

# THE HALL OF FIRE

FAN WEBZINE

ISSUE TWENTY  
JULY 2005

*Nirnaeth Arnoediad - Unnumbered Tears by Jenny Dolfen*

Jenny Dolfen



## GREETINGS,

### SALUTATIONS... HELLO ALL!

Another month has passed. We have seen an announcement for Decipher's next release, the Helm's Deep Sourcebook, and there was growling and griping. We then saw an announcement that the release would be delayed until early to mid-July and this time we got griping and growling. Then finally there was the announcement that it'd be available at Origins in limited release and what happened? You guessed it, there was more growling and griping. And after all of that, all I have to say is: "Can't we all just get along?"

Well enough of that news and gossip and on to this month's issue. As promised, this issue would take a look at Dale and boy does it! There are articles about the city and the surrounding area, the line of lords and kings from Girion to Bard II, and the Bardings and other local peoples. In addition, there is an article on Fornost Erain, optional rules for the expansion of the Vala Virtue ability, a discussion of the Loremaster Order, plus more!

Happy gaming to one and all,

Matthew A. Kearns  
aka GandalfOfBorg  
Editor



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# ADVENTURING IN

## DALE

by Mathew Kearns (GandalfofBorg)  
pictures by Peter Merryman

### HISTORY

In the north of Middle-earth, east of Mirkwood, and at the foot of The Lonely Mountain, there lies the city and kingdom of Dale. In its early days, Dale was a settlement of Men who were a plain and simple folk but renowned as expert woodworkers and crafters. As time wore on, Dale grew in size and renown as it became the leading trade partner with the Dwarf-kingdom under Erebor.

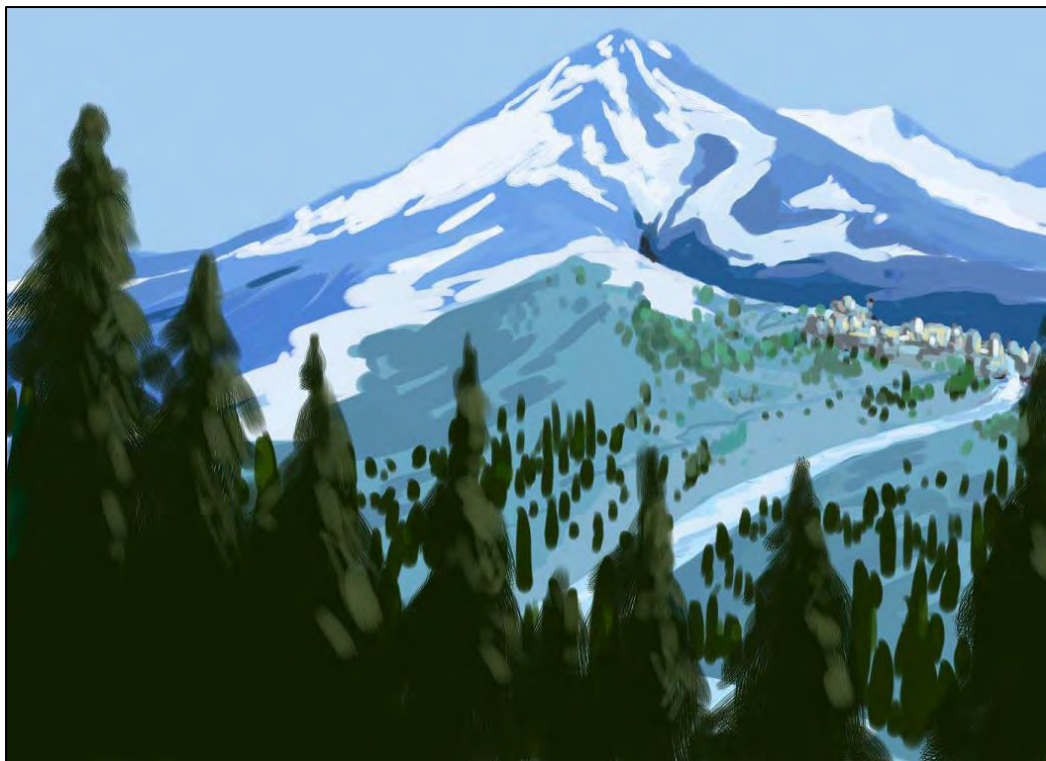
Eventually, rumor of the wealth and prosperity of the two kingdoms fell upon the ears of the last great wurm of Middle-earth, Smaug the Golden. In 2270 Third Age (TA), the great dragon came with fiery breath upon wings of a hurricane and destroyed both Dale and the Dwarf-kingdom, taking up residence upon a great pile of plunder.

The lands around the mountain and ruins of Dale became a desolate wasteland, bleak and unfriendly. The borders of The Desolation of Smaug (as it came to be called) harbored a little clinging greenery and life, but its heart was scorched and utterly barren, cursed by the dragon's foulness. The desolate lands extended southwards some miles along the banks of the River Running from Smaug's lair beneath the Lonely Mountain, but the lands to the north of the mountain seem to have suffered even more fiercely, if the map accompanying *The Hobbit* is a reliable record. After Smaug's death in TA 2941, it seems that the curse was lifted and The Desolation was slowly reclaimed, as both Erebor and Dale were recovered from their destruction and now prosper once again. Ironically, the kingdom of Dale eventually came to claim the lands covered by the The Desolation as if it were some werewild for their loss and long years of fear and suffering.

### Battle of Five Armies

*“So began a battle that none had expected; and it was called the Battle of Five Armies, and it was very terrible. Upon one side were the Goblins and the wild Wolves, and upon the other were Elves and Men and Dwarves.”*  
- *The Hobbit*

Since the ending of the War of the Dwarves and Orcs, the orcs had nursed a hatred of that race. In the year TA 2941, Bilbo, Thorin and their companions were captured by a colony of the orcs that infested those regions. With Gandalf's help they escaped, but not before killing several of their captors, including their leader the Great Goblin. The loss of the Great Goblin at the hands of a band of Dwarves inflamed the bitter memories of the old wars with the Dwarves. Under the command of



Bolg, whose own father Azog had been killed, all the armies of the orcs of the Misty Mountains issued forth from Gundabad with their allies, the wolves and bats, with aims of revenge and retribution.

Oblivious to these events, Bilbo and the Dwarves continued their journey eastward. Though their quest to recover Erebor was successful, they earned the anger of Thranduil the Elf-king of Mirkwood, and indirectly caused the destruction of Lake-town. Thranduil's Wood-elves joined with the Lake-men and marched to the doorstep of the ruined dwarf-kingdom to claim a share of Smaug's treasure in recompense. In response, Thorin called on his cousin Dáin, who set out with his own army from the Iron Hills.



So the scene was set for a confrontation between the Wood-elves and Lake-men on the one side, and the Dwarves of Thorin and Dáin on the other. Already the first arrows had been shot when a dark cloud was seen coming out of the north - the bats that heralded the orc-armies of Bolg. The Elves, Men and Dwarves quickly forgot their differences in the face of this new threat, and battle was joined on the slopes of Erebor and the valley beneath. The battle was ferocious, and as it raged, it was joined by others - Eagles out of the Misty Mountains, and even Beorn himself in the shape of a monstrous bear.

This battle was the end of Thorin and his cousins, Fili and Kili, and it severely diminished the presence of orcs in the Misty Mountains for years to come. Dain took up the throne in Erebor and Bard the Bowman, of the Line of Girion and the man who killed Smaug, was unanimously given lordship and kingship over Dale.

## Battle of Dale

A battle that took place nigh the end of the War of the Ring in Dale and Erebor. Brand of Dale (grandson of Bard the Bowman) and Dáin Ironfoot were both lost in the battle, and their respective forces besieged in the Lonely Mountain. The sons of these two lords, Bard II and Thorin III, were eventually able to break the siege and defeat the forces of Sauron sent to beleaguer them.

The actual Battle of Dale ended with the victory of the Easterling invaders, leaving Brand and Dáin dead, and their heirs, Bard II and Thorin III, besieged within Erebor. The siege lasted for seven days, until news of the Downfall of Barad-dûr reached the besiegers and sapped their morale, giving the two kings and their armies the opening they needed to rout the dark forces and drive them from their lands.

## SURROUNDING AREA

### Esgaroth

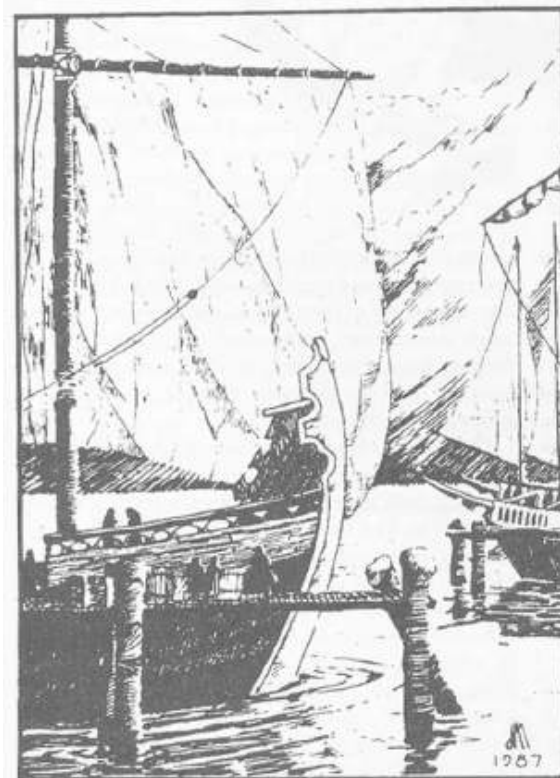
Also called 'Lake-town', it is a town on the shores of the Long Lake, the original home of the Lake-men. After the coming of Smaug to Erebor, Esgaroth was abandoned from shore to be built upon platforms out in the Lake as a form of defense from the dragon. Run by the elected Master, Esgaroth is a town of merchants and farmers eking out a decent life on the lake.

