

# THE HALL OF FIRE

FAN WEBZINE

ISSUE TWENTY-NINE  
APRIL 2006

*Éowyn, Shield-maiden of Rohan - by Unkown*



## GREETINGS,

### SALUTATIONS... HELLO ALL!

I'd like to welcome you all back to The Hall of Fire once more for another rousing issue filled with more gaming info to whet your appetite for more *Lord of the Rings* gaming. In #29 we've got more Orders of Magnitude, the last two entries to the Helm's Deep competition, part 2 of the Trade Skills in Take Another Look, plus a whole lot more!

Just as a note, I am starting a new section that is interviews with average gamers so everyone can see what the face of gaming, specifically CODA *Lord of the Rings* gaming, is out there. If you'd like to participate, see the end of the issue for the list of questions to answer and email me your answers so we can start a dialogue.

Happy Gaming,

Matthew A. Kearns  
aka GandalfOfBorg  
Editor

# THE AKKONEMA HALL OF FIRE

The Unofficial Lord of the Rings RPG Webzine

## IN THIS ISSUE

GREETINGS	1
TAKE ANOTHER LOOK	2
▪ Trade Skills, Part 2: Appraise, Seacraft, and Teamster	
FAN FLAVOUR...	5
▪ Orders of Magnitude: Minstrels	
▪ New Racial Package: Man of Osgiliath	
▪ New Traits: Experienced Driver, Eye of an Eagle, Lingering Shadow	
FEATURED CREATURES	9
▪ Snow-wargs	
ALLIES AND ADVERSARIES	10
▪ Éodred	
IT'S ALL OPTIONAL	11
▪ Ferry-tolls	
A PC'S SO CALLED LIFE...	12
▪ Getting Started: The "Why" behind the "Die"	
THE ROAD GOES EVER ON...	15
▪ The Great River: Prologue	
POSTMASTER	20
CALLING ALL GAMERS / CREDITS	23

### CONTACT THE HALL OF FIRE AT:

[CODAWEBZINE@HOTMAIL.COM](mailto:CODAWEBZINE@HOTMAIL.COM)

#### CREW

MATTHEW KEARNS (GANDALOFBORG), EDITOR, WRITER

[ultimac@hotmail.com](mailto:ultimac@hotmail.com)

DOUG JOOS (TOMCAT), WRITER, LAYOUT

[djoos5@yahoo.com](mailto:djoos5@yahoo.com)

DAVID D. (ISSACHAR44), PROOF-READER/WRITER

[issachar44@yahoo.com](mailto:issachar44@yahoo.com)

#### GUEST WRITERS AND ARTISTS

EOMER3RDMARSHAL, GUEST WRITER [CONTEST WINNER]

ZEHNWATERS, GUEST WRITER [CONTEST WINNER]

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

# TAKE ANOTHER LOOK

---

## TRADE SKILLS, PART 2: APPRAISE, SEACRAFT, AND TEAMSTER

by Mathew "GandalfOfBorg" Kearns

The goal of this series of articles is to expand upon the concepts for the skills and traits outlined in the CRB and elsewhere. For skills, I aim to include descriptions of new and listed (where needed) skills, define sources of affinity and other bonuses, and maybe some optional rules. For traits, I will discuss more in-depth uses, slight alterations to their effects, and give an outline to define how to create your own traits pertaining to test bonuses (skill, attribute, test type, etc.).

### APPRAISE

---

"It takes more than just a deft eye and knowledge of component value to determine what something is worth... you must also look into the heart of its creator -- his soul -- and, of course, your money pouch."

- Faloth, Assayer from Tharbad

---

**Description:** Using your judgment of the quality of the craftsmanship and materials used, you are able to give a decent estimate of the worth of items. It may also be applied to other things that require judgment by sight (or other sense) when determining a value, such as measurements, or the appraisal of a piece of art.



#### Related Traits

##### Edges

- Eye of the Eagle (HOF #29)

##### Flaws

- None

#### Related Abilities

- Eye of the Eagle (HOF #29)

#### Related Spells

- None

#### Appraise Expanded

Those who appraise items of value often or as a profession have some simple, yet delicate, tools they use to perform their duties besides their discerning taste: magnifying glasses, tiny metal pincers, soft brush, etc. Knowledge of the local rates for materials is quite helpful as well, gaining an affinity bonus from Lore/Realm (which should give some economic information).

#### Armor

You are able to discern the value and condition of a suit of armor, gaining an affinity bonus from Craft: Leatherworking for leather armor or Smithcraft (Armorsmith) for metal-based armor.

#### Gems

You are able to determine the value of gems, gaining an affinity bonus from Stonecraft (Gemsmith).

#### Precious Metals

You are able to determine the value of raw or worked precious metals, such as gold and silver, gaining an affinity bonus from Smithcraft (Metalsmith).

#### Weapons

You are adept at estimating the value of a weapon of any type, gaining an affinity bonus from Craft: Bowyer/Fletcher or Smithcraft (Weaponsmith).



## New Features

### Art

You are a connoisseur of the art scene, interested in paintings, sculpture, or whatever happens to come your way. You gain an affinity bonus from the appropriate Craft skill when you are critiquing or appraising an item.

### Measurements

The Appraise skill can also be used to judge distance or length or volume, gaining an affinity bonus from Observe (Spot).

### Performance

You are a critic of the performing arts: dance, music, etc. You gain an affinity from the Perform skill with the appropriate specialty when critiquing a performance.

Since the results acquired from this skill are relatively subjective and require judgment, even with some known quantities, this skill should use Perception as the governing ability instead of Intellect.

There is no estimated value if a Marginal Success is made, so if one is made, an item's quality and value are judged to be within 15% of the actual value, either way. I would also alter the failure misestimates to be 15-30%, 31-50%, and 51-100% for Failure, Complete Failure, and Disastrous Failure, respectively.

When determining if an item is fake, you may incorporate the affinities listed above and include a separate affinity bonus from Insight, Mimicry, or Guise as appropriate.

The Curious edge could also include giving the added bonus from Courage to Appraise skill tests.

The flaws, Dull-eared and Dull-eyed, may also affect Appraise tests when appropriate.

The Grasping flaw may also blind a character to the actual value of an item, causing him to receive a -5 to all Appraise tests and causing all misestimates on failed appraisals to be above the actual value of the item.

Just as with Dull-eared and Dull-eyed, the spell Dull Senses can have a similar effect upon a character making an Appraise test when applicable.

## SEACRAFT

"Aye, the sea is a cruel mistress -- one moment yer ridin' 'er smooth like the finest silk and the next yer fightin' against a fury of fists aimin' to break you like a twig. Don't take yer eye, and I mean your good eye, off 'er for a second."

- Old Yarl One-eye, experienced seaman and innkeeper at the harbor of Dol Amroth

**Description:** You are experienced in tending to craft built to ride upon water, be it building a small boat or repairing a ship of war.

## Related Traits

### Edges

- None

### Flaws

- None

## Related Abilities

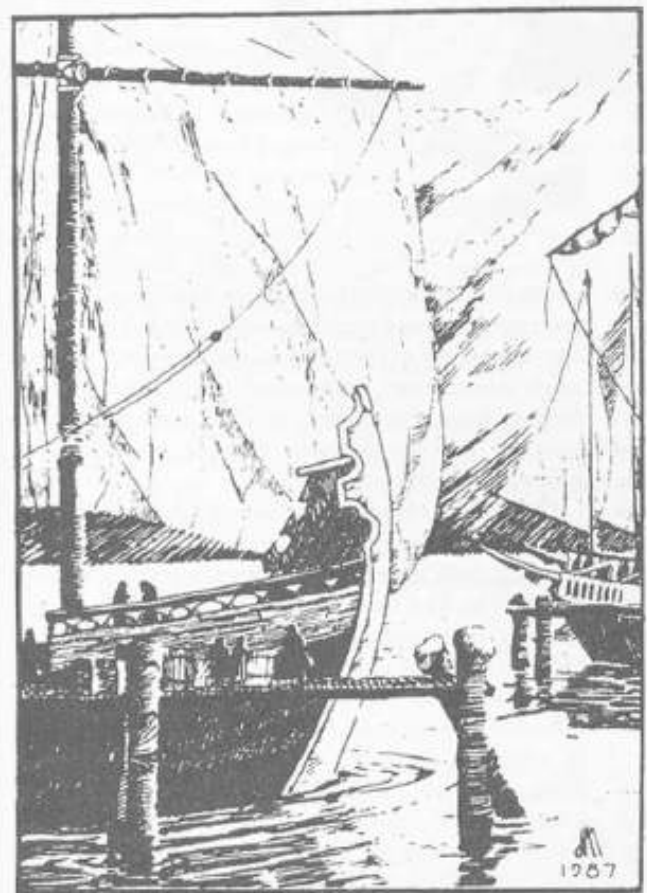
- Ship (CRB)
- Home Sweet Helm (HOF #10)
- It's Just a Wagon (HOF #10)
- Ship Tactics (HOF #10)
- You Call That a Storm? (HOF #10)
- Storm-reverence (HOF #28)

## Related Spells

- Crafting-spell (CRB)
- Steady Craft (PotW)

## Seacraft Expanded

None



## New Features

Sea-craft could be considered a skill group, as knowledge used for Boating is considerably different than that of Tactics or Command, or even Sailing.

## Helm

Boating and Sailing are fine specialties for small, private vessels, but Helm has been created to be used for piloting large craft such as those meant for war, along with executing specific naval combat maneuvers. (See HOF #9)

## Command

This specialty is used for barking out orders and complicated maneuvers during a battle at sea. It could also be used in situations when dealing with intense conditions where orders given for the survival of the ship need to be heard and obeyed. (See HOF #9)

## Tactics

This specialty is used for both initiative in the optional naval combat rules in The Hall of Fire, Issue #9, and for analyzing and understanding enemy tactics and devising new tactics on the fly.

## Weapons

This specialty is used for commanding siege weapons aboard sea-going vessels and executing specific naval combat maneuvers. (See HOF #9)

The Craftmaster edge could also include granting its bonus to Sea-craft (Shipwright) tests.

The Travel-sense edge can be expanded to include navigating a ship.

# TEAMSTER

"It was as if thunder had rolled in from the horizon. Some quailed at the sound, then many more at the sight of their great phalanxes. The Easterlings had come!"

