

# THE HALL OF FIRE FAN WEBZINE

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MAY 2005



*Morgoth fights Fingolfin - by Ted Nasmith*



# GREETINGS,

## SALUTATIONS... HELLO ALL!

Spring is upon us and the time is ripe to start up a new Lord of the Rings campaign of your own creation, or support Middle-earth Campaign Setting run by Timothy Creese. There are even openings for Narrators to run games at cons.

Yes, at this time, there is no real news from Decipher concerning further products, but oh well, that's why we're here and boy are you in luck! This month is a veritable treasure trove of great stuff like more 0-advancement characters, another Order expansion with Orders of Magnitude, a look at some of the abstract edges in the game, a guide to creating your own balanced traits, plus a whole lot more!

Happy Gaming,

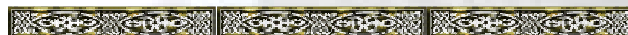
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# THE MRKX:FN:CA HALL OF FIRE

The Unofficial Lord of the Rings RPG Webzine

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# ADVENTURING IN

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## MITHLOND

by Mathew "GandalfOfBorg" Kearns

### HISTORY

The history of Lindon and the Grey Havens began before the great upheaval at the end of the First Age. The shipwrights long plied their trade in Beleriand in one of the safest havens of free folk during this time. A Sindarin people occupying the land of the Falas in western Beleriand, on the shores of Belegaer. Círdan the Shipwright was their lord, and their great cities were the Havens of Brithombar and Eglarest.

The Elves of the Havens enjoyed peaceful relations with all the Elves of Beleriand, and were particularly closely allied with the people of Nargothrond. As one of the most remote peoples from Morgoth's forces in Angband, the other Elvish lords would often send their children to the Elves of the Havens for safekeeping. The elves and men ruled the oceans and Morgoth dared not challenge their power there, nor that of Ulmo, unless his armies were mighty indeed.

Unfortunately that was the case, as after the Nirnaeth (the "Battle of Unnumbered Tears"), Arnoediad, Brithombar and Eglarest were besieged and taken by Morgoth's armies. Most of the Elves were slain or imprisoned, but some few, including Círdan and the young Ereinion Gil-galad, who was at that time lodging with the people of the Havens, sailed south to safety on the Isle of Balar. At the beginning of the Second Age, Círdan sailed east to found the Grey Havens on the Gulf of Lhûn, and the remnant of the Elves of the Havens must surely have accompanied him.

It was here they discovered the green land to the west of the Blue Mountains; the only region of Beleriand to survive the destruction during the War of Wrath. Gil-galad, last High King of the Noldor, dwelt there during the Second Age.

Mithlond is where the harbours of Círdan lie -- at the eastern end of the Gulf of Lhûn, from which the Elves of the north of Middle-earth passed into the West during the later Ages. While there was still a recognized king of the Elves, it was part of the realm of Lindon, ruled by Gil-galad, and then went into Círdan's stewardship after Gil-galad's death battling Sauron at the side of Elendil.



PM

Cirdan's stewardship lasted many years, and he oversaw the crafting of many ships ere he knew that his kin would eventually leave this place. The realm had little dealings with anyone, beyond offering courteous help when asked. Cirdan took little overt action to deal with the events of the world other than to bequeath Narya to Gandalf and to send ships to aid King Arvedui of Arthedain. Although the Third Age's end saw the passing of the Ringbearers across the sea, Cirdan stayed and the havens remained open for many years until he finally passed over on the last boat.

After the passing of Cirdan, Mithlond remains a lonely and bittersweet testament to the greatness and beauty of the elven culture. King Elessar and his descendants sought to keep at least this place in order as a monument to the friendship of the Elves and Men and to honor the final struggle and triumph of the bearers of great burden.



## NOTABLE FEATURES

### House of Cirdan

This is the home of Cirdan the Shipwright (large building west of the shipyards). Its function to him is not much, as he spends most of his time at the shipyards or his table where he pores over plans of ships. It is a fit enough house for one of Cirdan's stature, though it is now a useless museum for recollecting the days of

Beleriand and before. There are a number of servants who tend to the house, which is about all they do.

### High Court

On the south side of the cove (out of view from the map), this great hall and estate is where Gil-galad, the last king of the elves, held council and his court. After his passing, it fell into disuse, only now used to commemorate a noteworthy event or to entertain a visiting dignitary, both of which are few and far between in this land.

### Galad-i-Haraduin / Galad-i-Foroduin

These great beacons are the lighthouses of Mithlond. The stand as sentinels to the entrance to the cove of the city, both giving light to the wayward and lost and warning those of the rocky shoals that are common around the cove's entrance. They were crafted with great cunning and skill in the First Age, as they were the lights of Eglarest and Brithombar, rescued by their few survivors. These lights can be seen at about 5 leagues during the day and 10 at night. Only with great unnatural power can these lights ever be dimmed or diminished in any way and only the greatest could ever extinguish them through darkness, fog, or destruction (for each level of success against a Narrator-determined TN a light is diminished, reducing its visibility by 25%).

### Shipyards

Besides the ever-increasing fleet of elven swanships, there can be found trade vessels from other places such as Tharbad, Pelargir, Osgiliath, etc. This place is large enough to berth a whole fleet of vessels of various sizes, but most of the time it is about half full at any given time.

### Hostels

Since this city is the last place in Middle-earth seen by most of the elves leaving the land, there are many hostels and houses catering to these pilgrims. And as such, they are some of the most beautiful in architecture and cultivation west of The Last Homely House. They are also centers of gossip, lore, and tales of far off lands and far off times.

### Caristuin

This is the great library of the elves of Lindon; it is second only in size and depth of knowledge to that of Elrond. It is a quiet place of contemplation and research. Most of the documents located here are free for perusal by any, but there are some special sections where either the High King or Cirdan's permission is required -- it can be given for periods ranging from one day to indefinitely (very rare). The Istari have access to the

library and have priority over all others. There are scrolls and tomes on various subjects ranging from craft knowledge to gardening and beyond. The restricted sections contain many secrets known or remembered only by the elves, and much knowledge of The Enemy.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

### 1. Plea for Aid

Since Gondor is too far away and Rivendell is unable to lend any aid at this time, you are sent with a message of great urgency to the elf lord, Cirdan of the Grey Havens. The message, written by the king himself, is of urgent request for aid for the fleeing remnants of the kingdom of Arthedain, lest the Witch-king destroy what is left of the Dúnedain in the North. Your king and the last of the realm are depending upon you.