### Forest River

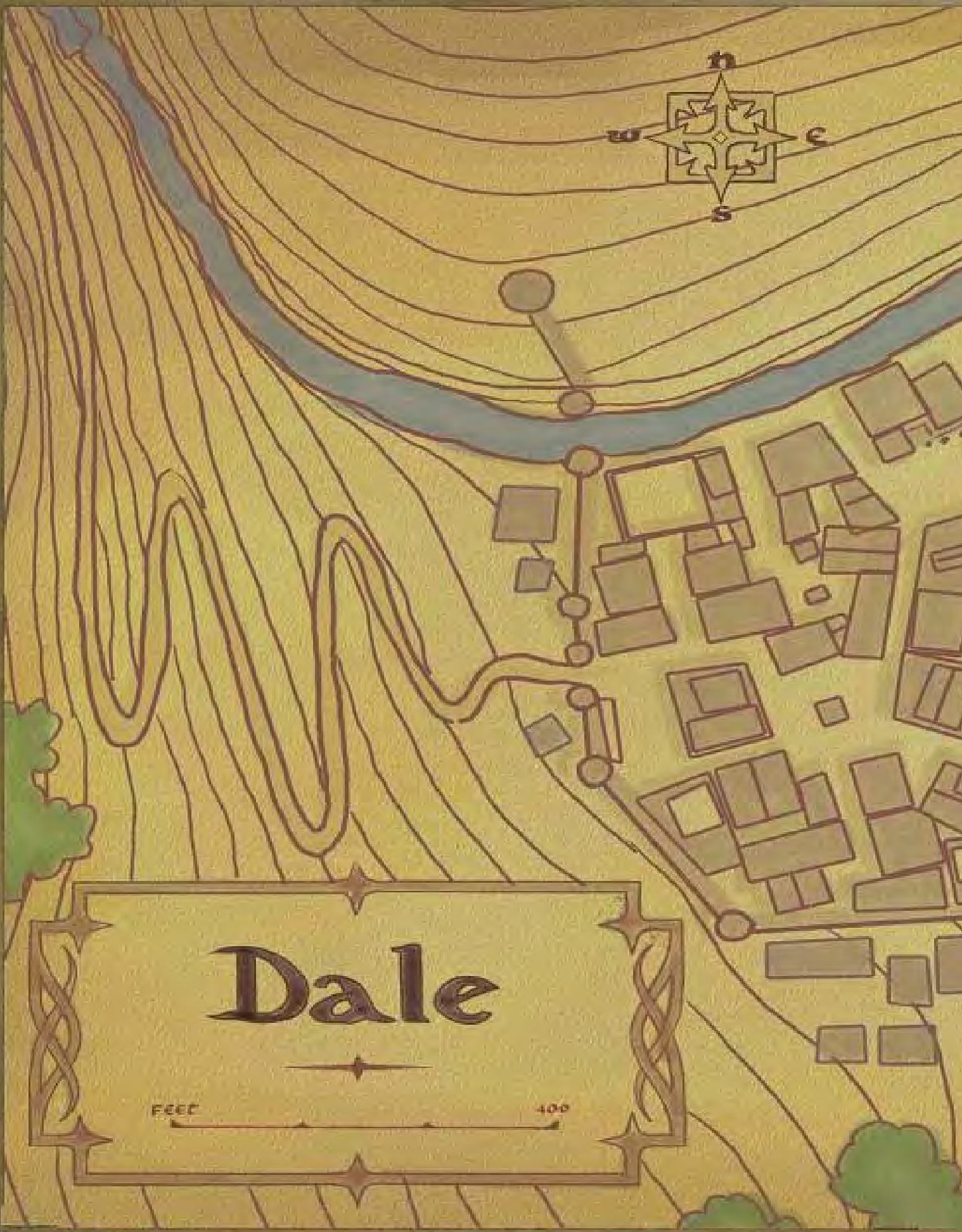
A river so-named because for much of its length, running through northern Mirkwood. It rose in the Grey Mountains to the north of the Forest, and followed a roughly southeasterly course to its outflow into the Long Lake.

### Long Lake

The lake that lay to the south of Erebor and Dale, the site of Esgaroth, home of the trading people of the Lake-men and descendant of the ruined city of Dale. The lake provides both sustenance for the people and a wealth of trade, both of their own goods and the trafficking of goods between surrounding realms like the Woodland-realm and Dorwinion.

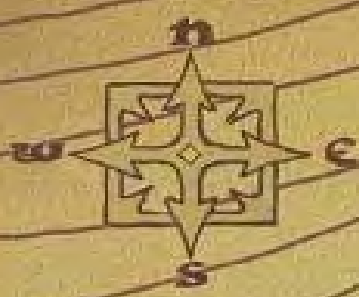


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# Dale

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### River Running

This river flows out from the south end of Long Lake, traveling generally in a southeasterly direction and eventually pouring into the great inland sea of Rhûn. It is the River Running that facilitates transportation of people and goods between the Woodland-realm, Dale, Erebor, and the friendlier realms of the Near East like Dorwinion.

### Notable Features

**NOTE:** This description is of Dale at the time of Bard the Bowman's kingship and may be altered as you see fit for earlier years or as ruins during Smaug's "reign" over the area.

#### Statue of Girion

In the center of the city's square surrounded on four sides by the keep of Dale (south), the merchant guild house (north), the constabulary (east), and the officers' barracks (west), this is a monument to the first actual Lord of Dale, Girion. This is the spot where he reportedly made his last stand with his guards against the onslaught of Smaug while he bided time for his wife and young child to escape into the night.

#### Keep of Dale

Even though Dale became a kingdom after the death of Smaug, and the keep was rebuilt to its original splendor, it remained nothing more grand than that. Though given pretty much carte blanche the ability to rebuild as he saw fit, humility remained with Bard as he decided to honor his and Dale's past. The keep consists of not much more than a great room, kitchens, living quarters for the royal family, the keep's servants, and the royal guard; everything else can be found elsewhere nearby.

#### Merchant Guild House

As their trade in woodworking, food, and supplies is what makes the city so prosperous, the merchants' guild was given leave to build the great house in the downtown square. The building is large, allowing for a number of meeting rooms and residences for some of the regulars along with dwarves visiting from Erebor on business.

#### Officers' Barracks

This is the main residence for the officers of Dale's army, connected to the royal livery, smithy, and the foot soldiers' barracks. Along with quarters, the build also holds one great war room, a huge library of maps and other information, and a number of smaller rooms for instruction and training.

#### Constabulary

Not affiliated with Dale's army, this building is the city's jail and courthouse. As Dale grows, so does the number of kingdom constables. This is where all trials are held, unless they are petitioned to be brought before the king.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

1. Soon after the fall of Smaug, Esgaroth must be rebuilt along with Dale. Even though the goblins were routed in the Battle of Five Armies, they are still a potential threat along with the spiders of Mirkwood until the return of the dwarves to Erebor. Protect the rebuilding effort and/or seek to cleanse the ruined city of Dale from any horrors that remain.
2. Now that Dale is being rebuilt with part of the treasure of Smaug and Esgaroth has recovered, trade is booming on the long-lived trade route along the River Running, the Long Lake, and the Forest River. You have been hired by the merchant guild of Esgaroth and Dale to protect shipments from bands of thieves along the long roads into the East and the perils of Mirkwood up to the Woodland-realm.
3. King Brand has come to the throne upon the death of his father. Dale has earned a few enemies in the nearest East realms for their persistent, yet mostly peaceful expansion of the kingdom. Mordor seeks to fuel this enmity further as part of its plans for wiping out the last of the kingdoms of the Free Peoples while it searches for the One Ring. Protect the realm from incursions from the East and southern Mirkwood and/or defend against the Siege of Erebor where Brand and Dain fall.

# PEOPLES OF MIDDLE-EARTH – MEN OF DALE

by GandalfOfBorg



*“After the death of Smaug in 2941, Dale was rebuilt by Bard, a descendant of the old Kings of Dale, who became its first King.”*  
*The Complete Guide to Middle-earth*

## STATS AND/OR RACIAL PACKAGES

**Attribute Modifiers:** See below

### **Racial Packages:**

Man of Esgaroth (Middle Man) - Craft or Smithcraft or Stonecraft +2, Debate +1, Sea-craft (Boating) or Teamster +1, Survival (Forest or Mountains) +1, Swim +1

Man of the Outlands (Middle Man or Man of Darkness) - Craft +1, Language +1, Ride +1, Survival (Plains) +2, Teamster +1

Man of the Steppe (Man of Darkness) - Craft +2, Ride +1, Survival (Plains) +2, Teamster +1

(Man of Dale package in the CRB can be used for residents of Dale before its destruction and after its refounding)

## HISTORY AND LANDS

Men of this part of Middle-earth come from similar stock as those of the Anduin Vales and to some extent the ancient Easterlings who took up with Morgoth during the First Age.



### **Bardings and Men of Esgaroth**

In the beginning, Dale was a small settlement of Men at the base of Erebor in long years past. As the founding and expansion of power and influence of the Dwarf kingdom under the mountain grew, so did Dale. It co-existed quite harmoniously with the folk of Durin, both peoples prospering from the relationship and sharing in one another's plight when the great winged drake, Smaug, destroyed both in TA 2270.

During the times leading up to the appearance of Smaug, the governance was held by a hereditary ruler, Lord of Dale, until the time of Girion. After Dale's destruction, the survivors took up residence along the southern shore of Long Lake, far away from the shadow of the mountain and dragon, thinking the line of lords was broken.

The settlement on Long Lake came to be called Esgaroth, which was then governed by the trading guild led by one who was elected among their ranks. Eventually after many years of trafficking goods between the East and the Woodland-realm, the

town became quite prosperous and influential once again. Once Smaug was slain, the majority of the city was in ruins and was never again what it once was, partially due to the resting place of the accursed wurm.

Toward the end of the Third Age, Dale was refounded by Bard the Bowman, descendant of Girion and the man who slew Smaug with one arrow. He was then declared King of Dale by the new residents and ancestors of Dale, and the people took to calling themselves Bardings in honor of him.

To find out more about Girion and those of his line, see Allies and Adversaries and Issue 9 for Bard the Bowman/King of Dale.





### **Men of the Outlands**

These rural folk live in the area of the Lonely Mountain and within a few days' ride of Dale and Esgaroth. They live the simple life of farmers, fishers, and craftsmen. Little of their heritage has been interrupted or changed for as long as any can remember, except when the Dark Lord's minions made war upon all Men at the end of the Third Age, burning and pillaging as they went.

### **Men of the Steppe**

Like the Wainriders and Easterlings further east in Rhûn and south, these people live a nomadic life, roaming the lonely plains between Erebor and Dorwinion. Though they are free from the influence of Sauron, they descend from men who betrayed men and elf, siding with Morgoth long ago. The same as the Men of the Outlands, little to nothing has changed about the Men of the Steppe, appearance or heritage, since the "dark days of when the earth broke and fell into the sea" as they put it.

## **PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

### **Bardings**

Descendents of original Dale, including the Line of Girion, are a broad and grim folk, coming out most with ire and displeasure. The men and women are of approximately the same height and build, dark brown or black hair, and brown eyes.

### **Men of Esgaroth and Outlands**

These people come from a mixture of the original residents of Dale, Men of the Steppe, and a small portion from the Men of the Anduin Vales. They have no typical or distinguishing features to themselves.

### **Men of the Steppe**

These people are closely related to the ancient Men of the East and those of Dorwinion. They are light of build with light brown to white blonde hair and blue or grey eyes.

## **SOCIETY**

### **Bardings**

Their seemingly unfriendly demeanor hides their true nature in the joy that they take in providing for themselves and friends and as skillful workers of wood, greatest in the region, rivaling even the folk of the Woodland-realm. Home, family, and community are the three pillars of life to them. Little crime can be found, but when it is, its roots are typically in outsiders, especially from the East.

### **Men of Esgaroth and Men of the Outlands**

Similar to the Bardings, as they were a part of their society for a long time, they are a people who are simple and honest. Their city is governed by a mayor who is elected by popular vote, a rarity in this world, though typically it is the most wealthy and/or influential merchant. Though initially unfriendly and wary, if you are trustworthy, they will open their arms and hearts to those in need.

### **Men of the Steppe**

These people lead a nomadic life, living frugally off the land, following the herds of wild deer and antelope. They have a simple life where pride and honor are what hold their clans together. Like the rest of the Free Peoples, they revere the elements, sun, moon, earth, sky, plants, animals, etc., but unlike the rest, they worship them as well as deities. To a certain extent this belief reflects the cosmology of Middle-earth, but the Elves and some of the Dúnedain know the actual history of Middle-earth along with who and what created the world.