- *Torgil, sergeant in the Gondorian infantry. He recalls the Battle of Hazor during King Elessar's reign to end the threat from the East once and for all.*

**Description:** You are trained in the use of managing animal-driven transportation: carts, wagons, wains, etc.

## Related Traits

### Edges

- Travel-sense

### Flaws

- None

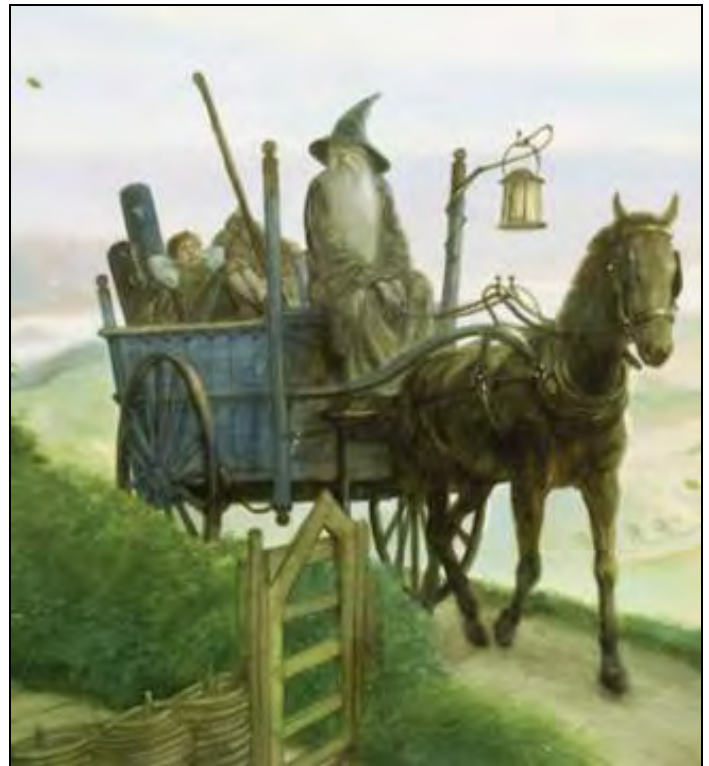
## Related Abilities

- None

## Related Spells

- Beast-speech (CRB)

- Beast Summoning (CRB)
- Enslave Beast (CRB)
- Finding and Returning (CRB)
- Naming (CRB)
- Swift of Foot (PotW)



## Teamster Expanded

Teamster should be made a Racial Skill for Hobbits and an Order Skill for Craftsman and Warrior. Additional options for the list include Noble, Captain, and/or Knight.

## New Features

Use Teamster (appropriate vehicle) tests for performing Movement maneuvers for mass combat (similar to using Sea-craft (Helm) for naval combat).

The Warwise edge could conceivably apply to Teamster tests when making Movement maneuvers.

The Blessing of Oromë spell could be applied to Teamster tests as well.



# FAN FLAVOUR

## ORDERS OF MAGNITUDE by David D. "Issachar44"

The "Orders of Magnitude" series of articles takes a close look at each of the PC orders and offers ways to add new possibilities, flavour, and interest to roleplaying them.

### MINSTRELS

#### THE LEAD SINGER

Singing is the central and oldest musical art, whose preeminence in Western society only began to be rivaled by instrumental music a few centuries ago. In pre-modern times, singing was also a much more universal activity, viewed as acceptable and appropriate in a majority of everyday situations. (In fact, social researchers theorize that the lack of widespread, basic singing ability is a comparatively recent phenomenon that coincides with the popular elevation of professional vocalists on radio and TV.) In the ancient world of Middle-earth, almost everyone, from the lowliest commoner to the greatest lord or lady, knows at least a few songs -- generally a mix of old epics and contemporary tunes. Adventuring characters of all backgrounds are likely to spend some time both listening to songs and singing themselves.

All of this means that the Minstrel's "game niche" is far less marginal than one might suppose. Your Minstrel's repertoire of music and poetry should come into play constantly, in mundane situations as well as when employing the special abilities of the order.

The Minstrel's talents should not be played as a personality quirk; this is not the eccentric party member who feels compelled to interject a snatch or two of verse at every pause. Reciting songs and poems relevant to the current situation is *normal* behavior in *The Lord of the Rings*. The group's warriors, nobles and rogues speak this way themselves, and they certainly expect it all the more from a Minstrel.

But "my character sings a song as we walk" quickly gets old. How does one keep this aspect of roleplaying fresh and interesting?

#### Musical Vocabulary

Many of us -- including myself -- have a limited musical vocabulary, and don't know how to describe different types of songs. A little self-education can go a long way in getting beyond "my character sings a song". What kind of song is it? What are its characteristics? This section of the article attempts to marginally expand our ability to describe the Minstrel's signature activity.

#### Song Types

**anthem** - a song of celebration, often with a simple melody and rhythm

**aria** - a solo piece with an expressive melody

**ballad** - a narrative, story-telling song or poem, focusing on actions and dialogue more than descriptive elements; it has a simple metrical structure and few or no key changes

**carol** - a festive song, often with dance-like or popular characteristics

**catch** - a song for 3 or more voices sung in a round, often with suggestive or vulgar lyrics

**chant** - rhythmic singing on a single pitch, or with a simple melody involving a limited set of notes

**chantey** - a work song, sung by a group in rhythm with the pace of the work or the march

**ditty** - an especially simple, whimsical or nonsensical song

**hymn** - a song of praise or prayer addressed to a great power

**lament** - a song expressing grief or regret; often beginning slowly and simply and then including variations before returning to a simple finish

**laude** - a simple song on a sacred theme for a soloist

**lay** - a narrative poem similar to a ballad; more often chanted than sung

**lullaby** - a soothing song for a child at bedtime, often with imaginative imagery

**madrigal** - a secular text (such as a poem) set to music for 3-6 voices; light in style

**oratorio** - a large-scale vocal performance; essentially an opera without scenery, costumes, or acting

Have your Minstrel choose a style of music that suits the mood of the occasion -- or that purposely tries to change it.

Consider also the provenance of your song. Does it come from the Dwarves of Erebor, the Men of Rohan, or even the Elves of ancient Beleriand? Is it a provincial piece seldom heard outside your homeland? Is it traditional or contemporary -- or a combination of both, since new verses are often set to old tunes?

You might want to build a short song repertoire for your Minstrel, jotting down notes about the subject matter of some selected pieces. Look over your character's Lore skills and write down a list of key persons and events covered by those areas of knowledge; you may even want to invent some new names that aren't referred to in *The Lord of the Rings* canon. Make a few notes about the general themes of each story. For example:

- Beren and Lúthien: *star-crossed lovers, pursuit of one's desire, mortality, beauty, bonds between Elves and Men*

- The coming of Smaug: *Dwarven strongholds and craftsmanship, dragons, hopeless last stands, exile from one's homeland*
- Mad Baggins: *outlandish and eccentric people, magic tricks, fabled treasures, Hobbits*
- The Long Winter: *snow and ice, community solidarity through hardships, battles with goblin and wolf raiders*

You can also make checks on the fly to see if your Minstrel knows songs or poems about subjects you have not listed in advance. A successful Lore test about any subject should indicate that the character knows at least one song or poem with a relevant theme; on a Superior success or better, the Minstrel actually knows a song about that specific subject.

## THE BACKUP BAND

Despite having endowments like a high Bearing score and strong social skills, a single-order Minstrel won't often lead the adventuring party. Instead, he'll be relegated to a supporting role in the major events of your chronicle, while the nobles, warriors and mages of the group take the lead. That's appropriate, and playing backup to other characters emphasizes the values of unity, loyalty and teamwork by which Tolkien's heroes so often succeed or fail. In what sorts of situations, then, can your Minstrel really help the party?

### Contests of Wits

It's fun to think up clever dialogue by yourself, but sometimes you hit a creative wall and need your character's wit (not yours) to stand on its own. When a character is engaged in banter, taunts, or other verbal "jousting", you can determine who gets the better of his opponent using opposed Debate tests. The winner of such a "debate" does not win in the traditional sense of convincing listeners to adopt a point of view or a course of action, but rather causes the opponent to suffer loss of face or embarrassment.

You can also use witty remarks to bolster your arguments in a real debate. In addition to the Debate test you make for each stage of the debate, make a separate Debate test against TN 10. On a Marginal or Complete success, you gain a +1 bonus to the result of your normal Debate test. On a Superior success, the bonus is +2, and on an Extraordinary success, the bonus is +3. Narrators should note that this debating strategy may not work or may backfire in situations where solemnity is expected of the debaters, or when the audience closely identifies with the person against whom the jibes are directed.

#### New Edge: Glib

**Requirements:** Wits 8

**Description:** A master of clever remarks and plays on words, you receive a +1 bonus to all Debate tests. When the Debate test is made to engage in banter, taunts, or other contests of wits, the bonus increases to +4. However, you do not receive any bonus from this edge if you do not have at least six ranks in the language you use for the Debate test.

## The Last Word

Bringing closure to significant events with an appropriate statement or song is an important, almost priestly, custom in Middle-earth. Recall that even the urgent need to rescue Merry and Pippin did not prevent Aragorn from taking a few minutes to properly honor the fallen Boromir. Likewise, the joy of Aragorn's accession to the throne of Gondor was made complete by a minstrel coming forth to sing of the valiant deeds of Frodo and his companions, who made possible the return of Gondor's rightful king. Your Minstrel must be ready to fulfill this role many times in the course of a chronicle.

To support this feature of Tolkien's world with a small bit of rules "crunch", when a character makes a speech or musical performance to conclude an important event or episode, the character can make a Perform test of the appropriate type. This functions like an Inspire test whose results take effect the next time a listener rouses himself by calling to mind the event and its concluding speech or performance, up to a maximum number of days equal to the performer's Bearing score. The listener can use this benefit only once, and he chooses at that time whether to inspire courage, heroism or vigor (see the Inspire skill description in the Core Rules). Generally, a character may not "save up" these benefits from multiple events or multiple performers; only the most recent or the most personally significant one applies.

A talent for extemporizing lyrics and poetry is especially valuable in this regard. If a character uses Perform: Compose Verse to make the test, listeners may choose *two* applications of the Inspire skill and apply them simultaneously when using the benefit of the performance, and they may use it within a number of days up to *twice* the performer's Bearing score.

#### New Edge: Coda

**Requirements:** 4+ ranks in a Perform skill

**Description:** You have a special gift for knowing the right and proper words and songs to honour significant events. You gain a +1 bonus to all Inspire tests. Also, when you make a Perform test using "The Last Word" optional rules, you gain a +4 bonus to the test result.

### Propaganda

Most social tests are made to influence a single individual or a small group. How do you go about swaying the opinions of entire towns or even regions? Although the commercial jingle is a fairly modern innovation (and an insidious one! -- I can still sing a score of them from my childhood), people have long recognized the power of music and verse to spread ideas among the masses. A Minstrel is uniquely equipped to influence large numbers of people over a period of days or weeks in your chronicle. This might be useful if you want to loosen the grip of fear that a tyrant holds over his subjects, or stir up discontent in an apathetic populace, or advance an account of events contrary to the commonly accepted version of the story.

To attempt this type of mass influence, choose a venue -- ideally an inn or a public square -- from which to launch your message. Make a Perform test that involves some form of vocalization, whether singing, oration, or comedy. The TN of this test depends on the attitude of your audience toward your idea --or toward you personally, whichever is less favorable. Include social test modifiers, including Renown modifiers, as applicable. (A Persuade test to get the audience on your side first is often a good idea. Also, a subtle message may be seen as a matter of indifference by listeners who might oppose a more radical idea.)

