



THE HALL OF FIRE FAN WEBZINE

Issue Thirty-Five
November 2006



GREETINGS,

Salutations... Hello All!

Year 3 is rapidly coming to a close and here we are with Issue #35. Decipher is mum on new products (no surprise to any who read this, I'm sure), but we, of course, won't give up hope. Well, there is a bit of bad news with the webzine - Tomcat has decided to relinquish his duties with *The Hall of Fire* due to personal reasons; please join me in wishing him the best and hope that his presence won't be gone altogether. Brandir had decided to help out as our new layout editor, but unfortunately misfortune befell him and he is no longer able to assist us. So, long story short, Issachar was quite generous enough to get the issue out the door. So please help me in thanking him for that. Maybe he will take over the duties *nudge, nudge*.

And now on with the show... and what a chock-full issue this is with articles on Harad and its inhabitants, more newbie characters ready to be played with, a couple NPC's I'm sure you've been hoping to read about, plus a whole lot more!

Happy Gaming,

Matthew A. Kearns
aka GandalfOfBorg
Editor



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ADVENTURING IN

HARAD by Matthew "GandalfOfBorg" Kearns

This is the region of land, wide and sun-baked, south and east of Gondor and Mordor. Here lived the men of Harad, collectively called the Haradrim or Haradwaith (the land is also known by this name) by those in the North. Ancient is their enmity and their struggle against those of the North, both Men and Elves favored by the Valar. In the depths of time they swore a binding oath of fealty and blood to the dark powers of the world: Morgoth and Sauron. Since then, they continue to wage war upon the descendants of the Three Houses of Men and the Firstborn.

This region is great -- as big or bigger than that of The East. It encompasses a wide diversity of climates with a great number of different tribes of barbarians and Men of Darkness -- from the blood-thirsty cults of barbarians in the darkest parts of the southern jungles, to Umbar, the last bastion of western 'sophistication', to the icy isles of the southern wastes.

NEAR HARAD

A region of indefinite known size in the northern part of Harad, it lies to the south of Gondor and Mordor, beyond the River Harnen (S. "South-water"). The river creates the natural boundary between Gondor and Harad, rising in the southern mountains of Mordor and flowing west to the Great Sea. There is a long road that runs north-south through Ithilien, parallel to the Mountains of Shadow, called the Harad Road. It crosses the Poros at its fords and continues south in the unknowns of Harad. It travels north of Ithilien to the gates of the Morannon and then continues on between the Anduin and Mirkwood.

Little is said of the inhabitants of this region beyond Umbar in the histories of Middle-earth, except that the men of that land conspired with those of Khand and the Wainriders, to overthrow Gondor in the time of King Ondoher. Anticipating their strike, Ondoher created the Southern Army to defend his land against them. That army, under the command of Eärnil, met the invading force in southern Ithilien and defeated them completely.

THE MORTAUR

The Mortaur (S. "Black Forest") is not really a forest but the densest and most perilous jungle of Harad and of Middle-earth. It is here that the wild oliphaunts roam along with savage and beastly natives, who take much relish in their dark and bloody cults. Orcs and trolls have also roamed freely in these lands, adapting to the lack of mountains and caves, becoming hole-diggers and great fortress-builders to escape the bane of sunlight.

BARANGURUTH

The Baranguruth (S. "Brown Death") is the great wasteland desert of Harad; it is also known more commonly as "The Last Desert". This is the largest region of the south, acting as the boundary between the Mortaur and Far Harad. A few tribes of the most hardy and resourceful barbarians survive in the wilds

here, migrating from oasis to oasis and daring to hunt the desert-drake. There have also been rumors, rumors so prevalent that they have reached all the way up to the remote realm of The Shire, of the great and terrifying Were-worm (HOF #5).



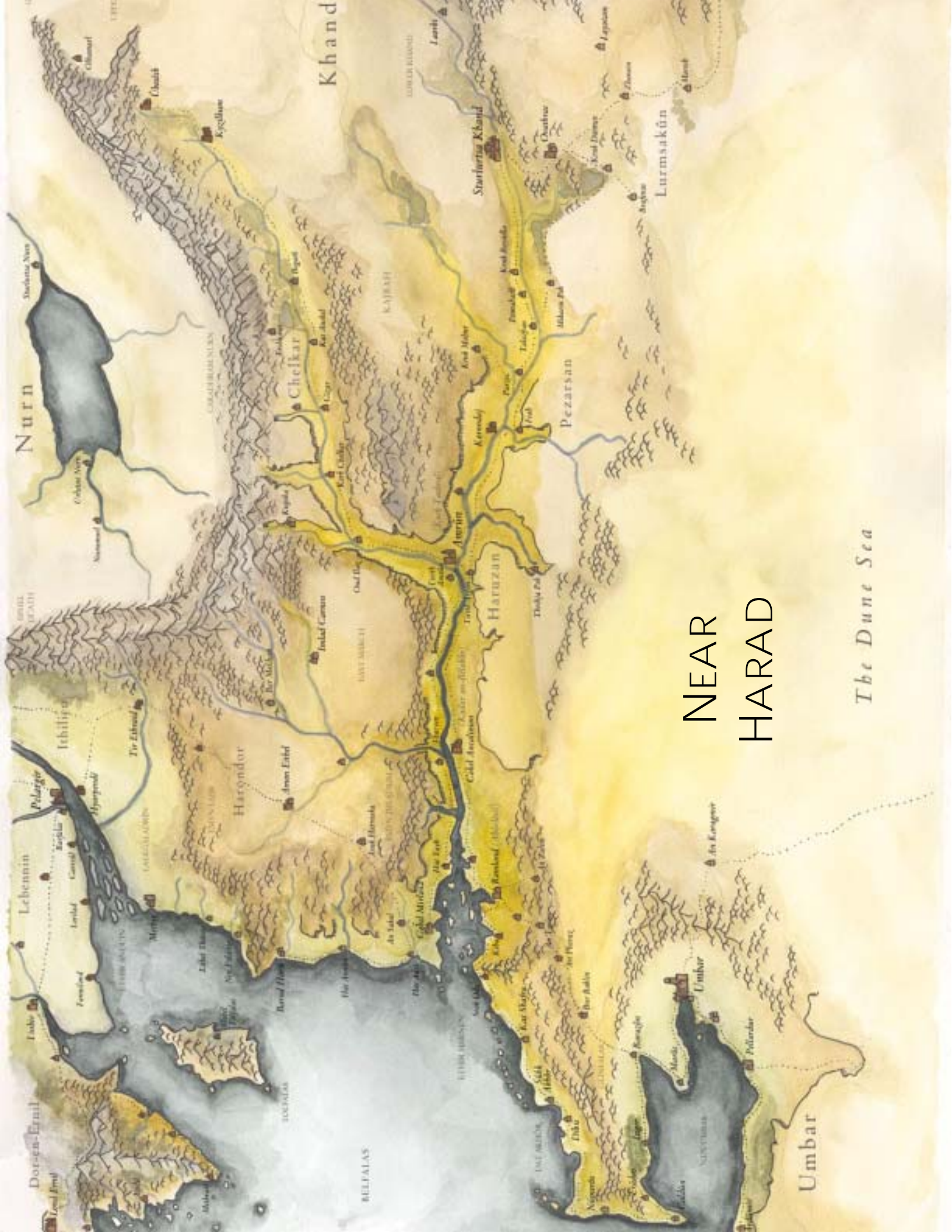
FAR HARAD

Far Harad is a small region very far south of Gondor -- the Harad Road doesn't even reach here, dying along the way in the Baranguruth. The name simply means the Far South (as opposed to Near Harad, the more familiar southern lands). It was a region almost unknown to the peoples of the northwestern parts of Middle-earth. Nonetheless, some of its fierce people travelled north at the time

of the War of the Ring, and fought on the side of Sauron at the Battle of the Pelennor Fields.

TOL-HELEG

The Tol-Heleg (S. "Island(s) of Ice") are the furthest point south in the world that any have ever travelled who returned to tell the tale. While the isle of Numenor was at its height of exploration and expanse of power, these isles were discovered and explored, though many ships were lost in these ventures. There are no known settlements of Men or any other race, but dark tales have come back speaking of great white and blue spider-like creatures able to freeze both the heart and body with just a look.



NEAR HARAD

The Dune Sea

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Since Harad is such a huge region, conceivably as large as Rhun, these hooks are really geared more towards whole chronicles as opposed to single adventures.

1. THE FINAL FRONTIER

Now that Gondor has regained much of its ancient glory and power by expanding the realm, making peace with former enemies, and vanquishing many of the Dark Lord's servants, the King has decided once again to take up the exploration of the world by commissioning several vessels to travel south and north along the coast, seeking allies, riches, and places suitable for colonization.

