief can be played off a character's choice of such traits.

Grief Triggers

The first of two ways Grief could be invoked is to have the events of a chronicle or the character's actions in some way affect specific flaws or edges. Here is a list of some character traits that could be used to trigger Grief and some ways to affect them (remorse is a great motivator):

Table 1: Character Traits	
EDGES	Examples of the Trait Triggering Grief
Ally	An ally is seriously wounded, captured and/or tortured, or killed.
Command	Those under your command are seriously wounded, captured and/or tortured, or killed, or a crushing defeat in mass/unit combat.
Friends	A friend that you are close to is seriously wounded, captured and/or tortured, or killed.
Rank	Those whom you rule/command are seriously wounded, captured and/or tortured, or killed.
FLAWS	
Battle-Fury	Seriously injuring or killing a friend or loved one while under the influence of your rage.
Code of Honour	Being put to an evil test where breaking your code is the "lesser of two evils".
Crippling Wound	Losing an arm, leg, or eye or even reduced capability with one of these can cause a blow to a character's ego.
Dark Secret	The object of your Dark Secret is discovered, causing embarrassment, remorse, etc.
Duty	Failing to perform your duty.
Fealty	Breaking the bond of fealty.
Oath	Breaking an oath.
Reckless	Your ill-advised actions bring loved ones or friends to harm or bring about ill effects to your liege, realm, etc.
Stiff-necked	Not heeding the wise words of someone you are intolerant of.
Weak-willed	A Disastrous failure when attempting to resist torture for information or cowing in the face of great evil when you should have stood your ground.
ABILITIES	
Domain	Constituents are harmed, the domain is invaded, or it falls to the Enemy.
Place of Trade	Vandalized, destroyed, or forcibly taken.
Protector	Failing in duty to protectorate.
Sanctum	Vandalized or destroyed.

If a character doesn't have any of the listed traits above, the same situations could still be used, but with lesser power.

Invoking Grief

If a situation triggers a Grief test, a character must make a Willpower test vs. Corruption to counter further harmful effects. The test has a base difficulty of TN 5 (for characters with no ranks in any of the traits) and is increased by +2 TN for each rank, depending on the trait (Rank or Command would have an increased TN while Fealty wouldn't, as the former reflect an increased number of people in your charge, while the latter has only one object of your loyalty). Upon failing the Corruption test, the character suffers some harmful effects (see Table below).

Table 2: Failing the Grief Test	
Result*	Effect
1-3	(Result x -2) penalty to social tests for a number of weeks equal to Result
4-5	Add a rank to the Grief-triggering flaw or gain a new flaw
6	Gain 1 Corruption
* Roll 1d6, +1 for a Complete Failure or +2 for a Disastrous Failure	

A list of some appropriate flaws that could be assigned upon failing the Grief test are: Battle-fury, Craven, Dark Secret, Fey, Hatred, Reckless, Stiff-necked, and Weak-willed. There are some new flaws found in previous issues and in Fan Flavour of this issue that would also make good choices.

It may be noted that these rules seem to “double-dip” characters that have these traits (especially Nobles, as they would more than likely have a number of such

traits), by having the characters suffer both the penalties directly associated with the traits and also those associated with Grief. I would suggest using this mechanic sparingly and in only appropriately dramatic circumstances, especially for the ‘lower powered’ edges.



Imrahil tends his nephew by Anke Eissmann

FAN FLAVOUR

THE EFFECTIVE MAGICIAN by Mathew Kearns

Shrouded in the mists of myth and rumor, Magicians are the stuff of legend, wielding powers, great and small, unlike those seen by others. In the world of Middle-earth, almost anyone could be a sorcerer or mage, yet they are widely considered to be (and often are) charlatans who use subtle tricks of legerdemain and chicanery to deceive the masses. Those that have the ability and know-how to manipulate the power of the land and the very fabric of the world are the true Magicians, those who can mold the physical world with the power of their will, a few spoken words, and/or a flick of the wrist.

BACKGROUND

The CODA system and the game itself almost beckons that you create your character's concept and background before rolling the dice and picking skills, traits, and abilities. Regardless of the Age in which your game is set, the Magician is a viable Order that can be used at almost any time. Think about where he comes from, his motivations, and maybe even sketch out a few of his personal goals. This will help both you in focusing your roleplaying and your Narrator in creating side adventures for developing your character. Work with your Narrator to come up with something suitable for the game in



which you will be playing. The road to become a Magician is one of the most arduous, compelling, and satisfying, and your character's background should reflect these traits.