Audience attitude	TN
Opposed	20
Apathetic	15
Sympathetic	10

If you beat the TN, at least some among your audience will remember your performance and repeat it to others in the community. The propaganda spreads through the locality in phases, each time reaching another ten percent of the local area. This happens for a number of phases equal to your Perform test result / 3, rounded up. The time required for each phase of the spread depends on the population density of the region:

Population	Time per phase
Dense (Minas Tirith, Hobbiton)	1 day
Moderate (Bree-lands, Lórien)	3 days
Sparse (Dunland, The Wold)	1 week

Not every individual in an affected area hears the propaganda, and hearing it does not imply acceptance of it. Some people will be influenced by the propaganda while others will not. It is up to the Narrator to decide whether the spread of an idea through your performance has a significant impact on attitudes and events in the region. (If it does, your fame -- or infamy -- in that region might increase, resulting in greater Renown or the acquisition of an Edge or a Flaw.)

#### New Edge: Demagogue

**Requirements:** Bearing 8, Wits 8, 4+ ranks in Perform: Compose Verse

**Description:** Your knack for inventing simple but memorable phrases, rhymes and tunes makes listeners more susceptible to your ideas. You gain +1 Renown, and you receive a +1 bonus on all Persuade tests. When using the optional "Propaganda" rules to influence large groups of people, you gain a +4 bonus to your Perform test result.

## THE PERFORM SKILL(S)

Even in a rules system that works through abstraction, the Perform skill as written is far too unrealistic. Skill specialties just don't adequately reflect the different talents required to play a lute and a flute. As many gamers have already done in their house rules, I suggest making Perform a skill group comprising individual skills that correspond to what the Core Book identifies as skill specialties: composing verse, singing, playing an instrument, dancing, etc.

This penalizes the Minstrel somewhat, and as a Narrator you may want to grant characters their existing number of Perform ranks in more than one skill after the split, especially if a character has purchased extra specialties for Perform. You can also sweeten the deal by employing the following affinity bonuses for some individual Perform skills:

- Perform: Acting -- affinity bonus to Persuade (Charm, Fast Talk) tests
- Perform: Dance -- affinity bonus to Acrobatics (tumble) tests
- Perform: Stringed Instrument -- affinity bonus to Legerdemain (Prestidigitation) tests
- Perform: Wind Instrument -- affinity bonus to tests made to hold one's breath

## NEW MINSTREL ORDER ABILITIES

### Beast Song

**Requirements:** Soothe Beasts order ability, 8+ ranks in Perform: Singing

**Description:** You can make a Perform: Singing test at TN 15 to duplicate the effect of the Beast Speech spell. You must make a Stamina test to avoid losing Weariness levels when you use this ability, just as if you had cast the Beast Speech spell, but the ability still works even if you fail the Stamina test.

**Special:** If you are a spellcaster who can cast the *Beast Speech* spell, the difficulty of the Perform: Singing test is reduced to TN 10.

### Lithe Dancer

**Requirements:** 3+ ranks in Perform: Dance, 6+ ranks in Acrobatics

**Description:** You can make a Perform: Dance test in place of a Swiftiness test made to Dodge or to evade an effect.

### Master's Ear

**Requirements:** 4+ ranks in any Perform skill involving vocals or instruments

**Description:** You receive a +2 bonus to Observe (Listen) tests at all times. When you are actively listening for something, the bonus increases to +4.

### Multi-Talented

**Requirements:** Natural Talent order ability

**Description:** The first pick you spend on any new Perform skill buys you three ranks in the skill instead of one.

### Song of Authority

"Old Man Willow? Naught worse than that, eh? That can soon be mended. I know the tune for him."

-- Tom Bombadil, *The Fellowship of the Ring*

**Requirements:** Voice of Power order ability, 8+ ranks in Perform: Singing



**Description:** You know the power of specific songs that hold great influence over certain individual beings. When you acquire this ability, you gain one Song of Authority over an individual being of your choice. Thereafter, you can learn additional songs through intensive study; use the rules for researching lore in Paths of the Wise and treat the information as TN 25 on Table 4.7: Obscurity of Lore.

When you have learnt a Song of Authority, when you are in the presence of the subject you can influence him/her/it by making a Perform test at a TN equal to the subject's TN equivalent. On a success, you automatically win any contest of wills or opposed

Intimidate test against the subject for the duration of the current encounter.

**Note:** At the Narrator's option, a single Song of Authority may apply to a small group of individuals with a shared history, such as "the wights of the Barrow-Downs east of the Old Forest" but not all wights.

#### Soothe Beasts

**Requirements:** 3+ ranks in Mimicry, 6+ ranks in a Perform skill involving vocals or instruments

**Description:** As a full-round action, you can make a Perform test to calm an animal (but not a Fell Beast) and make it friendly to you. The TN is equal to the animal's TN equivalent + 5.

## NEW RACIAL PACKAGE by Mathew "GandalfOfBorg" Kearns

### MAN OF OSGILIATH

Debate +1, Insight +1, Inspire +1, Intimidate +1, Persuade +1, Honey-tongued

## NEW TRAITS by Mathew "GandalfOfBorg" Kearns

### EXPERIENCED DRIVER (EDGE)

You have been driving carts and wagons a long time, and you know which paths are best to take and how to navigate large animal-powered vehicles.

**Prerequisite(s):** Teamster 4+

**Effects:** You are able to pick the best path while out on the road, increasing your Movement by 0.25 mph per level of success of the Teamster test.

### EYE OF AN EAGLE (EDGE)

You are able to quickly discern distances and adjust your aim as needed when attempting to hit a target at range.

**Prerequisite(s):** Appraise (Distance) 4+, Ranged Combat 6+

**Effects:** You are able to use the Aim action as a free action once per round for Ranged Combat tests.

**Upgrade:** Yes. You can take this edge a number of times equal to your Perception modifier (minimum 1). Every time you pick this edge, you gain an additional use of the Aim action as a free action.

**NOTE:** This trait could also be considered an ability for Rogues, Warriors, and Archers.

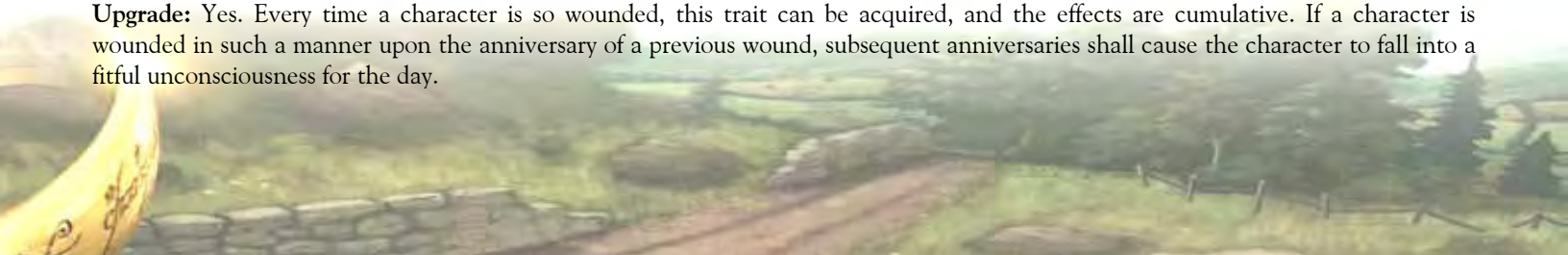
### LINGERING SHADOW (FLAW)

You have been grievously wounded by a powerful agent of the Enemy and lived to tell the tale, but you will never be completely whole again in your heart.

**Effects:** Upon taking damage from a servant of The Enemy of sufficient corruption (for example, TN Equivalent 15 or greater), you have become stained by the touch of evil. Though your wound may heal (recover all Wound Points), a scar will remain no matter the skill in healing. You will also suffer a -2 penalty on social tests, and the Fair edge shall be nullified (even if you are an Elf, for your spirit has been diminished).

These wounds strike deep into a character's soul and the subtle magic of Middle-earth marks the anniversary of such a wound, causing the character to lose 3 Weariness levels for 24 hours.

**Upgrade:** Yes. Every time a character is so wounded, this trait can be acquired, and the effects are cumulative. If a character is wounded in such a manner upon the anniversary of a previous wound, subsequent anniversaries shall cause the character to fall into a fitful unconsciousness for the day.



# FEATURED CREATURES

## SNOW-WARGS by Eomer3rdMarshal

**ATTRIBUTES:** Bearing 10 (+2), Nimbleness 9 (+1), Perception 10 (+2), Strength 12 (+3)\*, Vitality 10 (+2)\*, Wits 4 (+0)

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

**SKILLS:** Armed Combat: Natural Weapons (Bite) +6, Intimidate (Fear) +7, Jump +5, Language: Warg-speech +4, Observe (Smell) +4, Run +9, Stealth (Sneak) +9, Survival (Forest, Tundra) +5, Track (Scent) +2

**SPECIAL ABILITIES:** Armor (3), Natural weapons (2d6, bite), Silent and Cunning Ways, Vice-like Grip, Bane of Fire, Glare of Ice, Snow-dependent

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

**DEFENCE:** 10

**HEALTH:** 14

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 12

**TN EQUIVALENT:** 10 (pack of four)

**Note:** As this is similar to a warg, I simply modified warg statistics. There were three sets of normal warg statistics I could use: the CRB, Fell Beasts & Wondrous Magic, or The Hall of Fire. I used those found in The Hall of Fire, so look in Issue #10 for the abilities Silent and Cunning Ways and Vice-like Grip.

### UNIQUE ABILITIES:

**Bane of Fire:** Because of the ice in their being, whenever one of these hounds is hit with a Superior Success or better by any form of flame (including magical), it is instantly melted into a puddle of watery blood and killed.

A snow-warg will never charge anyone with a burning brand, and must make a TN10 Willpower test to avoid fleeing whenever any enemy with flame confronts it. On any Failure, it retreats and does not return. On a Marginal or Complete Success, it stands frozen with fear. On a Superior Success or better, it may attack a companion of the torch-bearer (though never the torch-bearer himself). Also, a snow-warg may never come within twice the range of the light cast by a campfire.

**Snow-dependent:** This ability reflects the unusual need of these creatures to stay in the cold that is woven into their being. When taken to a climate that is warmer than 32F (the freezing temperature of water) they begin to dissolve. Every hour, they must make a Stamina test at TN 10. On any failure, they lose 1 point of Strength and 1 point of Vitality as well as suffering a -1 penalty (cumulative) on every test they take. When either Strength or Vitality reaches zero, the snow-warg melts into a bloody puddle and dies. On a superior success or better, it doesn't need to test again until the following day. Upon reaching

cold climes again, it will regain +1 Strength and +1 Vitality every hour. This ability effectively prevents a snow-warg from being found anywhere at all warm, and is one of the primary reasons that they are not widespread or widely known.

**Glare of Ice:** When one of these beasts fixes his cold glare upon someone, even the most stalwart hero may tremble. As one full-round action, a snow-warg may make an Intimidate (Fear) test at TN 15. On a success, make an opposed Willpower test between him and his target. If the snow-warg succeeds, the mind of the PC runs chill and he will drop his weapon, freezing for 1d6 rounds before attempting to recover his weapon. If the PC succeeds, for the remainder of this encounter he may not be attacked by the Glare of Ice, although, in subsequent encounters, he may have to face it again. However, if the PC has not acted yet in the round, his mental struggles lose him the chance to attack.

