



THE HALL OF FIRE FAN WEBZINE

Issue Thirty-Seven

January 2007

GIANT SIZE Anniversary Issue!

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GREETINGS, Salutations... Hello All!

Our great achievement continues into its fourth year with quite a bang! Hey, maybe not with any news on the Decipher front but at least we've brought to you a really BIG issue stuffed full of great stuff per our usual. I hope you're impressed because I certainly know I am. David went all out in his layout presentation and certainly gets a ton of kudos from me. Sure it may not be exactly printer-friendly on a few pages, but it looks gorgeous!

Now on to the meat and potatoes of this issue. This, this cornucopia of content just begs for your reading (and viewing) pleasure: a new adventure, pictures of Elostirion that we missed getting into last issue straight from Peter, a treatise on the Hillmen, a story about 'Bullroarer' Took, plus a whole lot more!

Tuck in that napkin and ask for an extra plate as you step up to this smorgasbord and enjoy!

Happy Gaming,

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

IT'S ALL OPTIONAL

CREATING HEROIC ITEMS

by GandalfOfBorg

Anduril/Narsil, Herugrim, The Elf-stone – these are items of heroism and heroic worth. Their monetary worth is beyond measure to those that find or inherit them. To PC's, their worth in game mechanics is also quite high as they convey minor unique powers in the form of skill bonuses and maybe edges or abilities.

First, a sword is just a sword until you give it a name. That gives it a start to becoming truly famous in the likes of those renowned items above. Even if the item didn't have its own inherent heroic bonuses, using the rules for invoking the power of words could still be appropriate.

Next, a character needs to give up something of himself to the item. It's his personal power that is used to help the subtle workings of this world infuse power within the item. There are two ways of going about this while applying the restrictions below: spending Advancement Picks or transferring acquired powers and skills.

SPENDING ADVANCEMENT PICKS

When you've acquired an Advancement, you may spend picks on skill bonuses, edges, and abilities to apply to an item.



TRANSFERRING POWER

At any time the Narrator approves, you may assign skill bonuses, edges, abilities, or other personal effects to an item. To give an effect to an item, the character removes that effect from his character, ie. to give a skill bonus, remove an equal number of ranks in the skill.

RESTRICTIONS

- Effects may be applied to an item a maximum number of times equal to the original owner's Bearing modifier.
- No bonus value can be greater than the Attribute Modifier of the skill's associated attribute.
- A character must have at least 8 ranks in a skill to place a bonus on an item for that skill.
- An item is limited to contain effects worth more Advancement Picks than the original owner's total attribute modifiers.
- No more than half of the bonuses placed in a Heroic Item may be applied to any one effect.
- All effects purchased or transferred are permanent and cannot be removed unless the weapon becomes cursed or destroyed.

FAN FLAVOUR

THE FOLK OF BÓR By Thomas Gingras

HILLMAN (MAN OF DARKNESS)

Armed Combat +1, Climb +1, Ranged Combat +1,
Stealth +1, Survival (Mountains) +1, Travel sense

RHUDAUR COMMONER (MAN OF DARKNESS)

Armed Combat +1, Climb +1, Craft +1, Ranged
Combat +1, Weather sense

HISTORY

After the Edain a second wave of men migrated into Beleriand during the later years of the First Age. The Swarthy Men or Easterlings were not as true or noble as the Edain, and betrayed the Elves, falling pray to the guiles of the shadow and entering into secret alliance with Morgoth, while serving in the open the sons of Fëanor. The greatest chieftains of these people were Bór and Ulfang.

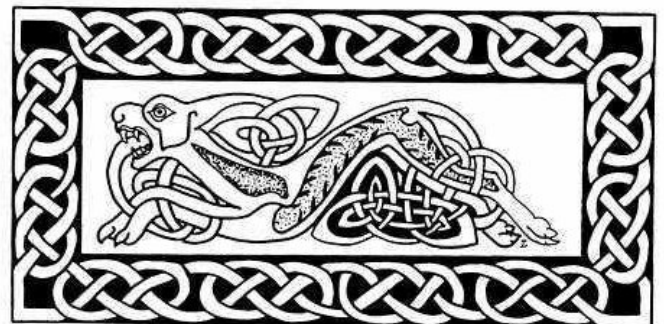
The people of Bór remained loyal to the Elves and Edain, and in the dark hour when their services were called upon by Morgoth they forsook him and remained true, while those of Ulfang betrayed their friendship and served Morgoth. The wars raged for many years and in the end the forces of good were triumphant over the shadow, but only through the intervention of the Valar, who in their wrath destroyed much of Beleriand in order to overthrow Morgoth the dark enemy.

Those who remained after the sundering were split and cast over the land, the houses were divided and people were in a world that had physically changed. The lands of Beleriand were gone, sunk into the sea with many of their folk lost forever. Many of the Edain managed to remain with their Elven allies and were spared great suffering and pain at the sudden loss of their kingdoms and homes, but the Swarthy Men were not so fortunate. Instead with the sundering of the land they wandered alone and without guidance, forced to seek out lands and places of their own.

Whether sundered through the chaos of the time or whether those dealings with Morgoth left a lasting mark on the spirit of the people, the people of Bór were not numbered among the chosen to dwell in Númenor, the land of the gift. Fearing the sea and the damage and loss it caused the folk of Bór, they fled to the east, traveling across the expanses of Eriador to finally stop before the barrier of the Hithaeglir Mountains.

Through the early years of the Second Age the Folk of Bór establish themselves in the angle of land between the River Mitheithel (W. Hoarwell) and the River Bruinen (W. Loudwater) and reach as far north as Mount Gram. The majority of this terrain is rolling and rocky, very much the foothills of the mountains to the east. Within these geographical boundaries they remained relatively isolated from the rest of the people of Eriador and benefited little from the golden age of the region ushered in by the arrival of Númenóreans. Reclusive by nature, they feared the Men of Westemnesse even during their most benevolent stage and instead sought the refuge that their natural borders provided. The establishment of havens and settlements in Middle-earth by the Númenóreans affected them little.

The war between the Elves and Sauron that begins in 1693 largely passes the Hillmen by. The Forodrim to the east ally themselves with the Númenóreans and the Elves and suffer greatly as a consequence. Sauron's domination of Eriador and desire to conquer all free men serves only to push the Hillmen further to the north out of the low lands of the angle and into the higher lands of the Trollshaws, as this land was largely inaccessible due to the limited fording points. This fact was known to Elrond Half-elven and contributed greatly to this area being selected for the foundation of Imladris after the fall of Eregion to Sauron in 1697.



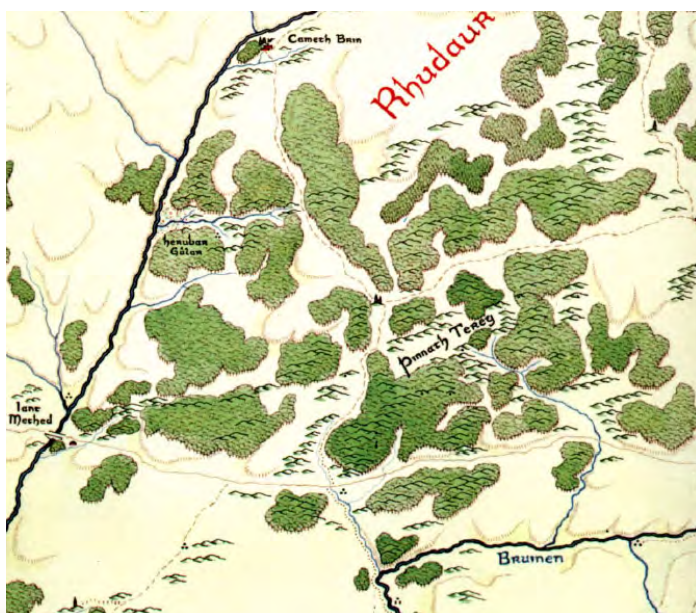
The Númenórean victory in the war sees a small return of the Hillmen to the lowlands. The resulting age of imperialism has the Hillmen of the lowlands under nominal Númenórean control but otherwise unaffected in the north.

The Second Age passes with little direct impact on the lives of the Hillmen until the founding of the realms in exile in 3320 of that age. The establishment of the realm of the northern kingdom sees the lowlanders incorporated into the Dúnedain realm of Arnor by Elendil and they fight alongside him in the War of the Last Alliance to the conclusion of the Second Age.

The Third Age sees the Hillmen dividing into two distinct groups the independent minded Hillmen in the rugged terrain in the north and the lowlanders of the south who welcome the rule of the Dúnedain Kings of Arnor. The lowlanders come to inhabit all of The Angle south of the Trollshaws and the open area separating the North Downs and the river Mithiethel. The Dúnedain population of the region remains small, though all acknowledge the lordship of the King at Annúminas while peace reigns for the first eight centuries of the Third Age.

The division of Arnor in 861 into the three kingdoms of Arthedain, Cardolan, and Rhudaur finds the lands of the Hillmen totally in the realm of Rhudaur under the kingship of the youngest of the three sons of Eärendur, the tenth and last king of united Arnor. The lowlanders make up the commoners of Rhudaur and form the largest bulk of the population of Rhudaur throughout the existence of the kingdom.

The incessant wars of the north throughout the first two millennium of the Third Age would destroy the kingdom of Rhudaur and destroy the lowlanders as a distinct people. The Hillmen would survive into the Fourth Age largely unchanged and remain independent even after the establishment of the Reunited Kingdom under Elessar Telcontar.



LANDS

The Folk of Bór dwell solely in the area of Arnor known as Rhudaur. The people were contained by the Hithaeglir mountains in the east and would not migrate over their high passes. The land starts as river basin to the west and steadily rises to foot hills and rolling terrain as one moves north or east. The area is broken into two distinct regions the lowlands and the highlands. The lowlands are soft rolling hills of grass land good for growing and pasture. The upper lands or highlands are distinguished by steeper hills and rockier terrain. Small streams are numerous and the vegetation is largely heavily wooded with dark pine the closer to the mountains.



PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The physical appearance of the Folk of Bór is much different than all the other folk of lower Eriador. These people are not as tall and lordly in appearance. Their height is less that of other peoples and more pronounced the higher in the hills they are found. Dark hair and swarthy complexion is prominent and where light skin is found it is pale and sallow. The majority of the people are dark haired and eyed as well. Some interbreeding in the low lands has produced some browns and tans but the dominant trait of these people is darker. The men average 5'5" with women being slightly smaller.