RACE

There are no racial restrictions for this Order. While all races of the Free Peoples have Loremasters within their societies, Elves (more so Noldor and Sindar) would have more characters of this type, along with ancient Númenoreans before the end of the Second Age. Hobbits are the least likely to become Magicians and are typically restricted from acquiring this Order.

ATTRIBUTES

Perception is essential in that it allows a Magician to “see” beyond the obvious and understand what is beyond normal senses. Bearing is important when it comes to persuading others of your opinion or casting spells. These two attributes are also key to Willpower, which is vital to successfully casting spells. Wits is another key attribute for Magicians, as it governs the Order's bread-and-butter skills: Language and Lore. A high Wits score also provides for a higher starting Wisdom.

REACTIONS

Willpower is probably the most important reaction for Magicians as they are called upon to use their magical abilities, and may find themselves in situations where they must resist forced-upon influences. Wisdom is also a good choice for Favoured Reaction (detecting lies, coercion, etc.). When making a concerted effort for research and investigation, a good Stamina score will help keep you going.

SKILLS

Like Loremasters, Magicians specialize in the various Language and Lore skills, which are governed by Wits. The other Order skills are all great choices for a Magician with really no gaps. If there were a Cross-Order Skill a Magician should acquire, it may be Armed Combat: Clubs with the Staff specialty, as the staff is a Magician's ubiquitous weapon of choice (consider spending Racial Skill picks on this).

EDGES

There are many edges that enhance the effectiveness and give a bit of flavor to the Magician: Ally, Curious, Eloquent, Friends, Gift of Tongues, Healing Hands, Honour's Insight, Stern, Strong-willed, Tireless, Wakefulness, and Wise.

FLAWS

With the pros of being a Magician, there are always cons -- the flaws -- that reflect their erudite and, at times, idiosyncratic nature: Dark Secret, Proud, Rival, Stiff-necked, Weak, and Weak-willed.

ABILITIES***

Spellcasting - Through intense study, Magicians have gained the knowledge and ability to manipulate the powers of the world around them by casting spells. The Magician is required to take this ability first upon acquiring the Order, unless he already has it from another Order (Loremaster or Wizard).

Dwimmer-crafty - At first look, this ability seems costly, but in the end it is quite worth it when it comes to spells you use often. Unfortunately, for the spells that seem a bit min-max, it makes them worse of course (Lightning anyone?).

Sanctum - Like Spellcasting, this ability is a prerequisite for other abilities. But unlike Spellcasting, it gives no real benefits other than defining the location of your sanctum until the other abilities are chosen.

Sanctum Power - One of two spells having Sanctum as its prerequisite, it allows the character to exert power over the land his sanctum covers. These effects are similar to a number of spells available to characters. This ability is really only useful if the character's sanctum is used often.

Spellcasting Method - This ability allows you learn the other means of invoking magical effects: runes and song. If you choose this, I highly recommend acquiring ranks in the appropriate corresponding skills (Craft/Smithcraft/Stonecraft or Perform).

Spell Specialty - Along with being appropriately thematic, this ability allows the character to better cast spells that are of a specific specialty for he has an affinity.



Wizard's Heart - By far, this is the ability all Magicians should shoot for as it is written bar none. I would suggest adding the requirement that the spellcasting must be done within the sanctum, not just anywhere.

MULTIPLE ORDERS

Craftsman - This Order would make a good complement to Magician, giving him the ability to apply his accumulated lore to the creation of items, including enchanted or magical items.

Loremaster - Being so close to what the Magician already is, it isn't a likely choice unless for the wholly unique and powerful ability Vala Virtue, or for Secretive to make casting spells easier.

Mariner - This would be an opportune Order to complement the Magician Order if the character focuses on water and air spells.

Minstrel - Someone of this Order coupled with an expanded base of lore through the Magician Order could create interesting and memorable ballads about far off places and times long past. The Spellcasting ability could be used to increase the evocativeness and/or persuasiveness of his performances.

Noble - Some of noble blood deem it a great honor to have their children schooled by great Magicians and Loremasters so they may become wise in the ways of philosophy and other academia. Unfortunately, it seems that most of those, especially of the mortal races, with the powers of spellcasting seem to turn their goals to domination instead of benevolence.

Rogue - When it comes to a well-timed and executed heist or investigating potential prospects, a Magician's expanded knowledge base and a few well-timed spells can come in handy when attempting to pull off a job.