**NOTE:** *We know from history that ships were sent but not in time. Why weren't they sent in time? Was the errand party delayed/killed? Maybe the ships were sent in time but were delayed en route... why? These are all good questions that could use some exploring.*

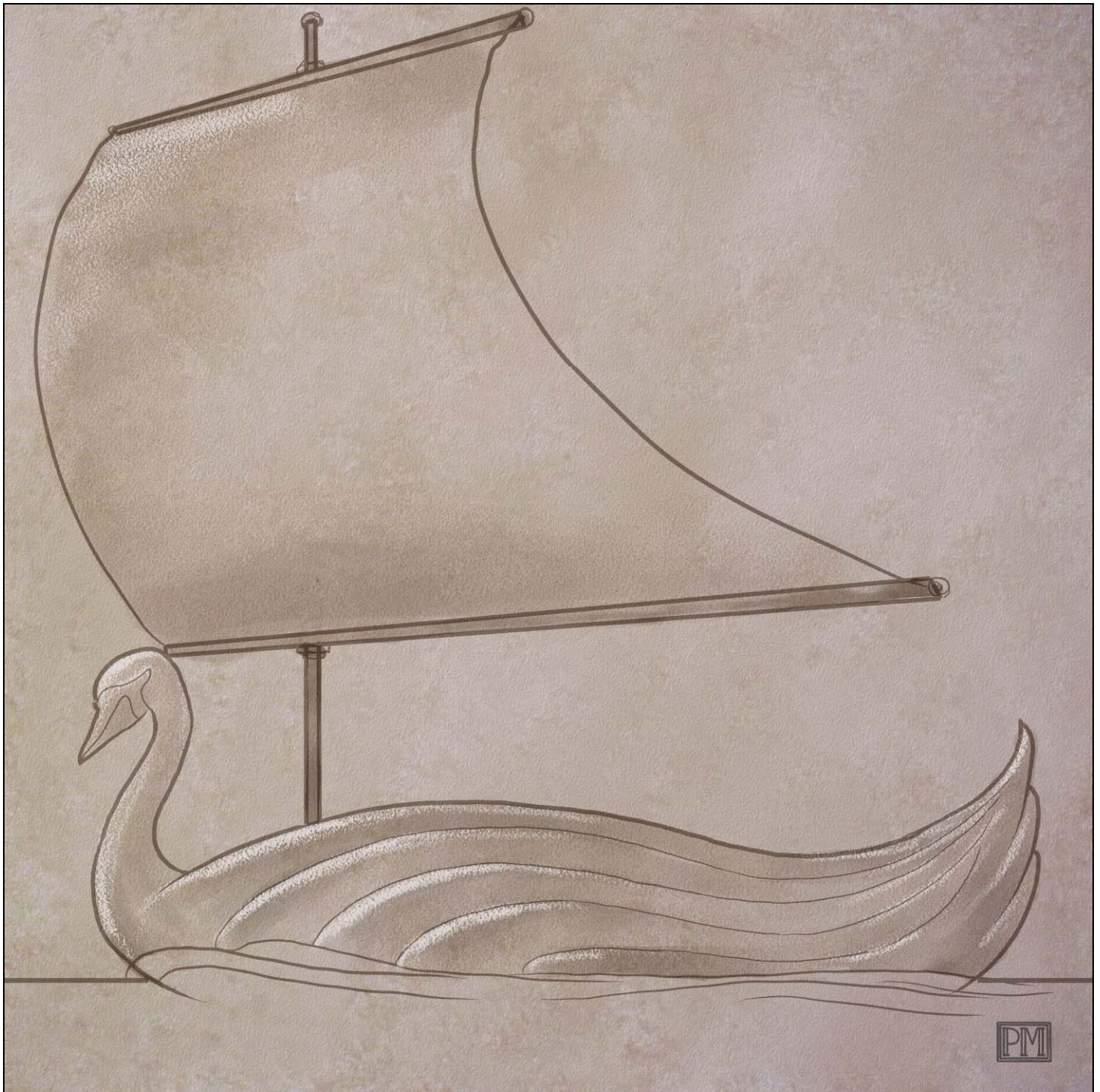
### 2. The Last Alliance

You join in the great vanguard of the Second Age with Gil-galad, Elrond, and many other heroes of the day in the great battles leading up to the end of the age.

### 3. River's Taint

There are whispers of a plague out of the North... some say it is Angmar and others say otherwise. Its fingers can be felt upon the land but it does not take hold of elves like it does to their Dúnedain friends, as they watch the poor people waste away in sickness. Soon worse comes and in a form unexpected: the River Lune is dying. The waters of the river become brackish and then black. Many creatures and crops die from the deadly water. The cove itself rebels against this attack, turning so violent it begins to wreak havoc on ships at the docks, even eating away at the quays and pilings. What is causing this dark malady of nature? Can it be stopped, let alone cured?





Swan Ship - Transport





Swan Ship - War



# PEOPLES OF MIDDLE-EARTH: ELVES OF MITHLOND

by Mathew "GandalfOfBorg" Kearns

## HISTORY & LANDS

The host of Valinor came and Morgoth was thrown into the Void. The land was broken and fell into the sea while the Isle of Númenor was raised. The Elves who remained in Middle-earth sought to find some place that they could call their own while hopefully retaining some of the beauty of Beleriand, and this they found in the lands surrounding the Gulf of Lune; a part of what once was Ossiriand and the last remnants of the continent of Beleriand above the sea. Those who survived the exodus followed Cirdan and the new High-king Gil-galad to the furthest inland point, situated in a large cove, where the new throne of Elvenkind in Middle-earth would be raised. This land they called Lindon.

The Elven population spread along the shores of the Gulf of Lune and two more settlements sprang up -- Harlindon and Forlindon. Life was peaceful but only for a relatively short period of time. Soon enough Sauron emerged to contend with the power of Men and Elves. Orcs, trolls, and other fell beasts marched across the lands east and west of the Misty Mountains and giving battle to all in their way; the worst was Eregion's fall and death of Celebrimbor.

The final battle set, the Last Alliance of Men and Elves marched upon Mordor to finish this struggle against Sauron. It was in this battle that the nation of Elves fell with its last king. After the diminishing of Sauron, Elves from all over began leaving the shores of Middle-earth for Valinor in the West. This left the kingdom of Lindon and the ruling line in ruins, making Mithlond, Harlindon, Forlindon, Rivendell, Lothlórien, and the Woodland-realm into independent city-states more or less. The rest of the Elves in the land either left or joined with the Wandering Companies -- bands of Elves seeking to rid Eriador of the stain of Sauron and protect caravans of their kin traveling to Mithlond.