The men often are seen wearing the skins of animals in the highlands, while those in the low lands are dressed similar to the other folk of Eriador, tunics and pants being the norm. The men of the highlands also tend to grow their hair long and plaited, while that of the lowlands is short and cropped. The women of both folk grow their hair long and plaited and wear skirts of ankle length and varying thickness depending on the climate.



SOCIAL INFORMATION

The division of the peoples between those of the highlands and the southern lands were to slowly divide the culture of the Folk of Bór until with the establishment of the Dúnedain Kingdoms of the north the break would become more pronounced and permanent. The men of the highlands were from the earliest traces of division called simply the Hillmen as a testament to the land in which they lived and having no stories among themselves on their origins or how they came to dwell in the lands they currently claimed. Among them were told only tales of a great fear in the east and of equally tragic shadows of lore that related great suffering in the west.

The nature of the terrain relegated the Hillmen to occupations of shepards and hunters with little in the way of permanent structures and nothing in the way of cities. They were and are still a clannish people focusing around the extended family and loosely based concepts of common descent and tied together by sharing a totem animal. A clan is headed by a ruling chief descended theoretically in an unbroken line to the founder so chosen in the early days by the totem animal. While the majority of these animals tend to be fierce or cunning, tough survivors in the wild, other tamer animals can be found.

A prevailing fear of the darkness is preminent in all their religious forms and has been used in the past to bend them to dark purposes and serve that which they fear to prevent it from doing them harm. Slavery is often employed to make up for shortages in clan or for specialized skill in a trade or craft unknown by any of the clan members. The common cause of warfare is for the gathering of slaves or the theft of cattle. Occasionally in times of great external turmoil, such as the wars with Angmar and the Witch King, a High Chieftain has been able to bring the people together under one leader. These instances are however infrequent, short, and impermanent being based on the force of character of the individual. The Hillmen absorbed little from the Dúnedain and only nominally came under their authority even at the height of Arnor's power.

The dwelling of the Hillmen is often erected upon a hill or promontory for protection. In the more transient dwellings the houses are made of mud brick with thatched roofs and low stockades or palisades are erected with earth and timber. In the holdings of the chiefs or a clan center the location is often cleared and circled in stone with stone buildings. The cattle, prized by

the Hillmen, is usually brought within the defensive ring at night and in some places into the lower floor of the houses themselves, the livestock adding crucial warmth to the house in the fierce winters of the north. Those that subsist on hunting will usually set up temporary housing of mud brick and sod to hunt an area, migrating within the clan's holdings as circumstances dictate.

The religion of the people is based upon their totem animal and usually around its ability to protect them from the dark shadows of the night and the creatures that dwell in them. Occasionally the worship of a great ancestor or hero of the clan is added. Stories or deeds that exemplified the traits of the totem animal are usually in the fore, as well as great deeds or skill. The priesthood is usually regulated to the domain of women, with the oldest relying upon tradition and story to guide the clan in all spiritual matters though sometimes hereditary priestly lines can be found. The totem animal is never worn for clothing by those espousing it and never eaten or killed except in great need. The wearing of a clan's totem animal or a representation of it is viewed as symbolic conquest of that totem and the corresponding people who follow it.

The lowlanders, Rhudaur commoners, were more agrarian than their brothers in the north. While the social breakdown and religious conventions were largely the same the people of the lowlands tended to worship spirits who guided the growing and cultivation of things. The clan system was also less pronounced and restricted largely to an extended family of blood relation. Slavery was less common but not unheard of, taking the form more of indentured servitude than direct ownership. Their settlements were more permanent in location, but consisting of the same sod and mud brick with earthen palisades and ditches surrounding the larger families. The benefits of Dúnedain lordship for these people largely came in their ability to master the growing of things.

The weapons of war for both peoples tended to be spears and the use of short bows. Armor is largely unheard of within their culture as they have few who know the crafting of it and is based mainly on leather and animal products instead of metals. Some metal armor is known, but usually in the possession of a family who won it in battle or in trade from outsiders passed down from father to son. The small scale and local nature of warfare has not precipitated a great need for armor even in the darkest and bloodiest periods of Hillman history.

THE HISTORY OF NECROMANCY

by Jose Enrique



THE ORIGINS

The history of Necromancy begins with Morgoth, master of all the Dark Arts that have ever been. He hated the First Born, beloved children of Ilúvatar, and he desired to enslave them and to make them worship him instead of the One, but he cannot and so he found other ways to force them to do his bidding. First he corrupted some of the Elves and deformed their spirits with pain, suffering and hate to create the foul race of the Orcs, and made them slaughter the Elves. But it was not enough for him because in the end, when Elves were killed, most of them fled from Middle-earth, returning to Aman, to the Halls of Mandos beyond the reach of his power and influence. But another few remained because they loved the places where they had dwelt and they disobeyed the Summons of Mandos, for they had become slightly corrupted. Morgoth used his immense power, forcing them to obey his will, and thus Necromancy was born.

He also used the mastery over spirits he had since his very creation to perform wicked deeds. Great wolves inhabited by foul spirits haunted the land; the Elves feared them and they were known among Men as werewolves. Sauron was their captain, as he was taught by Morgoth the Dark Arts of Sorcery and Necromancy. But he was not the most skilled nor the most powerful in the mastery of spirits, as two of the followers of Morgoth had been former servants of Mandos and their understanding on this matter was far beyond Sauron's. They were called Feamandûr (Q. Dark prison of the soul) and Herufeä (Q. Master of Spirits), who chose the name of Zotankath (B.S. Master of Wraiths). The history of the second is told here as he is related with Necromancy, but the first fled to the south and his encounter with Sauron and his part in the history of the One Ring will be told another day. In later Ages Sauron was the greatest master of Necromancy in the west and so he is the only one remembered in the history of the Elves of those days.

Morgoth knew that several Elves lived in the eastern lands and he sent some of his followers there to corrupt them, so their spirits would become easily enslaved. Among those agents of evil, it was Zotankath who would become the greatest necromancer that has ever been, second only to Morgoth himself. It was in those lands where the dark Elves dwelt far from the war in the west, where the Elves' spirits did not flee in terror to Aman because of the presence of Morgoth, where he found those who remained even after death in their beloved forest where the Summons of Mandos was not obeyed. They remained unseen and unheard by the living, shadows of their former lives, and with the passing of Ages their grief became anguish and their anguish became hate for the living.

This was told to Morgoth, who went there for his final triumph over the Elves, and he smiled as they were now weak and desired to do his bidding, but they were also difficult to handle as their hate for the living was very strong and so, in the very beginning of Necromancy, it was established that they must be linked to dead corpses so they never could go beyond their haunting ground (as it happened later in the Third Age in the sadly famous Barrow-downs where the pupil of Sauron, the Witch-king, sent houseless spirits to inhabit the tombs of the Kings of Arnor). This is the reason why an undead army could never exist within Eä (although Men's spirits and oaths made in the sacred name of Eru are an absolutely different matter).

In those times of eternal night before the Sun was created, Zotankath begun to discover his potential for Necromancy. The Houseless obeyed his commands, and soon he had a dreadful cohort of undead to do his bidding. He tasted power and the delightful sensation of causing fear and terror in whole regions in the far east. But it would change soon, because when the Sun first awoke with the pure light of the last fruit of the Golden Tree of Valinor shining high in the sky, the ungodly links that bound his undying followers broke.

In agony, pain and fury the foul spirits shouted and moaned while they were burned by the sunlight, and greater grew the hate in their black souls when they were finally swept out to the Wraith world. Zotankath could not command these souls again because they had become more aggressive and defiant, and the necromancer feared and cursed the daylight.

Morgoth knew from the Ainulindalë that the Second Born would awake soon, and so he had sent some of his spies to the east to search them out. Soon after the coming of Morgoth to the east, Men finally awoke with the coming of the Sun. Morgoth wished to make them his from the beginning and before his approach, he sent his minions mounted to hunt the newcomers without mercy, and he made them blow horns in the hunts so that the Second Born would fear Oromë and be kept isolated from the Valar.

Morgoth left the Men alone in a hostile world knowing nothing, so that they felt alone and afraid, and then he went to them as a saviour. First as a wise and powerful friend full of kindness, later as a teacher who wanted to teach them wicked lessons about the making of the world, the reason of their existence and the power they should worship, and finally as a ruler. But he failed, because some of these weak creatures did not believe his lessons and tried to flee to the west.

Morgoth was furious and decided to punish the whole race for their disobedience. He sent Zotankath, now full of resentment towards the newcomers and the light they brought, to make them fear their mortality. Their living bodies were possessed by Houseless and the undead walked among the living in dark and deep caves beyond the reach of the daylight and in the dark night.



It was the darkest time for the race of Men, and ever since then they are a changed people, and tales of those old days are never told because they are too dark and still cause anguish in their hearts. Those who learnt the name of Zotankath never dared to pronounce it again. They fled in fear towards the far west where some Elves had told them the only hope lay, but this story is told elsewhere.

Zotankath stayed in the east, near Hildórien in the Orocarni Mountains, because Morgoth wanted him to unveil all the possibilities of Necromancy and perfect the art, so that it became an even more powerful weapon for the war against the West. Even some of the dindair (servants of Morgoth that lurk in the shadows and may adopt any shape to spy on their quarry, confusing the Eldar and Atani) that had been sent to the east to create dissension between Men and Elves were put under Zotankath's command to help him in his task.

Zotankath's first work was to reinforce the Avari's love for their forest and deform their beliefs in the Valar and specially Mandos, so that most of them would remain in Middle-earth even after their deaths. After that, he realised he needed some helpers for his work and he discovered that Men were best for this task as, fearing their mortality and wishing for immortality, they could be more easily fooled than the Eldar.

So he gathered around him gifted Men to assist him with the most tedious and unimportant tasks; these were taught some Necromancy in order to be able to perform their tasks. This unorganized and small group was called 'Par-vadokunaut' or necromancers in a dialect of Black Speech that Zotankath pleased to use. Meanwhile the Powers of the West came to fight Morgoth in the War of Wrath, and it was only thanks to his secrecy and his isolated location that Zotankath was not discovered.



ABOUT FEAMANDÛR AND THE DWARVEN SPIRITS

In the Elder Days, an evil presence stalked the darkness of Middle Earth, in the lands of the Utter South, where the Grey Mountains cast their shadow on untamed jungles never trodden by mortal foot. The Elves feared this presence and avoided his domains, and called him Feamandûr, Dark Prison of the Soul: he was one of the Folk of Mandos, master of Spirits, but he had rebelled against his lord's will and chose to wander in Middle Earth, where he burned with hate for being denied the light of the Two Trees. When some incautious Elf dared to trespass the border of his forests, Feamandûr used to trap his soul and keep it for his amusement.