**DESCRIPTION:** Snow-wargs may remind you, upon first sight, of large albino wargs. They have pure white fur from head to toe, and they stand nearly 6' high at the shoulder (as opposed to 5' for an average warg). However, a closer look (which is dangerous to take) will reveal that their eyes, first of all, are not pink (as an albino's) but are a cold, thick black. Also, their fur is always flat to their sides, as if frozen in place.

**HISTORY:** Snow-wargs, though so called, are actually not wargs at all. These snow-wargs are a completely different breed of canid created by Morgoth for war in the far north around Thangorodrim. Morgoth formed these beasts shortly before his downfall, and not many of them survived the destruction of Thangorodrim by Ancalagon and the sinking of Beleriand. Those that did survive moved into the harsh tundra of the Forodwaith, hunting down the Lossoth, ice-orcs, or any other prey smaller than they, alone or in packs of four or five.

The latter dark powers to come, Sauron and the Witch-king of Angmar, do not employ snow-wargs, for they are completely useless as mounts for Orcs or in any other capacity due to their curious independence of any master short of the Dark One and their curious dependency on snow and ice of the frigid north.

These fell beasts are huge and ferocious, much more suited to life in the wild than their predecessors. By the Third Age, their feral habits turned their prey against them, forcing the Lossoth into hunting these beasts in turn until they became very rare. These minions may also be encountered in the most hidden recesses of the Misty or White Mountains, as long as it is cold enough. While most agree that the minions that menaced the fellowship outside of Moria were warg-wights, there are those who say that some of the chieftains were actually snow-wargs.

# ALLIES AND ADVERSARIES

ÉODRED by ZehnWaters

**RACE:** Middle-Man

**RACIAL ABILITIES:** Adaptable (Stamina), Dominion of Men, Skilled

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

**REACTIONS:** Stamina +4, Swiftiness +3, Willpower +4, Wisdom +5\*

**ORDER:** Antiquarian, Loremaster, Minstrel

**ORDER ABILITIES:** Entish, Expert Historian, Folklorist, Gladden, Inspiring Performance, Natural Talent, Perfect Recall, Persuasive Arcana, Scholarly Reputation 3, Scroll Hoard (Lore/History Rohirrim), Spellcasting 35, Versatility, Voice of Power, Woven Words

**SPELLS:** *Crafting-spell, Enhance Food (Ability), Exclusion, Finding and Returning, Misdirection, Rain-ward, Reading the Heart, Voice of Suasion (All spells can be cast without words or gestures.)*

**ADVANCEMENTS:** 64

**SKILLS:** Craft: Cooking +3, Craft: Gardening +5, Debate (Parley) +6, Games (Riddles) +3, Healing (Herbal Remedies) +6, Inquire (Converse) +5, Insight +9, Inspire +5, Language: Drúadan +4, Language: Dunnish +4, Language: Entish +4, Language: Rohiric +8, Language: Westron +8, Lore/Group: Rohirrim +5, Lore/Realm: Enedwaith (Dunland) +4, Lore/History: Ents +8, Lore/History: Drúadan +4, Lore/History: Dunlendings +4, Lore/History: Gondor +8, Lore/History: Rohirrim (Line of Kings) +9, Lore/Realm: Rohan (River Adorn) +7, Lore/Wilderness: Herblore +7, Mimicry (Voices) +4, Perform (Play Harp, Sing) +11, Persuade (Oratory) +7, Ranged Combat: Bows (Short Bow) +8, Ride +5, Search (Research) +4

**EDGES:** Accurate, Accurate Recall, Ally (Gandalf), Clear Speech, Curious, Eloquent, Hoard 2, Honour's Insight, Keen-eyed, Night-eyed, Resolute, Scholarly Lineage, Seniority, Valiant, Wary, Wise

**FLAWS:** Code of Honour (Aid any of the Free Peoples who need his knowledge), Fealty (King of Rohan)

**HEALTH:** 8

**COURAGE:** 6

**RENOWN:** 11

**DEFENCE:** 12

**GEAR:** Mearas Horse (his familiar), house, garden

**HISTORY:** Having been born into a long line of bards, Éodred was destined to be great, but few know how wonderful and learned he would become. Éodred grew up in Edoras after the Long Winter, and by the time he was fifteen he had become the Royal Bard due to his outstanding talent and keen memory. He retained that position for seven years before resigning to pursue his dream of traveling. It was during this time that Éodred first met Gandalf the Grey while the Wizard was traveling to Gondor; they became swift friends thanks to Éodred's natural disposition for ancient songs of lore.

After his resignation Éodred decided to do some traveling. The King granted Éodred a *mear* for his services as Royal Bard and for collecting many ancient songs. Éodred thanked the King and left. Éodred traveled the whole of Rohan, learning all he could of its histories and gathering as many ancient tapestries as possible. But the more he traveled the more he learned, not just of Rohan but of Gondor and of the Drúadan and of the Ents. The Ents let Éodred among them thanks to a recommendation from Gandalf, and he spent long days among them and learned Herb-lore and some of their ancient language. The Drúadan had actually captured him, but he managed to win them over with his beautiful voice, which they found soothing.

After a decade of traveling Éodred met the woman he would marry, Ednewyn the Fair. Éodred was singing by the Entwash River one evening when Ednewyn was riding to her relatives; drawn to his fabulous voice she came to him and he looked upon her fair features and her long red hair. They eventually married and moved to the west of the Gap of Rohan by the River Adorn (otherwise known as the Swanfleet). There they built a large house that they filled with Éodred's tapestries and their children. Altogether Éodred and Ednewyn had three children: the oldest, a son, and then two daughters. The son was hardy and strong and had red hair, like his mother. The two daughters had strawberry blonde hair and majestic voices.

During their time there Éodred learned even more of the Drúadan, since he lived near their ancestral home. His proximity to the Dunlendings also allowed him to learn a little of their history, but their hostility largely inhibited him. For awhile a few tribes tolerated

his presence, but most drove him out of their territory. There he spent the rest of his days collecting more knowledge from travelers and various trips and expeditions, and lived largely as a sage, aiding any who sought him out with good intent for his knowledge and insight.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

**(Short)** The heroes find that they are lacking in knowledge that is necessary for their mission. And while it deals directly with Rohan's past, no one seems to remember what it is. They are directed by a Marshall to speak with Éodred, whose knowledge is deep about such things.

**(Medium)** While adventuring too far from the protection of his home, Éodred's eldest son is kidnapped by one of the Dunlending tribes that is hostile towards Éodred. Éodred has requested that the heroes aid him in freeing his son since he does not have the necessary skills.

**(Long)** Ednewyn has fallen ill and Éodred needs the heroes to fetch a long list of local herbs in order to heal her. He would do it himself but then there would be no one left to watch his children or care for his wife.

# IT'S ALL OPTIONAL

## FERRY-TOLLS by Mathew "GandalfOfBorg" Kearns

**Table 1: Prices for Ferries and Hauling Cargo**

<u>Item</u>	<u>Price (Shire/Bree)</u>	<u>Price (Dale)</u>	<u>Price (Minas Tirith)</u>
Person	Free (across river)	10 cp per league	15 cp per league
	5 cp per league		
Animals	2 cp per 5 Tiny	3 cp per 5 Tiny	5 cp per 5 Tiny
	3 cp per 5 Small	5 cp per 5 Small	10 cp per 5 Small
	5 cp per 1 Medium	10 cp per 1 Medium	15 cp per 1 Medium
	+5 cp per +1 Size	+5 cp per +1 Size	+10 cp per +1 Size
Cargo	1 cp per 1 pound	3 cp per 1 pound	5 cp per 1 pound
Wagons, Carts, etc.	Same as cargo	Same as cargo	Same as cargo

**NOTE:** These prices are for ferrying by water. For passage in a caravan or to transport goods over land, these prices can vary from quite a bit, from +50% to +200% or more depending on the origin and destination, the cargo, the lands through which you travel through, the time of year, etc.

## Pulling Carts, Wagons, Etc.

Having more than one or two horses can increase the speed of a pulled vehicle, but the number of animals that could conceivably pull a certain type of vehicle is limited. In Table 9.41 in the CRB, there is a list of speeds associated with the encumbrance of the burden pulled. The table doesn't specify the number of animals pulling the load, but it doesn't require it. To easily lighten the burden and thus increase the speed of the vehicle, when you double the number of animals pulling, the speed increases by one factor in the table. For example, if one horse was pulling a "Very Heavy Burden", two horses would then be pulling a "Heavy Burden", four horses would pull at the normal rate, and eight horses would pull the burden at +0.2 mph; a vehicle cannot be pulled faster than this lest the number of animals needed is too many or they get too far out of control.

**Table 2: Standard Complement for Pulled Vehicles**

<u>Vehicle</u>	<u>Number of Beasts*</u>	<u>Max Number of Creatures to Pull</u>
Cart	1	2
Wagon, Small	1	2
Chariot, 1 Person	2	4
Wagon, Medium	2	4
Wain	2	6
Chariot, 2 Person	4	6
Coach	4	8
Wagon, Large	4	8

\* - The number of beasts listed is for pulling an Average burden. They are assumed to be Large creatures like draft horses or oxen; for Hobbits and Dwarves, the creatures are assumed to be Medium-sized like ponies.

# A PC'S SO CALLED LIFE...

## GETTING STARTED: THE "WHY" BEHIND THE "DIE"

by Doug "Tomcat" Joos

"The mechanics of creating the character and spending picks wasn't really my aim, but the motivation for the picks was more where I was going... does it explain 'why' the character chose the skills, or just how to choose them. If so, then you could put down a finished character sheet, and show 'why' you should pick certain areas of skill and not others, as a guideline for writing up a fluid character who is in continuity with his backgrounds."

--Erelgal, from the Decipher Messageboards

The above statement from one of the many players who visit the Decipher boards inspired me to write the following article on character generation. But instead of the basic mechanics of development, we are going to examine the why's behind the dice and create a character background, rounding out the character from his story. To do this, I am going to re-visit a character that I created and included in issue #16 of the Hall of Fire, Dougal – Outlaw of the Mark. In the next issue of the Hall of Fire, I will discuss the reasoning for the character's evolution through 8 Advancements.

To begin, we will re-present the character's description and history and from it derive his mechanical aspects:

**DESCRIPTION:** Dougal, son of Dermot, stands at 5' 11" and weighs 198 lbs. His eyes are blue and his blonde hair hangs at neck length though he is quite shaggy. Dougal's face usually only has stubbly growth as he tries to keep it clean-shaven as often as he can. He can be short of temper and carries a heavy weight on his shoulder – most people think him moody and introspective.

**HISTORY:** Dougal, son of Dermot, was born on the northern pasture of the East Emnet along the banks of the Entwash in 2962 T.A. The clan to which he was born traveled with the herds of horses that ranged the great plains between the Wold and the Fangorn Forest. He grew to be a great horseman and rider and learned from his father the ways of the squire. Dermot always told him that at times, the King in Meduseld would call and it was the obligation of every Rohirrim to answer the summons. Dougal, wanting to honor his father, worked diligently in his martial studies, as well, so he might be the capable Rider of Rohan of which his father spoke.