## **ECONOMICS**

### **Dale**

The economy of Dale is fairly closed, like that of Erebor -- Dale supplies the dwarves with foodstuffs and their expert woodcraft items while Erebor trades their own goods (metal- and stonework) and training in these arts. There is little outside trade in Dale as they produce most all they need, though their woodcraft is exported throughout the region via Esgaroth.

### Esgaroth and the Outlands

Though it has a limited craft and goods industry, Lake-town's economy is primarily based on being a waypoint along the profitable trade route between Dale, Erebor, the Woodland-realm, and on to Dorwinion and the beyond.

### The Steppe

There is little trade between these nomadic clans and other peoples and realms due to their self-sufficiency. When there is trade, it is done using the barter system where their beadwork and bone/antler carvings are highly prized by the obscure collector.



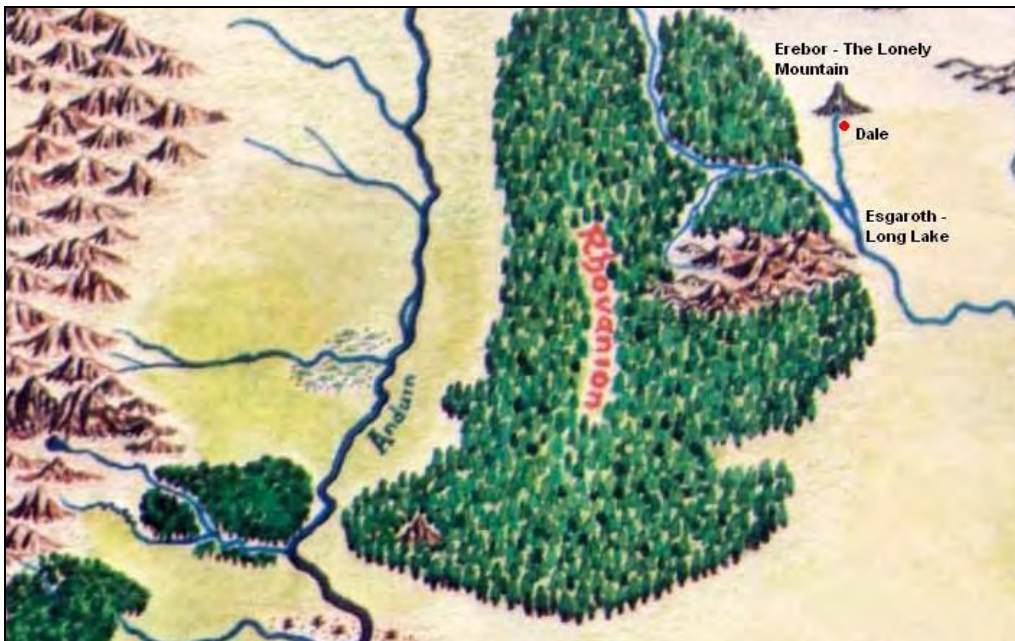
## STANDARDS/DEVICES

### Black Arrow Pennant

The Black Arrow is representative of the ruling family of Dale, formally known as the Line of Girion. The red dragon is Smaug as he was a prominent figure in the history of Dale. The dragon in combination with the arrow represents the refounding of Dale as a proper kingdom and those of the Line of Girion to be the line of kings. The mountain represents Erebor, 'The Lonely Mountain', and the realm of The King Under the Mountain where these kingdoms have a symbiotic relationship -- the closest relationship between Men and Dwarves.

### Shield of Lake-town

This simple device has a blue field representing Long Lake and The River Running as they are the life-blood of this town. The tree stands for Mirkwood, for it provides much for the town along with being the residence of the Elves of Mirkwood, one of their biggest traders and staunchest allies.





## DEAD-MAN'S DIKE: FORNOST ERAIN by Doug Joos

Arthedain's capital city since the abandonment of Annúminas, Fornost Erain stood as the realm's principal fortress and center of culture and trade. Perched strategically on the highest crest of the North Downs, and further protected by earthen and stone dikes and palisades beneath its high curving stone walls, Fornost housed the royal family and nobility of the kingdom in addition to Arthedain's renowned seers, scholars, artisans, and their many assistants and servants. The crest upon which it sat was a series of natural tiers rising up a 1,000 feet where the King's citadel was perched. The natural defenses along with those built up by the great folk of Arnor made Fornost a formidable stronghold.

The state of ruin of the city is based upon the year that the Narrator's game is being run. Fornost was abandoned to the besieging forces of Angmar in T.A. 1974 and the Witch-king sent a horde of undead fell-spirits to chase out any stragglers and to take up residence and keep away any would-be heroes trying to restore the crown. The town may be nothing but a large mound with broken fragments of the once proud walls and rubble as the only trace that buildings and homes once stood there, or it could be still somewhat intact only showing the ravages done by the armies of the Witch-king. In either case, the residents listed below will be found in their respective areas.

The Narrator can describe the ruin as a series of standing walls on which ivy now grows thick. The gardens and orchards that once were cultivated now are overgrown with wild plants, scrubs and trees. The once manicured parks and squares are now stretching out over the cobbled roads that used to intertwine throughout the city, the trees grown large and full and their roots breaking up the stones and earth. A wispy fog seems to lie over the old city from dusk until dawn no matter how strong the wind may blow.

In the winter, the 'dead' city seems colder still and ice hangs over the landscape and ruins. The foliage that grows thick in the summer months and that at least makes the place a bit more pleasant to look upon is not there to cover up the scars. Even in the coldest of months, the wispy fog mentioned above still lays over the land.

Lastly, there is no evidence of any animals or birds making the down a home, only the foliage shows that life still roots here. There are voracious insects that swarm around the ruin of all kinds, buzzing, flying in ears and eyes, and biting. The bugs make for restless nights and for patience wracking days.

Standard information for the Narrator for any adventurers that enter the ruins of Fornost:

- The area that is encompassed by the map given has an unnatural feel to it that affects birds, beasts, and any of the Free Folk. Since its horrible and sorcerous destruction at the hands of the Witch-king, and its many years of dominion by the undead, the hill that Fornost sits on has an intimidating look and feel. Any animal or person that approaches the hill must make an Opposed Willpower test TN 12 or suffer the result based on the degree of success as is illustrated in Table 9.19 of the *Core Rule Book* (page 233). The ill-effects from the intimidation will persist for one hour per point of failure on the dice roll (i.e. if a character rolled a 10 on their Willpower test, the ill-effects will last for 2 hours). This effect can be reduced or negated by an Inspire test TN 12 which if successful, will allow the characters another chance to resist the intimidation.
- For every half hour spent picking through the ruins, the Narrator may roll 2d6. On a result of double 1's, a stone will shift or rocks will fall on the hero(es) searching. The hero(es) must make a TN 10 Swifttest or an Acrobatics test TN 15 or each sustain 2d6 damage (armor does not apply).
- Any walls still standing are 30' in height and any towers that the Narrator wishes to be whole will be three story and rise to the height of the adjoining walls.
- The ruin is quite old and has gone relatively undisturbed since its abandonment in T.A. 1974. Due to this, there may be natural pitfalls (i.e. overgrown holes, basements with weak ceiling, etc.) and other type of dangers that any explorers may run into as they move throughout the old city. The Narrator may add any pitfalls and define the required tests to escape the dangers.







- **About found treasures** - 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. The city of Fornost is essentially a great gravesite where many died. The PCs can recover a few items of value, but they should keep in mind that it is a site of great and noble people who perished defending against evil most foul. It could be consecrated and considered 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. The Narrator must decide if the items taken are for a noble purpose and if not, the item should have some type of curse placed upon it. Perhaps the 'thief' is immediately given the Greedy Flaw, or is haunted by the soul that once owned the object. Of course, the Narrator should be the only one privy to the curse until its ill-effects are revealed.
- **Treasures within the ruins** - Fornost has sat in ruin for many, many years and when it was sacked, it had been stripped of most of its wealth. Still, some items remained that were of no interest to, or were never found by the forces of the Shadow. I have not listed any items below but the Narrator may feel free to 'seed' the ancient ruin with anything that he or she wishes to that will compliment their chronicle.

1. **The Gates** – The gates that once protected the road into the city are now nothing more than a broken arch, its doors long rotted away and the extending walls fallen and splintered. Ivy drapes over most of the area and it is possible to not see the structure for what it was. Upon the keystone of the arch, which has now fallen down amongst the other rubble, is an inscription written in Sindarin. It reads, "*Ost-na-i-Aran na-i-Yondo-ion Isildur*". If found, the inscription will require a Language (Sindarin) test TN 10 and any that hear the words read will be encouraged and be immediately restored one Courage point up to their maximum. The inscription translated reads, "*Fortress of the King of the House of Isildur*". It will require a Search TN 15 or an Observe (Spot) TN 20 to find the old keystone.

Also laid within the archway is a sorcerous enchantment placed by one of the Witch-king's foul servants many years ago. Any that walk through the broken gate will immediately hear the whispery voice of the caster as he tells the heroes that they will meet their doom within the broken city. The voice emanates from the arch stones through a modified *Farspeaking* spell casting and it utters its dark doom in the abhorrent language of Mordor. Though none may understand the language, they will still be affected by its intimidating effect. Any characters that hear the spoken words must make an Opposed Willpower test against TN 15 or suffer the result based on the degree of success as is illustrated in Table 9.19 of the *Core Rule Book* (page 233). The ill-effects from the intimidation will persist for one hour per point of failure on the dice roll (i.e. if a character rolled a 13 on their Willpower test, the ill-effects will last for 2 hours). This effect can be reduced or negated by an Inspire test TN 15 which if successful, will allow the characters another chance to resist the intimidation.

2. **Lower Quarter** – the road that extended through the main gates into Fornost went west between two of the three lower sections of the city; north of the main thoroughway was the "Lower Quarter". This section of the city was once populated by well-to-do artisans and professionals who primarily served the needs of the upper city. Farms and gardens also were scattered throughout this section of the city but they were much smaller than those outside the surrounding Outer Dike.

Cobbles can still be seen marking where avenues and boulevards used to cross through the quarter and some foundations of building may also be perceived. But for the most part, the area is now heavily overgrown by large Poplars and Birch trees and hawthorn and branching buchthorn has sprung up throughout.

This section of town still maintains one resident. Lasindar was once a tailor of high regard and respected by folks both above and below his station for the delicacy of his stitchwork. He tailored many garments for those who were able to pay the highest coin as his time was limited and many desired his service. Unfortunately for the old man, he was also the eyes and ears of the Witch-king due to a personal grudge that he held against the line of Isildur. As all traitors find, there is none that trust them in the end and so it was that Lasindar fell to the hordes that overwhelmed the city – payment from the Witch-king for his treachery to his own folk.

The angry spirit of Lasindar still roams the Lower Quarter around the area where his shop once sat. He will torment any who search the area of the town, both Free Folk and Allies of the Shadow. Only by trying to communicate with the spirit will it be found that Lasindar seeks forgiveness and may be freed from his earthly bonds by one from the line of Isildur who grants him his plea. Due to the ghost being invulnerable to physical harm, the only way to drive him off is through sheer will. A hero must engage Lasindar in a Contest of Wills to drive him away – all the while the spectre may attack with his Icy Touch.