It is said that Morgoth tried to convince him to join the Court of Ardor, a group of corrupted and powerful Elves, but the Elves refused to work with Feamandûr because they loathed him as an old enemy. Always alone, hiding in the shadows of his forest, Feamandûr witnessed the arrival of Men, whose spirits were weak but much more difficult to imprison, and then the Dwarves.

Feamandûr loved to play with them, for they fought until the end. But he misjudged Dwarven stubbornness, for one year, when the dry season was at its height and the trees were parched, the Dwarves put fire to Feamandûr's Forest, making the evil Spirit flee to the most remote corner of his domain. Then the Dwarves cut down many other trees with their axes, claiming the valleys as their own.

Feamandûr, wounded by fire, swore vengeance upon the children of Aulë. And after many years of mumbling, he conceived a curse for them: it came as a kind of rust, to ruin the iron mines which the Dwarves sought all around. But this cancer not only affected metal, but also the spirits of those who touched it.

In fact, any Dwarf who handled the magic rust was weakened in body and soul, and in the end died, but his spirit could not fly to the gardens beyond the West. Instead, it was forced to stay, burning of hate and envy for all who lived.

Many Dwarves died in this way, and Feamandûr collected the rust nuggets which forced them to stay in Middle earth, and they haunted the places where they used to live. The Dwarves learned then to avoid the rust, that they called *crospar* (*icronite* in Westron) and stay away from Feamandûr's forest.

In those years, another black soul walked Middle Earth, after the defeat of his master Morgoth in the War of Wrath: Sauron. Drawn south, fleeing from the remaining Valinorean warriors, he decided to investigate the Court of Ardor and by chance he met with Feamandûr. Though eager to send away the visitor, Feamandûr feared his power, and he was drawn into a pact. Sauron was fascinated by the Dwarven souls forced to stay within Arda, and obtained the secret of their creation. In exchange, he had to leave Feamandûr his cloak of darkness.

Thus, Feamandûr was able to leave his abode in the night, protected by the cloak, and steal the souls of his victims. He became known as the Stealer of Souls, a figure of terror all around Dûshera. His fate is unknown: some say that his deal with Sauron brought him woe, and he was killed by Morthaur, one of the Eight Lords of the Court of Ardor, when their paths met by chance outside Feamandûr's forest, and that the Elven and Dwarven spirits that he held chained were freed.

Others say that Feamandûr was only wounded, but since that day he was more cautious about leaving his domain, doing so only on moonless nights.

Some servants of Oromë had been left in Middle-earth to hunt the minions of the defeated Morgoth, so the Free Peoples could finally know a peaceful life, and Sauron found that some of them were chasing him. He returned to the North, where he found haven on the banks of the Mitheithel river. There he found the secret dwelling of a group of Petty-dwarves, to whom he offered his forgiveness (thus removing the curse laid upon their kin), in exchange for hospitality. Although Sauron was unable in fact to break the curse, the Petty-dwarves were deceived, drawn both by hope and fear, and they accepted. It was their ruin, as a deal with Sauron never brings good to the fools who seal it.

Sauron became the counsellor of Miffli, the Lord of Armoq-al-Wanu, and his words seduced the young Dwarven Lord with visions of glory and richness. Sauron offered power to defeat any enemy, and life beyond the hopes of any Dwarf. The Petty Dwarves got them both, but if they had known, they would have preferred death and defeat. Sauron was eager to experiment with the secret power of the *crospar*, and made the Dwarves become spectres forced to stay in Arda.



Time passed and Hill-men inhabited the land, giving a new name to Armoq-al-Wanu: Cameth Brin, the Twisted Hill. Men feared the place because they met with the dreadful spectres known as the *Ta-fa-lisch* or 'Ghosts of the Little People'. So they remained haunting their lair under the hill where they had lived long ago until the Númenóreans faced the ghosts and found and broke the hidden *crospar* nuggets which forced them to stay, finally freeing them from the dark gift of Sauron.





SAURON AND HIS UNDEAD MINIONS

The Lord of Mordor was great indeed. He had impressive armies under his command – not only the foul Orcs, but also Men and sometimes even Dwarves fought for him. So he focused on improving the might of his warriors and he created new races of Trolls and Orcs. For Sauron, Necromancy was just another weapon to reach his purpose of conquest and domination, and he did not devote his time to research deeply this dark art.

However, it is true that Sauron used the deathly art extensively due to his great power, and that he did not fear to be discovered because his dominion over Mordor was complete. He made the Nazgûl, the nine mortal men doomed to serve him while the One Ring existed, and they became a sign of his power. The most important of them, the Witch-king, was a Sorcerer and a Necromancer. It was he who infected the ancient tombs in the Barrow Downs with Houseless spirits during the war between Angmar and the Dúnedain kingdoms of the north. This is the best known use of his Necromancy, but it is not the only one. Few dare to speak about the horrors he made when Minas Ithil became Minas Morgul and how his deep hate for his former people mixed with his awesome powers and cruelty, tearing, enslaving and condemning hundreds of souls.

When Sauron realised the great fear his Nazgûl inspired in the hearts of the Free Peoples and the advantage it gave him, he wanted more wraiths under his command. The power to make the One Ring had been too great to be matched again and no more rings for enslaving mortal men could be forged. But he discovered another way: Blades made of Sorcery and Necromancy. Due to the powerful dark magic which imbued them, only Sauron himself was skilled and powerful enough to forge one of these dreaded weapons. They drained a significant part of his immense power, so they always remained few in number as he had to wait to recover after forging one and usually he had another tasks which also required his power.

The Witch-king was the only one apart from Sauron who could use such weapons, and soon he killed great warriors of Gondor who passed into the shadows and fought as wraiths alongside their killer. The demoralizing effect on the whole kingdom was truly awesome in the beginning and Sauron was greatly pleased, but the Gondorians had learnt to be hard and remain impassive

even when facing the most devastating weapons of the enemy, and the effect became not so significant in the kingdom in later times, even if it was still able to change the course of battles.

These dreaded weapons were known as Morgul-knives, personal weapons of the Witch king who reigned in the lost city of Minas Morgul. Although these black blades were small and disappeared under sunlight because of their Sorcerous origin, even if a single splinter remained inside a wound, the wounded was doomed. The splinter had the power to move within the wounded body toward the heart, and once it or the whole blade pierced the victim's heart, he became a wraith under the command of the Dark Lord, like the Nazgûl, but weaker.

Unlike the Nazgûl, these wraiths were vulnerable to the pure light of the sun, like the unholy blade which had created them, and so most of them were destroyed or kept in Minas Morgul as slaves and trophies of the Witch king unless Sauron had a personal interest in the victim. An eternity of torment and pain beyond imagination awaited those unfortunates who learnt too late how wrong they were to challenge the power of Mordor.

After the great defeat he suffered in the war against the Last Alliance, for a time Sauron was forced to rely mainly on Necromancy because he was weak and recovering his former power, and he did not want massive forces around him to attract an early and fatal interest of the White Council. He established himself at Dol Guldur in Mirkwood, and was known as the Necromancer. He knew the Wise were aware of the necromantic cults scattered in the east, and he used his Necromantic powers to reinforce false beliefs about his identity while his real goal was searching for the One Ring in the Anduin, because he had captured and interrogated Gollum and knew the truth.

He taught a few glimpses of Necromancy to mortal men and he used one of his pupils as bait. This servant was sent to the east with a significant escort and the Elves of Mirkwood captured him as Sauron had planned. Once in Thranduil's Halls, the prisoner was interrogated. He had been deceived by Sauron, and so the Elves fell in the trap because the man told the truth, or at least what he believed was the truth. Soon messengers from Mirkwood were sent to Lórien and Rivendell with ill news about a Necromantic cult from the East that had settled in Dol Guldur, and Sauron smiled and the shadows grew darker in the forest.

ZOTANKATH, LOREMASTER OF NECROMANCY

After the War of Wrath, Zotankath realised he no longer had a master, and that the Powers of the West swore not to intervene directly in the history of Middle-earth, leaving him to do his own will without fear. He devoted his existence to becoming the greatest necromancer that has ever been, rivalling Sauron's bare power with deeper knowledge. Hundreds of years passed and great became his knowledge about the spirits. He knew that the Houseless desired most of all the respected remains of deceased kings, as they enjoyed desecrating them as a sign of hate for the living and as a way to show them how false were their beliefs in a peaceful afterlife.

He discovered the best night to walk in the Shadow World without sensing the far sight of Mandos upon him. It was the first spring day when all the Valar and Valier went to the palace of Manwë on the Taniquetil to celebrate all the gifts of Ilúvatar with a feast, as they had done the very day of the Darkening of Valinor. But he also learned that the most propitious night to bring them back to the Living World was the last of autumn, when winter comes, nights are prolonged, the daylight diminishes and the Houseless are eager to stop hiding and come back.

It happened that Sauron, who remembered Zotankath well, went to the east and found him. The Dark Lord was more powerful than the Lord of the Spirits and so Zotankath used all his intelligence to fool him. He taught Sauron such advanced tricks of Necromancy as the enslavement of Men's souls, and he pretended that this was all he had achieved, because even if the Dark Lord had also learnt necromancy from Morgoth, he had never paid it too much attention. A deal was made, so Zotankath could continue his studies: he would share all his knowledge with Sauron, the new Dark Lord, and meanwhile Zotankath would remain undisturbed. Sauron never discovered the treachery until it was almost too late, as his attention was focused on the west and they never met again. In that time, Zotankath also began the construction of Tīnor-faltor (B.S. Temple of Terror) using enslaved local peoples.

Some of Zotankath's helpers grew arrogant and caused wars and lead armies, attracting so much unwanted attention upon the Par-vadokunaut that an army was assembled to locate and destroy Tīnor-faltor. They underestimated the threat of Zotankath because they had only faced the feeble and clumsy undead created by his pupils, but they got lost in the mountains when the night came and the tiny lights of their campfires and torches would not offer protection against the upcoming terror that engulfed them.

That night mortal armies proved to be no match for the greatest necromancer of all times. The army was destroyed when a host of spirits fell upon them, possessing some of them, who became

killers of their own friends, and driving into terror and madness all the rest. It happened on the last night of autumn and so that night is still feared among Men, as they believed with reason that on that night the worlds of the dead and the living are closer than on any other night, and strange portents may happen. No Man, Elf or Dwarf dares to enter that hidden valley in the Orocarni, as it is said a powerful evil dwelt there.