2. A NEW MENACE ARISES

Sauron defeated and his forces scattered to the wind, King Elessar begins sweeping aside any last resistance of his people's ancient enemies. News of these tidings spread far and wide in Middle-earth, finally coming to the ears of one of the last were-worms of the south. Seeing a chance to dominate those who've not encountered its kind in millenia, the worm goes north to sow death and destruction.

3. FOR GLORY AND THE KING

Taking a few years to regain Gondor's former strength, King Elessar and King Eomer go forth to quash further harassment of their peoples by armies and raiders that come from the south. Campaign with these great leaders and share in the spoils of war.



PEOPLES OF MIDDLE-EARTH: HARADRIM

by Matthew "GandalfOfBorg" Kearns

STATS AND/OR RACIAL PACKAGE(S)

See Fan Flavour or past HOF issues for choices to select for Barbarian Order packages that would be applicable to the peoples of Harad.

HISTORY & LANDS

Little is known of the histories of the various peoples that inhabit Harad. The region is so large, with so many peoples and geographic features that make up the place, that the Professor either declined to discuss them or just didn't have the time to delve into the rest of the unknown in his world. What is known mostly is through their interaction with the powers of the West who defy the will of the Dark Lords. Many times tribes of Haradrim have made war upon the Numenoreans and their descendents, with those of the West always eventually winning out in such struggles. Many times did the Haradrim ally themselves with other barbaric tribes like the Variags and Wainriders, or out of fealty with Mordor. Long and bloody are the battles but in the end they always seem to lose out.

Harad is bounded by Gondor and Mordor to the north, Khand to the east, and Belegaer to the west; what is left is considered within the bounds of this great region of Middle-earth. Harondor, a small subregion originally a part of Gondor, is the most contested piece of land in all of Middle-earth; wars have been made over it for millenia and nary an original structure of Gondor or the natives still stands from that time, except in the haven of Umbar. Further south, the men of the West never traveled save for the great explorations by boat during the height of Numenor's naval power, but much of the knowledge gained during this time was lost either at the sinking of the isle or in the stagnation of the proud kingdom of Gondor.

PHYSICAL INFORMATION

Though the people are as diverse as the land, there are a number of physical similarities between them all. Haradrim are typically denoted by a short, squat stature, dark black hair, and dark complexion. It is rare for these people to be very tall or thin, but those that have such traits are treated as royalty and are usually found within the bloodlines of the chieftains and great warriors of the tribes.



SOCIAL INFORMATION

Despite their blood feud with the Men of the West, common life is hardly all that different between the cultures. There are farmers, warriors, traders, clan leaders, etc. who hold the same functions as their analogs in Gondor or Rohan. But where there is a rule, that rule is meant to be broken. In the case of the Haradrim, it is broken by the Ghamil, the feral tribe of the Mortaur. This tribe's bloodthirsty ways include ritual human sacrifice and other bloody rites induced upon themselves as a daily ritual, upon criminals (which are few), and upon prisoners of war. The rest of the Haradrim give this tribe a wide berth themselves and never marched all that closely with them in the host of Mordor.

ECONOMICS

Not being as technologically advanced as those in the North, most of the Haradrim never used a monetary system, preferring the barter system as tribes were independent of one another except when marching to war. The only place in the south to use currency of any kind, other than possibly lost colonies of Numenoreans, would be Umbar and its surrounding provinces.

** For information on the traditional Haradric profession of training oliphaunts and *mumakil*, see issue 18 of *The Hall of Fire*.

FAN FLAVOUR

by Matthew "GandalfOfBorg" Kearns

EDGES AND FLAWS

Here are a few traits ported over from the Star Trek RPG that would be applicable to Lord of the Rings characters.

EXTRA PROTECTION (EDGE)

You are able to better use cover than most.

EFFECTS: When using cover in combat, your Defence is increased by 2 for all attacks made against you, except for called shots to parts of you that are not being hidden by cover.

EVERYMAN (EDGE)

Your face is one that isn't easily recognizable, even if you are famous.

EFFECTS: The TN for Recognition tests made against you increases by 5.

TEN FEET TALL (EDGE/FLAW)

Your reputation precedes you.

PREREQUISITE: Renown 9+

EFFECTS: Choose a specific characteristic of the PC to apply to this trait. Examples are expertise in a specific skill, discipline, daring, etc. When an opponent makes a Recognition test against you, he will recognize you for one of the aspects you've listed for this trait, gaining a +3 bonus to social tests with this person for positive aspects (edges) and -3 for negative aspects (flaws).

TOLERANCE (EDGE)

You have travelled much abroad, seeing many things and learning much of different peoples.

EFFECTS: You gain +2 bonus to social tests when interacting with those from realms other than your own, but of the same race. If they are of a different race, the bonus is only +1.

RACIAL PACKAGE

MAN OF UMBAR (MAN OF DARKNESS)

You are native to the rebellious city-state of Umbar.

Armed Combat + 1, Craft + 1, Debate + 1, Intimidate + 1, Observe + 1, Persuade + 1

ORDER PACKAGES

FOLK OF THE JUNGLE (BARBARIAN)

You grew up among the lush rainforests, inhabited by fierce and deadly creatures.

Armed Combat + 1, Craft + 2, Observe + 2, Ranged Combat + 2, Stealth + 3, Survival (Jungle) + 3, Track + 2

PICK 5 BONUSSES: +1 to any Order skill

PICK 1 EDGE: Bold, Craftsman, Hardy, Travel-sense, Woodcrafty

DESERT-NATIVES (BARBARIAN)

Life wouldn't be worth it without the bright sun in the sky and dust upon your hands.

Armed Combat + 2, Craft + 1, Observe + 2, Ranged Combat + 2, Ride (Horse) + 1, Stealth + 3, Survival (Desert) + 2, Track + 1, Weather-sense + 1

PICK 5 BONUSSES: +1 to any Order skill

PICK 1 EDGE: Bold, Charmed Life, Hardy, Tireless, Travel-sense

NEW ITEM

RING OF ARTHEDAIN

The ring is a gold band with a black stone set in it; the stone is made of the same substance as the tower of Orthanc and the Stone of Erech. There is an engraving on it in elvish runes saying "Arnor", meaning that the true seat and heir of the North Kingdom lies in the realm of Arthedain. This ring was commissioned by Amlaith, the eldest son of Earendur and heir to the throne of Arnor, and has been passed on for generations to each eldest heir. That tradition was broken when Aranarth, son of Arvedui, last king of the Dunedain of the North, gave it as recompense to the Lossoth tribe that helped his father in his time of need.



OATH OF THE HEIR

The humble northmen refused all hoards of wealth offered, but Aranarth insisted on at least the ring, and pledged that if ever a dark menace in the North should arise again, this ring should be presented and he or his heirs would honor the oath of service he gave. If a Lossoth bears this ring, he gains Ally (Heir of Isildur).

SYMBOL OF ARNOR

The ring is recognizable as belonging to the King of the North Kingdom or his direct heir. It has a Renown 10 and grants a +4 bonus to social tests with Dunedain and subjects of Arnor or its child states.

THE EFFECTIVE: DRAGON-SLAYER

by Matthew "GandalfOfBorg" Kearns

BACKGROUND

The CODA system and the game itself almost beckons that you create your character's concept and background before rolling the dice. You could be simply a protector of the environs or a force of nature to be reckoned with. Think about where your character comes from and what his motivations are, and maybe even sketch out a few of his personal goals. This will help both you in focusing your roleplaying and your Narrator in creating side adventures for developing your character. Work with your Narrator to come up with something suitable for the game in which you will be playing.

PREREQUISITES

To become a Dragon-slayer, you must achieve the following besides 7 Advancements in one Order:

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Armed Combat 5+ | • Language: Felakmek 6+ | • Survival (Arctic) 7+ |
| • Craft: Carving 6+ | • Perform: Sing 6+ | • Track 7+ |
| • Games: Riddles 6+ | • Stealth 5+ | • Ability to cast spells |

Also, unless the good graces of the Narrator and an outstanding in-game reason for allowing such a thing, the race of the character would be restricted to Dwarf. Men would be the most likely of the other races, with Hobbits dead last and Elves just above that.

SKILLS

Beyond the skills listed in the prerequisites, Weather-sense is the only other skill as an Order Skill for the Dragon-slayer; each being quite useful in the search and confrontation with a dragon.

EDGES

There are many traits that may distinguish a Dragon-slayer in her profession and personally as well, such as Craftmaster, Curious, Hidden Strength, Honey-tongued, Resolute, Travel-sense, Woodcrafty, and Woodwise.

FLAWS

There are a number of traits that may represent the failings of such characters as Dragon-slayers, such as Arrogant, Code of Honour, Duty, Enemy, Oath, or Proud.

ABILITIES

Dragon-slayers may not acquire a number of Dragon-slayer abilities greater than Language: Felakmek rank - 5.