With the death of Gil-galad, no one person held rulership over all Elves, through it was Elrond's to claim as his birthright. Cirdan reluctantly stepped in to rule over Mithlond and the city retreated into itself, having little to do with the events of the world except in extraordinary circumstances, such as the attempted rescue of King Arvedui and Cirdan's passing of Narya to Gandalf when the latter arrived from Valinor. The great white swan-ships were built and Elves left Middle-earth, until finally Cirdan himself left not long after the beginning of the Fourth Age, and the city of Mithlond, like the other Elven cities, faded away.

## PHYSICAL INFORMATION

Elves of Mithlond are as varied as the Elven race can be. It became the great melting pot of Elven society with Noldor and Teleri of all sorts. Those who remained after the cataclysm that sank Beleriand came to Mithlond first before either eventually leaving from there to Valinor or moving on to other Elven settlements and realms, such as the Woodland-realm or Lothlórien east of the Misty Mountains, or Eregion near Khazad-dûm.



## SOCIAL INFORMATION

Just as there is no physical norm for the Elves of Mithlond, there is no social or cultural norm either unless it be diversity. While there was a High-king, the dominant theme was that of the Noldor, complemented by Sindarin tastes as the city and realm were built about the Gulf of Lune. Tolerance was common, though rivalries did arise, mostly of the friendly sort.

## ECONOMICS

While the realm of Lindon existed, Mithlond was a bustling center of trade by sea, river, and road. Here ended the West Road leading from the Misty Mountains, and Mithlond was also along the trade routes of what was left of the dwarf realms in the



Ered Luin. Goods of all sorts and from all nations could be bought and sold here.

After the beginning of the Third Age, Mithlond's influence fell as it withdrew from worldly affairs. The shipyards became more involved in the building of ships for Elves leaving for the Blessed Realm and less about trade and cultural cooperation, as the city was self-sufficient for its needs.

## STANDARDS & DEVICES

The standards and devices used by those of Lindon, and subsequently Mithlond, remained those of the royal line of Fëanor and, in a minor way, of Cirdan.



# 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.

## MAGICIANS

For players interested in magic and the Magician order, I have two excellent resources to recommend. The first, to no one's great surprise, is the *Paths of the Wise* supplement by Decipher. The second is the article 'Magic in Middle-earth' by Ron Williams, published in *The Hall of Fire*, issue 25. Mr. Williams defines the different types of magic in Tolkien's world and notes how their use is restricted to certain races and types of beings. The overall result is a lower-magic game than the CODA rules permit by default, but those who prefer to stick closely to Tolkien's vision will find the article a useful guide.

### SPECIALIST MAGICIAN PACKAGES

Arguably, a generalist magician with a Swiss-Army-knife selection of spells is less interesting and flavourful than a specialist who does only a few things, but does them well. The Core Book already provides options for magicians to focus on individual spells or groups of related spells (specialties). I want to offer even more ways to specialize your spellcaster, to accommodate roles based conceptually on narrow spell selections.

Any one of the specialist packages detailed below can be taken at no cost when you join the Magician order. It does not replace the standard (or custom) package that a starting character gets; it is an extra optional package you can take in addition to the normal one.

The specialist package confers benefits to a small selection of spells identified in the description of the package, but slightly penalizes all other spells. Please note that a specialist package **does not actually grant any spells**. Spells must still be purchased normally by taking the Spellcasting order ability.

**Benefits:** When you cast a spell on your specialist package list, treat your Bearing score as if it were **four** points higher for purposes of determining spell range, duration, and any effects that depend on Bearing. (This does not improve secondary scores derived from Bearing, such as Willpower tests made to oppose a target or to resist Weariness according to the 'Greater Weariness' optional rules.)

**Drawbacks:** All spells other than those listed in your specialist package become more difficult for you to acquire:

- If you learn new spells through study, the number of weeks of study required to learn a new spell increases by two weeks.
- If you learn new spells through discovery of innate talent, the initial penalty to Weariness tests increases by 2. (The -10 penalty in the first 'stage' of learning the spell becomes -12, and the -5 penalty in the second stage becomes -7.)

If the rules for acquiring spells are not used in your game, as a substitute penalty you can increase by +1 the Weariness TN of all spells other than those in your specialist package.

### Alchemist

**Description:** You perceive the nature of the created world, and refashion it through your arts.

**Spells:** *Blessing of Aulë, Change Hue, Corrupt Surface, Enhance Food, Ithildin-Fire, Transformation.*

### Beast-Kin

**Description:** You have a special connection or kinship with a particular type of animal.

**Special:** Choose an animal type, such as canines, equines, felines, reptiles, insects, birds, etc. The bonus to your effective Bearing score applies only to the effect of spells on this type of animal. (Other animals may also be affected by these spells, but the increased effects do not apply to them.)

**Spells:** *Animal Messenger, Beast Speech, Beast Summoning, Enslave Beast, Naming.*

### Dowser

**Description:** Your sensitivity to the magic of the land helps you locate items and persons of interest.

**Spells:** *Detect Foe, Finding and Returning, Sense Power, Virtue of Finding.*

### Jinx

**Description:** Those who cause you trouble find it returning to them in double measure.

**Spells:** *Disarm, Dull Senses, Dumbness, Hex-Spell, Move as Through Water, Slumber.*

### Physick

**Description:** Your arts restore strength and vigor to the wounded and the infirm.

**Spells:** *Healing-spell, Renew, Revive, Stout Body, Strength of Limb.*

### Seer

**Description:** Your penetrating gaze pierces minds and great distances.

**Spells:** *Farseeing, Mind-Speech, Reading the Heart, Sense Power.*

### Weather-worker

**Description:** You invoke the powers of wind and water to aid you and your companions.

**Spells:** *Cold-ward, Fog-raising, Fog-weaving, Rain-ward, Watershaping, Wind-mastery.*

## THE 'MIND' SPELL SPECIALTY

The Heren Turambarion, in their *Compendium* of revised rules, offer a spell specialty in addition to those identified in the Core Rules: the Mind specialty. This specialty covers all non-sorcerous spells that manipulate free will or contests of will.

With the release of *Paths of the Wise*, the list of spells in the Mind specialty should be updated for those groups who wish to use the Heren Turambarion's rules.

Mind Specialty Spells: *Dull Senses, Mind Barrier, Mind Shield, Mind-speech, Reading the Heart, Slumber, Spellbinding, Transformation\**, *Voice of Command, Water-Fear.*

\* In my view, *Transformation* does not belong in the Mind specialty, although the *Compendium* includes it.