Since then, Zotankath decided to organise his helpers in a well organised Order of Necromancers with strict rules, and he kept more attention on the surrounding peoples, careful not to deploy so much power as to attract the unwanted attention of Sauron who might feel him as a threat to his dominion. "Let the Dark Lord of Mordor fight for their bodies and minds, because in the end all their souls will be mine," thought Zotankath. And sometimes he interfered in the history of the east in very subtle ways to keep the safety of Tīnor-faltor until he was ready to reveal his power.



Finally in the Third Age, Zotankath reached the top of his power and his knowledge and the ultimate secret of Necromancy was unveiled for him. There were more spirits remaining in Middle-earth than those of the Elves, unseen and unheard by all but him. And they were far more powerful and difficult to master because they were of his own kind, each and every evil Maia ever killed in Middle-earth. They have been reduced to impotence, infinitely recessive: still hating but more and more unable to manifest physical effects in the world. If Zotankath managed to master these spirits, this would be the key for his final triumph over Sauron and all Middle-earth would be his to command.

No one knows how far he advanced on that path, but it is known that his evil plans were finally discovered by a Brown wanderer, friend of beasts and birds, and Zotankath faced his doom when Saruman the White and more members of his Order (known as Morinehtar and Rómestámo, the Blue Wizards), stormed Tinor-faltor, putting an end to the wicked Master of Spirits. The temple was destroyed, and all the initiates and masters there were killed, but some of them who were far away on secret errands survived. Some even say that deep under the ruins of Tinor-faltor, a few powerful creatures brought beyond the gates of the dead by Zotankath shortly before his doom managed to survive the destruction.

It is also said that the cult created by Zotankath, the Par-vadokunaut (B.S. Necromancers), was refounded and the necromancers made blood sacrifices again under a new master, but of these stories little is known.



MORGUL WRAITH by Jose Enrique

The following profile gives the modifications to a Mortal Man or Hobbit character who is converted into a Morgul Wraith by a wound from a Morgul Blade.

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing +2, Nimbleness +0, Perception -1, Strength +2, Vitality +1, Wits +0

REACTIONS: Determine them with the modified attributes and add +1 to each one.

SKILLS: As the base creature, plus Intimidate (Fear) +8 (although over time, due to lack of use, he will lose those skills related to animals, plants, healing and some more at Narrator's choice).

EDGES: Add Night-eyed 1 and remove any inappropriate ones (such Elf-friend).

FLAWS: Add Fealty (absolutely bound and obedient to Sauron) and remove any inappropriate ones (such Deafness).

RACIAL ABILITIES: All are kept.

ORDER ABILITIES: Remove any inappropriate ones (such as Vala virtue).

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Scent of Blood, Wraithform (See *Fell Beasts and Wondrous Magic* pg. 36), Vulnerability (sunlight, 2D6 each round).

SPELLS: If the character could use spells, he retains this ability but immediately loses any non Sorcery or Necromancy spells. He is granted a +2 modifier when using Necromancy.

DEFENCE AND HEALTH: Determine them as normal with the new profile.

MOVEMENT RATE, SIZE, COURAGE: As the base creature.

RENOWN: +1

TN EQUIVALENT: Between 10 and 15 as a general rule.

GEAR: He may retain some significant items from his former life. This may grant him a +1 to his Intimidate (Fear) when facing former allies or friends.



NOTES

- The character becomes immediately corrupted and under the control of Sauron.
- Only some heroes and important characters who interest Sauron for some reason are chosen to become Morgul Wraiths.
- Elves and Dwarves cannot become Morgul Wraiths.
- While in Wraithform the wraith remains mainly in the Wraith-world:
 - He is invulnerable to sunlight
 - He causes great fear even if he does not want to. His Intimidate (Fear) score is doubled and he gains the Special Ability Terror, which remains in permanent use until he stops using the wraithform.
 - He may move at twice his normal movement rate.
 - He cannot interact with living beings at all, only causing fear among them.
 - He can be spotted with an Observe (Sense Power) test with TN 10 and can be hurt with magical weapons.



EXAMPLE MORGUL WRAITH (FORMER WARRIOR OF DOL AMROTH)

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 10 (+2), Nimbleness 8 (+0), Perception 8 (+0), Strength 12 (+3), Vitality 12 (+3), Wits 12 (+3)

REACTIONS: Stamina +4, Swiftiness +1, Willpower +4, Wisdom +3

SKILLS: Armed Combat (longsword +8, Spear +2), Intimidate (Fear) +8, Lore (Language): Westron +6, Sindarin +5, Quenya +3, Adunaic +3, Lore (Races): Elves +4, Orcs +3, Lore (Realm): Gondor +5, Observe (Hear) +2, Ranged Combat (Bows) +4, Ride (Horse) +2, Stealth (Sneak) +2, Track (Orcs) +2.

EDGES: Accurate, Quick-draw, Night-eyed.

FLAWS: Fealty (absolutely bound and obedient to Sauron).

RACIAL ABILITIES: Adaptable, Dominion of Man, Skilled (already included in the profile).

ORDER ABILITIES: Favoured weapon (longsword), Swift strike.

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Scent of Blood, Wraithform (See *Fell Beasts and Wondrous Magic* pg. 36), Vulnerability (sunlight, 2D6 each round).

DEFENCE: 13 **HEALTH:** 15 **COURAGE:** 4

SIZE: Medium **REOWN:** 5 **TN EQUIVALENT:** 15

GEAR: Gondorian longsword, Dol Amroth helmet and shield with a red eye painted over the white ship.

NOTES

Once in Mordor, he will learn Black Speech and may forget Quenya, Adunaic and Sindarin due to lack of use.



THE LEGEND OF BULLROARER

by Joe Baker

PROLOGUE

Bandobras 'Bullroarer' Took was a Hobbit of much fame and legend. He was the most well-known Hobbit prior to the War of the Ring, and one of the most popular and famous Hobbits known in the four Farthings. He was reported to be the tallest Hobbit known and his reputation seems to have grown with him.

But legends are sometimes myth, sometimes fact, and sometimes fancy. Bandobras' life was no exception to any of these. This little story will be the truth behind the fiction. The Red Book of Westmarch gives few details of the life of this illustrious Hobbit, and so it is like looking at a few pebbles and trying to imagine a beach.

In this short treatise, I will endeavor to explain a few of the pebbles, which turned into boulders, and a few boulders that were always there.



THE BEGINNING

As the eleventh Took-Thain of the Shire, Isumbras Took took his position with utmost seriousness. As Thain his responsibilities were vast, and recently it seemed had become a bit more complicated. His eldest son, Ferumbras, was in line to be the next Thain of the Shire, but his son's mind seemed to wander to other mundane things that his father could not, or would not understand. Ferumbras, of all things, wanted to be a Bounder! The father knew his son loved the woods and enjoyed being a scout and a protector of the Shire's boundaries, but Ferumbras had other responsibilities that were going to be coming to him soon and he could not and should not ignore them. Sadly, Isumbras also knew his eldest son did not have the political charisma nor the organizational skills of his younger brother - Bandobras. It was a decision the Thain would have to make soon, and he was in a quandary about it, and had been, for quite a few years.

And so it was, in the year 1140 S.R., in his 74th year, that Isumbras III, Twenty-Second Thain of the Shire made his decision and stepped down and proclaimed his son Bandobras the Twenty Third (Twelfth Took-Thain) Thain of the Shire. Although Bandobras was a little young to be Thain of the Shire (36 years old), his first seven years in office rolled by quickly and were well-received by the Hobbitry. He continually showed a distinct flair for solving the day-to-day problems of the Shire, and exhibited down-to-earth Hobbit-sense. His organizational skills were also put to good use when he organized an archer brigade for each of the farthings in 1144 S.R. In the fifth year of his office, these brigades showed their worth by repelling one of the largest incursions of wolves in the North and East Farthings.

The first part of this story begins in the sixth month (Forelithé) of 1146 S.R. when the history of the Shire and of Bandobras took a decided turn. In the early morning of the tenth of Forelithé, the Thain was out riding on his favorite pony - Warm - when he spotted a lone wolf near the ruins of Annuminas and gave chase.

THE YEAR PRIOR TO THE BATTLE

W

hen he slowly came out of his fog, Bandobras heard a low, friendly voice talking to someone across the small glade he had seen before the turf had come up fast and hit him in the face. He did not move from the soft grass for a while, mainly because he did not think he could, and secondly, he thought the conversation was a private one – and he did not want to intrude.

"So, you are telling me I must NOT tell the shepherds where you are or where you are going? Even though they are the ones who asked me to do this search for them?"

"mmerrmmmm" (Unintelligible)"

"I understand. Yes, yes, I do. I just do not feel good about this. Not good at all! But your wishes and (unintelligible).."

"mmnuummuummuem"

What was this drum-drumming speech?

Bandobras slowly lifted his head and looked through the trees in the direction of the voices. He saw a mannish-person in brown rags talking to a ... a ... a ... tree. The man in brown had stopped speaking, and then turned slowly towards him, and met the Hobbit's eyes. Bando did not think he had made any noise, and did not know how the man had seen him through the low brush, but was held captive by the large dark, brown eyes – whose sparkle was unmistakable, even from this distance.

The man in brown started to walk towards the Hobbit, so Bando gingerly sat up, groaning from his sore muscles and bones, and held up his hand to show friendship.

"Pardon me, sir, but no harm was meant. I had been lying here, out like a light, when I awoke to your"

"Quiet, my little friend. No harm done, and no offence taken. Stay still. You have a cut above your eye."

Bando put his hand to his forehead, felt the bump and the pain, and then looked at the smudge of dried blood on his hand. The man approached, crossed his legs and sat down in front of him. He pulled out a water skin from under his cloak and offered it to the Hobbit.

"A bit of Ent-draught, courtesy of the Wives. Now let me look at that cut."

Bando had no idea of what he was offered, but he was parched, so he took a drink of the "antdroff" and thought it had an earthy, but pleasing taste. He drank more than half of the skin, as the old man pulled out another pouch from around his waist, and produced some dried flowers. These he wetted and placed them on Bando's forehead.

"Ow, OW, OWWW!" said Bando.