BEMUSE: A powerful ability that can enhance a character's aptitude in both persuasion and resistance to coercion by granting the effect of gaining Voice of Suasion as a spell ability and the trait Strong-willed.

CARVE DRAGON-SLAYER SPEAR: If you are lucky enough to survive an encounter with a dragon and slay it, you may gain this ability that allows the creation of a spear crafted from the skeleton of the great beast.

TOOL DRAGON-FELL: With the same preconditions as the ability above, you may gain this ability that allows the creation of a suit of armor crafted from the hide of the great beast.

MULTIPLE ORDERS

BASIC ORDERS

BARBARIAN: With the prerequisite of spellcasting, this Order would need to be multiclassed with one that grants spellcasting or the character's race would have to allow it. Otherwise, the Barbarian fits in quite well with the theme of the Dragon-slayer.

CRAFTSMAN: Like Barbarian, this Order would need to be multiclassed with one that grants spellcasting or the character's race would have to allow it (unless the Enchantment ability would count); otherwise, it fits in quite well with the theme of the Dragon-slayer.

LOREMASTER: Though this Order gives the ability to cast spells, a character with this Order as its primary focus would hardly be up to the task or really have the motivation to join with this Order.

MAGICIAN: Like the Loremaster, a character with this Order as its primary focus would hardly be up to the task or really have the motivation to join with this Order.

MARINER: Though this Order fits the bill for many of the prerequisites, it just doesn't work thematically unless under unusual circumstances.



NOBLE: Like Barbarian, this Order would need to be multiclassed with one that grants spellcasting or the character's race would have to allow it; otherwise, it fits in quite well with the theme of the Dragon-slayer.

ROGUE: Like Barbarian, this Order would need to be multiclassed with one that grants spellcasting or the character's race would have to allow it; otherwise, it fits in quite well with the theme of the Dragon-slayer.

WARRIOR: Like Barbarian, this Order would need to be multiclassed with one that grants spellcasting or the character's race would have to allow it; otherwise, it fits in quite well with the theme of the Dragon-slayer.

MASTER OF THE WILD: Like the Loremaster, a character with this Order as its primary focus would hardly be up to the task or really have the motivation to join with this Order.

MINER: A character with this Order as its primary focus would hardly be up to the task or really have the motivation to join with this Order.

PILGRIM: A character with this Order as its primary focus would hardly be up to the task or really have the motivation to join with this Order.

RANGER: Though this Order fits the bill for many of the prerequisites, it just doesn't work thematically unless under unusual circumstances.



ELITE ORDERS

ARCHER: Like Barbarian, this Order would need to be multiclassed with one that grants spellcasting or the character's race would have to allow it; otherwise, it fits in quite well with the theme of the Dragon-slayer.

ANTIQUARIAN: A character with this Order as its primary focus would hardly be up to the task or really have the motivation to join with this Order.

ARTIFICER: Like Barbarian, this Order would need to be multiclassed with one that grants spellcasting or the character's race would have to allow it (unless the Enchantment ability would count); otherwise, it fits in quite well with the theme of the Dragon-slayer. The ability to create wondrous items would be a boon to any group seeking to take down a wyrm.

CAPTAIN: Like Barbarian, this Order would need to be multiclassed with one that grants spellcasting or the character's race would have to allow it; otherwise, it fits in quite well with the theme of the Dragon-slayer.

EARTH-READER: A character with this Order as its primary focus would hardly be up to the task or really have the motivation to join with this Order.

KNIGHT: Like Barbarian, this Order would need to be multiclassed with one that grants spellcasting or the character's race would have to allow it; otherwise, it fits in quite well with the theme of the Dragon-slayer.

SPY: A character with this Order as its primary focus would hardly be up to the task or really have the motivation to join with this Order.

WIZARD: Like the Loremaster, a character with this Order as its primary focus would hardly be up to the task or really have the motivation to join with this Order.

SPELLS

There are numerous spells that would be a great help in ridding the world of dragons. A few suggestions are Bane-spell, Blade Preservation, Flame of Anor, Lightning, Resist Fear, Sense Power, Spellbinding, and Victory-spell.

PLAYING A DRAGON-SLAYER

Since finding and killing dragons consumes your every waking moment, your single-mindedness can hamper the flexibility of party participation unless there is a way to justify a distraction as leading eventually to some advantage or to your goal along the way. The best example Tolkien gives of this kind of character is Fram of the Eotheod, who hunts down and slays Scatha in the Grey Mountains. Bard would technically be considered a dragon-slayer, but I don't think he quite fits in the framework on this Order.

ORDERS OF MAGNITUDE: ROGUE

by David "Issachar" DeBoe

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.

DARK HEROES IN MIDDLE-EARTH

The anti-hero, popular in today's fantasy, is mostly absent from Tolkien's writings. Though many of his heroes are tragic and suffer such character flaws as ruthlessness and petty jealousy, they are not mere scoundrels. This may discourage some players from playing a Rogue to type, as a shady character with fewer moral compunctions than the rest of the party. You might instead play your Rogue as a wandering adventurer, a survivalist, or as a victim excluded from society for no just reason.

In my view, any of these Rogue types are acceptable in Middle-Earth, even the anti-hero Rogue, so long as the distinction between right and wrong continues to be an intrinsic, pervasive aspect of the setting. In a system that describes the "mirror of nature" and that includes rules for acquiring Corruption, there must be in-world consequences for heroes whose methods are rather less than heroic. For the anti-hero Rogue, this could mean ending up as a redeemed villain or eventually slipping over the line into service to Morgoth. Flying just under the moral radar indefinitely should not be not an option.

OUTSIDE LOOKING IN

One point of commonality among all types of Rogue characters, something almost definitional, is their "outsider" status. Rogues live partly or wholly outside the mainstream of society, and are often distrusted by members of society in good standing. Conversely, the Rogue enjoys a rapport with - or at least has the savvy to know how to deal with -- those who are popularly regarded as unacceptable or disreputable. Even when there is no honour among thieves and "every man for himself" is the credo, the Rogue understands his fellow outsiders in a way that others do not.

Playing your Rogue as an outsider does not have to mean that the character is socially inept, even in a king's court. But try to make use of the psychological gulf between ordinary folk, who are accepted by society, and the Rogue, who frequently is not. Some Rogues may have open disdain for the classes who look down on them, and wear their rejection as a badge of honour. Others might try to adapt and fit in, with varying degrees of success. The point, however, is that the Rogue feels that he or she must **try** to belong, while others just naturally do belong.



MINIMALLY MULTI-TALENTED

There are many different archetypes and niches that a roguish character can fill, and accordingly the Rogue order is versatile, having more order skills than any other basic order in the game. Yet despite this broad range of **potential** talent, the Rogue receives only five points per advancement like everyone else, so in practice the character tends to specialize in a few skills. This prevents the CODA Rogue from being as much of a jack-of-all-trades as the equivalent class in third edition D&D.

For those who want to take better advantage of the Rogue's versatile skill list, consider allowing the "Breadth of Skill" order ability described below in your game. Other new order abilities in this issue are designed to help the Rogue specialize and fulfill a particular niche or character concept. There are more new abilities on offer than in previous "Orders of Magnitude" articles, in part because I feel that the set of Rogue order abilities in the Core Rules leaves much to be desired. Hopefully players and Narrators will find something here to add more lustre to the somewhat neglected Rogue.

NEW ORDER ABILITIES

BREADTH OF SKILL

DESCRIPTION: You have at least a little know-how in many different areas. Choose up to five Rogue order skills in which your number of ranks does not exceed your number of advancements. You gain one rank in each of those skills. Note: You cannot choose Armed Combat, Ranged Combat or Unarmed Combat.

You may purchase this ability a number of times equal to your Wits bonus + 1. Each time you purchase the ability, select up to five Rogue order skills (excepting combat skills) in which your number of ranks does not exceed your number of advancements. You gain one rank in each of those skills.

BURGLARY

REQUIREMENTS: 2 ranks in each of Appraise, Legerdemain and Stealth

DESCRIPTION: You have a talent for purloining valuable items and getting away scot-free. You gain a + 2 bonus to all Appraise, Legerdemain, and Stealth tests.

DANGER SENSE

REQUIREMENTS: Perception 9+

DESCRIPTION: Your heightened senses and instincts alert you to immediate threats. When making an Observe test to detect an imminent danger (such as the sound of foes approaching, the presence of poison in a drink, or the feel of a trap door underfoot), you receive a + 2 bonus to the test result. (The Narrator should add this bonus secretly to the appropriate Observe tests, to avoid revealing the presence of danger.) In addition, for every four ranks in Observe that you have, you gain a + 1 bonus to Swifttest tests made to determine initiative.



DERRING-DO

DESCRIPTION: The challenge of overcoming physical obstacles energizes you. When you spend a point of Courage on any Climb, Acrobatics, Jump or Run test, the bonus is + 5 instead of + 3.