When into his late teens, Dougal met Marda, a beautiful flaxen haired girl from a neighboring clan that was also coming of age. She would often come amongst Dougal's folk with a few of her own family and as the men would make trade, Dougal and Marda would walk the fields around their enclave and speak of love and commitment. The two young lovers made a pact that with the next spring, Dougal would make his intentions clear to Marda's father and ask for her hand in marriage – he would be 20 years old. Unfortunately, that day would never come...

When the trades were done, during that fall season, Marda and her father, along with ten others of their clan mounted to head back over the Entwash and south onto the West Emnet. They would never make it. The group of Rohirrim was set upon by a ranging band of orcs out of the Misty Mountains (truthfully out of Isengard) and all were slain. When they never arrived, their clansmen sent out people to search for them and some of these individuals came back to Dougal's clan. It was here that he learned of his lover's disappearance and took up the search for her and her father. Dougal, along with others from both his and Marda's clan finally found the bodies of their kin. They had all been slain, stripped and left to rot under the sun. The decay of the bodies and the impact of carrion feeding upon them horrified the young Dougal and he became shadowed. His heart, he felt, had been torn out and left to die with the woman that he loved.

Amongst the dead, the orcs had also left traces of themselves, thus revealing the culprits of the horrific act. As he laid her body upon the pyre, in his heart, Dougal swore the most awful pact that he could muster – an Oath to his love that he would bring death upon the orcs (and any that followed or allied with them), a life for a life, one for every moment of time that they stole from him and his beloved Marda.

After the burning of the dead, the winter that followed was cold and cruel to Dougal's folk. The young Rohirrim began to slack on his duties to his people. He became roguish and in the following spring, when the King in Meduseld called for warriors to muster, he turned his back to the call. Thus it was that Dougal, son of Dermot, became an outlaw in his own land.

Now, sixteen years later, Dougal and a harsh band of compatriots haunt the Eastern Emnet – between Fangorn and the Wold – robbing both friend and stranger, and brutally hunting any orc or orc band. From a small sanctuary that he has made on the Wold, Dougal ranges the Emnet.

Okay, let's begin development by going through the **8 Steps of Character Generation**. Step 1 is to **Envision your Character...** I think that we have accomplished this by the detail above. By the background, I know I wanted to create a Rogue Order character, so that in itself will help guide how I buy his Attributes, Skills, and Traits, but let's start thinking of different game mechanics that could come into play as he is developed.

First, from his description, Dougal sounds healthy, albeit a little rugged, so his attributes should cater to Strength, Vitality, and his life's path to Perception. As far as the rest of his description and some things that we can take from his background story, the following traits could be in order: Charmed Life, to be a thief one must have a bit of luck to survive; Fell-handed, Dougal's hatred of Orcs may merit this Edge; Furtive, excellent trait of a thief; Tireless, important to those who are always on the run; Woodcrafty, Dougal ranges the land around his sanctuary looking for possible booty or places to hide, this would be a boon for our character; and there are a few Flaws that could be used for Dougal, Hatred, Oath, and Stiff-necked.

With these thoughts in mind, let's proceed to step 2, **Generate Primary Attributes**. I am going to use the Pick Method, so I start with the following numbers and to them I may distribute an additional 8 points, but no attribute may be greater than 12.

<u>Primary Attributes</u>			<u>Racial Mod</u>
Bearing	7	+1	
Nimbleness	10		
Perception	7	+1	
Strength	9		+1
Vitality	5	+3	+1
Wits	4	+3	
		+8	

So, after we disperse all of the points available for Primary Attributes, we get the following:

**ATTRIBUTES:** Bearing 8 (+1)\*, Nimbleness 10 (+2), Perception 8 (+1), Strength 10 (+2), Vitality 9 (+1), Wits 7 (+0)\*

I decided on the two favoured attributes based on the idea that Bearing would be a necessity for Dougal to maintain control over the band of rogues he associated with and that he would have to become smarter over time to survive, thus Wits.

Step 3, **Selecting Race:** I knew that Dougal was a Man and that he was from Rohan, thus Middle-man racial mods are applied to the above Attributes. For his beginning package, I chose first to give Dougal a flaw - Oath, the words he whispered over Marda's body, words that would haunt him through his life. This gave me an additional pick to add to his skills taking his starting allotment from 6 to 7 and then the bonus +2 for his Racial Skilled bonus, for a total of +9.

Because he was of Rohan I chose Ride (Horse) +1 to which I added the +2 Skilled bonus for +3. I then thought the other following skills a necessity, and chose Tireless for his Racial Edge.

<u>Racial Skills and Traits</u>	
Healing (Treat Wound*)	+1
Inquire	+1
Insight	+1
Inspire	+1
Ride (Horse*)	+3
Track (Orc*)	+1
Weather-sense	+1
Tireless	Edge
Oath	Flaw

\*remember that the first specialty when generating your character is free

I then multiplied his Wits by 3 to determine that I had 21 points to spend on Language and Lore Skills. I am using the updated rules in Paths of the Wise in this example:

<u>Lore and Language Skills</u>	
Language (Westron)	+4
Language: Northmen (Rohiric)	+6
Lore: History (Rohan)	+3
Lore: Wilderness (Horses)	+4
Lore: Realm (Rohan)	+4

Step 4, **Selecting an Order:** As stated above, I already knew that Dougal was a Rogue; the question is which Order package should I use or should he be totally customized. Well, fortunately they have an Outlaw Order package, which is perfect for the character as described in his background. So, I needed only worry about adding the 5 extra ranks of skills.

Dougal turned out as follows along with an Order Edge of Dodge, a trait I thought would go well with whom he was, and an Order Ability of Sanctuary, one of his key background descriptors. Lastly was the additional 5 picks that you can add to your Order... they are illustrated at the end.

<u>Order Skills, Ability, and Traits</u>	
Armed Combat: Blades (Longsword)	+3
Climb	+2
Conceal (Hide Treasure)	+2
Observe (Spot)	+2
Ranged Combat: Bows (Shortbows)	+2
Stealth (Sneak)	+3
Survival (Fields)	+1
Dodge	Edge
Sanctuary	Ability
Acrobatics (Balance)	+1
Appraise (Horses)	+1
Guise	+1
Legerdemain (Open Lock)	+1
Persuade (Charm)	+1

Step 5, **5 Free Picks**: now we need to spend his remaining picks - I chose the following skills to finalize Dougal.

<b>5 Free Picks</b>	
Run	+1
Search	+2
Unarmed Combat*	+1
*Unarmed Combat is a Non-Order skill and costs 2 picks	

The last steps, 6-8, are as follows, **Record the Final Attribute Modifiers**, **Generate Secondary Attributes**, and **Finishing Touches**. Step 6 is nothing more than filling out the different boxes on the character sheet with the appropriate Attribute, Ability, Trait and Miscellaneous Modifiers.

Step 7 needs a little bit of explanation in regards to how we will disperse the last two Racial Modifiers for Men: Adaptable and Dominion of Man. You may add +2 to Stamina, Swiftiness, or Willpower - I chose Swiftiness due to Dougal's profession. Dominion of Man is the bonus Courage that the races of Men receive due to their natural tendency to take on any task before them.

Step 8 needs a little thought as to what the character owns of varied value. Generally, this is a step that is worked on with the Narrator based on their game.

Putting it all together, a player should now have a character that fits mechanically into the back story that they created, there should be a 'why' for each roll of the die.

## DOUGAL

### BEFORE ADVANCEMENTS

**RACE:** Middle-man (Man of Rohan)

**RACIAL ABILITIES:** Adaptable, Skilled, Dominion of Man

**ATTRIBUTES:** Bearing 8 (+1)\*, Nimbleness 10 (+2), Perception 9 (+1), Strength 10 (+2), Vitality 9 (+1), Wits 7 (+0)\*

**REACTIONS:** Stamina +2, Swiftiness +4\*, Willpower +1, Wisdom +1

**DEFENCE:** 12

**ORDERS:** Rogue (Outlaw)

**ORDER ABILITIES:** Sanctuary

**ADVANCEMENTS:** 0

**SKILLS:** Acrobatics (Balance) +1, Appraise (Horses) +1, Armed Combat: Blades (Longsword) +3, Climb +2, Conceal (Hide Treasure) +2, Guise +1, Healing (Treat Wounds) +1, Inquire +1, Insight +1, Inspire +1, Language: Westron +4, Language: Rohiric +6, Legerdemain (Open Lock) +1, Lore: History (Rohan) +3, Lore: Horses +4, Lore: Realm (Rohan) +4, Observe (Spot) +2, Persuade (Charm) +1, Ranged Combat: Bows (Shortbow) +2, Ride (Horse) +3, Run +1, Search +2, Stealth (Sneak) +3, Survival (Fields) +1, Track (Orcs) +1, Unarmed Combat +1, Weather-sense +1

**SPELLS:** None

**EDGES:** Tireless, Dodge

**FLAWS:** Oath

**SIZE:** Medium (6 Wound Levels, 1 Healthy)

**HEALTH:** 10

**COURAGE:** 4

**RENOWN:** 0

**GEAR:** Longsword, Leather armor, Horse, clothes, backpack, short bow, quiver with 20 arrows



# THE ROAD GOES EVER ON...

## THE GREAT RIVER: PROLOGUE by David "Issachar" D.

### INTRODUCTION

"The Great River" is a tour of Middle-earth along the path of the Anduin, from its headwaters in the cold north to its delta emptying into the Bay of Belfalas. Originally conceived as a companion piece to a *Hall of Fire* article on the Mariner order, the adventure includes many episodes that take place on the water, but also a good deal of action on land.

The adventure is designed to accommodate ongoing chronicles by providing many points of entry into the story. A gaming group need not start at the beginning of "The Great River": their characters may join the adventure at whatever point they cross the path of the Anduin, and might depart before the concluding episode.

**Time:** The years between TA 2951 and TA 3018 (or as early as TA 2600, with minor modifications)

**Theme:** Traditional action-adventure in which the heroes must rid themselves of a dangerous artifact from Angmar.

**Difficulty:** Moderate to Hard. Player characters should begin with three to five advancements.

### BACKGROUND

For more than six hundred years Angmar, land of the Witch-king, loomed as an ever-present threat to the people of Arnor in northwestern Middle-earth. When the power of Angmar was crushed at last in TA 1975, the Witch-king's surviving thralls and soldiers fled in terror. One party of soldiers, having looted as many treasures from Carn Dûm as they could lay hands on in their haste, traveled as far as Mount Gundabad, where they briefly took a hand in directing the Orcish raids on Dwarves and Men in the nearby northern lands.

However, rivalry between two of the men, both officers of rank under the Witch-king, eventually led to an open clash. The loser, a captain named Ájolaš (see "NPC's"), originally of the Lossoth tribes, fled south into the mountains with a single stolen artifact, the sceptre called Fornanghai. There he survived for several months with his small band of orc-slaves, before succumbing to starvation and disease.