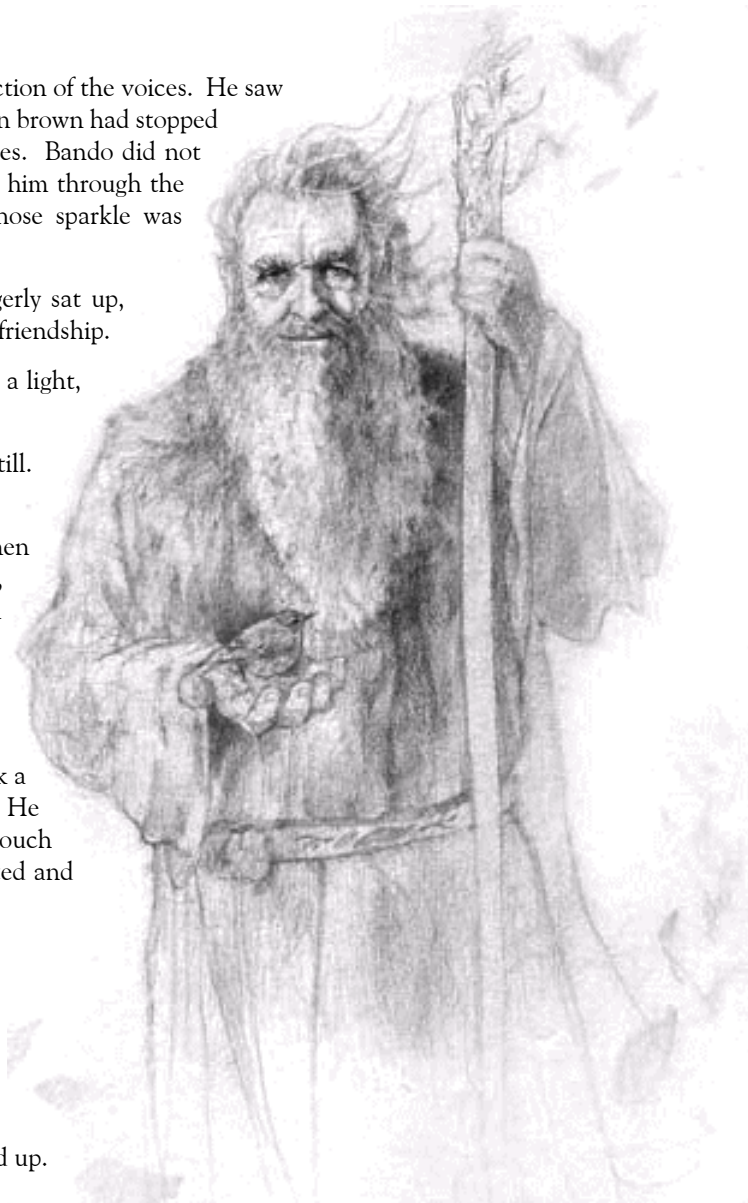
"Hold these here, till the stinging goes away," the old man replied.

"Thank you for your kindness, sir. Uhhh ... how should I address you?"

"Do not worry about that, you poor little Took, I am of no consequence."

"How did you know I was a Took?" Bando exclaimed as the old man stood up.

"There is much I know and much I don't. Drink the rest of this skin, my little Took, and you will no longer be one."



Bando thought his thumped head had made him addled-brained, because he did not understand much of what this old man prattled on about, but he was appreciative for the slightly green water and glad for the aid for his wound. Then he suddenly realized, he did not know where Warm was.

The old man, as if reading his mind, said "Your pony is not far away and was not hurt in your fall. When you call for him, he will be by your side once more."

As Bando turned and looked around the forest for Warm, he slowly began to feel much better and almost completely invigorated. He called for Warm, and heard a happy whinny come from his left. As Warm came up and nuzzled him, Bando noticed a stick device thrown over the back of Warm. He pulled it off Warm's back, and looked it over. It was a wooden slat with holes in it attached by a string to a slightly shorter staff. As Bando pondered this contraption, he gave Warm the rest of the

water in the skin and rubbed his mane and stroked his back. Warm seemed to be in fine shape after taking his tumble, as opposed to Bando's banged-up head and ego.

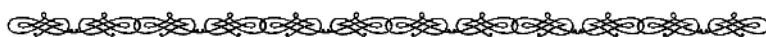
He then turned around to thank the old man again, but he was nowhere to be found. He and Warm seemed to be alone in the forest. So Bando took his pony's reins and they both slowly walked their way back to Long Cleeve and arrived at their hearth before nightfall. The tired twosome fell into the most relaxing sleep of their lives that night.

Over the next six months, Bandobras Took grew eight more inches in height, to the astonishment of his family, friends, and the Shire. And old Warm grew from a pony into a magnificent, albeit smallish, horse. The now taller (and slightly thinner!) Thain was the talk of the four Farthings for many months thereafter.

BATTLE EVE

The day ended as any other day in the North Farthing – with a gloriously rich western sky! Parko Puddifoot had been out performing his Bounder duties on the east side of the North Farthing, and after a good night's rest, was ready to head back to the old homestead in the morning. After trudging around the countryside for the last week, he was ready for a nice, stout roof over his head. Things had been fairly quiet for the last day or two, which had been a welcome relief from the previous month's wolf problems. But, as Parko set up camp and ate his quail eggs and mushrooms, he began to notice things were too quiet. Very few birds or beasts were to be seen. An eerie calm seemed to have settled over the land, as if waiting for something to happen.

As he prepared his small, smokeless warming fire and began getting his bedding ready, he heard a metallic clang in the far off distance. Scampering to the top of the small rock outcrop that his camp was under, Parko looked out to the darkening eastern horizon and saw what very few Hobbits had seen before or since – a large band of ugly creatures walking southwest – directly towards the heart of the North Farthing! Before another blade of grass had been moved by the western wind, he was off to warn the Shire!



Bando was sitting by his round window overlooking his garden in Long Cleeve when he first heard the ruckus. Laying down his grandfather's ceremonial sword (which he had been polishing before placing it back over the mantel), he rushed outside and down to the town square. He found a group of Hobbits forming around a Big-Folk and a disheveled Parko Puddifoot. Parko and the stranger were explaining what they had seen and were calling for Bando and the Shire-reeve.

"A Shire-muster! A Shire-muster! Hurry! Hurry! We haven't much time!" exclaimed Parko.

"Whoa, there, Master Puddifoot!" said Bando waving his hands for quietness, "What are you on about?"

Parko stood there dirty, ragged and tired-looking, and was getting ready to explain, when the mannish stranger responded for him.

"I am Drandor, a woodsman from the north, and I saw Parko here dashing madly towards your village early this morning and joined him. I was on my way here also, to let your Thain know about the Orcs, when I spotted him.."

Immediately, a chorus of Hobbit voices started murmuring "Orcs ..Orcs ..ORCS !"

The Shire-reeve, Olo Blackwood, had also joined the commotion, and had worked his way over to Bando.

"Bando, as Thain, you must call a Shire-Muster," said Olo, "and we must see how many Hobbits we can get here as quickly as possible. And what is this MAN doing here. I don't like the looks of this at all!"



"I understand, Olo, but we do not know how big of a band is up there or how fast they are travelling. Oh, so much to do and plan!" said Bando.

Drandor looked at Olo and Bando and said "Thain and Sheriff, I must tell you what I know about them and then must move on quickly. There are others that must be notified."

Olo and Bando looked at each other and gave a quick nod .. "Please, woodsman, tell us what you know and you can be on your way."

The three sat down to talk on the Market Square Common, and after a few minutes Bando called three sturdy Hobbits over to him.

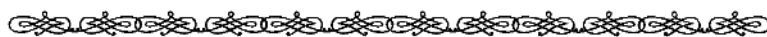
"Rodrigo, Briar and Hob – you three have ponies. I need one of you to go to Dwaling, one to Oatbarton and one to Greenfields and round up some able-bodied Hobbits. Get the Archery Brigade out of Oatbarton armed and here as fast as they can muster." Then he turned to Parko, "Parko, get over here and tell us what you know too! The rest of you – TO ARMS!"

As they sat down to deliberate, a small Hobbit-child walked by whirling a noisy toy, seemingly oblivious to the commotion going on around him. Olo turned to the child and said,

"Ned-boy, quit making all that noise! That alone could scare off those Orcs."

To which Drandor chuckled and added, "You know, my Hobbit friends, Orcs do not like unusual noises like that, at all. It might be something to think about."

Then Bando looked at the toy and recognized it as a smaller version of object left on Warm by the stranger in brown he met after his fall last year. It was an ancient device known as a Bullroarer.



In the Orc encampment on the south side of the River Baranduin, their leader was swaggering and staggering throughout the camp, talking about the fun they were having on this campaign. They had already been through a few small, sparsely populated towns on the way down here from their home under Mount Gram in the Misty Mountains. The Orcs had destroyed them and scattered the people without any problems and had thought that the rest of the trip to the Elven Towers would be as easy as the first part.

"Ah," thought Golfimbul, "To finally reach the accursed Elven Towers and crush them into dust under the mighty Orc hand!"

And so, after crossing the river and traveling through some moors, the Orc band of about fifty or so camped at the base at the beginnings of some rolling hills. One of their scouts had even found this campsite that seemed to have been used before. But having seen no enemy of any kind for the last fifty leagues, the confident Orc leader decided to give his troops a rest before moving farther into the West.

THE BATTLE OF GREENFIELDS

On the morning of the seventh of Thrimidge (May), scouting reports came in that the Orc-band was on the move and heading south-west through the hills towards Oatbarton and Greenfields. Shire-reeve Olo and Thain Bando immediately rounded up the Hobbits that had answered the call and started them on the path to Oatbarton. The man who had helped Parko yesterday had said there were forty or fifty of them and they were very sloppy – no guards, a few scouts – more like thugs than a militia. They obviously thought this part of Eriador was sparsely inhabited or of no danger to them at all.

Bando also took forty Bullroarers that he had the local woodwright, Jack Pickthorn, make over night. Since they were comprised only of a slat with a hole in it and a piece of rope, Jack had forty made before daybreak. Bando made sure they were on one of the pack ponies. The Hobbits of Oatbarton and Greenfields who could not help in the fight, could help in other ways – and Hobbits could make a lot of noise when they wanted to (or none when they had to!)

After arriving in Oatbarton and receiving another scouting report that the band was heading towards Greenfields, Bando and Olo devised a plan to lure the Orcs into the Greenfields valley by having them chase a small group of mounted Hobbits through the Bottleneck pass. Bando figured that if he had enough archers on the ridge of the pass, then many of the Orcs could hopefully be slain without any hand-to-hand combat. If that could be avoided, a big advantage could be taken away from the much taller and stronger Orcs.

The archers were immediately dispatched to the ridge along with five of the bravest Hobbits with the fastest ponies. Bando would lead the archers. Olo was to organize the noise-makers along the outskirts of where the Hobbits hoped the Orcs would pass and were taught how to make the most sound come from those simple devices.

Benbo Starsley of Greenfields had rounded up some more archers and armed Hobbits and put them with Olo's group. The idea was to have the Orcs rush through the pass towards Greenfields and then have the Hobbits put up so much resistance and racket that

the enemy would have no choice but to go back through the pass again or be so confused they would splinter into smaller groups.