Warrior - Many soldiers, especially those considered officers and captains of men know the value of a good education and do what they can, when they can, to increase their knowledge. Magic used for war and combat is in limited supply and can also be quite draining to a man-at-arm's stamina.

Archer - This Elite Order is a far stretch for the Magician, as the prerequisites are quite expensive for any Order that doesn't have Ranged Combat as an Order Skill, and high Nimbleness scores would almost never exist.

Captain - Same as the Warrior, an expanded knowledge base is always good, but other than that, Magician isn't that great of a choice for those focusing on warfare.

Knight - Like the Captain, this Elite Order wouldn't be likely to gain much by already having or gaining advancements in the Loremaster Order.

Ranger - Magician would be an okay choice for the Ranger when it comes to lore about plants, animals, etc. and spells related to the wilderness.

Spy - Like the Ranger, Magician would help in expanding your Lore and Language skills and the Spellcasting ability for disguise and deception.

Wizard - This Elite Order is quite likely the one that a Magician would attempt to achieve, while the reverse isn't true except for maybe the same reasons as listed for Loremaster.

SPELLS

As a Magician, your choices for spells are only restricted by the number of points you have to spend and the focus you have for your character's personality. Remember, Sorcery spells can be obtained **without** acquiring 1 Corruption Point if it is only used as a counterspell against the same. Narrators, don't forget the same is true for NPC's.

PLAYING A MAGICIAN

The greatest value a Magician hero brings to any game is his great wealth of information, be it in books, tomes, scrolls or his mind, along with magical powers. When he speaks, the Magician should be listened to, especially if you are relying on him to get you out of a particularly difficult situation where brawn is useless. A big point of playing spellcasters in Middle-earth is that overuse of spells is not in essence of the world, will cause greater powers to become aware of the character's activities, and can cause the character to become quite weary, possibly at a very inopportune moment. If ever you should need assistance in finding good examples of Magicians, look to none other than Gandalf the Grey (later Gandalf the White), for he is a great example of a Magician's scholarly bent along with his practical use of wizardly might. There is also Galadriel, and other elf-nobles who have used their powers for gathering information and protecting their kingdoms.



HOSTILE HAUNTS

CAZAR'S KEEP by Mathew Kearns

The East is full of small bickering realms of petty despots, valiant kingdoms fighting against the darkness that has governed those lands for centuries, and vast empty lands, devoid of any known peoples. It is here that the realm of the Cazar resides (blue X), bounded by the River Running to the west, Dorwinion to the north (red X), and Rhûn to the east and south. His keep is largest structure in the realm, made of baked mud bricks and sandstone mined from the mountains around the sea of Rhûn.

The Cazar is the ruler of the realm. Some Cazars have been independent minded from either extreme of good and evil while some have colluded with other dark realms of the East under the sway of Sauron; still others strain against plotting courtiers to keep their reigns intact while trying to free their people from the heel of oppression. In the last few centuries before the War of the Ring, each Cazar seems to be of the same mind as if there were some undying presence guiding them. Those who have challenged the Cazar and his rule during this time have all found themselves and their rebellion quashed swiftly and in deadly fashion.



Keep's Entrance

This is the main entrance to the keep of the Cazar. Guarded by two men most of the time, it is the only way for those other than the guards and officials to enter (Figure A). At the top of a small flight of stairs are two great doors made of wood found in the small groves of trees found along the banks of the River Running. These doors open into the great hall of the Cazar.

Hall of the Cazar

Beyond the large doors is the Hall of the Cazar. The floor consists of flagged stone with four columns supporting the ceiling (brazier #1, #4, #5, #8, counted from near left around to near right). At each of these and the other braziers a guard is found who belongs to the Cazar's personal guard. There is also a pair of guards standing at either side of the Cazar while he sits upon the throne (Figure B). A few tapestries can be found draped upon the walls about the hall too.

Secret Door

A 5x5 slab of stone hides a hidden portal (Figure C) used as an escape for the Cazar in times of need. It is also the means of entrance for the dindair (see *Fell Beasts & Wondrous Magic* for description) called Gwaerenduath (S. "Windy Shadow"), agent of Sauron in this land (see below). There are two triggers for opening the portal, one in the Cazar's throne and another within the passage (the first torch's wall brace). To find the secret passage requires a TN 15 Search or TN 20 Observe (Spot) test.