## IMPROVED SPELL EFFECTS

I like the idea of improving low-level spells such as Create Light by spending additional spell picks on them, and I wish that Decipher had designed improved effects for more spells in their grimoire. Since they didn't, I've taken a stab at it myself.

Only the increased effect is described here; consult the source books for the full spell descriptions. Also, all of the spells below are 1-pick spells with Weariness TN 10 or lower; the purpose of this is not to create 'super-spells'.

**Cold-ward:** With one additional pick, an area up to 10' in radius around the caster can be warded.

**Fireshaping:** With one additional pick, the caster can increase the size of an existing fire by one category while concentrating. The TN to avoid losing Weariness levels depends on the newly increased size category of the fire.

			Sm.	Lg.	Raging
<b>Size:</b>	Torch	Campfire	Bonfire	Bonfire	Fire
<b>TN:</b>	5	7	9	12	15



**Fog-raising:** With one additional pick, when the caster ceases concentrating on the spell, the fog still persists for one minute per point of the caster's Bearing (or until dispersed).

**Mind-speech:** With one additional pick, the target of the spell need not be capable of mind-speech (either as a spell or an ability) to receive the caster's communication.

**Rain-ward:** With one additional pick, an area up to 10' in radius around the caster can be warded.

**Smoke-weaving:** With one additional pick, the caster can increase the volume of existing smoke to fill an area up to one 10' cube per point of the caster's Bearing. The smoke disperses immediately when the caster ceases to concentrate on the spell.

**Spellbinding:** With one additional pick, the caster can concentrate to maintain the spell for an indefinite duration, and the spell also persists for one round per point of the caster's Bearing after concentration ceases. After the spell has been in

effect for one minute, and each minute thereafter, the target gains an additional opposed Willpower test to break free.

**Watershaping:** With one additional pick, the caster may increase the speed of running water within range to the equivalent of a 'swift current'. When controlling water in this way, the caster may concentrate for a maximum duration of 1 minute per point of Bearing. The caster can also create a wave of water capable of damaging or capsizing a small vessel, but doing so ends the spell immediately.

**Wind-mastery:** With one additional pick, the caster may increase wind speed enough to reduce normal movement rates within the area by half. Any movement faster than a walk requires an Acrobatics (balance) test to avoid falling down; difficulty is based on the movement speed:

<b>Speed:</b>	Jog	Run	Sprint
<b>TN:</b>	5	10	15

When controlling wind in this way, the caster may concentrate for a maximum duration of 1 minute per point of Bearing. The caster can also create a wind gust strong enough to knock down creatures up to Large size (TN 15 Swifttest to resist), but doing so ends the spell immediately.

**NEW MAGICIAN ORDER ABILITIES**

**Charlatan**

**Requirements:** Wits 8, Bearing 8, Persuade +3

**Description:** You use props and charismatic words to create the illusion of magical abilities. Add the following to your order skill list: Conceal, Guise, Legerdemain, Mimicry, and Perform: Magic Tricks. You also gain a +2 bonus to any test relating to passing off fake magic as real.



To impress an audience with your performance, make a TN 7 Perform: Magic Tricks test. (Extensive preparations ahead of time may confer a bonus from +1 to +4 on this test.) On a Complete success, you gain a +1 bonus to subsequent Inspire, Intimidate, or Persuade tests made to influence the audience on the same occasion as the performance. Each higher level of success (Superior, Extraordinary) increases this bonus by an additional +1.

A skeptical person in the audience can make an Observe (Spot), Insight, or Wisdom test as appropriate to see through your deception; this test result replaces the normal test difficulty of TN 7 that you must beat to influence that person. (If an entire audience is skeptical and you do not want to conduct opposing tests for each individual, increase the Perform: Magic Tricks test difficulty to TN 10 or TN 12.)

**Special:** This can be the first Magician order ability taken, as an alternative to Spellcasting. It does not prohibit a character from taking the Spellcasting ability at a later time to become a true wielder of magic, nor does the ability to wield true magic preclude a character from continuing to fake magical effects when the need arises.

### Craft Charm

**Requirements:** Spellcasting order ability, Wits 9, Craft +4 in carving, metalworking, or other craft skill appropriate to the creation of a small object

**Description:** You can create charms or talismans, minor enchanted items that confer a one-time spell effect designed to protect the user. The bearer of a magical charm can take a single action to grasp the charm and invoke the enchantment, which is the full effect of the spell (not a reduced effect as described for permanently enchanted items in *Paths of the Wise*). The magician who crafts a charm normally instructs its user on how to invoke the enchantment; in the absence of specific instructions, a character must have some other means of determining how to use the charm. After being used, the charm becomes a mundane object, no longer enchanted. Charms are considered small items for purposes of determining size factor.

You can enchant a charm with any of the following spells: *Beast Cloak*, *Blessing of Elbereth*, *Cloak of Shadow*, *Cold-ward*, *Guarding-spell*, *Hide's Virtue*, *Mind Shield*, *Rain-ward*, *Resist Fear*, or *Shell's Virtue*.

### Spellcasting Prodigy

**Requirements:** Spellcasting order ability, Wits 9

**Description:** You learn to cast spells more easily than most.

- If you learn new spells through study, reduce each week of required study time by a number of days equal to your Wits bonus +1. This cannot reduce the required time to less than one day per spell pick.
- If you learn new spells through discovery of innate talent,

reduce the initial penalty to Weariness tests by your Wits bonus +1. This applies to the initial -10 penalty as well as the -5 penalty in the second 'stage' of learning the spell. It cannot make a penalty smaller than -1.

- If you have the Spell Specialty ability, whenever you learn a spell within that specialty that: a) costs 1 pick, and b) permits increased effects by spending additional spell picks, you gain the first level of increased effect automatically upon learning the spell, without spending any additional spell picks. (This does not apply retroactively to spells you have already learned, and it only applies to one spell specialty, even if you have taken the Spell Specialty ability more than once.)

### Uncanny Knack

**Requirements:** none

**Description:** You have a strange gift that seems to come to your aid at just the right moment. This special talent is an innate spell ability, though you might not recognize it as such.