When the time came, the five Hobbits used as bait performed their job splendidly. But the Orcs only sent half of their force after them, the other half continued a slow march around the pass. Bando, seeing this clearly from the ridge and knowing he could not let the first group get through intact, let the archers take aim and fire after the group was most of the way through the pass.

The Orcs in the first group were decimated. Of the twenty or so that came into the pass, only five made it through to the valley. The Orcs were so bewildered by the noise and surprised at finding themselves under attack, they panicked and were struck down easily by the other waiting Hobbit fighters and archers.

The Hobbits were so happy at the outcome of their war, that they started to sing and celebrate, and clap each other on the back.

It was not until Parko Puddifoot came down from the pass and told them another twenty-five Orcs were coming around the Bottleneck that Olo could settle them down and get them back to the business at hand.

Based on Parko's information, Benbo and Olo got their Hobbit army together and moved them to the northern side of the Greenfields plain figuring this is where the rest of the Orcs would be coming from. Parko had told them the enemy had split into two groups and that one group had gone north of the pass, so the Shire-reeve and Benbo got their people in position and waited for the second wave.

Bando could see that the Orcs that had made it through the pass were destroyed and had immediately sent Parko down to let them know about the northern route the rest of the Orcs were taking and to move in that direction. He was also amazed at how loud the forty bullroarers were when the townspeople started whirling them around their heads. He could clearly hear it from on top of the ridge and wondered if it carried to where the other Orcs were.

Then, he got his archers from both sides of the culvert and had them on a forced march to where he thought they would intercept the Orcs before they got to the Greenfields plain.



Inside the Orc-band, Golfimbul thought the other half of his army was having a good time roasting and skewering the little people they had seen and had probably caught by now. He was continuing on his way around a smallish hill when he first heard the noise – he wasn't quite sure what it was, but he didn't like it one bit. His remaining band of Orcs did not like it either and started to murmur among themselves about "bad omens". The Orc leader knew he could not back-track and go to the north side of the hillock, so he decided to move his band around to the south side to meet up with the rest of his troop. He pushed them into a faster pace to quiet down some of the talking and to get where he thought he needed to go faster.

It was on the northeastern side of Greenfields when the archers of Bando and the Orcs of Golfimbul met. Luckily, Bando's scouts had seen and heard the Orcs coming long before the Orcs knew what was going on. He had time to set up his archers in some low trees and shrubs and waited til they were in range.

The first flurry of arrows knocked out eight of the hostile band and by the time the Orcs figured out where the arrows were coming from and formed an attack, the Hobbits had vanished into the underbrush. That is when the remaining Orcs heard the "noise" again. It was a low roar that was coming close to them and was getting louder and louder as it came. Golfimbul's troops started to panic, but he kept barking orders at them so fast and fiercely that they held together.

They held together, that is, until the next rain of arrows came down on them. Then it was pure mayhem. Golfimbul saw where many of the arrows came from this time and went for the leader of the group who seemed to be orchestrating the attack. He attacked with a vengeance and anger. Many of the archers scattered into the trees. But Bandobras Took, Twelfth Took-Thain of the Shire, stood firm and drew the ancient sword of his grandfather.

BATTLE AFTERMATH

After the battle, the Hobbits were very excited and happy with the performance of their Thain, their Shire-reeve and the archer brigade. After carting all the dead Orcs into the heart of the Greenfields plain and burning them (for they were foul!), a large celebration was decided upon and planned for the first day of Forelithe. This would give the Hobbits time to prepare a great celebration and to spread the word. Most Hobbits love a good party, and this was to be the biggest ever!

Meanwhile, Bando and Olo made sure there were many Hobbit Bounders out in all the Farthings, and kept up this pace for three weeks. As the party date moved nearer on the calendar, they both began to feel that this just was a small rogue band that wandered a bit too far from home. Drandor had returned to confirm this and to tell the Hobbit leaders that his group of "rangers" had not seen any other movements also, and they felt that this was an isolated incident.



At the party in Greenfields, many Hobbits from all over the Shire gathered around the large bonfire as Bandobras, now called "Bullroarer" Took, Twelfth Took-Thain of the Shire told (and retold) the story of his slaying of the Orc leader.

"It was like this, my lads and lasses," began the Bullroarer. "There I was, with my lads all scattered about in the underbrush, standing and facing the leader of the Orc band as he charged at us with all his might. Oh, I do not mind telling you, that the fear was overflowing in my boots..."

"Are you sure it was fear or was it some other wet substance? Har har har har!!!" – yelled one of the more drunk members of the gathering.

"Be quiet, ya sot!" yelled another newcomer to the group, "I haven't heard this yet."

"Yes, yes, now, quiet back there in the stable door." yelled Bullroarer, as he tried to hide his snickering also. It seemed the flowing ale and the happy atmosphere were getting into him also.

"Anyway, so there I was, watching as this giant, ugly – and I do mean ugly! – Orc came charging at me. I pulled old Isembras' sword out from its ancient scabbard, and said to myself – 'Well, Bando, if you can't stop him who else in the Shire can? So...'"

"Good golly, Bando, are you sure your swelled head can fit into this Shire or should we expand it into the Blue Mountains so it'll fit!" came another heckler from the other side of the stable, and it brought another round of guffaws.

"Now, listen, you two Brandybucks, keep your comments to yourself, till I get through with my story!" said Bando. But this too brought another round of laughter, but then it soon quieted down. Bando continued.

"So, as I pulled out ole Isengrim's sword, I saw an arrow hit the Orc in his leg. Let me tell you, my fellow Hobbits, that got him even more angry. AND, whoever shot that arrow – GOOD SHOOTING!" he yelled to a bunch of the archers a good pace off in the distance.

"Then the ugly ole Orc yelled some thing like 'Golfing blue', which I guess was an Orc curse word, then moved straight to me. He swung his big black sword at my head, but I jumped to the other side and scrambled around behind him. He just couldn't move as fast as he probably could have with an arrow in his leg. That is when another arrow struck him in his rump! He let out a screech that even drowned out the bullroarer's noise... He quickly turned around to try and pull it out, and so I saw my opportunity to get in and take a jab too. I jumped at him from his other side and sliced at his knee. I did not know if my blade went through his leather leggings or not, but he sure felt it and swung his sword around at me. Luckily, I got old Isengrim up just time to save my life, but his blow still knocked me off my feet and into the brush. I think I ended up maybe ten feet away from him.

When he saw me hit the dirt, he seemed to forget about the two arrows sticking in him, and came at me again. He grabbed his sword with both hands and was about to swing it down on my head when his foot caught a root and he tripped. As he fell to his knees, I was rolling to one side, and so his big sword missed me and went straight into the ground. AND IT STUCK THERE! He couldn't get it out. As he struggled to loosen his sword, two more arrows struck him - one in the back and one in his main sword-swinging arm. As he scooted closer to his stuck sword to try to pull it out, I ran up to his side and struck him in the neck with my sword, where IT got stuck between his ugly head and his leather armor! Blood was everywhere!"

At this, many of the young listeners let out a collective – "Eewwww!"

Bando went on, "At this last strike, he slumped forward onto his sword which propped him up on his knees. His head, which was now half way off..." (another large "yuk" expression from the audience) "... dangled over the stuck sword handle. I quickly looked to my left and right for something, anything, to smash him with. I then saw a fallen tree branch close by that was very nearly in the shape of a war club. I quickly grabbed it, and with both hands swung as hard as I could at his big, gurgling head..." Bando paused for a moment to let the anticipation build (he was after all a politician of sorts, too), then continued.

"And as his head snapped off and sailed into the field, down it went into a small hole, and I yelled 'There's your 'golfing' for ya!' Ha ha ha ha!" ...finished Bando to the applause and laughter of his admiring audience.

And so a legend (and a sport) was born that summer in the Shire.



REFERENCES

From "The Tolkien Companion" by J. E. A. Tyler :

"Bandobras 'Bullroarer' Took – One of the tallest 'Halflings' in Shire-history and the most notable Hobbit up to the period of the War of the Ring. Being four feet five and able to ride a horse, this adventurous Took was given the admiring nickname of 'Bullroarer'. He was also the first Hobbit in history to fight (and win) a battle: that which occurred at Greenfields in 2747 Third Age, after marauding Orcs led by Golfimbul of Mount Gram had invaded the Northfarthing. Bullroarer slew the leader and the remaining Orcs fled in dismay."

"Golfimbul An Orc-chieftain, leader of the Goblins of Mount Gram (the location of which is not known, though it may have been near Gundabad in the Misty Mountains). Golfimbul led a raid deep into western Eriador in 2747 Third Age, during the course of which he was slain by no less a Hobbit than Bandobras 'Bullroarer' Took (in what later became known as the Battle of Greenfields)."

"Took ... It was Bandobras Took, the younger son of the eleventh Took-thain, who became the most renowned warrior and leader in Shire-history (until the War of the Ring). Not content with growing to greater stature than any other Hobbit, 'Bullroarer' also won acclaim as a military captain when, in Shire-year 1147, he led the Shire-muster which defeated an invading force of Orcs (See Battle of Greenfields). He also founded the North-took clan of Long Cleeve."

From "The Hobbit" by J. R. R. Tolkien:

"... even to Old Took's great-granduncle Bullroarer, who was so huge (for a Hobbit) that he could ride a horse. He charged the ranks of the goblins of Mount Gram in the Battle of Green Fields, and knocked their king Golfimbul's head clean off with a wooden club. It sailed a hundred yards through the air and went down a rabbit-hole, and in this way the battle was won and the game of Golf invented at the same moment."

From "The Lord of the Rings" by J. R. R. Tolkien:

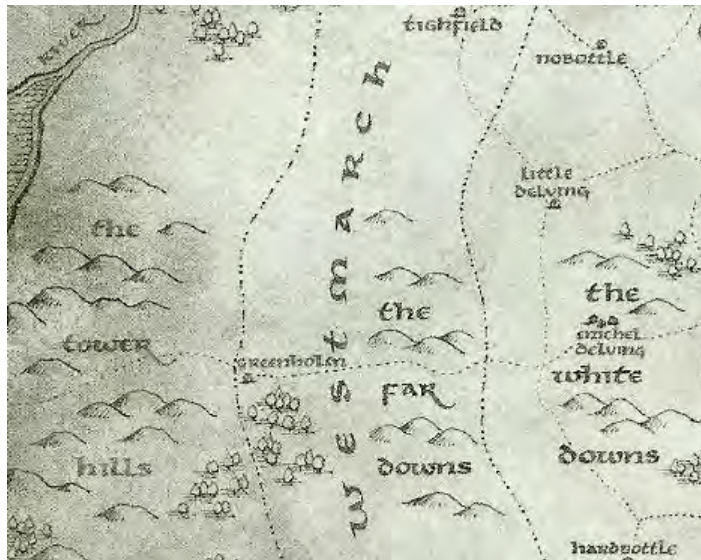
"According to the Red Book, Bandobras Took (Bullroarer), son of Isengrim the Second, was four foot five and able to ride a horse."