Hidden Passage

The hidden passage (Figure G) moves straight and progressively downward until it comes to a T-intersection. At this intersection, there is another hidden portal in the ceiling that eventually leads to the Cazar's chambers. The only ones able to open this portal are the Cazar or Gwaerenduath. To discover the existence of the portal requires a TN 15 Observe (Sense Power) or TN 20 Search or TN 20 Observe (Spot) test. Taking a right at the intersection leads eventually to a dead end

while a left ends with a final secret portal in the back of a jail cell that is never used. The portal can only be used one way -- from inside the passageway. To find the activator of the portal requires a TN 15 Search test or TN 20 Observe (Spot) test.

Outer Rooms

These rooms contain an additional pair of guards. Some rooms are set up with tables for meetings or feasts while others house additional arms in case of an emergency. The hallway outside these rooms run along the outside of all the rooms with a pair of guards at each doorway leading to these rooms.

Stairways

These relatively bare rooms contain stairwells (Figure E and F) with the one on the left leading to the upper levels which include the Cazar's chambers and high tower while the one of the right goes down, leading out to an inner courtyard and further down into the dungeons.

NPCs

Gwaerenduath

One of the few surviving dindair of the downfall of Thangorodrim, he spent many years wandering the northern regions from the coast of the great sea deep into the East, watching and listening to the whispers in the dark corners and learning about the many webs of deceit spun throughout dozens of small realms. Soon he began to pull on these strings causing civil wars, assassinations, and other such terrible atrocities. The weakened spirit of Sauron soon took notice of Gwaerenduath's dark power starting to rise and so, with a bit of persuading as only the Dark Lord can do, enlisted his aid in a small realm far in the west but not one of the kingdoms of the West. If confronted by PCs, Gwaerenduath will attempt to escape, fighting only if no other recourse remains. By means of magic, if in any way he is discovered or a potential threat from the West enters the realm, let alone the keep, Gwaerenduath will alert Dol Guldur and Mordor.