Since this ability costs far fewer picks to acquire than the standard rules for innate magical abilities prescribe, it is subject to certain limitations:

- the innate ability is usable once per day for free; after which each additional use costs a point of Courage
- the innate spell must cost 1 pick and have Weariness TN 8 or less
- the innate spell affects only you, not other persons or objects
- the innate spell's effect must be invisible or extremely subtle

Good spell choices for this ability include: *Beast Cloak*, *Blessing of Aulë*, *Blessing of Elbereth*, *Blessing of Oromë*, *Cold-Ward*, *Detect Foe*, *Hide's Virtue*, *Invocation of Elbereth*, *Keen Senses*, *Mind Shield*, *Rain-Ward*, *Resist Fear*, *Sense Power*, *Shell's Virtue*, *Spoken Thoughts*, *Steady Hand*, *Stout Body*, *Strength of Limb*, *Swift of Foot*.

**Special:** This can be the first Magician order ability taken, as an alternative to Spellcasting. The ability can be taken only once.



## NEW RACIAL PACKAGE

by Mathew "GandalfOfBorg" Kearns

### WOSES

Insight +1, Lore +1, Observe +1, Stealth +1, Survival +1, Track +1

## NEW TRAIT

by Mathew "GandalfOfBorg" Kearns

### NIMBLE RIDER (EDGE OR ORDER ABILITY)

You are an expert horseman, able to escape harm while mounted and on the move.

**Prerequisite(s):** Ride 6+

**Effects:** You may substitute a Ride test for a Dodge test to avoid injury while mounted, if your mount is not stationary. When carrying a small shield, add +1 to the result and +2 for a large shield. If a shield is used in this manner, you do not receive the benefit against ranged attacks for this round.

## NEW ITEMS

by Mathew "GandalfOfBorg" Kearns

### POISON OF WEAKNESS

This poison is often used by Drúadan hunters seeking prey for food or sacrifice to their deities. They will also use it in combat to subdue those whom they wish to interrogate (before killing usually).

<b>Type:</b>	Injury
<b>Onset:</b>	1 round
<b>Potency:</b>	+10
<b>Treatment:</b>	+5
<b>Primary Effect:</b>	Reduce Strength by 1d6+3
<b>Secondary Effect:</b>	Reduce Strength by 1
<b>Stages:</b>	2d6

The effects will begin to wear off in 10-Vitality modifier (negative modifiers will be added to the base) minutes. After that, the victim regains 1/2-d6 Strength every 5 minutes if he suffered a simple Failure on the Stamina test, every 10 minutes for a Complete Failure, or every 30 minutes for a Disastrous Failure.



# IT'S ALL OPTIONAL

## GUIDE TO TRAIT CREATION

by Mathew "GandalfOfBorg" Kearns

With all the complaints about traits being too powerful or broken, I've endeavored to devise a way to create your own traits (edges or flaws) while maintaining a semblance of balance in their effects. If you have read my CODA BSR, then this would be a repeat for you, but to those that haven't, here are my guidelines:

### Do They Already Exist?

Compare your idea to the established traits and make sure you aren't just copying an existing one.

### Are the Effects Too Powerful?

Review similar traits to make sure yours is approximately of the same power. If you think it has more power than what you consider the most powerful of similar traits, you may want to consider either making it an ability instead, or scaling back its effects.

**FYI:** Traits are general character descriptors; they should be created with the thought in mind that any character should be able acquire it regardless of Order.

### Create Your Trait

Traits Granting Bonus/Penalty to Type or Categories of Tests

- The modifier should not be greater than  $\pm 1$  for a general modifier.
- The modifier should not be greater than  $\pm 2$  for a modifier in a specific situation.

**FYI:** I highly suggest a prerequisite of Wits 7+ for academic tests, Bearing or Perception 8+ for social tests, and Strength or Nimbleness or Vitality 8+ for physical tests.

Traits Granting Bonus/Penalty to Attribute Tests

- The modifier should not be greater than  $\pm 1$  for a general modifier.
- The modifier should not be greater than  $\pm 2$  for a modifier in a specific situation.

**FYI:** I highly suggest a prerequisite of the attribute with a score of 9+.

Traits Granting Bonus/Penalty to Reaction Tests

- The trait should not give more than a  $\pm 1$  modifier to the base reaction and have a maximum modifier of  $\pm 4$  after 3 additional picks of the trait that grant an additional  $\pm 1$  modifier.

- The trait should not give more than a  $\pm 2$  modifier to the base reaction and have a maximum modifier of  $\pm 4$  after 2 additional picks of the trait that grant an additional  $\pm 1$  modifier.\*\*
- The trait should not give more than a  $\pm 2$  modifier to a reaction test in a specific circumstance and have a maximum modifier of  $\pm 8$  after 3 additional picks of the trait that grant an additional  $\pm 2$  modifier.
- The trait should not give more than a  $\pm 4$  modifier to a reaction test in a specific circumstance and have a maximum modifier of  $\pm 8$  after 2 additional picks of the trait that grant an additional  $\pm 2$  modifier.\*\*



Traits Granting a Bonus/Penalty to Skill Tests:

- The trait should not give more than a  $\pm 2$  modifier to a single skill without a listed specialty.
- The trait should not give more than a  $\pm 1$  modifier to two skills without listed specialties.
- The trait should not give more than a  $\pm 4$  modifier to a single skill and one specialty.
- The trait should not give more than a  $\pm 2$  modifier to two skills and one specialty each.
- The trait should not give more than a  $\pm 1$  modifier to four skills and one specialty each.

**FYI:** Be mindful of the effects of the traits you create if you allow a Trait Upgrade edge (which lets you improve an edge that normally can't be improved, such as in the Star Trek RPG) -- they may cause trouble later on. I highly suggest having a list of traits that can/cannot be upgraded with such an edge.

**FYI:** There are traits that grant extra bonuses when Courage is spent to gain a modifier; I believe these are applied inconsistently and should be limited to being abilities instead of traits.

\*\* Better used with flaws than edges.

# TAKE ANOTHER LOOK

## ABSTRACT TRAITS, PART 1

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.).

### ACCURATE RECALL

You have a penchant for being able to recall details both of great importance or insignificance on a whim.

**Description:** This trait gives you a bonus to Lore tests.

**Related Skills:** Lore

**Related Traits:**

Edges: Scholarly Lineage, Wise, Woodcrafty, Woodwise

Flaws: City-dweller, Dullard, Forgetful, Incredulous, Provincial Upbringing

**Related Abilities:**

Loremaster: Expertise, Perfect Recall, Scroll Hoard, Versatility

Antiquarian: Expert Historian, Identify Enchantment

Pilgrim: Sense of Place

**Related Spells:** None

### Accurate Recall Expanded

I believe this trait should have been more like Eidetic Memory from the Star Trek RPG where simple tests of knowledge automatically succeed without the need for performing a test, as opposed to giving a blanket bonus to all Lore tests.