DIRTY FIGHTING

DESCRIPTION: A swift kick between the legs, a fistful of dirt in the face -- you'll use any trick in the book to gain an edge in a fight. As a single action, you can make a special Unarmed Combat test against an opponent in an attempt to hamper that opponent's actions. If your attack test succeeds, you deal no damage, but on the opponent's next turn all of his or her physical tests suffer a -1 penalty for each level of success you achieved on your attack test (-1 for a Marginal success, -2 for a Complete success, -3 for a Superior success, and -4 for an Extraordinary success). **Note:** Some large, powerful, or supernatural enemies are not vulnerable to dirty fighting tactics.

LURKING IN SHADOWS (REVISED)

DESCRIPTION: You can spend a point of Courage to improve your stealthiness in one of two ways. You can gain an immediate + 5 bonus to a single Stealth test (instead of the normal + 3 bonus), or you can gain a + 2 bonus to all Stealth tests you make within the next one minute.

NIGHT'S ALLY

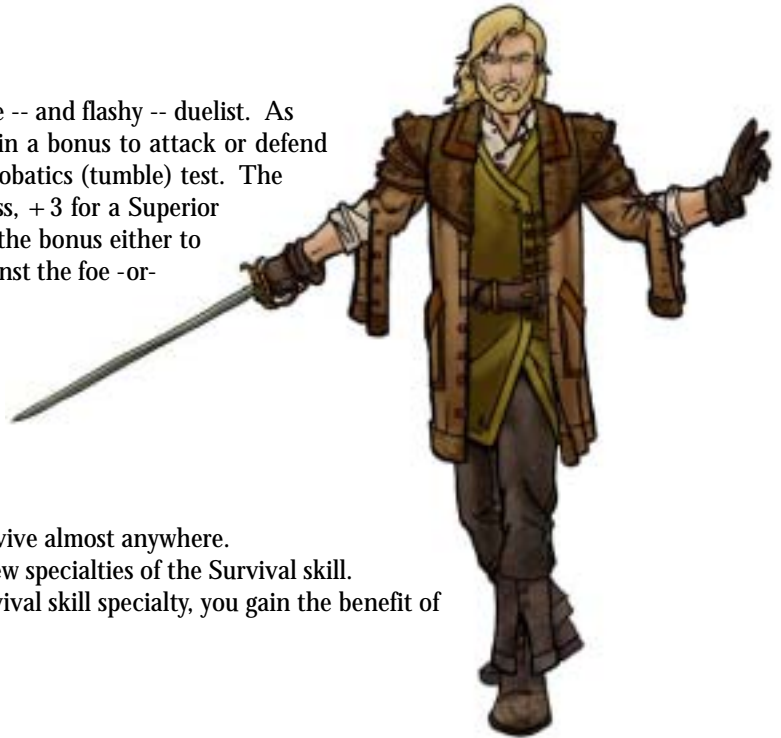
REQUIREMENTS: Night-Eyed edge -or- Lurking in Shadows ability

DESCRIPTION: You are accustomed to pursuing your activities under cover of night. At nightfall, you gain an extra point of Courage that remains until daybreak. If spent, the point of Courage is recovered at the same rate as normal Courage points. (If you are in an unlit area such as a cavern or dungeon for an extended period of time, you receive the extra Courage point regardless of whether it is day or night outside, though in this case the Courage point goes away if you enter a well-lit area.) Additionally, your penalty for seeing in the dark is reduced by 2; this stacks with the Night-Eyed edge.

SWASHBUCKLER

REQUIREMENTS: 3 ranks in Acrobatics

DESCRIPTION: Your agility and grace make you a more effective -- and flashy -- duelist. As a single action, make a TN 10 Acrobatics (tumble) test to gain a bonus to attack or defend against a single foe that you designate when you make the Acrobatics (tumble) test. The bonus is +1 for a Marginal success, +2 for a Complete success, +3 for a Superior success, and +4 for an Extraordinary success. You may apply the bonus either to the next Armed Attack or Unarmed Attack test you make against the foe -or- to your Defence score the next time the foe makes an Armed Attack or Unarmed Attack test against you. If you do not use the bonus by the end of your next turn, it is wasted.



VAGABOND

REQUIREMENTS: 3 ranks in Survival

DESCRIPTION: Extensive wandering has taught you how to survive almost anywhere. You gain a +1 bonus to all Survival tests. You also gain two new specialties of the Survival skill. When traveling in any environment for which you have a Survival skill specialty, you gain the benefit of the Travel-sense edge.

ORDERS OF MAGNITUDE: WARRIOR

by David "Issachar" DeBoe

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.

DEALING DEATH

Uniquely among the basic orders, the Warrior's trade is killing; his training prepares him to slay his foe swiftly and effectively and live to fight another day. In our time, the military profession has learned to overcome people's natural reluctance to kill, and to help them deal with the weighty emotional effects of having done so. As the player of a Warrior, you might want to consider how your character learned to kill and how this has affected his or her outlook on the value of life.

In one of his lesser-known books, *Till We Have Faces*, C.S. Lewis includes a scene in which a character training to fight a duel for the first time is made to go out and slaughter a pig. The warrior doing the training explains that this is a useful step towards overcoming the natural revulsion most people feel about driving a sword-point into flesh. If your character is a career soldier, similar practices in his or her order can easily be imagined. On the other hand, your Warrior might have been flung into battle for the first time without preparation, killing a foe out of sheer desperation. The first battle your Warrior ever fought, and certain other ones, are likely to be prominent in the character's memory. Think of details from these battles that come often to mind and continue to affect the character for a long time afterwards.

Each Warrior character has an individual perspective on the business of dealing death. Some might be so hardened to the act that it is their first instinct even when violence can be avoided. Others may strive to kill only in self-defense. A great many warriors will differentiate between the morality of killing an "evil" or criminal enemy and one who does not clearly deserve death. The question then becomes, how does one determine when death is deserved?

Of course, the appropriateness of applying modern psychology to the warrior-heroes of an ancient fictional past is questionable. In our own real-world past, whenever life and health were precarious and brutality was commonplace, people have done whatever deeds were necessary to survive, without much apparent remorse. But I believe there is room in your LotR game for introspection about the Warrior's trade. In the first place, although the setting is ancient, the game is played by modern players, and we tend – appropriately – to insert themes that resonate with us regardless of the setting. Also, Tolkien provides us with moments like Sam's musings on the fallen Haradrim warrior and what brought him from home and peace to fight in a war on behalf of the Enemy. Tolkien presents this sort of introspection as a noble trait that befits the heroes in his world.



RESOURCES FOR WARRIOR PC'S

The Hall of Fire has published a variety of articles over the years with information and suggestions about the Warrior order and the tools of a Warrior's trade. You might find the following articles useful to review:

ISSUE, PAGE	DESCRIPTION
2, pg 16	Warrior packages (Brawler, Huntsman)
4, pg 11-12	Combat rules summary, part 1
5, pg 17-18	Combat rules summary, part 2
5, pg 9-12	Crafting and repairing weapons and armour
7, pg 23	New order abilities (Lucky Strike, Staunch Defender)
10, pg 29-30	Warrior package (Squire of Dol Amroth)
13, pg 14-20	The Effective Warrior (character tips)
16, pg 6	Warrior package (Druadan Watchman)
16, pg 18	New order ability (Tactical Advantage)
17, pg 9-10	New weapon descriptions
23, pg 7-9	Weapon quality, repair & maintenance rules
34, pg 12-13	Damage types and weapons

NEW ORDER ABILITIES

IMPROVED COMBAT EDGES

DESCRIPTION: You get improved benefits from combat-related edges. From the following list, choose a number of edges equal to half your Wits score (rounding up). If you have the selected edges (or acquire them later), you receive the improved benefit described. Subsequent increases to your Wits score can enable you to select additional edge improvements from the list, but penalties to your Wits score do not cause you to lose the benefits of edge improvements you have already selected.

- **Accurate:** The bonus from this edge increases by +1 when you acquire 8 and 12 ranks in the qualifying Ranged Combat skill.
- **Dodge:** You qualify for this edge if your Nimbleness is 7 or higher. If you meet the normal requirements (Nimbleness 9+), the bonus from the edge increases by +1.
- **Hammerhand:** Your unarmed attacks deal an additional +1 damage when you acquire 4, 8, and 12 ranks in Unarmed Combat.
- **Quick-Draw:** When you quick-draw a melee weapon and use your next action to attack with it, you gain a +1 bonus to that Armed Combat test.
- **Two-Handed Fighting:** The parry modifier for your off-hand weapon increases by +2.
- **Warrior's Heart:** The bonus from this edge also applies to Stamina tests made to recover Wound levels and to resist stun attacks.
- **Warwise:** You receive an additional +1 bonus to any one skill affected by this edge.
- **Weapon Mastery:** The bonus from this edge increases by +1 when you acquire 8 and 12 ranks in the qualifying Armed Combat skill.