**LASINDAR:** Bearing 11 (+2); Willpower +4; Dark Secret flaw; Unarmed Combat (Touch) +5; Camouflage, Icy Touch, Incorporeal, Invulnerable (to physical damage), Undead Stamina



3. **Central Quarter** – the Central Quarter sat between the Lower and South Quarters and in its time, boasted cheaper, but respectable, shops, inns, and boarding houses. It was here long ago where Gandalf the Grey would spend his time visiting with intellectuals and friends that resided within. Now there is nothing left to be seen but the bramble and weeds. Cobbles can still be seen marking where avenues and boulevards used to cross through the quarter and some foundations of building may also be perceived. But for the most part, the area is now heavily overgrown.
4. **South Quarter** – the South Quarter was the closest equivalent to a poor section of town that one would have found in Fornost. Now the area has become heavily overgrown with large poplar trees. At the feet of the trees still lies the rubble of the buildings that had once densely covered the quarter and amongst the rubble is one of the wicked, foul things that the Witch-king had turned upon the city – a Mewlip (see *Hall of Fire Issue 8, July 2004*). The fell-spirit polluted the corpse of a beggar named Boruthor and its sorcerous nature has preserved the corpse to this day though it is desiccated and stained by death, its teeth and nails sharp and long. Unlike the mewlips of the fortress above, Boruthor's spirit keeps this ghoul tied to this location and so it does not join its fellows in the hunt or in rest. The corrupted Boruthor has waited long for hapless victims to enter the ancient ruin and its unnatural hunger is immense.

**BORUTHOR:** The Narrator may take the stats as written for the Mewlip (*Hall of Fire Issue 8, July 2004*), or she may enhance them as needed for her chronicle.

5. **North Quarter** – a winding road leads up from the lower Quarters to the North Quarter, the wealthy sections that sat just below the King's citadel. Again, only the rubble and the traces of cobblestones mark both the building and avenues of old. The upper tier would have been a pleasant place to live once upon a time but now seems oppressed and sullen. The sound of a low moan can be heard when the upper tier is mounted and it is not discernable whether it is the wind or some other unworldly thing. The broken walls of the citadel above can be easily seen and the castle above causes any who look upon it to feel uneasy. It will take an iron will to mount the hill to the next tier.

Characters that wish to take the winding road up from the North and Upper Quarters will need to make a Willpower test TN 12 due to the evil taint that has corrupted the very land itself.

6. **Upper Quarter** – this quarter sits south of the North Quarter and like it, it is empty and desolate, only the foliage that hangs over all shows that any life exists here.
7. **Forts** – the road leads up out of the Upper Quarter to the first area of defense that the citadel boasted, a tall fortification that housed the once proud Dúnedain elite soldiers. The Witch-king saw to it that the structure was reduced to little but rubble and broken timber. No structures stand anymore in this area but a dark hole that leads to a subterranean complex

of rooms that were used for storage and barracks during the height of the citadels power. Now, most of these underground chambers have collapsed but a few still remain open where lie the restless dead.

When the fate of the city was certain, the Witch-king sent forth a horde of fell-spirits that corrupted and animated the many dead that lied on the fields of battle in northern Arthedain. This undead 'army' marched into the city and surrounding lands chasing out any who still hung on to hope. Over the long years, many of these spirits have faded but a large number still resided within Fornost and made the underground fortress their lair.

In the recesses of the old fort, waiting for any immortal or mortal to dare to enter their realm are 15 more Mewlips and 5 Dwimmerlaiks (see *Hall of Fire Issue 8, July 2004*). Like hounds on the hunt, the foul mewlips will roam through the broken rubble and set upon any living thing that they may come upon. The Dwimmerlaiks, far more deadly will use the cover of darkness to roam over all of the surrounding lands of Fornost. These shadowy undead use their icy touch to draw the life out of any thing that foolishly enters this perilous ruin.

8. **Citadel** - even in the world of undead there is an order and hierarchy, thus Mellawyn, greatest of amongst her peers, took the area of the citadel as her own. The dark spirit chose the body of a dead Sindarin Elf





to reside within as an insult to the immortal race.

From her high 'throne', Mellawyn *rules* the city of Fornost keeping it for the Shadow as a reminder of His great strength and that the efforts of the Free Folk are in vain.

The citadel area is the only part of Fornost that still has a standing structure. When the Witch-king had finished the sack of the city, he had hung within the Royal Hall all of the remaining soldiers (living and dead) by their necks. The hall was left standing as another reminder, but it eventually succumbed to the effects of time. The bodies of the fallen have long since rotted away and only Mellawyn now resides within the structure. If any were to enter, the first thing they would see would be the body of an elf sitting upon an old throne, her body desiccated by time.

9. **Inner Dike** – the state of the dike is relative to the year that the Narrator has his chronicle set. The dike was heavily damaged by the besieging forces of Angmar and as time passed it slowly fell into greater disrepair until it ended as nothing more than an earthen embankment with piles of rubble and lengths of broken wall.
10. **Outer Dike** - the state of the dike is relative to the year that Narrator has his chronicle set. The dike was heavily damaged by the besieging forces of Angmar and as time passed it slowly fell into greater disrepair until it ended as nothing more than an earthen embankment with piles of rubble and lengths of broken wall.
11. **Iaur Men Formen (Greenway)** – this long, wide road stretches from the foot of the old city of Fornost and stretches south through Bree, Tharbad and further until it brings any upon it to the white-city of Minas Tirith in far off Gondor.

## MELLAWYN, FELL-SPIRIT

**ATTRIBUTES:** Bearing 10 (+2)\*, Nimbleness 8 (+1), Perception 8 (+1), Strength 12 (+3)\*, Vitality 10 (+2), Wits 9 (+1)

**REACTIONS:** Stamina +4, Swiftiness +4, Willpower +5\*, Wisdom +2

**DEFENCE:** 11

**MOVEMENT:** 6

**SKILLS:** Armed Combat: Blades (Short Sword) +9, Armed Combat: Natural Weapons (Claws) +6, Intimidate (Fear) +5, Language: Understand Westron +4, Language: Black Speech +4, Observe (Sense Power, Smell) +5, Stealth (Hide) +5, Track (Scent) +4, Unarmed Combat (Any) +5

**SPELLS:** *Blast of Sorcery, Evoke Fear, Holding-spell, Veiling Shadow, Wizard's Hand, Wizard's Fist*

**SPECIAL ABILITIES:** Deadly Touch, Terror, Undead Stamina

**SIZE:** Medium (5 Wound Levels, 1 Healthy)

**HEALTH:** 13

**COURAGE:** 0

**RENOWN:** 10

**TN EQUIVALENT:** 15

## UNIQUE ABILITIES

**Deadly Touch** – This power is similar to the special ability Icy Touch but with the following modifications. The grasp is cold and lethal and for every successful hit by an Unarmed Combat test, or every round held in a grab, the victim is drained of 1 point of Strength and Vitality. The victim becomes paralyzed when either attribute reaches 0, but they will die if both attributes are reduced to 0. If the victim is not killed lost points return normally (see CRB p. 247), or are fully restored upon the application of a *Healing-spell*.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

**Short:** After a couple of ales in the Prancing Pony, talk turned to brave but foolish dares that would most likely be forgotten in the morning. Yet one peaked the interest of some in that fine establishment, rumor of a treasure buried within the ruins of Fornost. It was said that when the city was under siege one of its inhabitants, an old tailor, hid himself in a hole in his root cellar with all of his worldly wealth that he could gather. When the city was sacked, the tailor's home collapsed and it caved in to his cellar trapping the man in his hole where he perished. It is said that some of the treasures count amongst those brought from the legendary Númenor and the value of such relics would buy more than just food and drink - it could buy the inn itself, if not *many* inns! **Note to Narrator:** this is a great hook to build a chronicle from... instead of just a simple tailor, perhaps it is a rich noble and maybe the item in question would help serve the Free Peoples in their fight against the Shadow.



**Medium:** It is rumored that when the King of Arthedain retreated north from his city, he took with him many of the heirlooms of Isildur and Elendil. One thing was forgotten, the white tree that grew within the citadel of Arvedui that had been transplanted from Annúminas many years before was left standing and no seed or fruit was taken from it. Rangers out of the Angle have gathered some brave individuals to accompany one of their kin into the ruins and acquire a seed. For though it now stands burnt and leafless, it is believed that the seeds that have fallen to the ground below may still yield a new line from that once proud tree. It will take nurturing and skilled care to remove the taint from the corrupted land, but it could be done!

**Long:** By request of the High-king Elessar, a band of daring adventurers is recruited to clear out the evil that has housed itself in Fornost these many years. Should the adventurers be successful, the King will richly reward them.



*The Coming of Fingolfin by Jenny Dolfen*

## IT'S ALL OPTIONAL

### VALA VIRTUE by Mathew Kearns

As one of the Loremaster Order's most powerful or influential abilities, Vala Virtue is intriguing while also stretching the boundaries of both canon and the feel of Middle-earth. Yet debating religion in Middle-earth isn't the focus of this article, expanding upon this ability is. In the CRB, there are two Valar mentioned with associated effects given to their devotees and below I expand the list to include all the Valar in order of power (male then female) along with Morgoth at the end.

#### Manwë

Greatest of the Valar, Manwë is the spouse of Varda and King of Arda. He dwells in his halls on Taniquetil, highest of mountains, governing all with an affinity to the winds and airs of Arda. Devotion to him grants a +2 bonus to one Lore skill and to all Weather-sense tests.





## Ulmo

Lord of the seas and one of the greatest of the Valar. In the dark days of the First Age, he kept watch and lent indirect aid to both Elves and Men while the others of his order remained in Valinor. Devotion to him grants a +2 bonus to tests related to the sea (Sea-craft, Weather-sense, Survival, etc.).

## Aulë

One of the Aratar, the eight greatest of the Valar, Aulë was the Vala concerned with the substance of Arda; rock and metal. As his name suggests, he was also the builder and inventor of the Valar. Among his greatest creations were the race of Dwarves and the vessels of the Sun and Moon. Devotion to him grants a +2 bonus to Appraise plus Stonecraft or Smithcraft.

## Oromë

Oromë, one of the Aratar and the brother of Nessa, is known as The Huntsman of the Valar. In ancient times, he rode often in the forests of Middle-earth, and it was he who first discovered the Eldar at Cuiviénen. Devotion to him grants a +2 bonus to Ride, Survival, and Combat tests when hunting wild beasts.

## Mandos

The Doomsman of the Valar and keeper of the slain in his Halls in the west of Valinor; his true name is said to be Námo. Devotion to him grants the Foresighted edge (superseding the edge's requirements if they aren't met).

## Irmo

More commonly called Lórien, from the gardens of Lórien in Valinor where he dwelt with his wife, Este. Devotion to him reduces by half the amount of sleep required to recover from Weariness.

## Tulkas

The last of the Valar to descend into Arda, and the most warlike; he did battle with Melkor in the years when the World was young. It is said that he laughs more than anything, especially while in battle, instilling great fear into his enemies. Devotion to him grants a +2 bonus to Unarmed Combat or Inspire or Intimidation tests while in combat.