### FORESIGHTED

Either through a natural in-born gift or other fate, you are given flashes of insight about the world.

**Description:** By performing a Wits test, you can attempt to gain some knowledge about something to come in the episode or adventure.

**Related Skills:** None

**Related Traits:** None

**Related Abilities:** None

**Related Spells:** None

### Foresighted Expanded

This is a difficult trait for any Narrator to deal with since it deals with giving up elements of the story to come (I wouldn't have

made it a trait but a stand-alone mechanic, or left it as a prop along with fate as described, but that's neither here nor there). For Narrators who run their games with little preparation, it can take time to determine an appropriate and/or evocative vision, especially in the middle of a game session. For Narrators who do prepare their adventure outlines in advance, it can be annoying to give away hints (even if the hints might be well-thought out) to the players of what may be ahead. But for all Narrators, have a serious discussion during character generation with any player who wants to create a character with this trait, and impress upon him/her the responsibility of using this trait.

Beyond the advice given in the CRB, I would suggest to Narrators with PC's using Foresight that you have a few visions detailed for when the situation warrants it. Maybe make them a bit general so that they could be used at almost any time, and numerous outcomes or interpretations may be inferred from them. These visions can be useful tools to encourage or even divert your players, providing a useful (or not) distraction along the way.

### HIDDEN STRENGTH

You may exert yourself briefly to enhance your spellcasting abilities.

**Description:** For a period of time you are granted a bonus to Weariness tests due to spellcasting, after which you lose 2 Weariness levels.

**Related Skills:** None

**Related Traits:**

Edges: Tireless, Keeper of Anor

Flaws: Afraid of Fire, Afraid of the Sea, Afraid of the Storm, Forgetful, Tongue-tied

**Related Abilities:**

Magician: Dwimmer-crafty, Spell Specialty, Wizard's Heart

Pilgrim: Hardy Constitution

Wizard: Mastery of Magic, Quick Caster, Staff, Wizard Spell Specialty

**Related Spells:** None

### Hidden Strength Expanded

This ability can be overpowering with such a high bonus even for just a few rounds, leading to dreaded powergaming if gone unchecked. I would suggest either changing the duration to be equal to 2 + character's Vitality modifier (minimum 2) in rounds, or having the character make a TN 7 Vitality test and setting the duration at 2 rounds +1 for each level of success, with a Failure and Complete Failure giving +0 rounds while a

Disastrous Failure gives +0 rounds and has the character lose 1 additional level of Weariness.

## SCHOLARLY LINEAGE

You come from a family with a long tradition as knowledge keepers and worldly sages.

**Description:** The specialty bonus is increased for a selected Lore skill group.

**Related Skills:** Lore

**Related Traits:**

Edges: Accurate Recall, Wise, Woodcrafty, Woodwise

Flaws: City-dweller, Dullard, Forgetful, Incredulous, Provincial Upbringing

**Related Abilities:**

Loremaster: Expertise, Perfect Recall, Scroll Hoard, Versatility

Antiquarian: Expert Historian, Identify Enchantment

Pilgrim: Sense of Place

**Related Spells:** None

### Scholarly Lineage Expanded

This ability's improvement limits a character artificially and needlessly to 2 additional picks, affecting 2 other skill groups, while there are quite a few skill groups listed by the game and any number more created by players (unless they be called

Lore/Other), so the cost, in advancements, would be quite high to gain this small benefit for many or even close to all of the skill groups available.

## TRAVEL-SENSE

Knowing which way to go always came to you naturally.

**Description:** You never get lost and always know which way north is, regardless of your location, without tests.

**Related Skills:** None

**Related Traits:** None

**Related Abilities:** None

**Related Spells:** None

### Travel-Sense Expanded

I would change this trait in a couple of ways. First, I would base this capability on a selected environment that the character has associated with his Survival skill, and have subsequent picks of it grant the effects for a different Survival specialty. Second, I would allow it to reduce the TN by 5 for Survival or Lore tests to determine direction, if the character is lost, etc., for a specific environment as denoted by a Survival specialty; another pick could negate the requirement of a test in a specific environment.





# GETTING STARTED

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## 0-ADVANCED CHARACTERS

by Mathew "GandalfOfBorg" Kearns

### MAECHENEB

**RACE, SUB-RACE:** Man, Dúnedain (Man of Dol Amroth)

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

**ATTRIBUTES:** Bearing 10 (+2)\*, Perception 7 (+0), Nimbleness 8 (+1), Strength 11 (+2), Vitality 9 (+1), Wits 9 (+1)

**REACTIONS:** Stamina +2, Swiftswiftness +3\*, Willpower +2, Wisdom +2

**ORDER:** Warrior (Horseman)

**ORDER ABILITIES:** Evasion

**SPELLS:** None

**ADVANCEMENTS:** 0

**SKILLS:** Armed Combat: Blades (Longsword) +4, Healing (Treat Wounds) +1, Inspire +2, Intimidate (Power) +2, Language: Westron +5, Language: Sindarin +5, Lore/History: Gondor (Dol Amroth) +3, Lore/Race: Man (Dúnedain) +3, Lore/Realm: Gondor (Dol Amroth) +3, Lore/Other: Gondorian Nobility (Dol Amroth) +4, Observe (Spot) +2, Persuade (Fast Talk) +1, Ranged Combat: Bows (Short-bow) +1, Ride (Horse) +3, Sea-craft (Command) +1, Siegecraft (Unit Leadership) +1, Unarmed Combat: Brawling (Punch) +2

**EDGES:** Fair, Hammerhand, Hoard, Warrior's Heart

**FLAWS:** Fealty (Prince Imrahil), Proud

**HEALTH:** 11 (Medium, 6 Wound levels)

**COURAGE:** 4

**RENOWN:** 0

**DEFENCE:** 11

**GEAR:** Horse, chainmail, longsword, appropriate garb for his present station (knight-in-training, knight, nobleman, etc.)

**BACKGROUND:** Born to the least of the noble houses in Dol Amroth, Maecheneb still had naught to want. He attended the same classes and had the same tutors as those who taught the royal family and the same advantages as any other lad who was to grow up to take his father's place in the court. Yet still from the youngest of ages he realized that his place was nowhere near that of his peers. This led him to shun the courtier brats, as they did him, and he sought refuge with children of lower station -- running through the streets with the butcher's son or playing pranks on the miller's daughter while the others were preoccupied with the latest gift from their affluent parents.