"The last battle, before this story opens, and indeed the only one that had ever been fought within the borders of the Shire, was beyond living memory: the Battle of Greenfields, S.R. 1147, in which Bandobras Took routed an invasion of Orcs."



ADVENTURING IN... THE TOWER HILLS

The Tower Hills, known to the Elves as the Eryn Beraid, lie to the west of the Shire, beyond the Far Downs at the farthest reaches of the Westmarch.



Long ago, as a gift to Elendil, Gil-galad the Elven king built three great towers upon these hills: Elostirion, Tirech, and Forgamech. These mighty structures gave the Eryn Beraid their more common name of the Tower Hills.



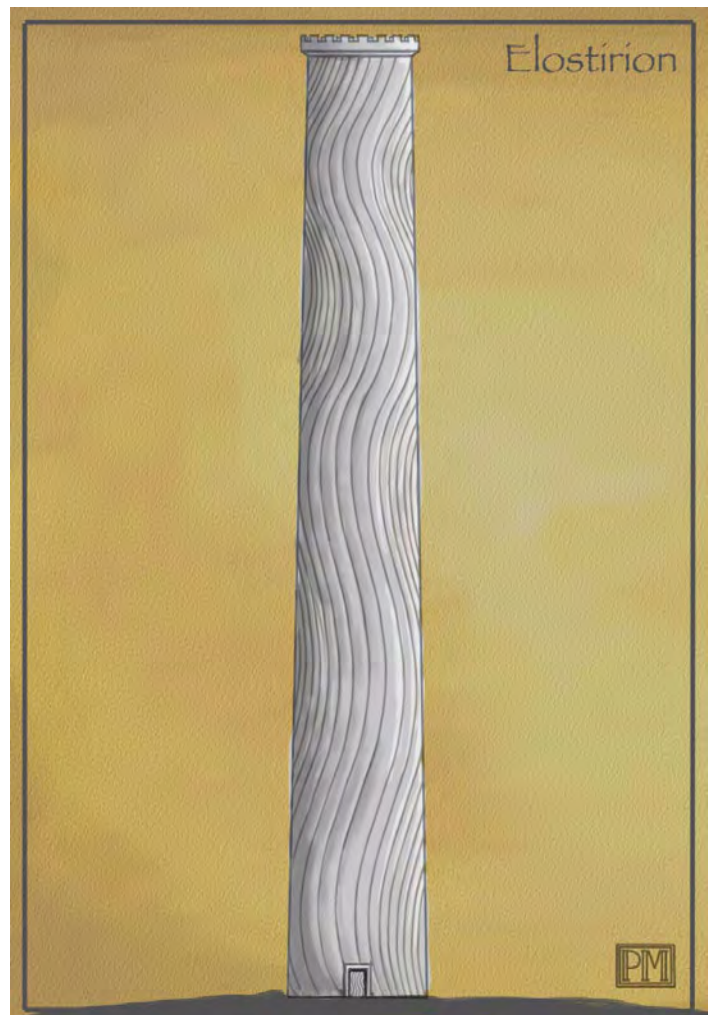
All three towers were useful vantage points for observing the hills and plains around.

Nothing in the area went unnoticed if the towers were manned with watchers.

ELOSTIRION

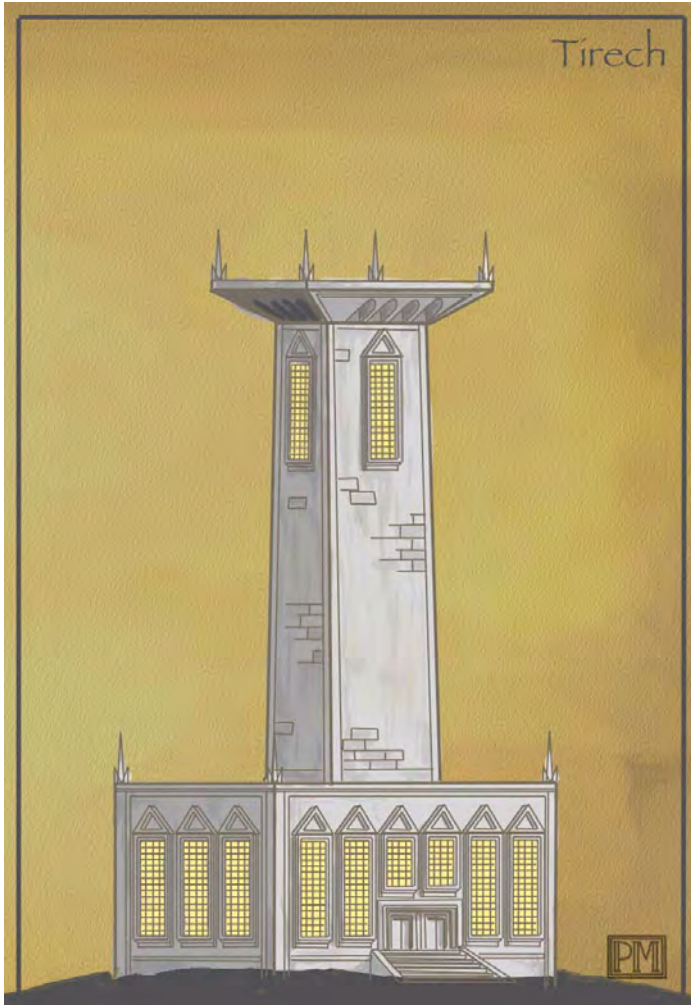
Elostirion is the tallest of the three towers; standing atop it, one with keen vision can see all the way to the western sea.

Elostirion housed one of the Seeing Stones – the *palantiri*. This stone (also called the Elendil Stone), no matter how powerful its wielder was, did naught but look back along the Straight Road and glimpse the Master-stone's Tower on Tol Eressëa and the Stone of Osgiliath, Middle-earth's master stone. When the Ringbearers left the shores of Middle-earth, they took with them the stone of Elostirion.



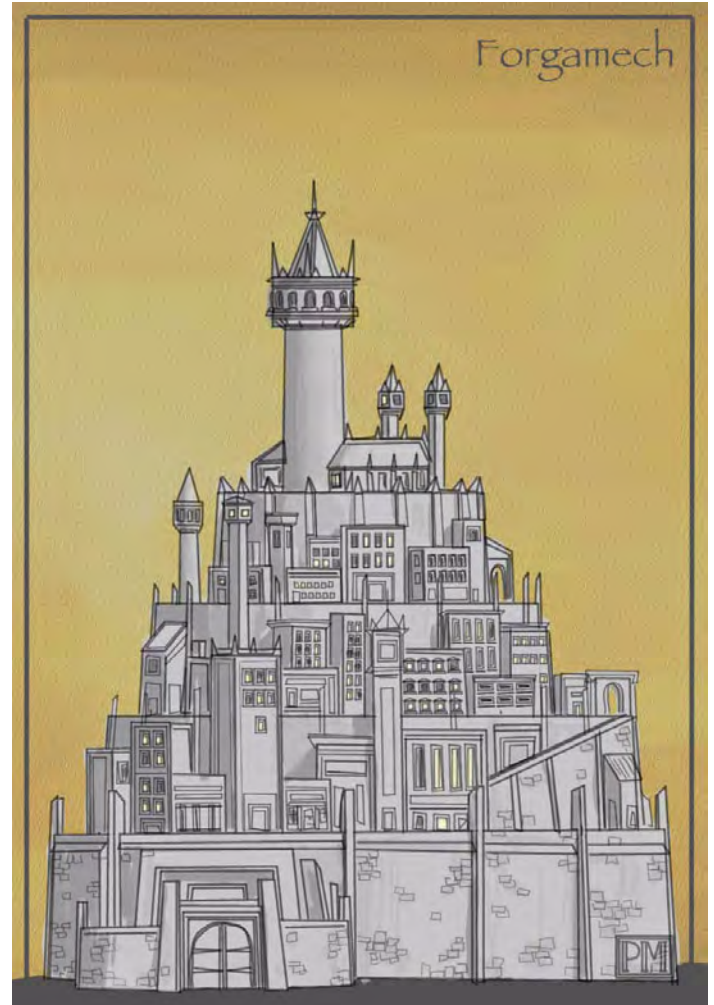
TIRECH

Tirech, the second tallest tower, was used to house a great library and had a flat top ideal for stargazing.



FORGAMECH

Forgamech is where the region's steward was housed along with the barracks; it had a large stable attached at the base.



GETTING STARTED: BEGINNING CHARACTERS

ARACAR by Matthew "GandalfOfBorg" Kearns

RACE: Man (Dunedain)

RACIAL ABILITIES: Adaptable, Dominion of Man, Skilled

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 10 (+2)*, Perception 7 (+0), Nimbleness 12 (+3)*, Strength 7 (+0), Vitality 6 (+0), Wits 10(+2)

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

ORDER: Rogue

ORDER ABILITIES: Scoundrel's Fortune, Treacherous Blow

ADVANCEMENTS: 1

SKILLS: Armed Combat: Blades (Longsword) +9, Conceal (Weapon) +4, Healing (Treat Wounds) +5, Language: Sindarin +5, Language: Westron +7, Lore/Group: Rangers of the North (Traditions) +6, Lore/History: Dunedain (Family) +5, Lore/Race: Men (Dunedain) +5, Lore/Race: Elves (Noldor) +5, Lore/Realm: Arthedain (Geography) +5, Lore/Realm: Rivendell (Geography) +5, Observe (Hear, Spot) +5, Ranged Combat: Thrown Weapons (Long Knife) +5, Stealth (Hide, Sneak) +9, Survival (Forest, Mountains) +5

EDGES: Rank, Strong-willed, Tireless, Dodge

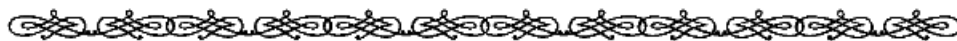
FLAWS: Fealty (Chieftain of the Dunedain), Outcast (see HOF 4, pg 13), Grief-stricken (see HOF 21, pg 15)

HEALTH: 6 **DEFENCE:** 13 **COURAGE:** 4 **RENOUN:** 0

GEAR: 24 cp, Longsword, Long Knife, Clothing, 1 day of rations

BACKGROUND: Aracar is on the road, not by choice but out of necessity. Many months ago, nigh a year, his blushing bride of two years was slain. None know for sure who it was, but, unfortunately for him, prevailing opinion is that he did it. Escaping to the wilds, he fled as fast as he could from what was left of his dying people. He hated to leave his duty, but it was the only way he could live long enough to find out who was the culprit. Along with the survivor's guilt of losing his wife, he mourns his prior excellent service now that it is tarnished. He will return someday to find the villain and exact upon him a husband's vengeance.