## Elbereth

The Queen of the Stars and spouse of Manwë the King of Arda, great among the Queens of the Valar. She set the stars in the sky, for which the Eldar of Middle-earth revered her, calling her by the name of Elbereth. Devotion to her grants a +2 bonus to resist Sorcery and other spells cast by evil powers.

## Yavanna

Called the 'Giver of Fruits', Yavanna was the Vala whose province was all growing things upon the earth. She was the spouse of Aulë the Smith. Devotion to her grants a +2 bonus to Lore tests related to plants and animals.





## Nienna

A Queen of the Valar, the sister of Námo and Irmo, who dwells alone on the western borders of the World. Nienna ranks as one of the eight Aratar, the most powerful of the Valar. Grief and mourning are Nienna's province; in her halls in the distant west, she weeps for the suffering of Arda. Her part in the Music of the Ainur was one of deep sadness, and from this grief entered the world in its beginning. The Maia Olórin, who was later to travel to Middle-earth as Gandalf, learned much from her. Devotion to her grants a +2 bonus to Insight and Persuade (Oratory) tests.

## Estë

A lady of the Valar, the spouse of Irmo, who dwells with him in the gardens of Lórien in Valinor. Devotion to her reduces by half the Weariness penalties applied to movement through natural areas.

## Vaire

She is a Queen of the Valar, spouse of Mandos, and the one who weaves the tales of the history of Arda. Devotion to her grants a +2 bonus to Lore: History tests.

## Vana

She is a lady of the Valar, sister of Yavanna, and spouse of Oromë. Flowers were said to open, and birds sing, at her passing. Devotion to her grants an additional +2 bonus when spending Courage on social tests.

## Nessa

The spouse of Tulkas and sister to Oromë, she delights in dancing on the green lawns of Valimar. Devotion to her grants a +2 bonus to Perform tests.



## Morgoth

Followers of evil cults throughout the ages have devoted themselves to Melkor Morgoth, Sauron, and others powerful in the darkest of arts. These cults are savage and brutal, exacting bloody rites and sacrifices to these 'gods' of darkness. Devotees of these faiths do not garner any bonuses as Melkor Morgoth is beyond the reaches of the world to affect it in any way until the End of Days.



# FAN FLAVOUR

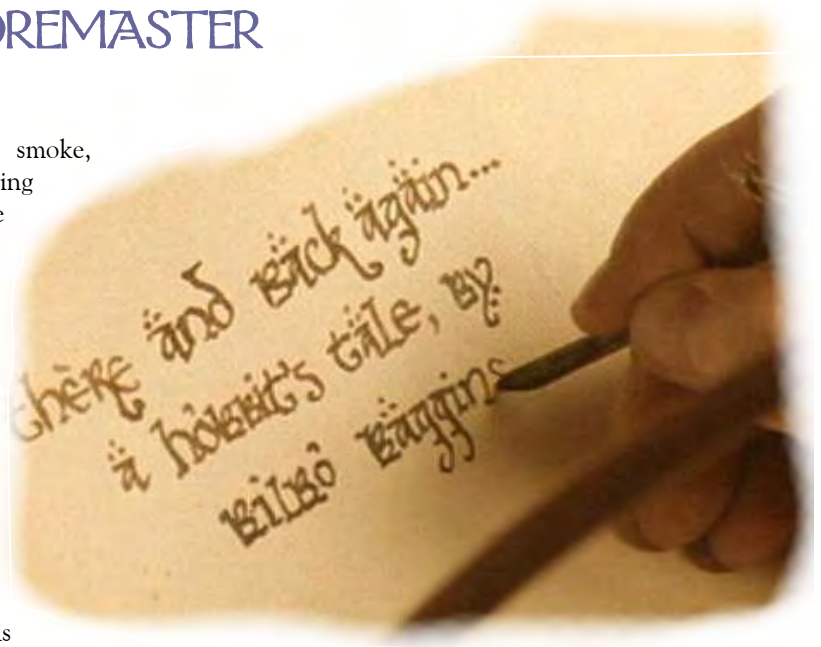
## THE EFFECTIVE LOREMASTER

by Mathew Kearns

Smelling of musty tomes and torch smoke, Loremasters are an integral part of any adventuring party in Middle-earth. The men and women are scholars and students of all types of knowledge, subjects ranging from healing to plants and animals to history. When it comes to researching a cure for a fast-spreading disease or deciphering ancient languages, the Loremaster is your go-to person.

### 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 you game is set, the Loremaster 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 for 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.



### RACE

There are no racial restrictions for this Order. While all races of the Free Peoples have Loremasters within their societies, Elves (moreso Noldor and Sindar) would have more characters of this type or least some advancements put toward it.

### ATTRIBUTES

Wits is the key attribute for Loremasters as it governs the Order's bread-and-butter skills: Language and Lore. A high score also provides for a higher starting Wisdom. Perception is essential in that it allows a Loremaster 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. The latter two attributes also are key to Willpower.

### REACTIONS

Willpower is probably the most important for Loremasters as they are typically in situations where resisting forced-upon influences and successfully casting spells (if they ever gain the ability). 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

Language and Lore, governed by Wits, in their various incarnations are what Loremasters specialize in, representing their vast knowledge and worth. The other Order skills are all great choices for a Loremaster, except maybe Games. If there were a Cross-Order Skill a Loremaster should acquire, it's Search as it complements his investigative and studious nature (Note: Consider spending Racial Skill picks on this).

### EDGES

There are many edges that enhance the effectiveness and give a bit of flavor to the Loremaster: 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 Loremaster, 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

**Ancient Scripts** - This is a very useful ability and reasonably priced. It fits the best for Loremasters who focus on doing research, treasure-hunting, or traveling through foreign lands.

**Expertise** - This high-priced ability provides nothing more than a bonus for a skill (or maybe multiple skills in certain situations) that already should provide a fairly large bonus to roll and happens to be the prerequisite for the ability. The bonus isn't worth the 3 picks spent either unless it could be applied to multiple skills.

**Scroll Hoard** - This ability is almost the same as Expertise in its results, but could be considered more powerful as it doesn't have prerequisites and, as written, applies to any Lore or Language skill when he has access to the scroll hoard. This may "tie" a character to a location and could become abused by players. An idea to cut down on the abuse is to have the player specify the types of knowledge contained in the scroll hoard and/or scale the amount of time required for research in the hoard along with the bonus for the test by how much info in the scroll hoard pertains to the topic being researched.

**Secretive** - This ability is very powerful compared to its cost as early on it could double your Willpower bonus (potentially equivalent of 6 picks or more), this being its base use. The specialized use of the ability is probably worth the 3 picks alone when adding 2x Wits modifier to Willpower tests (instead of 1x) for resisting torture/ domination.

**Spellcasting** - Through your intense studies, the Loremaster has happened upon the knowledge being able to manipulate the fabric of the world around them by casting spells. This ability is wholly less powerful than the same for Magicians and has expensive prerequisites, but it still is a worthwhile ability.

**Vala Virtue** - An interesting ability as its thematic quality could be considered a bit dubious (where devotion to a Vala isn't all that canonical in my opinion outside of Maia), but its practical quality can be quite potent when used appropriately along with a few choice edges and/or abilities. This ability would gain the most use if the character gains advancements in other Orders.



## MULTIPLE ORDERS

**Craftsman** - This Order would make a good complement to Loremaster, giving him the ability to apply his accumulated lore to the creation of items, including enchanted or magical items or aiding in Craft test from Vala Virtue for Aulë.

**Magician** - Being so close to what the Loremaster already is, it isn't a likely choice to be acquired unless it is for the more powerful Spellcasting ability or Secretive to make casting spells easier.

**Mariner** - Like the Craftsman ability, Loremaster can complement this one quite well, gaining the most from probably Vala Virtue for Ulmo.

**Minstrel** - Someone of this Order coupled with an expanded base of lore through the Loremaster 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** - Shrewd and wise rulers would either have or benefit by gaining the Loremaster Order.

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

**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.

**Archer** - This Elite Order is a far stretch for the Loremaster 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** - Your commanding presence can only be enhanced by having or acquiring the Loremaster Order. This is especially true when using Vala Virtue for Elbereth when leading men against the forces of the Shadow.

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

**Ranger** - Loremaster would be an okay choice for the Ranger when it comes to lore about plants, animals, etc. and Vala Virtue for Oromë or maybe Yavanna.

**Spy** - Like the Ranger, Loremaster would help in expanding your Lore and Language skills and maybe the Secretive ability when resisting domination if caught and trying to resist revealing your secrets.

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



## SPELLS

If your Loremaster does acquire the Spellcasting ability, he is limited to 2 spell picks to spend per rank in the ability. This can hamper your expansion of power (unless you join the Magician or Wizard Orders), but there are plenty of useful spells for you: Crafting-spell, Create Light, Display of Power, Healing-spell, Ithildin-fire, Scribe Moon-letters, Voice of Suasion, and more.

## PLAYING A LOREMASTER

The greatest value a Loremaster hero brings to any game is his great wealth of information, be it in books, tomes, scrolls, or his mind. When he speaks, the Loremaster should be listened to, especially if you are relying on him to get out of a particularly difficult situation where brawn is useless. If ever you should need assistance in finding good examples of Loremasters, look to Elrond, probably the greatest of all Loremasters in Middle-earth, Gandalf and any of the other Istari, and smallest of all, Bilbo Baggins.

# ALLIES AND ADVERSARIES

## THE LORDS AND KINGS OF DALE

by Mathew Kearns



**RACE:** Man, Middle

**RACIAL PACKAGE:** Line of Girion\*

**ORDER:** Noble

**ABILITIES:** Domain (Dale), Noble Mien

**SKILLS:** Debate (Oratory) +4, Intimidate (Majesty or Power) +5, Inspire +6, Language: Sindarin +3, Language: Understand Bird-speech (Thrush) +4, Lore: History (Dale, Erebor) +4, Lore: Race (Man, Elf, Dwarf) +3, Lore: Realm (Dale, Erebor) +3, Ranged Combat: Bows +5

**EDGES:** Ally (Master of Esgaroth, King Under the Mountain, King of the Woodland-realm), Command 2-3, Friends (City Council of Esgaroth, Dwarves of Erebor, Elves of Woodland-realm, Noble thrushes of Erebor), Hoard 3-4, Rank 2 (Girion to Bard the Bowman) or 4 (Bard, after being crowned, and all after)

**FLAW:** Duty (Govern Dale) or Fealty (Master of Esgaroth)

**RENOWN:** +7 (minimum)

\* - see HOF, Issue #9

### Girion

The Lord of Dale when Smaug descended on Erebor and ravaged the lands about. Girion died in Smaug's assault, but his wife and son escaped. He was avenged nearly two hundred years later when his descendant Bard slew Smaug with an arrow.

### Bard

Bard is long descended from the line of Girion, the last king of Dale. He led the defense of Esgaroth against Smaug, and the army of Men in the Battle of Five Armies. Before this time he was known as a capable warrior and occasional soothsayer or doom-speaker. After the great battle, he took the share of the dragon hoard given him by Dain Ironfoot and gave a portion to rebuild Esgaroth and his rightful kingdom of Dale. His rule in the reconstituted realm lasted many years and he left the throne to his son, Bain.