Death, however, proved no release from the bonds of service laid on the wretched man by his master the Witch-king. His ghost lingered as a malevolent spirit inhabiting his now lifeless body -- the same fate shared by many such Men of Carn Dûm.

At the time of this adventure, Ájolaš has dwelt alone in undeath for a thousand years, sealed inside the vault he commanded his orcs to create in the abandoned Dwarven mine they inhabited.

The Witch-king has used his sorcerous arts at various times over the centuries to learn the fates of his former lieutenants. He knows of Ájolaš' predicament but refuses to send anyone to release him, believing it a fitting punishment for a soldier who abandoned the defense of Carn Dûm. Ájolaš believes he can regain his master's favor by returning the artifact Fornanghai to him. He has heard nothing of outside events for many lifetimes of men, and he plans, if released, to go to Dol Guldur where he expects to find both the Witch-king and the dark lord Sauron himself.

### BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

#### Discovery of the vault

Two days ago, a party of Dwarves (see "NPC's") reclaimed an abandoned mine in the foothills of the northern Misty Mountains. A group of Northman herdsmen (see "NPC's") nearby overheard their shouts of discovery and came to investigate. A dispute ensued as to the right of the Dwarves to reclaim the mine. The herdsmen claim the current ownership of the land, which was granted to their forefathers by the kings of the Éothéod. The Dwarves assert a prior claim to the territory, which they say king Fram stole from their people long ago.

The situation is further complicated by the Dwarves' discovery of a sealed vault not far into the mine, which bears an inscription that appears to be written in Common, though they cannot understand it. The herdsmen, for their part, are illiterate but insist that an inscription in Common means that whatever the vault contains must not belong to the Dwarves.

The debate has resulted in stalemate, and the herdsmen proposed sending for someone with more learning who can translate the strange inscription. They hope that by doing so, they can also gain the advantage of numbers by bringing in more Men from Framsburg. The Dwarves have consented to this, but have also forced the herdsmen out of the mine and will not allow anyone inside other than the translator -- when he arrives.

#### Involving the Heroes

If the party includes one or more Dwarf characters, they might be accompanying the Dwarven miners, who are only one of several parties currently at work searching for and reclaiming old mines. If the party has been adventuring in the mountains, they might be staying temporarily with the herdsmen, who own a goat farm nearby. (If the PC's can translate the inscription themselves, no messenger will be sent to Framsburg.)



Most likely, the party is staying in Framsburg when Torwald, one of the herdsmen, arrives in town on a raft, asking for assistance in identifying a strange inscription on a sealed vault. The PC's might travel to the mine out of curiosity, or to see to it that a peaceful solution is reached. If no one in the party is likely to be capable of reading the inscription (see "Opening the Vault"), then Léofred, an elderly man from Framsburg with some book-learning, will also make the trip (see "NPC's").

Finally, it is possible that the party has discovered some reference to the burial vault of Ájolaš among a group of defeated orcs. Those orcs who were directly under Ájolaš' command were terrified of their ruthless leader and his sorcerous artifact, and would have passed on dire warnings not to venture near his no-doubt-cursed tomb. In this case, a group of PC's following up on the reference will arrive at the mine just in time to intervene in the dispute between the Dwarves and the Northmen.

### Framsburg

In the war between the Dwarves of the northern mountains and Fram's people, the walled town of Framsburg was sacked and destroyed, king Fram himself perishing in its defense. The kings of the Éothéod who followed made it a point of pride to clear away the rubble and restore the major buildings, but Framsburg never regained its earlier status. The centres of Éothéod commerce and political power shifted southward to Maethelburg and its environs, leaving the more northerly residents of the Anduin Vales culturally isolated.

Today Framsburg is a small provincial town that has settled into a stable economy of fishing, farming and trading. It is known for the quality of its wool, and raftsmen from Framsburg are recognized and welcomed for many leagues up and down the rivers. The townsfolk are a practical-minded lot, though many of them still harbor a sense of pride in their once-important burg.

In the centre market square stands a statue of Fram himself, pulled down and broken when the city was sacked, and later repaired by successor kings. Over the years, these repairs have deteriorated, and today Fram's statue sports an overcoat of brown moss and is missing its shield-arm, which lies cracked and undisturbed at the base of the pedestal. The town's only tavern, The Inn of the Cleft Shield, took its name from the dilapidated memorial.

### Travel to and from Framsburg

Framsburg lies at the confluence of the Langwell and Greylin rivers, forty-two miles away from the mine (6 miles overland and 36 by water). At the headwaters of the Langwell are tied a couple of rafts, each about eight feet square. The Langwell river runs straight and swift (5 mph), and by paddling with the current the messenger can reach Framsburg in about eight hours (two overland and six on the water).

For the return journey, a pair of horses is employed as draft animals to pull the raft back upriver against the current. The raftsmen must use a long pole to keep the raft from dragging along the banks, requiring a **TN 7 Sea-Craft** test every hour to avoid a mishap that causes the raft to get stuck. Another person must drive the horses along the towpath, requiring a **TN 7 Teamster** test every hour to avoid a mishap that causes a horse to stumble into the water. Progress up the river is slow (about 3 mph), and it takes one full day of travel (9 hours) and half of the next (4 hours) to reach the mine.

### Opening the Vault

The entrance to the mine is hidden from casual observation between two outcroppings of rock. Inside, the floor and walls are hewn smooth for several hundred feet down the main shaft. Eighty feet into the mine, a stone slab prevents entry to what seems likely to have been an office chamber of the mine's former overseers (**TN 8 Lore/Race: Dwarves** -or- equivalent). The slab, however, is not of Dwarven make (**TN 10 Lore/Race: Dwarves** -or- equivalent), but is a later addition. It is stuck neatly inside the door frame, nearly flush with the wall of the corridor, and the seam is packed in with mud that long ago hardened into thick cement.

Inscriptions on the slab identify the chambers beyond as the final resting place of Ájolaš, faithful servant to the true King of the northern lands. This epitaph, however, is not readily translated: the letters are those of the Common alphabet, but the words themselves are neither Common nor Dwarvish. In fact, the words are transliterations of one of the tribal languages of the Lossoth, whose dialects frequently have no written form. Anyone familiar with the speech of the Lossoth will recognize the words after a minute's study by sounding them out phonetically. Additionally, many geographic features of the near mountains still retain the ancient place-names given them by the Lossoth and their ancestors, and words like "king", "north" and "land" may be recognizable to local folk.

Extracting the slab from the door frame is a laborious task, requiring picks and hammers (which the Dwarves have of course brought with them). A group of three or four working together can chip away the cement seal and pry out the slab in about an hour. Despite the efforts of the laborers to control it, on the final heave, the slab tilts and falls out into the corridor, striking the floor with a thunderous crash that echoes in the depths of the mine for several long moments. A person inadvertently caught in its path can make a **TN 7 Swiftness** test to avoid taking 4d6 points of damage.

### The Ghost and His Treasure

Dust fills the area, taking a minute to settle again. The air of the small 10'x10' chamber behind the slab is stale, dry, and dead. The ceiling of the room is just under six feet high, and taller characters must stoop slightly to enter (this incurs a -1 penalty to most tests involving movement, such as attack, dodge, and

run tests). In the center of the far wall an open doorway provides entry to a farther room. A table and two chairs stand in the corner to the right. Thick stubs of mostly-spent candles rest on the table, along with a dry inkwell and desiccated fragments of what must once have been a quill and cheap parchment of the sort used for mundane business records. One of the candles has an iron key pressed into the wax on its bottom (**TN 15 Search** test to find it); this key opens the chest in the next room.

The wider (12'x15') adjoining room once served as sleeping quarters for the mine's overseer. Ájolaš lurks here, waiting for the first person to enter the room before attacking. Ájolaš' nearly insubstantial body requires a **TN 15 Observe (Spot)** test to see even in normal light, so it is likely that even a cautious character will be caught off guard. Once he attacks, Ájolaš glows with a fell light and can be seen easily by everyone even without a light source.

Ájolaš is a cunning foe who uses his abilities to their best advantage. He will attempt to neutralize a spellcaster by casting *Dumbness*, and will cast *Evoke Fear* to remove some foes from the fray if he is seriously outnumbered or outflanked. Remember that he takes half damage from all physical attacks and does not have to make Stamina tests to resist Weariness from his spellcasting.

If the party defeats Ájolaš, his form crumbles to dust and a faint but chilling shriek lingers in the air for a moment afterwards. Examination of the room shows a Dwarf-sized bed, a small table,

### Fornanghai

This magical sceptre is imbued with the icy winds of the Northern Wastes. Even in a warm environment, the sceptre is cold to the touch. After a full round spent holding Fornanghai, a character is physically chilled as if outdoors in cold weather, and must make a **TN 7 Stamina** test each minute to resist the effects of the cold (-2 to all physical tests). Fire and warm clothing do not relieve the chilling effect, which causes no harm other than the physical test penalty (and also does not protect the holder from either fire or cold from other sources).

Once per round on command (a single action), Fornanghai can conjure a blast of freezing wind similar in effect to the spell *Blast of Cold* (*Paths of the Wise*, page 50), but instead of affecting a spherical area, the blast moves outward in a tight line beginning at the sceptre's tip, to a maximum distance of 100 feet. A target struck by the blast suffers the following effects:

- Make a **TN 12 Swift** test or be knocked down
- Make a **TN 10 Swift** test or be blinded for 1 round by stinging particles of ice
- Make a **TN 15 Stamina** test or suffer a -4 penalty to all physical tests for 2d4 rounds

Fornanghai is a creation of the Witch-king himself, who fashioned it during his rule in Angmar from the bones of a Dúnadan captive horribly put to death. The weapon is strongly tainted by evil, and tempts its wielder to use its power ruthlessly. A character who uses the sceptre's magic must make a **TN 7 Willpower** test to resist gaining a point of Corruption. (**TN 20 Lore/Other: Enchanted Items** -or- Lore/History: Angmar -or- equivalent to know the item's history.)

### Returning to Framsburg

The discovery of an undead soldier of Angmar and a strange artifact temporarily supersedes the rivalry between the Dwarves and the Northmen. The entire group will agree to return to Framsburg to care for the wounded and to inspect their finds and decide what to do next. Both rafts are used, while one person drives the two horses back downriver along the towpath, arriving some hours later than the rafts.

and an iron-bound chest at the foot of the bed. The chest is sturdily made and is locked. The lid can be pried open with a pick and a **TN 15 Strength** test; two characters working at the same time may combine their individual Strength bonuses for this test. Alternately, the chest can be smashed open; it has Protection 4 and Structure 4. Heavy edged weapons such as axes deal full damage to the chest, while other weapons deal half damage. The chest and its contents weigh about 50 pounds and can be easily removed from the chamber without opening it.