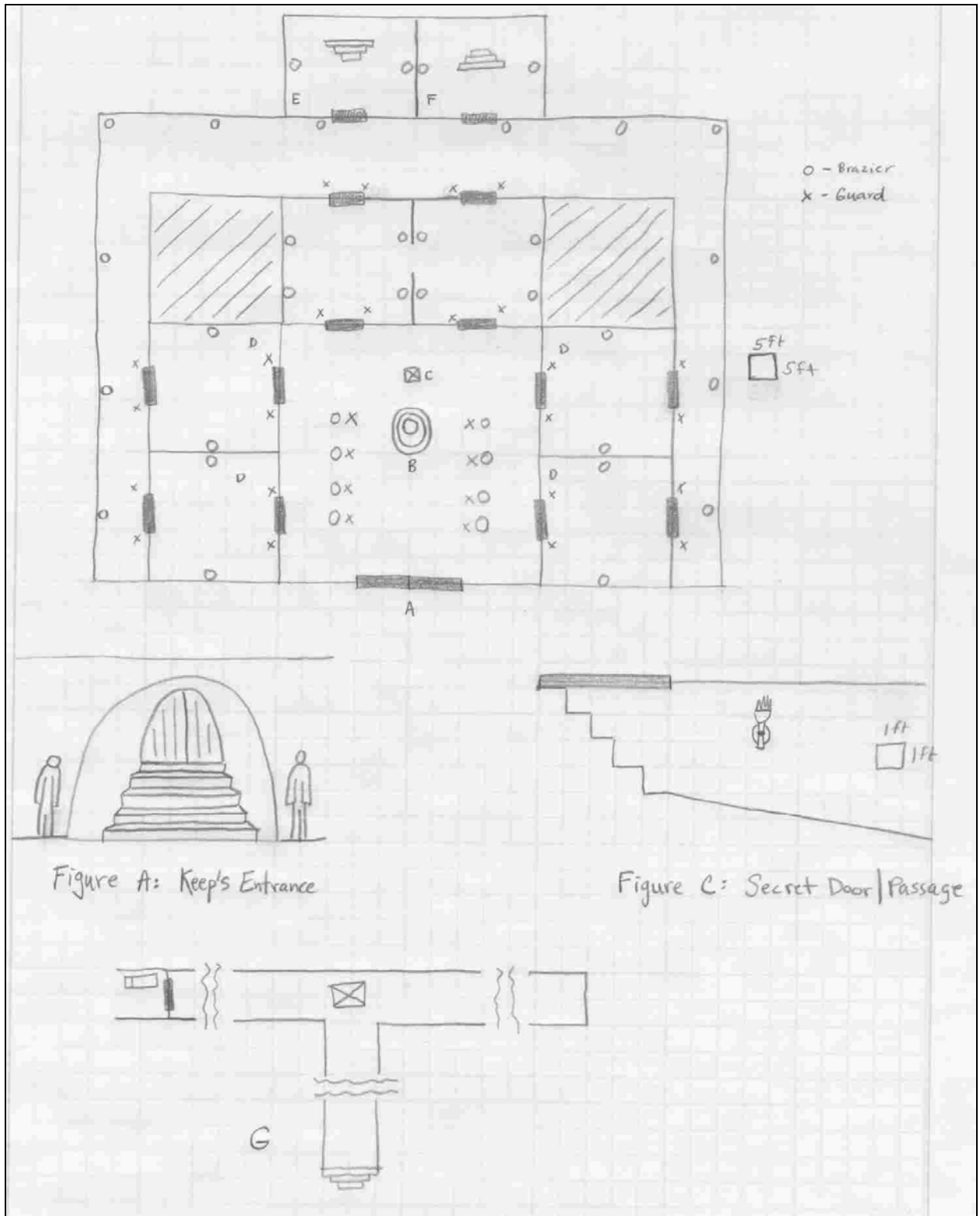
Personal Guard

Skills: Run +5, Observe (Spot) +5, Armed Combat: Swords (Scimitars) +8
Abilities: Evasion, Swift Strike

Guard

Skills: Run +4, Observe (Spot) +3, Armed Combat: Swords (Scimitars) +6
Abilities: Evasion





FAN FLAVOUR

NEW COMBAT MANEUVER

by GandalfOfBorg



Set

Action Cost: 2

Effect: You stand set and ready, bracing for an incoming charge. This maneuver can only be made with a polearm and cannot be parried; it can only be dodged. Make a normal attack test against the charging opponent. If the attack test succeeds, consult the table below.

Character Type	Damage
Key	2x (Weapon damage + Strength modifier of charger)
Important	1 Wound Level per level of attack success
Mook	1 success per level of attack success

A successful attack test also reduces any trample damage that the character might suffer from the charge: 3/4 trample damage on a Marginal or Complete Success, 1/2 trample damage on a Superior Success, and 1/4 trample damage on an Extraordinary Success (all rounded down). Full trample damage is dealt if the attack test fails. Trample damage is only dealt if the charging opponent is at least one Size larger than the character performing the set maneuver, such as a man set against a horse.

NEW EDGE

by Issachar

Merry Heart

"I will not say: do not weep; for not all tears are an evil."

--Gandalf, *The Return of the King*

Through times of loss and evil, your buoyant spirit remains steadfastly hopeful, and sorrow does not remain long in your heart. You receive a +4 bonus to Willpower tests to avoid suffering the effects of Grief, and +2 to Inspire tests used to grant others a bonus to resist Grief.

NEW FLAW

by Issachar

Grief-Stricken

A grief-stricken character is fixated on the cherished person or thing that was lost and on the events that brought him to grief. The character's will and ability to reason are impaired. Each day, he must succeed a Willpower test at TN 10. On a Failure, the character suffers -1 to all tests based on Bearing, Perception, or Wits.

If this Flaw is taken a second time, the character's grief is so great that it affects him physically: failure on the Willpower test also incurs a -1 penalty to all tests based on Nimbleness, Strength, or Vitality. If this Flaw is taken a third time, the Willpower test is made at TN 15.

NEW RACIAL ABILITY

by GandalfOfBorg

Call of the Sea

This ability applies to Elves after the end of the First Age. Albeit from vision of foresight, hearing the call of the gull or roar of the surf, a new stirring in your soul is awakened -- you are compelled to cross back over the sea to Valinor. If this event occurs, you must make a TN 5 Willpower test every month that you remain in Middle-earth. Failing the test causes you to gain 1 point of Sea-longing and increases the test by +1 TN. When an Elf character has accumulated a number of Sea-longing points equal to his total Willpower bonus, the character must seek out a haven and leave Middle-earth within one year or as soon as possible. If the character cannot leave Middle-earth, he begins to fade away, losing 1 Advancement Pick to spend or 1 Courage Point. If either reach 0, the character gains the Incorporeal creature ability and becomes tied to a specific place or thing, forever losing the ability to directly influence the real world.