Feel free to alter Bard from HOF, Issue #9, to fit the template above.

### Bain

The son of Bard the Bowman, Bain succeeded his father to become King of Dale and soon annexed Esgaroth to the kingdom. His rule was quite expansionist, as the kingdom soon claimed the lands south of the Lonely Mountain during his thirty year reign. He also saw Balin and his companions leave Erebor on their fateful journey to Moria, giving aid in supplies and ponies (and possibly more). The Dale-branded toys seen at Bilbo's Farewell Party were made during Bain's time. He died of old age and was succeeded by his son Brand, whose realm was said to extend far to the south and east of Esgaroth.

### Brand

Brand was King of Dale during the fateful and costly War of the Ring. As the Shadow made more forays into the West, Dale and Erebor were, of course, the first to feel its wrath. During his reign, he knew little time of peace and too much of war -- too much in fact as he fell at the side of Dáin Ironfoot in the War of the Ring and was avenged by his son Bard II.

### Bard II

The son of Brand and most like Bard than any of his other descendants, Bard II was justly named. He was a man grim of disposition, but just and fair, wise and tempered. His father was slain in the Battle of Dale, and Bard was forced back to Erebor, where he was besieged with his ally and new king of Erebor, Thorin III, for seven days. When news came from the south of the destruction of Sauron, Bard and Thorin emerged from the Lonely Mountain, breaking the siege in a rout and driving the evil Men from their lands for many, many years.



# THE ROAD GOES EVER ON...

## TRIUMPH OF THE WITCH-KING:

### CHAPTER 5, A PROMISE KEPT by Doug 'Tomcat' Joos

#### Interludes:

1. He sat in the cold damp cell, the smell of moldy straw filling the room. Too many risks were taken, too many times he tempted the fates, and now he sat here and waited for his death. What of his men? What of the Prince? Did they survive? How does a commander face being captured and the potential loss of his troops – to know that he lives and that they may lie dead on the field. He hung his head low. The clang of the metal bar startled him back to his surrounds as the door swung open... the man again, he was definitely an Easterling. "We will hear soon," he said. "Soon the Witch-king will call for you and I will have the great pleasure of giving you over to him!" He laughed as the door closed...
2. She did not feel anymore, not in the way that the living felt, but she sensed it... there was a faint tug on the thread and then a violent jerk. It was caught, what ever it might be... the shadow lumbered forward, darker than the blackness that surrounded her.

**Setting:** The characters have spent the last sixteen days in the city of Fornost, tending to Prince Arvegil. Great celebrations were made for the restoration of the prince's health and the King showed great favour to those who brought the healing plant to the city. But now that this errand has been performed, there is another that needs done - the rescue of the commander of the King's Third Host, Camentir.

## SCENE 1 - A MUSTER TO MARCH FORTH

Days 1-5 January 1-5, Fornost Erain and the travel to Pinnath Siran

This scene will be dominated with roleplaying by the characters. The players must discuss the best means by which they should march north into upper Rhudaur and lower Angmar. Will they decide on traveling in a small, but discreet group or will they muster a force behind them with the aid of the King of Fornost to march north against the forces of Angmar with the goal of rescuing Camentir.

The Narrator should let the players make their decision, but if they decide to muster a force, he or she should limit the size of the force that they can gather based on their chronicle. In my campaign, I let the players gather a host of 25 made up of warriors, scouts, and utilitarian type orders (i.e. Loremaster/Healer, etc.)

Once on the road out of Fornost, the travel should be relatively easy as the host rides through the safer lands of Arthedain. Still, the spying eyes of Angmar are always present so the Narrator has many options to introduce challenges, skirmishes, or any other exciting addition to the scene.

See the map to the right (the numeric points signify the amount of distance covered with each full day's ride):



**Overland Travel:** This optional rule simplifies Weariness for long overland travel. Rather than making many Stamina tests over time intervals, one roll is made with the TN of the test equaling the number of miles traveled (i.e. 20 miles = TN 20). Apply modifiers for Pace (Walk -2, Jog/Trot +0, Run +2, Sprint/Gallop +4), Terrain (easy ground -2, average ground +0, rough ground +2, very rough ground +4), and if any Beasts of Burden are used to make the travel (i.e. riding a horse +5 to Stamina Test). Degree of success determines the number of Weariness levels suffered: 3 on a disastrous failure, 2 on a



complete failure, 1 on a failure, 0 on any success. Also, if a Disastrous failure is rolled, the character must stop there and then, too exhausted to keep going for that day. Roll 2d6 and subtract it from the TN to determine how many miles were actually covered before the character needed to stop.

## LOCATIONS

**Raimaro** - The town of Raimaro is along the northern road out of Fornost. The road is now mainly used by the soldiers that travel to and from the borders of the land of Arthedain. Long ago, merchants used to travel from Bree to Pinnath Siran and beyond bringing their wares to the many people that inhabited the lands. Nowadays, this mercantile traffic has bled off as the region has become more and more dangerous. The Narrator can use the following narrative to describe the travel and the town of Raimaro:

Their course chosen, the Company of Arthedain moved out of the King's city and onto the old roads that would take them east. Their goal would be Eldanar and each person began to let that thought sink in - fourteen days on the wintry road to a Castle that lies in the Enemy's hands. The Company members all girded themselves for the coming trials.

The rain fell heavy for the whole day and due to the cloud cover, the winter night seemed to settle in quickly. Still, it was demanded of them all a full day's travel - ten hours in the saddle with intermittent breaks. For some, the experience was nothing new, for others it was a nightmare.

To the north, the great steppe like terrain rose in an easterly direction and the Company was forced to go a bit south and east. On the second day of their travel, they picked up the northern road. This day had a much more grateful ending as the troop rode into Raimaro.

Raimaro was still a thriving city that dated back to the early years of the Kingdom of Arnor. Like Bree to the south, it was a trading town and was readily able to tend to large groups of travelers with its many inns and taverns. Yet, these days of late, little merchant traffic made its way along the north road (which in itself was in great disrepair) and the prosperity of the town had dwindled. Predominantly it was the lonely soldiers of Arthedain that trekked between Fornost and their assigned duties at the many watchtowers that they still controlled all the way to Sirranar. Now watchful eyes and unsure looks greeted the troop as they rode in, wet with the rain.

**Pinnath Siran** - The town of Pinnath Siran is named from the northernmost garrison of Arthedain troops in Sirannar, a fortification that sits 20 miles north of the town. Like Raimaro, it has declined too and being on the frontier there are more opportunities for run-ins with shady individuals or for observing spies.

It is here that the players should get their first sight of Sacal, a large Easterling that sits in a tavern in the town. A potential problem could erupt when one of the rogue scouts of the Host (or any NPC the Narrator chooses) sits down to have a quiet conversation with Sacal. Of course, the meeting will need to be observed, but due to the noise in the tavern, cannot be overheard (TN 25). The rogue if observed and questioned will be very difficult to pry any information from (Interrogation/Intimidation TN 20). In either case, he will be found dead in the morning. The Narrator can use the following narrative to describe the travel and the town of Pinnath Siran:

Moving on, the main Host of soldiers and support picked up their pace along the road. They continued on and soon come out of a small forest they had been riding through. To the west, the lands fell in great steppes for as far as the eye could see, the sun sitting low on the horizon, but causing the snow covered ground to gleam an orangish-white.

To the north, the dark outline of another forest - a thick pine forest that sat on Pinnath Siran's western edge - could be seen. Just beyond the forest, the land dropped in a great cliff, only to continue some 120' below.

Also, the gates to the town could be clearly seen from the distance. A thick, thorny hedge that provided excellent, natural defense surrounded Pinnath Siran, but along its roads - north and south - large gates had been erected to keep out the unwanted. The town was notorious for trouble, but only for those that come looking for it.

**Note to Narrator:** The frontier town of Pinnath Siran is populated by the many folk of the northern region of Arthedain (i.e. Dúnedain, Eriadorians, and some of the simpler hill folk related to the southern Dunlendings). Stranger folk have been making their presence known, men with strange garb and speech - Easterlings. Though the Men of the West see them as potential threats, the few stragglers that come into town do not cause problems and therefore are not persecuted for being who they are.

## SCENE OBJECTIVE

The players must get the troop to Pinnath Siran and try to avoid any spying eyes that they can and overcome any minor challenges put before them. They must also find out about the traitor in their midst before he is murdered. The narrator may reward XP for roleplaying, picking up clues regarding the treacherous rogue, and for any combat or successful skill tests made.





## SCENE 2 - Those that Oppose

Days 6-9 January 6-9, Pinnath Siran and the travel north...

The Host will leave Pinnath Siran and continue north. They will reach the garrison at Sirannar by the end of day 6 and this will be the last permanent hold that the forces of Arthedain maintain. The lands beyond Sirannar, though still controlled by Arthedain, are mainly unsettled and are traveled by folks with both good and ill intentions.

Travel should be relatively easy due to the flat land and the old road that runs along a ridgeline towards the hills of Dol Gormain, but the Narrator may feel free to challenge the players with weather, random encounters of brigands, wolves or wargs, or with tests of stealth and hiding. The Narrator may use the following narrative to describe the travel:

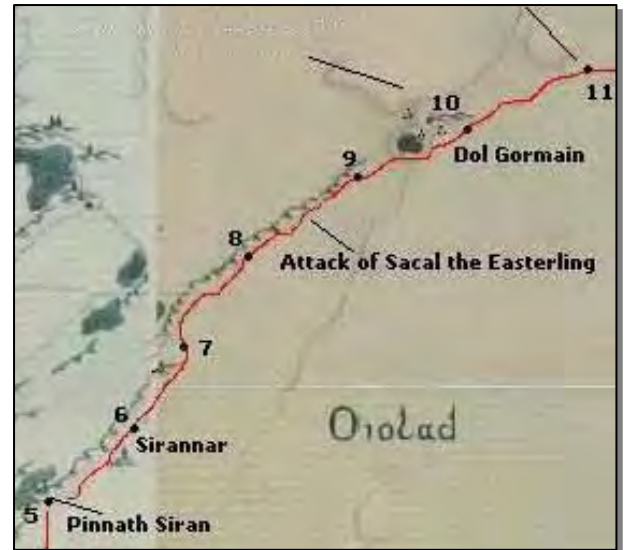
The next few days could have been considered perfect, if not for the bitter winds that blew. The sky above the Host was a rich blue with wispy, thin clouds high above. The sun shone brightly but offered only a little warmth. The terrain around them offered little in the way of shelter from the elements or the unwanted observer, again only sparse trees and scrub covered the landscape. Bright, white snow stretched in all directions until it met the deep blue sky upon the horizon.

Still, spirits were high as the company continued north passing the great tower of Sirannar that had stood since Elendil himself had seen to its construction. As the Host rode past the Dúnedain tower, the commander of Sirannar greeted them upon the road – his name was Arannel and his reputation was great indeed. He and his honour guard stood in salute as the Host passed, respect and pride beaming in their eyes. This was the frontier... the last foothold of the strength of the North.