Inside the chest is a small amount of treasure from the raids conducted by Ájolaš' orcish servants in the months before his death. The treasure consists of the following:

- A silver cloak pin
- A long knife in an ornate leather scabbard
- A long smoking pipe with a wide bowl
- A set of (loaded) ivory dice
- A simple doll made of cloth; this feels unexpectedly heavy (**TN 7 Observe (Touch)**) and on closer inspection appears to have been cut open and then re sewn (**TN 10 Observe (Spot)**). Inside are 17 sp and 4 SP.
- A rod of polished bone about one and a half feet long. Sceptre-like in appearance, the rod is embellished with carved tracings darkened with black paint, and is inscribed with a line of runic characters. The runes are Sindarin Elvish, and they spell out the name Fornanghai, which roughly translates to "iron wind of the north".

The adventure continues at the Inn of the Cleft Shield in the next issue of *Hall of Fire*!

## Narrator's Notes

If the player characters in your group are sufficiently advanced to deal with Ájolaš easily, add a second Man of Carn Dûm to the sealed chambers. Use the statistics given for a standard Man of Carn Dûm (not a captain like Ájolaš) in *Hall of Fire* 12:36-37.

Three of the NPC's in this adventure are suitable as companions for the player characters on their continuing adventures: Dhanir, Léofred, and Harald. Dhanir shares his people's grudge against the Northmen, but is wise enough to set aside those differences for a greater cause, and may even outgrow the old hatred in time. Léofred is primarily useful in this Prologue to the adventure, and should only be considered as a long-term companion if the party sorely lacks a character with Lore skills. Harald is available to provide the party with a Mariner if no PC has the skills needed to survive on the water.

If your chronicle takes place farther down the Anduin, never fear -- these characters will be headed in your group's direction soon enough!

## NPC's

### Dhanir

#### Mining party leader (Dwarf of the Grey Mountains)

**Attributes:** \*Bearing 9 (+1) \*Nimbleness 8 (+1) Perception 8 (+1) Strength 10 (+2) Vitality 12 (+3) Wits 7 (+0)

**Reactions:** \*Stamina +4 Swiftswiftness +1 Willpower +1 Wisdom +1

**Defence:** 11 **Health:** 14 **Courage:** 2 **Renown:** 0

**Advancements:** 4

**Orders:** Warrior

**Order Abilities:** Battle-Hardened, Evasion

**Racial Abilities:** Animal Aversion, Craftsmanship, Firestarting, Hardness of Body, Hardness of Mind, Healthy, Stout

**Edges:** Bold, Dodge, Quick-draw, Valour, Warwise

**Flaws:** Proud

**Skills:** Armed Combat: Axes (Battle-axe) +8, Climb +2, Debate (Parley) +2, Inspire +4, Jump +2, Language: Khuzdul +6, Language: Westron +5, Lore/History: Dwarves (Northern Wars) +2, Lore/Race: Dwarves (Grey Mountains) +3, Lore/Realm: Grey Mountains (Dwarf-holds) +2, Lore/Wilderness: Survival (Mountains) +3, Observe (Hear, Spot) +3, Persuade (Oratory) +2, Ranged Combat: Thrown Weapons (Throwing Axe) +5, Run +3, Siegecraft (Unit Leadership) +2, Stonecraft (Mining) +3, Survival (Mountains) +3

**Gear:** Dwarven chainmail, Battle-axe, 2 Throwing Axes (2d6 damage), mining pick, trail rations

### Belekki

#### Miner (Dwarf of the Grey Mountains)

**Attributes:** Bearing 6 (+0) \*Nimbleness 7 (+0) \*Perception 9 (+1) Strength 14 (+14) Vitality 12 (+3) Wits 6 (+0)

**Reactions:** \*Stamina +4 Swiftswiftness +1 Willpower +0 Wisdom +0

**Defence:** 10 **Health:** 16 **Courage:** 2 **Renown:** 0

**Advancements:** 1

**Orders:** Craftsman

**Order Abilities:** Deft (*Hall of Fire* 6:23), Speedy Work

**Racial Abilities:** Animal Aversion, Craftsmanship, Firestarting, Hardness of Body, Hardness of Mind, Healthy, Stout

**Edges:** Experienced (Stonecraft: Mining) (*Hall of Fire* 23:6), Hammerhand, Strong-Willed

**Flaws:** Proud

**Skills:** Appraise (Gems) +4, Armed Combat: Axes (Battle-axe) +1, Debate (Negotiate) +2, Language: Khuzdul +6, Language: Westron +4, Lore/History: Dwarves (Northern Wars) +2, Lore/Other: Dwarf-craft (Delvings) +3, Lore/Race: Dwarves (Grey Mountains) +3, Lore/Realm: Grey Mountains (Dwarf-holds) +2, Lore/Wilderness: Survival (Mountains) +1, Observe (Spot) +4, Perform (Storytelling) +2, Smithcraft (Armoursmith) +4, Stonecraft (Building, Mining) +7, Survival (Mountains) +1

**Gear:** Leather Armor, Battle-axe, mining pick, trail rations

### Narvi

#### Miner (Dwarf of the Grey Mountains)

**Attributes:** Bearing 6 (+0) Nimbleness 11 (+2) \*Perception 10 (+2) Strength 10 (+2) Vitality 10 (+2) \*Wits 7 (+0)

**Reactions:** \*Stamina +2 Swiftswiftness +2 Willpower +0 Wisdom +2

**Defence:** 12 **Health:** 12 **Courage:** 2 **Renown:** 0

**Advancements:** 0

**Orders:** Craftsman

**Order Abilities:** Deft (*Hall of Fire* 6:23), Manual Dexterity (*Hall of Fire* 27:16)

**Racial Abilities:** Animal Aversion, Craftsmanship, Firestarting, Hardness of Body, Hardness of Mind, Healthy, Stout

**Edges:** Craftmaster, Experienced (Stonecraft: Mining) (*Hall of Fire* 23:6), Night-Eyed, Strong-Willed

**Flaws:** Proud, Grasping, Hatred (Northmen)

**Skills:** Appraise (Gold) +4, Armed Combat: Axes (Battle-axe) +2, Craft: Locksmith (Mechanical Toys) +3, Debate (Bargain) +3, Language: Khuzdul +7, Language: Westron +5, Lore/History: Dwarves (Northern Wars) +3, Lore/Other:

Dwarf-craft (Enchanted Items) +3, Lore/Race: Dwarves (Grey Mountains) +3, Lore/Realm: Grey Mountains (Dwarf-holds) +2, Lore/Wilderness: Survival (Mountains) +1, Observe (Spot) +3, Smithcraft (Goldsmith) +6, Stonecraft (Mining) +3, Survival (Mountains) +1

**Gear:** Leather Armor, Battle-axe, mining pick, trail rations

## Erland, Fréawine, Knut, Torwald

### Herdsmen (Middle People)

**Attributes:** Bearing 5 (+0) \*Nimbleness 8 (+1) Perception 6 (+0) Strength 8 (+1) \*Vitality 9 (+1) Wits 6 (+0)

**Reactions:** \*Stamina +3 Swiftsness +1 Willpower +0 Wisdom +0

**Defence:** 11 **Health:** 10 **Courage:** 1 **Renown:** 0

**Advancements:** 0

**Orders:** none

**Order Abilities:** n/a

**Racial Abilities:** Adaptable (Stamina), Dominion of Man, Skilled

**Edges:** Hardy

**Flaws:** Stiff-Necked

**Skills:** Language: Westron +6, Lore/Race: Men (Northmen) +3, Lore/Realm: Anduin Vales (North) +3, Lore/Wilderness: Domesticated Beasts (Goats) +3, Lore/Wilderness: Survival (Hills) +3, Observe (Spot) +2, Profession: Herdsman (Goats) +2, Ranged Combat: Bows (Shortbow) +2, Survival (Hills) +1, Weather-sense +1

**Gear:** Staff, Shortbow, rations

## Léofred

### Town Elder (Middle People)

**Attributes:** \*Bearing 8 (+1) Nimbleness 6 (+0) Perception 7 (+0) Strength 6 (+0) Vitality 6 (+0) \*Wits 9 (+1)

**Reactions:** Stamina +0 Swiftsness +0 \*Willpower +3 Wisdom +1

**Defence:** 10 **Health:** 6 **Courage:** 3 **Renown:** 0

**Advancements:** 4

**Orders:** Loremaster

**Order Abilities:** Ancient Scripts, Expertise (Lore/History: The North)

**Racial Abilities:** Adaptable (Willpower), Dominion of Man, Skilled

**Edges:** Curious

**Flaws:** Slow Recovery

**Skills:** Craft: Apothecary (Salves) +5, Debate (Parley) +4, Games (Gambling) +2, Healing (Herbal Remedies) +4, Inquire (Converse) +4, Insight +3, Language: Northman (Lossoth) +4, Language: Northman (Rohiric) +4, Language: Westron +7, Lore/History: The North (Éothéod) +8, Lore/Race: Men (Éothéod) +5, (Lore/Realm: Anduin Vales (North) +5, Lore/Wilderness: Herbalism (Equal) +4, Observe (Spot) +2, Perform (Storytelling) +2, Persuade (Oratory) +3, Search +2, Survival (Hills) +2, Weather-sense +2

**Gear:** Staff, rations

## Harald

### Riverman (Middle People)

**Attributes:** Bearing 6 (+0) \*Nimbleness 8 (+1) \*Perception 8 (+1) Strength 8 (+1) Vitality 7 (+0) Wits 7 (+0)

**Reactions:** Stamina +1 \*Swiftsness +4 Willpower +0 Wisdom +1

**Defence:** 12 **Health:** 8 **Courage:** 3 **Renown:** 0

**Advancements:** 3

**Orders:** Mariner

**Order Abilities:** Jury-Rig (*Hall of Fire* 28:9), Rope-craft

**Racial Abilities:** Adaptable (Swiftsness), Dominion of Man, Skilled

**Edges:** Agile (*Hall of Fire* 19:16), Armour of Heroes, Dodge, Travel-sense

**Flaws:** Stiff-Necked

**Skills:** Armed Combat: Polearms (Spear) +3, Language: Northman (Beorning) +3, Language: Westron +6, Lore/Race: Men (Beornings, Éothéod) +3, (Lore/Realm: Anduin Vales (North) +5, Lore/Wilderness: Survival (Anduin Vales) +4, Observe (Spot) +6, Ranged Combat: Bows (Shortbow) +4, Ride (Horse) +2, Sea-craft (Boating) +7, Stealth (Sneak) +2, Survival (River) +2, Swim +4, Weather-sense +4

**Gear:** Raft, pole, spear, shortbow, rations

## Ájolaš

### Man of Carn Dûm (*Hall of Fire* 12:36-37)

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

**Reactions:** \*Stamina +3 Swiftsness +1 Willpower +2 Wisdom +2

**Defence:** 11 **Health:** 13 **Courage:** 1 **Renown:** 1

**Advancements:** 8

**Orders:** Warrior, Captain

**Order Abilities:** Battle-Hardened, Air of Command

**Special Abilities:** Icy Touch, Undead Stamina, Wraithform

**Edges:** Fell-Handed (vs. The Living), Night-Eyed 2, Warwise, Command 1

**Flaws:** Oath (serve Angmar even after death), Fealty (Witch-king), Hatred (The Living)

**Skills:** Armed Combat: Blades (Longsword) +7, Armed Combat: Polearms (Spear) +6, Intimidate (Fear) +6, Language: Northman (Lossoth) +6, Language: Westron +5, Observe (Spot, Sense Power) +5, Search +5, Stealth (Hide, Sneak) +8

**Spells:** *Dumbness*, *Evoke Fear* (ability), *Fog-Raising*

**Gear:** Longsword, Spear

**Icy Touch** - With a Superior or higher success on an attack roll, Ájolaš deals 1-3 points extra damage, and the victim suffers a (cumulative) -1 penalty on all rolls for the next 3 rounds.