POWERFUL STRIKE

REQUIREMENTS: Strength 9+

DESCRIPTION: When wielding any melee weapon considered Medium or Large for your size, apply your Strength modifier to Armed Combat tests instead of your Nimbleness modifier, and gain a +2 bonus to damage on a successful attack. You can also use this ability when using Unarmed Combat tests to make punch or kick attacks.

SKIRMISHER

REQUIREMENTS: Nimbleness 9+

DESCRIPTION: When carrying a total amount of weight up to your Strength score x5, of which no more than half may be armour and shield, you gain a +1 bonus to Defence and a +2 bonus to Dodge tests, and your Multiple-Action Penalty is reduced from -5 to -2 if used for a movement action.

SWIFT DEFENCE

REQUIREMENTS: Swiftiness 3+

DESCRIPTION: You can parry the attacks of multiple foes with a single maneuver. You gain a +2 bonus to all tests made to parry or block. Additionally, when you spend an action to make a Parry or Block maneuver, you can use the same test result at a -2 penalty to parry or block the attack of a second foe who attacks you before your next turn.

You can purchase this ability a second time to gain another +2 bonus to all parry or block tests and the ability to parry or block a third foe's attack with the same maneuver, using your original test result at a -4 penalty.

TEAM FIGHTING

REQUIREMENTS: 6+ ranks in Siegecraft

DESCRIPTION: When fighting side by side with an ally, once per round you can grant your ally a bonus against a foe that you successfully strike with an Armed Combat or Unarmed Combat test. The bonus is +1 for a Complete success, +2 for a Superior success, and +3 for an Extraordinary success. On your ally's next turn, he or she may apply this bonus to one melee attack test against the foe you struck, -or- to his or her Defence score against one attack from that foe.

TRAINED FOE-SLAYER

REQUIREMENTS: Fell-Handed edge

DESCRIPTION: If your Fell-Handed edge applies to a foe you face, you gain the following bonuses against that foe: +1 to damage, +1 to Defence, and +1 to Intimidate (power) tests.

VETERAN CAMPAIGNER

REQUIREMENTS: Battle-Hardened ability, 8+ ranks in Siegecraft

DESCRIPTION: Spending a point of Courage on any of the following tests gives you a +5 bonus instead of +3: Armed Combat tests, Healing (Treat Wounds) tests, Inspire tests, Ranged Combat tests, and Stamina tests.



ALLIES AND ADVERSARIES

by Matthew "GandalfOfBorg" Kearns

GOLDBERRY

*"O slender as a willow-wand! O clearer than clear water!
O reed by the living pool! Fair River-daughter!"*

—From Frodo's greeting to Goldberry, *The Fellowship of the Ring*

I hesitate to give actual stats to Goldberry as any numbers put down would be conjecture, but I will list some of her traits and powers that could be backed by an interpretation of the books.

RACE: From Beyond the Sea

ORDER: Craftsman, Loremaster, Magician, Minstrel, Noble

EDGES: Ally (Tom Bombadil), Craftmaster, Eloquent, Fair, Foresighted, Honey-tongued, Incorruptible, Indomitable, Wise

FLAWS: Duty (Old Forest)

ABILITIES: Deference, Enchantment, Expertise (Old Forest), Gladden, Inspiring Performance, Masterwork, Preservation, Refuge, Secretive, Sense Power, Speedy Work, Spellcasting Method (Songs), Spell Specialty (Song)

SPELLS: Animal Messenger, Beast Speech, Beast Summoning, Calling, Crafting-spell, Create Light, Enhance Food, Evoke Awe, Fog-raising, Fog-weaving, Power of the Land, Rain-ward, Springtime, Watershaping

BACKGROUND

Goldberry is a mysterious being described as the 'River-daughter' and is the companion of Tom Bombadil, probably being his wife. From her description, she appears quite young, but actually she seems to be somewhat older than her appearance suggests. Tom tells the Hobbits that he met her by the Withywindle 'long ago', but it isn't entirely clear what he means by this.

Like Tom, Goldberry's place in Middle-earth isn't easy to establish. She seems to be some kind of river-spirit, though it is conjectured that both Tom and Goldberry belong to the order of the Maiar (for more on this, see Tom Bombadil below). In literary terms, Tolkien seems to have intended her character to perform a symbolic role -- he writes. "We are ... in real river-lands in autumn. Goldberry represents the actual seasonal changes in such lands" (The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien, No 210, dated 1958).

TOM BOMBADIL

*"Old Tom Bombadil is a merry fellow;
Bright blue his jacket is, and his boots are yellow."*

—Tom Bombadil, *The Fellowship of the Ring*

I hesitate to give actual stats to Tom Bombadil as any numbers put down would be conjecture, but I will list some of his traits and powers that could be backed by an interpretation of the books.

RACE: From Beyond the Sea

ORDER: Loremaster, Minstrel, Noble, Ranger (Elite Order)

EDGES: Armour of Heroes, Bold, Charmed Life, Curious, Dodge, Doughty, Elf-friend, Eloquent, Faithful (Goldberry), Favour of Fortune, Furtive, Honour's Insight, Incorruptible, Indomitable, Keen-eared, Rank, Resolute, Strong-willed, Tireless, Travel-sense, Wise, Woodcrafty

FLAWS: Duty

ABILITIES: Domain (Old Forest), Gladden, Inspiring Performance, Noble Mien, Power Over Magic (like Balrog, but + 10 bonus for Air and Beast spells), Sanctum, Sanctum Power, Sense Power, Spellcasting, Spellcasting Method (Song), Spell Specialty (Beast), Wizard's Heart, Woven Words

SPELLS: Animal Messenger, Beast Speech, Beast Summoning, Break Binding, Calling, Display of Power, Evoke Awe, Farseeing, Fog-raising, Fog-weaving, Power of the Land, Rain-ward

BACKGROUND

A mysterious and powerful being, called by the Elves Iarwain Ben-adar (Oldest and Fatherless), who dwells in the valley of the Withywindle, east of the Shire, deep within The Old Forest. What kind of being he was has never been certainly discovered, but at some stage in the past, he seems to have settled at the edge of the Old Forest, setting himself boundaries, but boundaries within which his power was extraordinary. Tom was a creature of contradictions, one

moment defeating ancient forces with hardly an effort, the next capering and singing nonsensical songs; his powers were so great that even The One Ring held no sway nor affected Tom in any fashion.



He appeared as an old man, at least in hobbit eyes, with a wrinkled and ruddy face, bright blue eyes, and a bristling brown beard. He was said to be taller than a typical hobbit, but too short to be a Man, so he seems to have been about five feet in height. His attire consisted of a blue jacket and yellow boots, and he wore an old and battered hat, surmounted by a feather. He seems to have preferred to wear a swan-feather in his hat, but before he met Frodo and company on the banks of the Withywindle, he had acquired the feather of a Kingfisher instead. In his own house, rather than a hat, he wore a crown of autumn leaves, perhaps revealing something of the elemental powers he possessed. Unfortunately, for that reason and Tom's own nature and

personality, if the Ring had been left to him, it likely would have eventually made its way back to the world.

As to Tom's true nature, that is left to speculation. For more information, I suggest checking out the Encyclopedia of Arda or other notable sites or books that discuss this matter further such as these:

- What is Tom Bombadil? thoughts and discussion by Steuard Jensen < <http://tolkien.slimy.com/essays/Bombadil.html> >
- Who is Tom Bombadil? an essay by Eugene Hargrove < <http://www.cas.unt.edu/~hargrove/bombadil.html> >

RAGNAR, DUNLENDING CHIEFTAIN

"Some say his wolfish look comes from long treks into the wilderness or that he keeps a wolf for a pet, but I believe it is because he was suckled by and grew up with a pack of those wild dogs."