As time went on and he grew up, Maecheneb had fun with his friends, but he soon fell out with them as they spent more and more time to help support their families, while he was back to having to consort more and more with those whom he disliked -- who shared the feeling in return. Life became more and more miserable until fortune's favor found him the one who'd turn out to be his best friend through thick and thin.

Imrahil was 14 at the time and Maecheneb two years his elder when the former decided to steal out of the tower and see the city on his own. Being the Prince's only son, he had been kept away from any sort of contact outside the tower beyond those of noble birth in the realm. He also had no close, personal friends beyond his teacher and mentor and he desperately wanted to be around kids his own age. This bit of mischief, though, landed him in a spot of trouble with a local gang of boys. Seeing through the paltry disguise of the young prince but not knowing who he was, they decided to have a bit of fun that soon got out of hand when Maecheneb spotted the disturbance as he was returning home from an errand for his mother. Long story short, Maecheneb handled the situation with a fist to the eye of the leader of the gang and a swift kick to another, giving him a limp that would last a couple weeks.

After the gang dispersed with many epithets and curses, Imrahil revealed himself to Maecheneb. Taken aback a bit, he quickly offered to escort (and nudged) the young prince back to his estate. On the walk back, the two became fast friends, and this became a friendship that lasted for many years. They would fight border skirmishes with the Haradrim, face off against Corsair raiders, and when the time came, they would ride side-by-side to Minas Tirith's defense against the might of Mordor.



## GRUN

**RACE, SUB-RACE:** Man of the Wild (Wose)

**RACIAL ABILITIES:** Adaptable, Dominion of Men, Skilled, Woodsy

**ATTRIBUTES:** Bearing 7 (+0), Perception 12 (+3)\*, Nimbleness 8 (+1), Strength 9 (+1), Vitality 9 (+1)\*, Wits 8 (+1)

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

**ORDER:** Barbarian (Drúadan Tribesman)

**ORDER ABILITIES:** Walk Without Trace (Mountains)

**SPELLS:** None

**ADVANCEMENTS:** 0

**SKILLS:** Armed Combat: Clubs (Club) +2, Climb +3, Healing (Herbal Remedies) +1, Insight +2, Language: Understand Drúadanaic +5, Language: Understand Westron +3, Lore/History: White Rock Clan +4, Lore/Race: Men (Drúadan) +4, Lore/Race: Orcs (White Mountain Orcs) +4, Lore/Realm: White Mountains +5, Mimicry (Beasts) +2, Observe (Smell) +3, Ranged Combat: Thrown (Darts) +4, Stealth (Hide, Sneak) +4, Survival (Forest, Mountains) +4, Track (Scent, Orcs) +3

**EDGES:** Armour of Heroes, Bold, Woodcrafty, Wary

**FLAWS:** Battle-fury, Duty (Protect clan from outsiders), Enemy (Orcs of the White Mountains)

**HEALTH:** 10 (Medium, 6 Wound levels)

**COURAGE:** 4

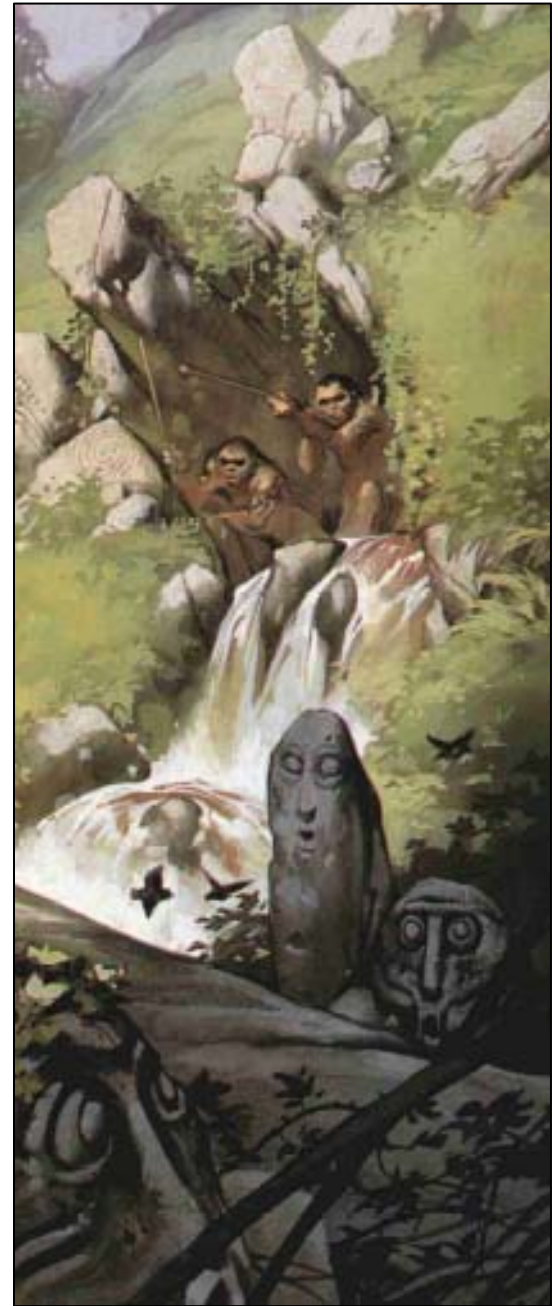
**RENOWN:** 0

**DEFENCE:** 11

**GEAR:** Poisoned darts\* x5, pouch of poultices for wounds (5 doses), antidote for poisons (2 doses), waterskin

**BACKGROUND:** Grun is a path-walker of the White Rock clan, one of the warriors who act as sentinels against intruders to the village. He has a good life with his young son and is well respected among his peers for his wisdom and skill in the wood. The elders see much in his future as he aspires to learn more about the ways of life and healing from the clan healer when not tending to his duties as warrior and father. Like all his people, he despises the bands of orcs roaming the hills and mountains, moreso than most as he lost his wife when a raiding party accompanied by wargs attacked the village while he was on patrol on the other side of the village.

\* See Fan Flavour or Issue 16 for sample poisons used on Drúedain darts.



# INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

## THE PERSON

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

My name is Ivor Whitten and I come from Northern Ireland in the UK. I earn a crust working for the British Medical Association (a medical professional trade union)

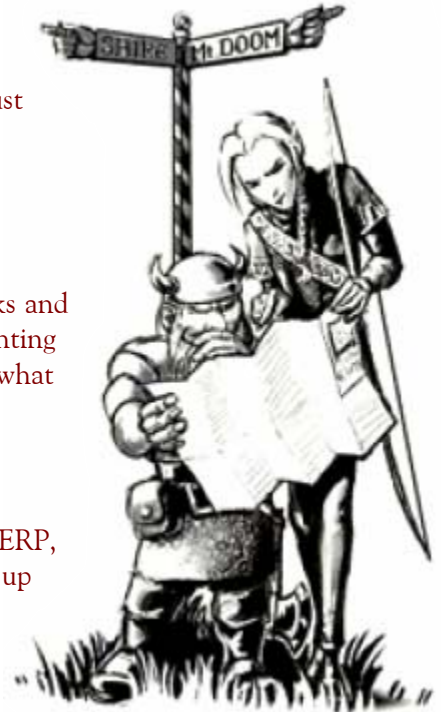
## THE EXPERIENCE

2. How long have you been in gaming?

Ahh! Well I have been role playing since I was 4 or 5 (playing with gun shaped sticks and pretending to land at Normandy). I started RPGing when I was about 7 or 8 (Fighting Fantasy books) and I finally started roleplaying with others when I was 12 (DnD, what else??). I am now 32 (as of 2006).

3. What games are you into (besides Lord of the Rings, of course)?

Hmmm, In chronological order I have played DnD, Warhammer RPG, ADnD, MERP, STOCs (a game produced by a Northern Irish company called Wasteland games – its up on the web now as freeware – just google it), Stormbringer, Palladium RPG, Vampire, Werewolf, Call of Cthulhu, Paranoia, The Riddle of Steel, SG-1 RPG and of course LOTR. I am also a miniature nut who loves 40k, Space Hulk, Necromunda, Blood Bowl, and \*cough\* LOTR tabletop games.



## 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.

I am currently running a LOTR RPG campaign with 4 players (1 man of Dale, 2 Noldor from Lórien and 1 Sylvan from Mirkwood). I was thinking of when to place it, where to place it and how to start it. Then with a rare piece of inspiration after a bit of reading I knew how to start.

It is late October in the year T.A 2941. The characters are starting in Lake-town, a Dragon is dead, the men of Lake-town and the Wood Elves of Mirkwood have just left for the Lonely Mountain to have a chat with a few dwarves about the concept of claiming insurance on the issue of Third Party Fire and Theft (UK readers will get the drift of this). The Noldor elves, twins Angrod and Alatar, are emissaries from the Lady of Lórien to King Thranduil, accompanying the war-host to Lake-town along with the Wood-elf, Maeglin.

They meet Lanmír of the Dales at Laketown and all are left behind to help with the rebuilding of Lake-town. Needless to say the characters, in true 'lets break the plot' gusto get bored waiting and travel to the Lonely Mountain just in time to have a-go at Bolg's host of goblins and Wargs. I went for this big bang start as I wanted to give a little atmosphere to the game (which for aficionados is not totally to script) by starting with a scene opener that would give them a reason to be together and provide a staging post for further adventures. I wanted it to give the feel of the beginning of the Fellowship film as well as other film inspirations such as Gladiator, Underworld 2, etc. – an explosive background story to hook them on.

## THE GAME ITSELF

5. How were you attracted to the game? Are/have you been involved with the creation or playtesting of the line?

It's LOTR!! What a silly question.



6. Out of what is available officially from Decipher, what do you own? What is your favorite? Least favorite?

I have the RPG and TCG – love ‘em both!

7. What do you think is done the best? Worst?

Well the combat in LOTR RPG sucks (always loved MERP tables) so I made my own table which I am willing to share if any one wants it. I feel while MERP was gritty – good for the dark periods of Middle Earth in around T.A 1640 – I always hated the D&D-esque magic system. LOTR RPG is very much more heroic deeds in the vein of Tolkien and the magic system – while not perfect – really is a joy to behold. I love it as I try to capture the cinematic imagery and encourage Angrod’s player to really give it large in acting what Angrod does or says while casting spells.

I like the CODA system as when it is used for cinematic purposes is clean and crisp, simple and clear. It reminds me of the Fighting Fantasy books.

The amount of specializations and bonuses is good but sometimes, especially when creating a character, can be confusing. But we are all still learning the system.

8. If there were to be only one more supplement released, what would you like it to be?

I think it would have to be a full Players Guide with all of the different races and orders set out in style giving a little more history to each, just to give it that little more atmosphere. Maybe even in the style of an ancient document documenting the races, interaction and motives as well as the cultural biases to particular orders.

9. If there were to be a second edition for CODA, what would you scrap, change, and/or add?

Don’t know, though I would probably just stick with what I have and add anything I think might work.

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?

About 2 or 3 months now (since January) and came across it on the Decipher Boards.

12. What do you think of it? What are your favorite sections?

I am blown away that a free fanzine is of such high quality. It is fan-tastic (see what I did there?? Oh, have it your own way, Philistines!).

I love the Peoples of .... Bits as well as ‘Its all Optional’ and the excellent Idiots Guide to PC creation ‘A PCs so-called Life’.

Well done, one and all.

13. Besides The Hall of Fire, where else do you find information and inspiration for your gaming in this system?

You are actually asking me this question?? Well for one LOTR and the Hobbit. Next up is the Silmarillion, the Atlas of Middle-Earth by Karen Wynn Fonstad, MERP modules, Encyclopedia of Arda and of course The Hall of Fire. Oh also, Heren Turambarion’s Compendium – a very useful piece of GMing Kit.

## THE SOURCE

14. What got you interested in Tolkien’s writings?

I first read the Hobbit when I was 12 and was hooked ever since. I moved on to LOTR and read around books of Tolkien. My wife even did her dissertation on an analysis of the Hobbit Bilbo as an archetypal hero (I did mine on the significance of the Round Table in the Arthurian legends – we both majored in English BA (Hons)).

Tolkien just knew how to spin a really good story with a slight edge of pseudo history, just enough to make you wonder.

15. What did you think of the movies?

Peter Jackson is a god. Nuff said. Mind you I did wonder about it in the beginning as I have been a fan of Jackson before this (you have to watch Meet the Feebles, Braindead and Bad Taste) and, well, I doubted him, yes I confess I doubted him. LOTR was brilliant he told his version of LOTR as well as Tolkien told his own.

However, a cautionary tale must be included. It was Peter Jackson, yes Peter, who made King Kong. Yes some people will like it, but I thought it was crap. Yup you heard it, my eloquently described critique of a landmark piece of cinematic history consists of merely 3 words – it was crap.

Rant Finished ☺



## WHAT'S OUT THERE

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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!

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*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

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