By mid-day on the eighth day out of Fornost, the Host will be waylaid by a force of Angmarim under the command of Sacal. Sacal is the great Easterling that may have been seen (or met) in the town of Pinnath Siran a few days past. Through his spies, he knew of the oncoming force out of Arthedain, though he does not know the Host's intent, and has set up an ambush. The Easterling is one of the many commanders of the Witch-king's forces and he is great tactician and commander.

The Narrator must adjust the size of the force under Sacal as is appropriate for his or her chronicle. They may even alter the statistics given for Sacal as needed. The combat can be done using *Mass Combat Rules* (depending on the size of the force) or with the *Mook Rules*, or with the standard *CODA Combat System* (if the number of combatants is low enough that it will not bog the game down). No matter what the method of combat, make sure that the fight is a bit desperate for the heroes and their followers.

Sacal will not fight to the death and will withdraw his force, or what is left of it, if the tide is moving in an unfavourable direction. The Narrator will want to use Sacal as an antagonist to the Host for the rest of this chapter and perhaps for the rest of their chronicle.



### Sacal the Easterling

**RACE:** Man of Darkness

**ABILITIES:** Bearing 9 (+1)\*, Nimbleness 10 (+2), Perception 10 (+2), Strength, 10 (+2)\*, Vitality 8 (+1), Wits 8 (+1)

**REACTIONS:** Stamina +1, Swiftiness +2, Willpower +3\*, Wisdom +2

**ORDER:** Warrior

**ADVANCEMENT:** 5

**ABILITIES:** Evasion, Swift Strike

**SKILLS:** Armed Combat: Blades (Longsword) +14, Healing (Treat Wounds) +3, Inspire +6, Intimidate (Power) +6, Observe (Spot) +6, Ranged Combat (Shortbow) +14, Ride (Horse) +3, Run +5, Siegecraft +4, Track (Men) +3, Unarmed Combat (Brawling) +7 (all skills include all applicable modifiers except Specialty Bonus)

**EDGES:** Accurate, Command, Dodge, Warwise, Weapon Mastery

**FLAW:** Fealty (Witch-king)

**HEALTH:** 10 (6 wound Levels, 1 Healthy)

**INITIATIVE:** +2 **DODGE:** +5 **DEFENCE:** 12

**ARMOUR:** 5 (Chainmail)

**DAMAGE:** Longsword 2d6+6 / Shortbow (arrow) 2d6+1 (all include Strength Bonus)

## SCENE OBJECTIVE

The players must overcome any random encounters that the Narrator puts before them and successfully drive off the Angmarim that ambush them on day 8.

## SCENE 3 - CREEPING HORROR

Days 9-10 January 9-10, The Ruin of Dol Gormain



This scene was previously released as the Hostile Haunt I wrote in *Hall of Fire issue 13*. The Host will be subjected to Gorvorsang's spell ability Misdirection. She will attempt to bring the group into the lowland that lies beneath the three hills of Dol Gormain where her brood can waylay them and she may take a 'trophy' or two.

Once within the area of effect of her power, the horses will begin to panic and only on a Superior Success Ride Test will the riders be able to remain mounted. The Narrator must get the details of Gorvorsang's lair from the above-mentioned issue, but he or she may feel free to use the following narratives and interludes to describe the scene:

### On the approach:

The Host continued on through the day passing on the east side of a large pine forest that stretched north and west to butt up against a series of low hills. The region was called Dol Gormain and in times past three active towns had sat along the hillsides - those were happier times. But unfortunately the Kingdom of Arnor had slowly decayed and finally broke into three and those three smaller parts became easy prey for the Witch-king and his hordes. These small towns were the victims of that deterioration.

### Finding the entrance:

They walked across an old road that had traveled through the center of the north-most village and climbed over a large, long, stone wall. There stood the old foundation of a house or building but the ground was broken and a large sinkhole went down into the darkness. As they approached, the smell became overwhelming and the men needed to put their hands to mouth and nose to try and block the stench. The ground around the hole was frozen and littered with 'pellets' of sorts. Long icicles ran down what appeared to be leafless vines (or ropes?) that draped down into the hole. The pit was about twenty feet from top to bottom and below could be seen a passage that went deeper into the ground. A terrible feeling of unease settled on the group and they wished to be away as quickly as possible. What they did not know was that hundreds of eyes watched them.

### Interludes (if Narrator likes to add colorful narratives regarding things going on unbeknownst to the players):

Winter was normally a time of inactivity for them, but this was the second time in many long weeks that 'food' had walked into their realm. Silent and still, they sat and watched as the Company had entered first the southeastern town and then come north - by her. Well, she had always claimed that type of 'food' for her own never letting them partake in the sweet meat. Still, they had gorged themselves on the warm, fat, brown furry ones that had wandered into their home the day before.

"The two-legs had come in alone... leave them to her", they thought. There were many of the four-legs just outside of town and they would see to the capturing of them! They began to move, coming out of cracks and holes, silent and unseen, all the while weaving a net that would ensure that none of the 'food' would escape.

She knew they were there. *She* could sense them; both by her unholy powers and by the simple pad of their feet on the ground above. In her stirred feelings - not of hunger, she had no more need for that - but a thrill. A thrill to hunt. A thrill to capture and watch as her 'prey' hung, and a thrill to torture and fill them with utter despair. *She* knew her brood also desired the 'food', but no... these were hers. *She* would have some pretty new pieces to add to her collection. The young ones could eat the four-legged food. *She* would have the rest for herself... well maybe all for herself. Perhaps she would share...

This scene is meant for the players to enter into Dol Gormain by themselves, misled by Gorvorsang. If the characters are accompanied by a host of men, the Narrator will want to devise a reason to separate the main characters from the rest of the host. The Misdirection ability is perfect for this, causing the characters to lose contact with the rest of their group. Or perhaps they must go to the rescue of a few NPC's that were separated by Gorvorsang and have been set upon by the spiders about the Spider-wraith's lair. In my chronicle, my players could not get the horses to enter the valley and thus ordered the main host to move to the north side of the hills and wait why they went to aid one of the others that had been drawn into Dol Gormain.

There is no number given for the number of lesser giant spiders or giant spiders outside of Gorvorsang's lair. The Narrator should stock the area around Dol Gormain with as many spiders that would be appropriate for their chronicle.



## SCENE OBJECTIVE

The primary objective here is for the players to survive the encounter with Gorvorsang. If she is killed, it will certainly be many more experience points, but she has lived for many hundreds of years - she will not go down idly.

## SCENE 4 - THE ASSAULT ON BARAD ELDANAR

Days 11-17 January 11-17, the travel to and attack on Barad Eldanar...

After the harsh road north, the force out of Arthedain has come to within striking distance of the castle named Eldanar. The bad thing is that there is little known about this ancient Dúnedain fortress as it has been in the hands of the Witch-king for over 300 years. If the characters seek any information from their own personal lore or from any loremasters in their group, the Narrator may read the following:

The castle Eldanar was built in the early part of the Third Age. It was one of the first official landgrants given by Elendil to Eldanar, one of his faithful followers. It became the center of the northernmost county of Arnor, and unfortunately, it was the first to fall into the hands of the Angmarim... in 1325 T.A., as I have been told. Needless to say, the King in Fornost knows very little about the castle and even the heirs to Eldanar who live within Fornost, in 'exile' from their family lands, have little recollection of the castle's layout.

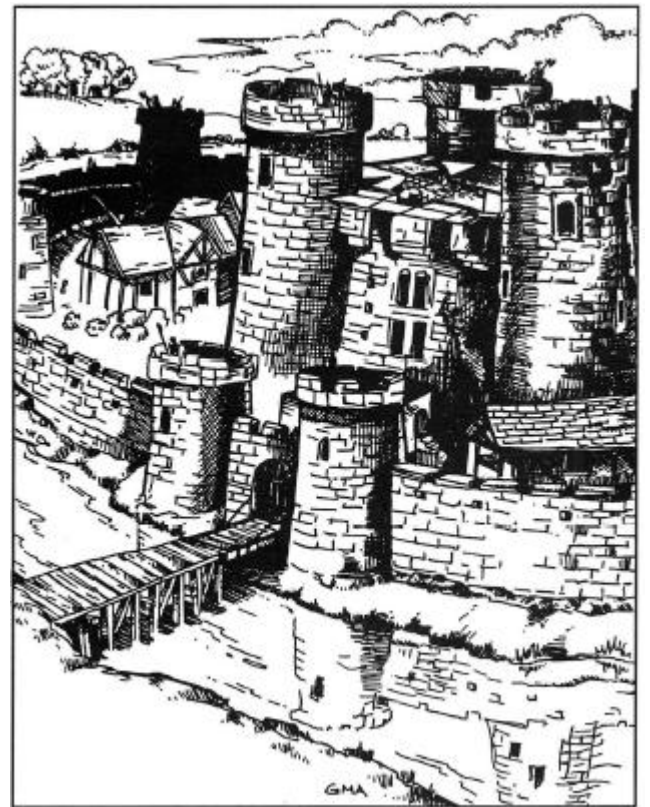
An opportunity lies before the players to garner some information regarding the fortress and its occupants. Two Easterling riders from Eldanar can be found out on the plains heading west. These two men are carrying an important message and request from Arkish, the Asháktur of Eldanar. The Narrator may decide on any tests that they wish to capture these two men, hopefully alive (i.e. Stealth tests). If they do capture them, the next thing will be to get them to talk or reveal what is written on their parchments (i.e. Intimidate or through spells - *Command*, *Voice of Command*), as it is written in a foreign language (requiring Language tests). If the players pass the Narrator's designated tests, the following may be read (the Narrator needs to fill in the blank line below):

To Sakalure,

*My Liege, I write this note to impress upon you the urgency of my position in Eldanar. We have, over the last few months, been ordered to initiate offensive attacks against the Dúnedain of Arthedain... in particular against my captive and his forces that have ranged my territory for the last three years.*

*Needless to say, the last orders came from Carn Dûm itself nearly a month ago and I was commanded to issue forth my cavalry to attack into the Ettenmoors, and then again not two weeks later. In both cases we attacked the forces of Camentir and have at last prevailed over them. Still, my numbers here at Eldanar have dwindled.*

*I urgently request reinforcements to bolster my defense. We have received word via our many spies that a force has marched out*



of Fornost against us. A reconnaissance force and I fear what troops follow on behind.

Eldanar is a vital fortress in our Angmarim defenses and I will need more men to hold it than the \_\_\_\_\_ that are present. Even now I am ordered to send our 'captive' north by command of the Witch-king himself - with him I will need to send a guarding force that will reduce my numbers even greater.

Please send a small contingent of at least 200 to re-support my garrison... perhaps your commander Sacal may come? I look forward to your reply to this request.