—Gordurg, Village Elder

RACE: Man, Darkness (Dunlending)

RACIAL ABILITIES: Adaptable, Dominion of Man, Skilled

ORDER: Barbarian (Mountain Folk)

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 10 (+2)*, Perception 8 (+1), Nimbleness 8 (+1), Strength 12 (+3)*, Vitality 8 (+1), Wits 5 (-1)

REACTIONS: Stamina +2*, Swiftess +3, Willpower +2, Wisdom +2

SKILLS: Armed Combat: Clubs (Club) +9, Climb +5, Intimidate (Power) +6, Mimicry (Beasts) +4, Language: Understand Dunlendish +3, Language: Understand Westron +2, Lore/History: Clan History +2, Lore/Race: Man (Dunlendings) +3, Lore/Race: Orcs (Misty Mountain Orcs) +2, Lore/Realm: Clan Territory +3, Observe (Spot) +4, Stealth (Hide, Sneak) +9, Survival (Mountains) +9, Track (Beasts) +5, Weather-sense +3

EDGES: Doughty, Hardy, Swift Recovery

FLAWS: Battle-fury, Crippled (Loss of Arm)

ORDER ABILITIES: Champion (Orcs), Hard March, Preferred Weapon (Spear), Walk Without Trace

ADVANCEMENTS: 10

HEALTH: 11 **DEFENCE:** 11

COURAGE: 5 **RENOWN:** 5

EQUIPMENT: Rations, survival gear, spear



BACKGROUND

No one knows the age of Ragnar The One-Handed, he doesn't even know. He was found as a child approaching adolescence living with a pack of great, grey wolves. Apparently some time in his past, his family was lost for one reason or another, yet he survived in the care of the wild animals. He's always been gruff of nature and mightier than any other in body. It took a long time for him to adjust to living among his kind again, but once he took to it, the village became his home -- territory he eagerly defends tooth and nail. He speaks not at all, but does understand Dunlending and some Westron.

Shunning conventional weapons, Ragnar's choice is that of using a jaw-bone as a club. He acquired such an item from the skull of a warg-chieftain he had killed with his bare hands. It was also in that fight that he lost the use of his right arm from the savage claws and bites from his opponent.

GETTING STARTED

0-ADVANCEMENT CHARACTERS by Matthew "GandalfOfBorg" Kearns

MALAKIL

RACE: Man, Dunedain (Black Numenorean)

RACIAL ABILITIES: Adaptable, Dominion of Man, Skilled

ORDER: Magician (Student of the Secret Arts)

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

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

SKILLS: Armed Combat: Swords (Longsword) +1, Debate (Oratory) +4, Inquire (Converse) +1, Insight +2, Intimidate (Majesty) +3, Language: Adunaic +6, Language: Haradric (Umbar dialect) +2, Language: Quenya +2, Language: Sindarin +3, Language: Westron +5, Lore/Group: The Wise (Saruman) +2, Lore/Group: The Nine (Witch-king) +3, Lore/Group: Umbar Nobility +4, Lore/History: Numenorean (Kin Strife) +4, Lore/Realm: Umbar (Politics) +5, Observe (Listen, Spot) +4, Persuade (Charm) +3, Search +3

EDGES: Ally (The Mouth), Curious, Honey-tongued, Rank

FLAWS: Dark Secret (Spy, now double-agent), Grasping

ORDER ABILITIES:
Spellcasting

HEALTH: 7

DEFENCE: 10

COURAGE: 4

RENOWN: 0

CORRUPTION: 4

EQUIPMENT: Robes, staff of rank, some jewelry, 2d6 SP

BACKGROUND

The Mouth survived... barely. To the surprised and now thoroughly enthralled sycophants, he returned in secret to Umbar to lick the wounds he suffered in the destruction of The Eye. His faithful servant and student, Malakil, was there to tend his master's injuries, both of body and ego. Long had he served the Lieutenant of Mordor in various capacities, but primarily as student and confidant. As his agent in the court of Umbar, he had learned much of what transpired at the gates of Mordor and the rants about what to do against the reemergence of a king in the realm of their most hated enemy. Mum he had kept in the shadows, biding his time and collecting information for his master and his schemes.

But a day of reckoning has come for Malakil. A spy of Gondor has sought him out, as he is often in the courts of the nobles, to aid in the cause of toppling Umbar and to bring peace once again to the land. This simple thing gave him pause, a pause that could change his life. He had never given thought before about the end of war with Gondor beyond its destruction, living in peace without the backstabbing and machinations of the courts under the sway of The Shadow. Nor had he even thought of betraying his master; his loyalty was never wavering... until now. He was offered gold and other such prizes for his services, which he gladly accepted since that was his nature, but he isn't so sure of it anymore.



HOLEM

RACE: Man, Darkness (Man of Umbar)

RACIAL ABILITIES: Adaptable, Dominion of Man, Skilled

ORDER: Craftsman (Guildsman)

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 11 (+2)*, Perception 10 (+2)*, Nimbleness 8 (+1), Strength 10 (+2), Vitality 6 (+0), Wits 6 (+0)

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

SKILLS: Appraise (Goods) +3, Armed Combat: Clubs (Club) +1, Conceal +5, Craft: Merchant +6, Craft: Other +2, Debate (Bargain) +6, Intimidate (Power) +1, Language: Adunaic +3, Language: Haradric (Umbar) +3, Lore/Group: Umbar Nobility +3, Lore/History: Umbar +3, Lore/Realm: Umbar +3, Lore/Realm: Harondor +3, Observe (Listen) +3, Persuade (Charm) +6

EDGES: Craftmaster, Friends (Resistance), Honey-tongued

FLAWS: Dark Secret 2 (Leader of resistance, Affair with daughter of highly-placed courtier)

ORDER ABILITIES: Place of Trade

HEALTH: 8

DEFENCE: 11

COURAGE: 4

RENOWN: 0

EQUIPMENT: Staff, 1d6 sp, 1d6 gp, fine clothing

BACKGROUND

The constant infighting within the realm and the wars with Gondor and its allies have worn thin the treasury of the land and patience of the people. They are constantly gouged in taxes even though the Corsairs bring back plenty from their raids. Enough had been enough for many and this included Holem. Riots began to crop up in places, only to be quelled at the point of the sword and head of the arrow, but this did not sway the belief that the elite's quest to defy Gondor and to ally themselves with evil creatures was dooming everyone to destruction. Holem and other prominents of the working class, even a few of the nobility, have banded together to create a resistance against the tyranny. Their tactics aren't very public anymore so as not to show the hand of the growing movement. One of the resistance's most promising achievements is to make in-roads into the most elite of courts with the contact of Malakil, a Black Numenorean noble commonly known and seen around the various courts and homes of the upper crust.

BARKESH

RACE: Man, Darkness (Man of Harad)

RACIAL ABILITIES: Adaptable, Dominion of Man, Skilled

ORDER: Craftsman (Animal Warden)

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 10 (+2)*, Perception 9 (+1)*, Nimbleness 9 (+1), Strength 10 (+2), Vitality 7 (+0), Wits 6 (+0)

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

SKILLS: Armed Combat: Blades (Knife) +2, Conceal +2, Craft: Animal Handling (Mumakil) +6, Debate (Negotiate) +4, Games +3, Language: Haradric (Local) +6, Lore/History: Tribe History +4, Lore/Race: Man +3, Lore/Realm: Tribe Lands +4, Lore/Wilderness: Beasts (Mumakil) +5, Observe (Spot) +1, Persuade (Charm) +2, Ranged Combat: Whips (Whip) +3, Ride (Mumak) +1, Run +1, Survival (Jungle) +2

EDGES: Craftmaster, Favour of Fortune, Travel-sense

FLAWS: Duty (Mumak trainer)

ORDER ABILITIES: Train Animal

HEALTH: 9

DEFENCE: 11

COURAGE: 4

RENOWN: 0

EQUIPMENT: Knife, whip, water, rations

BACKGROUND

His father trained mumakil and his father before him; now Barkesh has learned how to handle the mumakil. It is in his ancestral blood and it is in his own blood as well ever since the ritual of the Blood-bond was performed with the first mumak calf he was to train. The purpose of the ritual was so the two would become brothers, to learn from one another and share the other's life. The time has come now for his first calf to go through the trials to earn its place in the ranks of those sent to aid in the wars of his people. It is a very proud day for him and he cannot wait for the others under his guidance to achieve this day.



DREMA

RACE: Man, Wild (Lossoth)

RACIAL ABILITIES: Adaptable, Dominion of Man, Skilled

ORDER: Warrior (Scout)

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 8 (+1), Perception 9 (+1), Nimbleness 11 (+2)*, Strength 11 (+2)*, Vitality 8 (+1), Wits 6 (+0)

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

SKILLS: Armed Combat: Polearms (Spear) +5, Craft:Bonecarving +2, Healing (Treat Wounds) +3, Insight +2, Observe (Spot) +3, Ranged Combat: Thrown (Spear) +5, Stealth (Hide) +3, Survival (Northern Wastes) +1, Teamster (Dogsled) +2, Track (Beasts) +5, Weather-sense +1

EDGES: Charmed Life, Snow-wise (same as Woodcrafty for tundra), Warrior's Heart, Wary

FLAWS: Duty 2 (Protect clan, complete errand)

ORDER ABILITIES: Favoured Weapon: Spear

HEALTH: 10 **DEFENCE:** 12

COURAGE: 4 **RENOWN:** 0

EQUIPMENT: Carving tools, ulu, winter gear, dogsled and team, rations, water, spear, 1/2-d6 sp

BACKGROUND

Drema never thought his life would amount to much more than being a hunter and warrior for his tribe, but fate has a way of causing things unlooked for, great or small, to occur. After a troubling night's weather of lightning without thunder or rain, the shaman called for Drema to come to his hut. When he entered, many of the tribe's elders were whispering quietly amongst themselves around the center fire and all eyes were on him, except for the shaman. He was in a deep trance, mumbling inaudibly. When Drema had sat down, the shaman came out and brought his bright black eyes upon him.