HELM'S DEEP CONTEST

To kick off the resumption of Decipher's Lord of Rings RPG line, this contest will be kind of a big one. I certainly hope it will generate more interest than our last ones (1 participant each, fortunately their submissions were quite good). Without further ado, here are the topic and submission guidelines for the contest...

1. Since the topic of the new sourcebook is essentially Helm's Deep, the great fortress of Rohan that will be the topic for the contest.
2. The contest is to create an adventure arc of three modules.
 - Module #1: Your own creation -or- inspiration from adventure hooks in The Two Towers Sourcebook.
 - Module #2: Same as above
 - Module #3: Same as above, but will end at Helm's Deep with a great battle using Mass Combat rules.
3. The final module should use the new/expanded Mass Combat rules in the Helm's Deep source book. Complete the module, but leave space to fill in details needed for the mass combat system. Once a winner is chosen and the prize is received, the writer can then finish the module.
4. Module length: 2500-3500 words per module
5. Use the format seen in the free adventures from Decipher, including the following elements:
 - Full write-ups for important NPCs and/or unique creatures
 - Plot summary, storyline, planned events, etc.
 - Random encounters*
 - Unique items*
 - Subtle magical effects of the land*

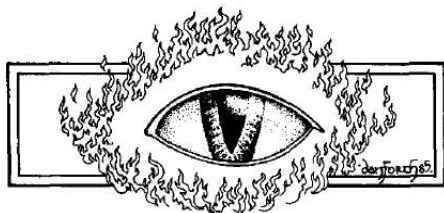
* - *Optional*
6. For NPCs, new creatures, unique items, or subtle magical effects of the land, there is a 250 word limit for the description after any stats (use standard format as seen in Decipher publications and *The Hall of Fire*). If you create new abilities/edges/flaws, send their descriptions and they will be located in the Fan Flavour section of the webzine.
7. Each submission must be unique.
 - It cannot have been something an author has had featured in a previous issue of *The Hall of Fire* or any other publication.
 - It cannot be something copied, tweaked, or converted from this RPG, Middle-earth RPG by ICE, or any other copyrighted property.
8. Editing of a submission for content and layout may be required for publication, but will not be done without prior approval of the author.
9. Files are to be *.txt or *.doc files for text and *.jpg files for maps, pictures, and other artwork. In the subject line of the email, write "Helm's Deep Contest".
10. Deadline: August 31, 2005
11. Eligibility: Anyone (unless staff of *The Hall of Fire* wish to recuse themselves). I (GandalfOfBorg) will be judging the submissions with any staffers who don't wish to participate.
12. Prizes
 - 1st Prize: A copy of the new Helm's Deep Sourcebook and a The Hall of Fire Year 1 CD.
 - 2nd Prize: \$15 gift certificate to Barnes & Noble or Decipher.com (your choice), a The Hall of Fire Year 1 CD
 - 3rd Prize: \$10 gift certificate to Barnes & Noble or Decipher.com (your choice), a The Hall of Fire Year 1 CD



DISCLAIMER: This contest is in no way sanctioned or sponsored by Decipher, Inc. or its affiliates. By making a submission to this contest, you acknowledge that you have read and understood the rules above as they are written and that Decipher will view your work as previously published works and will not accept them for paying contract.

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.fanhq.com/viewforum.php?f=164>

DECIPHER'S LOTR RPG SUPPORT DOCS

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

THE HALL OF FIRE WEBZINE SITE

<http://halloffire.org>

FAN MODULES FOR MIDDLE-EARTH

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

THE MAD IRISHMAN

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

STARBASE CODA

<http://www.starbase-coda.com>

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ARDA

<http://www.glyphweb.com/arda/default.htm>

SCOTT'S RPG CENTRAL

http://www.geocities.com/scott_metz/

RPG TOOLS FOR DECIPHER'S CODA GAMES

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

THE SLAVE PITS 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>

TREK-RPG.NET

<http://forum.trek-rpg.net/index.php>

CODA WEBZINE REPOSITORY

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/coda_webzine

TOLKIEN ONLINE

<http://www.tolkienonline.com/>

TALES OF MIDDLE-EARTH

http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/tales_of_mid

dle_earth/

CHRONICLES OF THE NORTH

<http://roleplay.avioc.org/lotr/index.htm>

CALLING ALL GAMERS!

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

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Note to any that wish to print out their copies of *The Hall of Fire*: If you wish to print this document in a book style (front and back pages), understand that the cover was intended to be printed by itself on one page.