Humbly,  
Arkish



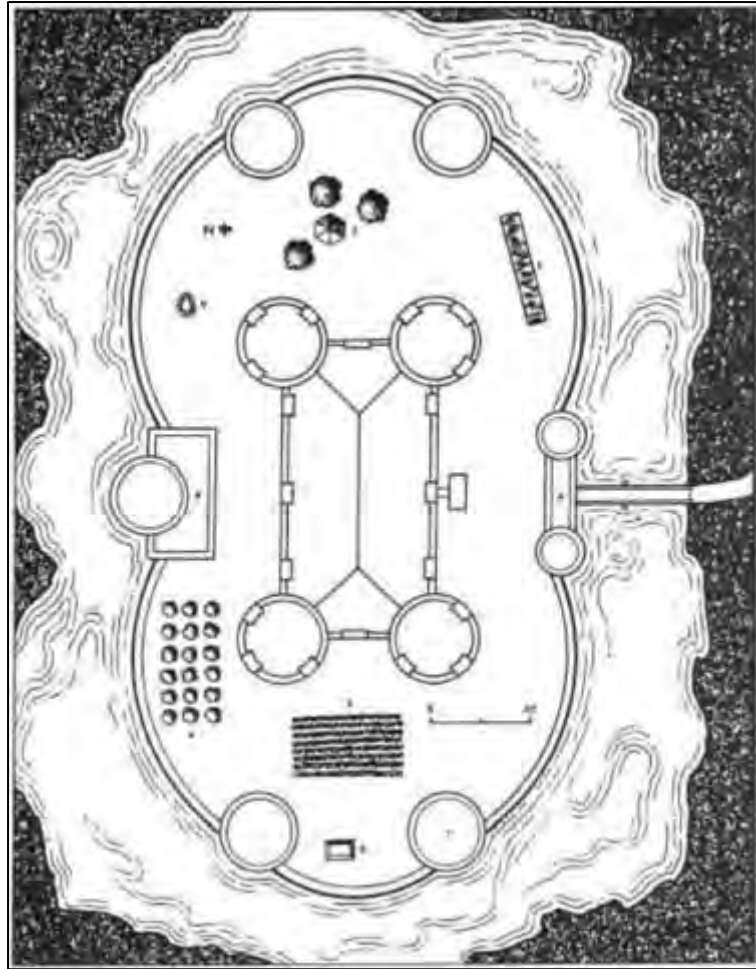
From the letter, the Host will know the strength of Eldanar and if they are a small band can try to enter the castle by stealth; if they are a large host, than a siege could commence. The Narrator will need to prepare the appropriate forces and their disposition depending on how they wish to conduct this scene.

The commander of Barad Eldanar is Arkish, the Ashâktur. He has come far from his home to command the forces of Eldanar under Sakalure and has done well for many years. He longs for his home and returning to the warm lands beside the ocean from whence he came, but he is as much a thrall to the Witch-king as those that suffer in the pits of Carn Dum.

The stats for Arkish are not given but the Narrator may mirror those of Sacal's (just give him some additional Advancements up to 10). Arkish also has a lieutenant within Barad Eldanar named Rhukar – his stats may also mirror Sacal's as given.

## SCENE OBJECTIVE

The objective of the scene is the capturing and searching of Eldanar for the commander Camentir. As in scenes past of this Chapter and past Chapters, the Narrator will want to make the scene as desperate as they can for the Host out of Arthedain. This keeps with the theme of the North and the long struggle made only to end with the loss of those kingdoms.



This scene is also meant as a cliffhanger to lead into our future *Chapter 6: Nan Angmar!!* If the Host is successful in the taking of the keep, they will find no trace of Camentir and the Narrator will want to read this last narrative:

Above, on the battlements and unbeknownst to the Dúnedain Company below, a sole surviving Easterling ran the length of the parapets towards a far tower. He moved as stealthily as possible and prayed to his 'faith' to deliver him from these attackers and to let him escape without harm. When he arrived at his destination, he reached down to open the trap door so he could hide within. He pulled it up and as he did, his eyes were averted to the east... towards movement in the morning gloom. Yes! There was movement! It appeared to be a great number of riders! The messengers that they had sent had made it - they had summoned aid!

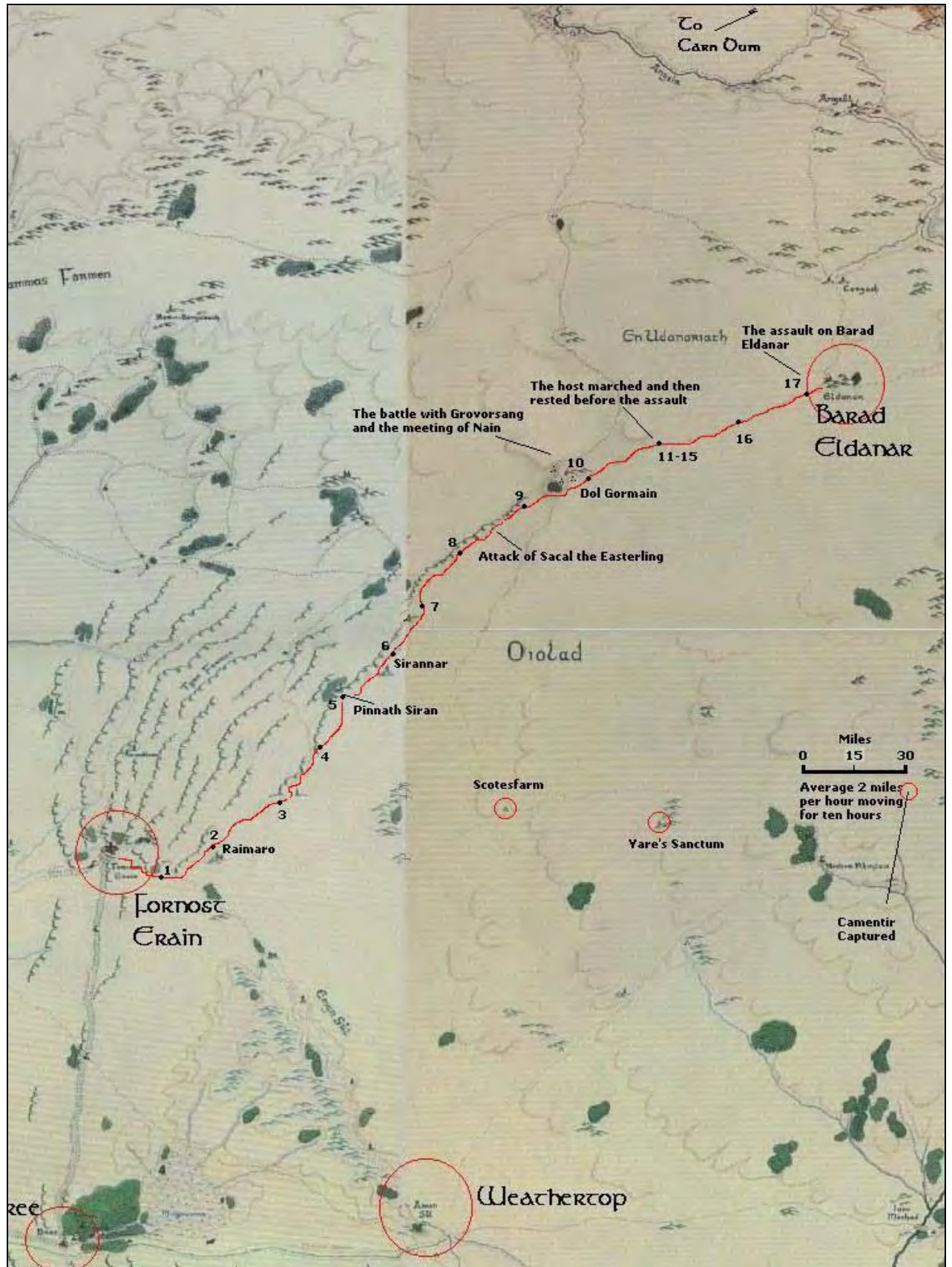
The Easterling archer let slam the trap door and ran over to a shelf where lay an old ox horn. He grabbed it up and put it to his lips and let air a tremendous call that echoed through the morning sky.

The Narrator may award experience as they please, or they may feel free to award as follows: 1,000 for the Primary Objective of taking the keep, 30 points per scene to each character that adds to the scene with good roleplaying; 5 points for each important Test Success; and any points scored for the defeating of enemies.

**Lastly about treasure:** I have not seeded the Chapter with any treasures. I have always played my Lord of the Rings sessions with heroics in mind - not treasure-seeking. Still, the Narrator may add any treasures that they see fit especially in the realm of Gorvorsang.



The following map is from my chronicle and how my players progressed:



# POSTMASTER



1. I don't fully understand the ruling on Falling Damage on p. 245 CRB. Does the victim makes a swiftness test for half damage or is it an acrobatic test? May the victim make some kind of test to prevent falling?

I'll address your second question first. The Swiftiness test is to prevent the character from falling. Upon failing the test (TN listed in Table 9.33), the corresponding damage listed in the table is dealt to the character. I think that Acrobatics reference is either a typo or just a descriptor for the action taken. But I wouldn't disagree with allowing the character to make an additional free Acrobatics test against the same TN to cut the damage in half (rounded up).

2. Does the Perform skill work like the Lore skill or as any other skill with specialization? Does the artist possess the ability to sing, write verses and play an instrument and gaining a +2 only for specialization?

Perform as listed in the CRB is a skill and has specialties as Tell Stories, Sing, etc., so yes, a performer would be able to tell stories, sing, play an instrument using just the Perform skill. Personally, I would change this to be a Skill Group and the specialties into individual skills with allowing subsequent specialties as a Narrator fiat.

3. Do you have any news about any LOTR RPG products coming out soon and where do you get your info?

The Helm's Deep Sourcebook is due out during the month of June. An exact date at the time of this answer is unknown. I get my info from the Decipher messageboards.

**Note:** The most recent news is that Helm's Deep has been delayed by the printer and now is forecasted for early July at Origins and general release in mid-July.

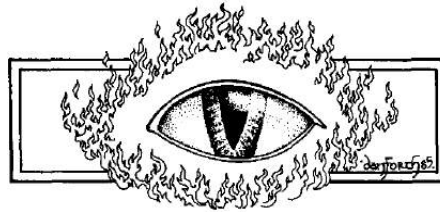
4. [Pray] tell, my good friends, I have a Knight of Dol Amroth in my group and I want to do a tournament with jousting but my problem is this: the only rule about unhorsing an opponent is in the "Extra Successes in Combat" (p.231 CRB). I was wondering if you guys (or gals) had a better way to deal with this than waiting to have one of the opponents to roll an Extraordinary Success? Do you know of a good ruling on this subject (from you and others)???

I have a couple suggestions. First, have the character attack the mounted opponent. Upon a successful attack, besides normal damage being dealt, have an opposed Strength test between the two with the attacker getting 1.5x Strength bonus to the roll while the defender can use the Strength bonus of his mount (this is probably best used for an unmounted attacker against a mounted opponent, also see my Set maneuver in Fan Flavour of the upcoming issue). Another (and probably better) way to do this is to rule that when jousting, the characters are charging one another (each making the Charge maneuver) and resolving per the Charge maneuver (being knocked back would equate to being dismounted). I would even consider giving a Ride affinity bonus to resist being dismounted.



## 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>

### 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/](http://www.geocities.com/scott_metz/)

### CHRONICLES OF THE NORTH

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

### 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>

### VALINOR

<http://sauron.misled.us>

### TREK-RPG.NET

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

### CODA WEBZINE REPOSITORY

[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/coda\\_webzine](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\\_midle\\_earth/](http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/tales_of_midle_earth/)

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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'

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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.