"Tall king in the south, crowned.
Ruling ring broken, shattered.
Dark creatures fewer, scattered.
Black stone lost, found.
New factions seek stone, driven.
To you errand placed, given.
Haste be you lest red is the ice now drowned."

After a moment of silence, Drema responds in a shaky voice, "But what is this errand, Wise One?"

"To the south you must go and seek the tall king. Give him news of the dark stone." Pulling something out of a small pouch, he hands it to the young man. "If he doubts your word, show him this and he will know." The object is the signet of Arvedui, last king of Arthedain.



MENELDIL

RACE: Elf, Silvan (Elf of the Woodland-realm)

RACIAL ABILITIES: The Art, Beast-skill, Comfort, Elven Form, Elven-sense, Elven-sleep, Farsightedness, Ghost-scorn, Lightfootedness, Swift Healing, Woodsy

ORDER: Warrior (Sentinel)

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 10 (+2), Perception 11 (+2)*, Nimbleness 13 (+3)*, Strength 7 (+0), Vitality 6 (+0), Wits 7 (+0)

REACTIONS: Stamina +0, Swiftiness +3*, Willpower +2, Wisdom +2

SKILLS: Armed Combat: Swords (Short sword) +4, Climb +1, Healing (Herbal Remedies) +3, Inspire (Elves of Woodland-realm) +2, Intimidate (Power) +2, Language: Westron +3, Language: Sindarin +3. Lore/Group: Thorin & Co. +2, Lore/History: Woodland-realm +3, Lore/Race: Elf (Silvan) +3, Lore/Race: Orcs (Mirkwood) +1, Lore/Realm: Woodland-realm +4, Lore/Wilderness: Herbs +3, Observe (Spot) +4, Ranged Combat: Bows (Short bow) +6, Ride (Horse) +1, Run +3, Siegecraft (Defence) +3, Survival (Forests) +1

EDGES: Night-eyed, Wary, Woodcrafty

FLAWS: Fealty (King Thranduil), Proud

ORDER ABILITIES: Evasion

HEALTH: 6 **DEFENCE:** 13

COURAGE: 3 **RENOUN:** 0

EQUIPMENT: Shortbow, Short sword, scale armour, rations, water, 1d6+ 1 sp

BACKGROUND

Meneldil still laughs at the memory of the time Bilbo and the dwarves were "housed" in the Woodland-realm. He had been a forest sentry in the troop that encountered Thorin and his followers interrupting the king's feast. More than once had he thought he'd heard footsteps behind his as the troop would enter or leave the underground halls, but never did he spy anything or anyone following him. After the hobbit related his story to the king about his stay and the tale passed around the realm, Meneldil couldn't help but raise a tankard to the burglar and his daring and inventiveness.



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WISDOM OF THE MASSES

TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS FROM YOUR FELLOW GAMERS

|ANDOR| ON CREATING A CHRONICLE:

"Another thing that is important for a GM is to have a well rounded chronicle. If yours is combat-heavy, then the players are going to naturally want things that will make their combat skills better, but if you have a lot of different challenges, then focusing too much in one area is going to really hurt the PC."

ALDARON ON NOT PLAYING THE HERO:

"I haven't actually experienced [uncharacteristic gameplay for the setting] in my own Chronicle, but I know of others who have run into the problem of characters looting every corpse and robbing every grave, as if they were playing a certain other fantasy roleplaying game! Very un-Tolkienesque, if you ask me.

My players' characters (when a similar situation arose) burned a very nice sword (actually a Dunedain blade) that was being wielded by an orc along with the carcasses of the orcs they had slain. The theory was that they wanted nothing tainted by Orcs, especially not a blade that had likely tasted the blood of Men and Elves in the hands of an Orc. They buried all the dead Men with all honour they could, along with all their weapons and armour, the latter repaired as best they could and the former clasped in dead hands.

Considering they gave up hundreds of silver pieces worth of "loot", including at least one "magical" weapon in order to roleplay in the universe, I rewarded them with stacks of experience and had the whole scene witnessed by Gondorian scouts, giving the characters positive Renown bonuses within Gondor. I've rarely been so proud of my players.

How to stop it when it happens? Well, there's always the old experience penalty, plus there's the opposite of what I did. What would be the reaction of a Wandering Company of Elves should they witness the characters despoiling the dead (assuming the dead are men or elves)? And what would be the reaction to them wielding weapons obviously once held by Orcs (assuming the dead are orcs)? In an RPG like LOTR, in-game solutions often work better than meta-game solutions (like talking to the players directly).

Another possibility is that the weapons or "loot" may be cursed in some way, and that curse will activate on the characters. [Go] see Pirates of the Caribbean: Curse of the Black Pearl for some nasty ideas along those lines!"



INTERVIEW

THE PERSON

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

My name is Philip O'Neill, and I am located just near Geelong, in Victoria, Australia. I teach programming, applications and other info tech subjects to adult students at a technical college in Geelong.

THE EXPERIENCE

2. How long have you been in gaming?

Oh dear :-). Umm...22 years. I'm 39 years old and started playing Dungeons & Dragons (the original Red book) when I was 17. Scary! :-)

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

Here's a fairly complete list. Of course, I'm not playing/running campaigns in *all* of them right now: Lord of the Rings (CODA), Star Trek (CODA), Dungeons & Dragons (3rd Edition, not 3.5), Star Wars (d20), Stargate: SG-1, d20 Modern, Traveller: The New Era, Buffy, The World of Darkness (bit of Vampire, Werewolf, Mage all tossed in...but kind of an X-Files-ish paranormal investigator game), 2300AD (using Traveller: TNE mechanics), Merc: 2000

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 three campaigns. My LotR campaign is set in the Fourth Age, and currently has two characters: Luthien, a female Silvan Elf magician, and Elegost, a Dunedain warrior. It is set FA 23, and is using a hybrid of the "official" campaign involving Margil, Carangul and the like, along with several home-made adventures and modifications of several adventures available on the 'Net and in Hall of Fire. By and large it deals with Carangul's attempts to revive the old Kingdom of Angmar to challenge the Reunited Kingdom in the North, and the search for the palantiri thought lost with Arvedui in the mid Third Age.

I am also running two Star Wars campaigns. One is set in the interim between Episodes II and III, and commenced two months after the Battle of Geonosis. It deals with a young Padawan, Noah Melvar (played by my 9-year-old son in his first role! :-)) and his Master, Jamila Shabala, uncovering a sinister plot to assassinate Bail Organa on Coruscant. It leads them deeper into the

machinations of one of Tyrannus' apprentices, and his efforts to find an old Sith holocron and challenge the current masters.

The other Star Wars campaign is set in the time of the Knights of the Old Republic. It deals with twin Padawans, Kojii and Anyssra Ansaren, and their part in the war against the Sith Empire. Kojii is lame in one leg, but is strong with the Force, and Anyssra has a strange access to darker powers. Why, she does not know. In reality, she is the reincarnation of an ancient Sith Lord, and will eventually face the darkness within herself as she attempts to destroy the last remnants of her own former self.

All three of these games are tabletop. I've never been a fan of other formats, as I enjoy the social interaction of gaming.

THE GAME ITSELF

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

I tried ICE's MERP game many years ago, but found it wanting, especially in the magic area. I felt it too much like D&D. Having been a long-time fan of the LotR novels, I was naturally curious about the films, and hoped they would generate more "spin-offs" like RPGs! I was converted to CODA Star Trek as a result of my association with TrekRPG.net, and when Decipher brought out the LotR RPG, I naturally grabbed it, and immediately fell in love with it. I believe it captures the "feel" of the stories - the epic nature and scope, the subtle use of magic, and the less high-fantasy / D&D approach to adventuring, all of which are hallmarks of Tolkien's world, be it on the page or on the screen. Oh, and no, I was never involved in creation or playtesting.

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

Let's see...the Core Rules Book, obviously. Fellowship of the Ring sourcebook, Two Towers Sourcebook, Helm's Deep, Fell Beasts & Wondrous Magic, and both the boxed sets of maps, which I absolutely love. Oh, and the two e-books: Paths of the Wise and Isengard. I'm still hunting down Moria - it's getting awfully hard to find, these days! Most favourite? Probably Fell Beasts - I find myself using it constantly, and I enjoy just reading it from time to time. Least favourite? Well, I love them all, but I'd say the Fellowship of the Ring sourcebook is the one I use the least.