**Undead Stamina** - Ájolaš never needs to eat or drink, take only half damage from physical attacks, heal all injuries at five times the normal rate, never need to make Stamina tests to resist Weariness.

**Wraithform** - TN 15 Observe (Spot) test required to see Ájolaš until he attacks or wishes to be seen.

## POSTMASTER

---

### ASK THE HALL OF FIRE

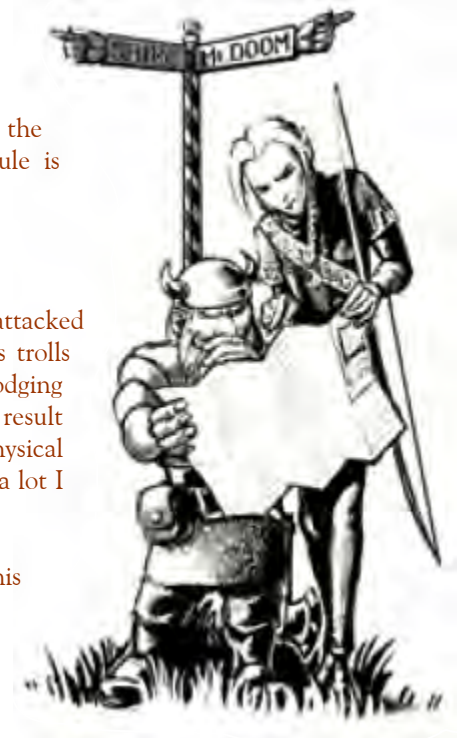
#### LeLoupArdent writes:

In the CRB it says that the Dodge result (p. 229) becomes the new TN replacing the defender's Defence against all attacks attempted on the defender. I find that this rule is unbalanced for my game and I would like very much to get advice on fixing this problem.

Here is an example on my plight:

Durandir has Swiftiness +7, Dodge and Bold Edges, and the Evasion ability. He is being attacked by 5 very mean Olog-hai. Durandir wins the initiative but he decides to let the vicious trolls attack first, in which they comply. Before my first attack, Durandir declares a dodging manoeuvre prior to my attacking roll, gets an 11, and spends 3 Courage points for a total result of 36 -- this is the TN to hit Durandir for the whole round against any number of physical attacks (and this without taking note of the Evasion Order Ability, which does help him a lot I can tell you). All of this at a ridiculous price of 1 action!

Don't you find that a bit too overpowering? The only way I could think of to restrain this unbalance without making obsolete the Dodging Manoeuvre is by making each attack successfully dodged (beyond the first attack) cost 1 action by attack, to the maximum of action allowance per round by the defender. So, what say you?



#### GandalfOfBorg replies:

No I don't believe that Dodge is overpowering. Typically characters aren't tricked out to Dodge monsters like the mentioned PC, and so they have to work hard for their better Defence score, even with Evasion and Dodge alone without improvements to the reaction. As you said, this only lasts for one round and the character has probably blown a good chunk or maybe all of his Courage in 1 action (which can and probably will be much to his detriment, especially against five Olog-hai), and for what? Not getting hit in one round? A very poor choice IMO tactically and for other reasons. You, as the Narrator, could always decide that the other PC's are more worthy targets to pound on instead of super ninja over there, making him waste his action and his Courage.

What I do believe is that your player is "gaming" the system (power-gaming) and he's either had little restraint or maybe a lack of oversight or maybe both (no slight intended towards you) when making his choices of things to spend advancements on.

My advice is to plan for this in the future by sending in powerful creatures that require spending Courage just to face them without running away or cowering in fear, or create adversaries equally up to the task of hitting someone as dexterous as the PC, or something else that would neutralize this advantage. Also, keep an eye on what your players spend advancement picks on -- a constant suggestion of mine is to make sure that they can justify what they purchased based on what's happened in the game since the last advancement.

#### Beomoud writes:

- 1) How do you deal with the relatively quick advancement of PC's and how do you balance your game so that it follows Decipher's models and keeps the feeling of Middle-earth?
- 2) I need some clarifications concerning poisons and their mechanics. How much time does it pass for the next stage of effect? Is it the onset time, one round, one minute?
- 3) Are there any spells (like Flame of Anor) that you reserve for Wizards or other spellcasters only? I just thought that some should be performed only by the wisest and most powerful of mages.

4) What's wrong with the Sundering spell? I saw it revisited in the Heren Turambarion Compendium, but according to the rule book it does 10\*Bearing score Structure damage if I can recall. The strongest wall [in the books] you come across has Protection 20 and Structure 60 -- with Bearing 10 (quite common for a spellcaster), you can come up with structure damage of 100, bringing down anything pretty much any fortress, tower, etc.

5) Do you apply penalties due to the loss of Wound Levels to all tests or just all physical and academic tests? Shouldn't they be applied to all tests? I mean you can't cower someone to your will without a penalty if you look as though you were about to fall over. Also, do Weariness penalties apply to all tests? They should as well -- I believe you can even miss something from a search if tired... What are your thoughts?

6) Is there a difference between Magician's Spellcasting and Wizard's Wizard Spellcasting? As I saw them, they appear to be separate things (for example, Melencar has Spellcasting 10 and Wizard Spellcasting 5).

7) In the Core Rulebook it is mentioned, I think in the magic chapter, that a wizard is sometimes quite proficient in making elixirs... What could that cover? Has anyone made up any elixirs? What would they do? Heal wound levels maybe? Based on the herbs found in the Heren Turambarion Compendium, I have made up a system that allows the PC, by combining them using his Craft skill, to create minor potions, antidotes, and a couple more elixirs. Has anyone thought of something else? Could this be an issue? What do you think of using such a system, nice or too DnD? I believe in the right way, it can be quite favorable.

### GandalfOfBorg replies:

1) Well I don't know what you consider to be fast. Playing PbP has taken quite awhile to gain advancements due to the nature of the environment of the "tabletop". If I were sitting down with real people, it would solely depend on what I felt the adventure and their participation is worth. I would suggest you also check out the MECS as they calculate giving enough XP between 3-5 adventures for a character to gain 1 advancement.

2) As I read it, the onset time is also the amount of time between stages. It is something I should clarify in the CODA BSR as well.

3) No, there are no spells that I reserve for any Order, as there is no need to; the mechanics of the limiting prerequisites work just fine for me. The prerequisite for Flame of Anor is the Secret Fire Spell Specialty and no Corruption I believe. The Spell Specialty ability requires at least one advancement to attain, but you can always require training, study, etc. under another who has it to become worthy of allowing the PC to acquire it. Just because the mechanics don't make it too difficult to acquire the spells, doesn't mean you can't set forth guidelines to require in-gaming roleplaying to justify their acquisition.

4) Yes, Sundering is a tad on the overpowering side. If you want to tone it down, make it a Success-based result: make the damage a multiplier of the caster's Bearing based on the level of success of the Weariness test (or the second Weariness test if using the optional rules from PotW) -- x1/2 Marginal, x1 Complete, x2 Superior, x4 Extraordinary (for example).

5) Wound and Weariness test penalties apply to physical tests and are cumulative, but I can see that Weariness could apply to academic tests (hard to concentrate when tired). Using these penalties for social tests would be few and far between to nonexistent IMO. I believe Observe is a physical test, so it would be affected by Wound and Weariness penalties.

6) Spellcasting and Wizard's Spellcasting are different in that they are abilities for two different Orders -- their function is the same, but only within their respective Orders; Spellcasting cannot be used as a prerequisite for Wizard abilities and vice versa (though you could do it that way in your own game).

But anytime "ability to cast spells" is a prerequisite for something, either Spellcasting (Loremaster and Magician) or Wizard Spellcasting would cover it -- and also, in my opinion, the innate spellcasting ability of Elves or characters that've spent advancement picks to acquire spells.

7) See Paths of the Wise for the Distill Draught ability (allows the infusing of certain spells into consumables) and a nice list of herbs for herbal remedies and elixirs. A character could also use the Brewing ability for creating antidotes to poisons or cure diseases. Also, you could reasonably use the rules for item creation for PC's to make elixirs as well.

Being a "low-magic" setting such as this, having mild to moderate curative and restorative potions/elixirs/draughts aren't outside the realm of possibility (see Miruvor). Work with your players on this but make sure the item's effects don't go beyond what you feel is appropriate for the setting and game.

# INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

---

## THE PERSON

1. What is your name, where are you located, and what is your profession (if you have one)?

## THE EXPERIENCE

2. How long have you been in gaming?
3. What games are you into (besides Lord of the Rings, of course)?

## THE GAME YOU PLAY

4. Are you running/playing in a game right now? If so, what is its format (tabletop, Play-by-Post, etc.). Tell us about it and your character.

## THE GAME ITSELF

5. How were you attracted to the game? Are/have you been involved with the creation or playtesting of the line?
6. Out of what is available officially from Decipher, what do you own? What is your favorite? Least favorite?
7. What do you think is done the best? Worst?
8. If there were to be only one more supplement released, what would you like it to be?
9. If there were to be a second edition for CODA, what would you scrap, change, and/or add?
10. If you don't like using the CODA system, what system do you use?

## THE HALL OF FIRE

11. How long have you read the webzine (if you read it at all)? How did you hear about it?
12. What do you think of it? What are your favorite sections?
13. Besides The Hall of Fire, where else do you find information and inspiration for your gaming in this system?

## THE SOURCE

14. What got you interested in Tolkien's writings?
15. What did you think of the movies?

When you answer these questions, please put some delineation between the question and the answer, as well as between separate questions, for the sake of readability.

If you have any questions for me about this, please don't hesitate to ask.



## 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://lotrrpg.fanhq.com>  
 DECIPHER'S LOTR RPG BOARD  
<http://forums.fanhq.com/viewforum.php?f=164>  
 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/](http://www.geocities.com/scott_metz/)  
 CHRONICLES OF THE NORTH  
<http://roleplay.avioc.org/index.htm>  
 THE LAST ALLIANCE  
<http://thelastalliance.com>

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](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/coda_webzine)  
 THE ONE RING  
<http://www.theonering.com/>  
 TALES OF MIDDLE-EARTH  
[http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/tales\\_of\\_mid\\_dle\\_earth/](http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/tales_of_mid_dle_earth/)  
 VALINOR  
<http://sauron.misled.us>

## 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'

## CREDITS AND CONTACTS

---

All pictures and graphics were obtained from Decipher and New Line Cinema or from sources on the Internet. No claim of ownership is made through their use here. These images are used with no permission.

**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.