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

Best? The Core Rule book, I think. It's beautifully set out, and feels like a "right proper bloody book!" in your hands! :-). Worst? As much as I love it, I'd have to say Helm's Deep. My copy, at least, is not that well-used, but the spine is already cracking and a few pages are coming loose. I'm not a big fan of paperback RPG books, personally.



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

A Fourth Age Sourcebook, of course! :-) Then again, it might invalidate half the stuff I have in my chronicle!

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

I would add in some more professions - many of the ones done in fanbooks and Hall of Fire, for example. I would add a sample chapter in the CRB - I *always* like sample adventures in game books. The other thing I would alter would be the combat/damage system. I find it just doesn't work as-is to capture the feel of LotR combat. I've modified it by using damage multipliers based on success levels, and modified the "mook" rules with the variant described in the early issues of Hall of Fire, but it's still a work in progress.

10. If you don't like using the CODA system, what system do you use?

N/A. I love CODA! :-)

THE HALL OF FIRE

11. How long have you read the webzine (if you read it at all)? How did you hear about it?

Since Issue #1 (don't ask me the date!). I heard about it on the TrekRPG.net forums, I think, and grabbed the first issue, loved it, and have downloaded it religiously ever since.

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

I absolutely adore it! It is my absolute *favorite* resource for my Chronicle, and I find myself constantly referring to it. About the only thing it needs, I think, is some kind of updateable index (one that is updated with each issue - perhaps an online database, or even just a text file). Issue #24's (IIRC) index was *tremendous*, but now we're starting to build up more and more articles post-#24.

My favorite sections? I have three, I think. First and foremost would be "A PC's So-Called Life", dealing with rules and mechanics. Close and equal second would be "The Road Goes Ever On and On" and "Allies and Adversaries". I have a busy family life and career, and don't usually have the time to sit and

gaze at the ceiling in order to come up with adventures or NPCs. Having some material in front of me, however, gives my dozens of ideas which I can then modify to suit my chronicle. So keep 'em coming! :-)

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

Most of the "classic" sites on the 'Net: Valinor, Steward and the King, and the like, though they haven't been updated in a while. I also downloaded and purchased the "Encyclopedia of Arda", which I find a tremendous source. I also have a well-used and battered copy of "The Encyclopedia of Middle Earth", which I will often skim through, and reading about some obscure event in TA 2012 will begin the germ of an adventure idea. This is actually how my current Chronicle got started - I was reading about Arvedui's loss in the north, and the loss of the palantiri along with him, and I started to think: "What if...?"

THE SOURCE

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

We actually read "The Hobbit" when I was in grade 5 at school, and put on a play of it. I got to play an Elf, and had a ball. After that, I re-read the Hobbit a couple of times, and my parents bought me a copy of The Lord of the Rings for my next birthday (I would have been about 11, I guess). Of course, I held off reading it for a bit, because this was in 1977, and a certain spectacular space-opera was released at around the same time, and I quickly became obsessed with lightsabres and Jedi Knights! :-)

After a while, however, I picked up LotR and read it. At the time, I admit, I wasn't overly impressed. Oh, I loved the grandeur and the story, but I found the language old-fashioned and difficult to deal with, like most 11-12 year olds, I guess. Then when I started playing D&D when I was 17, I started reading fantasy novels for inspiration and to immerse myself in fantasy. The first one I read was Terry Pratchett's "Sword of Shannara", and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Then I read LotR again, and loved it this time. I still found the language to be archaic and a slog to read through, but being older I was able to appreciate the beauty of the language Tolkien used, along with a greater appreciation for his imagination. I've now read LotR, oh, eight or nine times, I would guess, and a lot of the support material out there as well.

15. What did you think of the movies?

I absolutely **loved** them. All of them. Every part of them. The only criticism I have is that we didn't see Beregon, Pippin's friend, or Prince Imrahil (one of my favourite characters from the novel). Everything else I thought was **flawlessly** executed. In fact, being the heretic that I am, I go as far as to say that Peter Jackson **improved** the story. Whilst I adore Tolkien's works, it's not without its flaws, and Jackson went a long way toward correcting most of them.

The elimination of the whole Tom Bombadil plotline was met with a sigh of relief for me. I've **never** liked TB, and always thought he was a waste of a couple of chapters, an irritating diversion from the story, and a bit of whimsical self-indulgence on the part of the author. **ducking rotten fruit* :-)*

The removal of Glorfindel and replacement with Arwen. Again, while I have nothing against Glorfindel, I felt he was a wasted character. Walked in, rescued Frodo, then disappeared. Why bring in a **new** character for something like that? Having Arwen do it gave her something more than the paragraph or so she merited in the novel, as well, which I always thought was a bit insulting, considering she was Aragorn's beloved.

The Elves' aid at Helm's Deep. I found it a good emotional payoff that the Elves were willing to make a last ditch effort at reforging the Last Alliance before they departed. Certainly, in the book, we are **told** that they fought alongside Men up in the north, but we never **see** it. In fact, if Tolkien had a fault, it was that he loved to **tell**, rather than to **show**.

Samwise Gamgee. **Sigh**. I was overjoyed to see one of my least-liked character in the book become my most beloved in the film. Tolkien's Sam was, in my opinion, a dimwitted, fawning

sycophant. Jackson's Sam was **way** more likeable, as a true friend and reluctant hero.

Elimination of the The Scouring of the Shire. I realise the importance of what Tolkien was saying with the SoTS, that war leaves nothing untouched, but I think that point was clearly made through Frodo. To me, it was anti-climactic and disappointing, and I was glad it was gone in the film.

Wow...it sounds like I'm picking on Tolkien! I'm not trying to, seriously. I wouldn't have read his novels over and over, and become so steeped in Tolkien lore if I didn't like his writing! I just don't think he was perfect! :-) Moreover, I am trying to point out how much I love the films. The emotional impact they have on me is astonishing, and that's **because** of Tolkien's writings. When we first sat in the cinema and watched Fellowship of the Ring, my wife looked at me in amazement right at the beginning, as the camera panned across Hobbiton and she saw tears in my eyes. "What's wrong?" she asked me. "Nothing", I replied, "It's just that it's **exactly** how I always imagined it!" It was like Jackson got inside my head and put my mind's eye on the big screen, and **that** is one reason I love the films.

The other reason is that it opened LotR up so much to so many people. My wife is dyslexic. She can read enough for day-to-day and work, but the idea of reading a long novel fills her with the dread of not understanding half of it without re-reading over and over, and pounding headaches as a result, so she simply doesn't read long novels. The LotR film is her favourite movie of all time, and she is regularly in tears through all three parts of it. And she is incredibly grateful to Jackson for allowing her to experience the magic of Middle-Earth. After we saw Fellowship, she turned to me and said "Now I know what you've been raving about all these years!"



WHAT'S OUT THERE

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

<p>DECIPHER'S LORD OF THE RINGS RPG HOME http://lotrrpg.fanhq.com</p> <p>DECIPHER'S LOTR RPG BOARD http://forums.fanhq.com/viewforum.php?f=164</p> <p>THE HALL OF FIRE WEBZINE SITE http://halloffire.org</p> <p>FAN MODULES FOR MIDDLE-EARTH http://groups.yahoo.com/group/fan-modules</p> <p>THE MAD IRISHMAN http://www.mad-irishman.net</p> <p>STARBASE CODA http://www.starbase-coda.com</p> <p>ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ARDA http://www.glyphweb.com/arda/default.htm</p> <p>SCOTT'S RPG CENTRAL http://www.geocities.com/scott_metz/</p> <p>CHRONICLES OF THE NORTH http://roleplay.avioc.org/index.htm</p> <p>THE LAST ALLIANCE http://thelastalliance.com</p>	<p>RPG TOOLS FOR DECIPHER'S CODA GAMES http://groups.yahoo.com/group/rpgtools/</p> <p>THE SLAVE PITS OF BARAD-DUR http://www3.sympatico.ca/smaugrob/lotrmain.html</p> <p>THE STEWARD AND THE KING http://www.stewardandking.net</p> <p>THE TOWER HILLS http://homepage.mac.com/jeremybaker/towerhills</p> <p>TREK-RPG.NET http://forum.trek-rpg.net/index.php</p> <p>CODA WEBZINE REPOSITORY http://groups.yahoo.com/group/coda_webzine</p> <p>THE ONE RING http://www.theonering.com/</p> <p>TALES OF MIDDLE-EARTH http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/tales_of_middle_earth/</p> <p>VALINOR http://sauron.misled.us</p>
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Interested in submitting...

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- New Orders or Elite Orders?
- Racial / Order packages?
- NPC's?
- Weapons / equipment / magical items?
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If so, write to us for details on submission at: codawebzine@hotmail.com with 'Fan Content' in the subject line. Please include your name and/or pseudonym (handle/online identity) and email address(es) with which one of our editors may contact you.

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

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

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

If you would like to post an advertisement for:

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

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

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