Aracar is a typical man of Dunedain descent: tall, dark hair, bright grey eyes, and of sturdy build. This past year has worn on him and it can be seen in the wrinkles upon his face, both from sorrow and the elements. His clothes are a little tattered and weather-stained.



RACIAL PACKAGE by GandalfOfBorg

RANGER OF THE NORTH (DUNEDAIN)

You are one of the few remaining houses of a dwindling people with a great and proud history. Though diminished in power and numbers, the Dunedain in the north of Eriador still have the will and determination for defying the growing shadow and seeing that the rightful heir is put back on the throne.

Armed Combat +1, Healing +2, Ranged Combat +1, Survival +2; Rank, Fealty (Chieftain of the Rangers)

THE ROAD GOES EVER ON

SHADOWS AT MIDNIGHT

by Doug "Tomcat" Joos

"You sure she just didn't go a wanderin'?" asked the constable. "You know how your little girl likes to explore. Mayhaps she went off with that brother of yours Déorwyn?"

That was when the woman started to cry again, "No," she answered. "Her room was all a'torn! Whoever took her seemed like they were a'lookin' for something."

INTRODUCTION

"Shadows at Midnight" is an adventure for use with the Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game by Decipher, taking place in the Third Age during any year the Narrator chooses between the Necromancer's reign in Dol Guldur until his return to Mordor. "Shadows at Midnight" is suitable for a company of 4-5 characters ranging from 4 to 6 Advancements.

Narrators will require the use of *The Lord of the Rings: Core Rule Book*, *Fell Beasts and Wondrous Magic*, *Paths of the Wise* and a few issues of the Hall of Fire (mentioned below) for running this adventure. He or she may also want to have handy a copy of the Helm's Deep or Isengard sourcebooks for reference of the region in question.

The adventure takes place in a rustic, small town in Rohan, along the rocky range of the White Mountains. The town is far out of the way, but sits upon a major road between Gondor and Rohan. Its citizens are of some of the highest in quality... and some of the lowest. Players that plan to take part in this adventure should not read any further.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

A young child is found to be missing in the morning, stolen from her bedchamber. The distraught parents run to the center of their small village desperate for any news that their neighbors may have of the girl.

They tell of her bed and her belongings being strewn about the room and the window shutters being torn open. The nights get very cold in the foothills of the mountains and they fear for her life – not only from some thief in the night, but also from exposure to the elements.

The chance meeting occurs due to the company of player characters being camped out at the village, or staying in the local inn. The heroes will be led on a chase of a young rogue, and from there into the darker danger of a lair of some of the vilest servants of the Shadow.

SCENE 1—MISSING!

Morning comes for the characters with a cry for aid. In the small village commons, a mother and father yell out to their neighbors to inquire whether anyone has seen their young daughter named Erin. The mother is a weeping mess and the father seems to be raging from the loss of his daughter, stolen from his very home.

As they cry out, villagers will start to gather around the couple and begin to ask questions. It soon becomes a cacophony of people talking over one another but very little getting resolved. A heavy set, older man walks into the group and attempts to calm everyone and bring a little order to the crowd. He is addressed as constable, and his name is Del. The fretting couple's names are Déorwyn and Guthláf.

If the company of characters approaches the couple to offer any assistance, they will first have to win their trust. Being a small and simple town, the common folk that reside here are suspicious of strangers and thus it will take some effort for them to be accepted.

To win this trust will require either a Bearing or Persuade test. The company can address the constable or the two parents with this test, but if they choose to talk to the constable, they will gain better modifiers for any future social tests with the common village folk. The people will say about the company, "Oh... these are Del's men (or women)!"



The base TN for the test above is 10, but the Narrator will need to add any applicable modifiers from the table to the right:

Any success on the Bearing / Persuade test means that Erin's parents accept the characters and will speak with them. Now it is necessary for the players to roll Inquire tests to glean information. The Degree of Success (DOS from this point forward) will determine how much is revealed.

The Narrator may use the table below to give information to the players, or she may give them the information based on how well they roleplay the conversations.

TABLE 1: BEARING / PERSUADE TEST MODIFIERS

-2/+2	Character(s) demonstrate evidence of sincerity / do not demonstrate evidence of sincerity
-3/+3	Character(s) are from Rohan / are not from Rohan
-5/+5	Character(s) is from the village / are not from the village
-1	Per point of Renown modifier of the person making the test
+2	Bonus to any future social tests if the characters talk to the constable and are successful at the Persuade / Bearing test above

TABLE 2: INFORMATION AND RUMORS

TN 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the couple woke this morning, they found Erin's room empty. The room has been ransacked. They put Erin to bed early the evening before and she was fast asleep when the couple went to bed. She has never run away before.
TN 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Erin is a good child, but she is a bit dreamy. She likes to hang around Déorwyn's brother, Olin, and listen to his stories of adventure. Much to the parents chagrin, Olin has taken her about with him on hikes along the mountain foothills - they are sure these trips have not always been safe. Olin likes to hang out in a ramshackle tavern called Wily's - a place where seedy travelers taking the road through Rohan always congregate.
TN 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Erin has a small box of 'treasures' in her room; she hesitates to let anyone see what is inside, even her parents. Olin is a rogue; he holds no job nor has any skills to provide for himself, save his imagination. Olin likes to tell tales, and he is a very good singer. Déorwyn is not proud of her brother, but he is her brother and thus she and her husband take care of him as they can. They chalk his problems up to youth, but Guthláf only does what he can for his wife's sake.



Once the inquiries have been done with the parents of young Erin, the players will more than likely want to investigate the home. It is not far from the center of town and Guthláf will escort the constable and the PC's to the location.

The Narrator may read the following text:

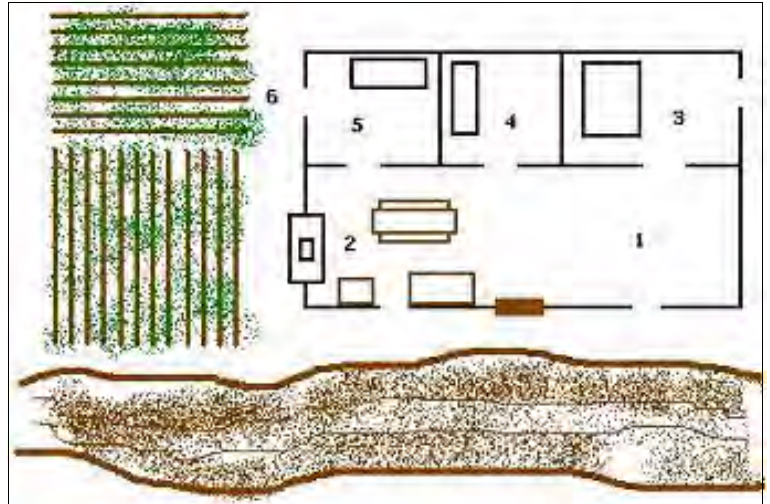


The house was a one-story structure that sat at the base of a hill along a dirt road that wound upward into the pine forests that grew along the base of the White Mountains. A farm surrounded the residence though the fields were not yet grown in with the early spring. Recent snowmelts still had the ground muddy and the roads were riven with wagon wheel tracks.

Inside the house was quaint (for a simple farming family); one main room with hearth, kitchen and living area and three rooms that extend back. Each room had a window covered with wooden shutters and heavy woolen drapes.

KEY

1. The living area of the house. A large weaved mat makes up the predominant part of the floor and simple wood furniture sits about. The smell of pipe tobacco hangs heavy in this part of the room.
2. Kitchen area.
3. Guthláf and Déorwyn's bedchamber. A heavy woolen curtain separates the room from the main living area.
4. Olin's bedchamber. A heavy woolen curtain separates the room from the main living area.
5. Erin's bedchamber. A heavy woolen curtain separates the room from the main living area. The room is strewn with Erin's bedclothes and her personal things. A small wooden box, painted brown, is on its side with its lid open. Erin's treasures are on the floor by the box, the items include:
 - a. A long brown cattail that has partially burst and its cottony-looking seedpods are drifting around the floor.
 - b. A bone comb.
 - c. A piece of silk ribbon.
 - d. Two wood carved dolls, with horsehair and painted faces, dressed in small knitted clothes.
 - e. A dried rose that is crushed and its petals are scattered.
 - f. A piece of quartz.
6. The window shutters are broken outward and one lies on the ground outside while the other still hangs from a rope hinge. The heavy wool drape is also pulled down though it lies on the floor inside the room. Any character that makes a Search test TN 12 will see prints outside the window of a large boot in the soft, muddy ground. A Search test TN 20 will reveal a small fragment of cloth that is stuck on a jagged piece of broken wood. The cloth looks and smells very old.



The players may make a Track test TN 10 to follow the footprints up the hill and into the pine forest. On an Extraordinary Success, the tracker will be able to see that the print does not indent the earth as deep as it should for someone wearing a boot so large.

Once inside the forest, it will require a Track test TN 20 to pick up the trail again and follow it; then four more consecutive tests TN 15 to maintain the track to the abandoned longhouse (see Scene 4). If any of the four tests are failed, another Track test TN 25 will be necessary to find the trail once again and then whatever number of TN 15 tests were leftover.

**SCENE 2—WILY'S!**

Besides investigating the child's bedroom, the characters will probably also want to search out where Olin is keeping himself. If they were successful at questioning Guthláf, then they will know the name of Wily's tavern – the place where Olin likes to drink. It does not matter the time, the young rogue spends the better part of his life in an inebriated state – when he can afford it.

Because Olin has no job, he has a hard time coming by the coin to purchase the ale that he likes to drink. Déorwyn gives him the occasional coin, without Guthláf's knowledge, but it is not often enough and so the young man needs to be resourceful for himself.

Olin spends the day spinning tales or singing songs (of tales) to any travelers that will listen, and occasionally these merchants or fellow rogues will toss him a coin. Another activity that Olin puts to use is to roam the surrounding hills and plundering through the old ruins of Gondor and Rohan. At times he will find a rare coin or piece of jewelry that he trades to Wily to pay down his tab and to glean more credit.

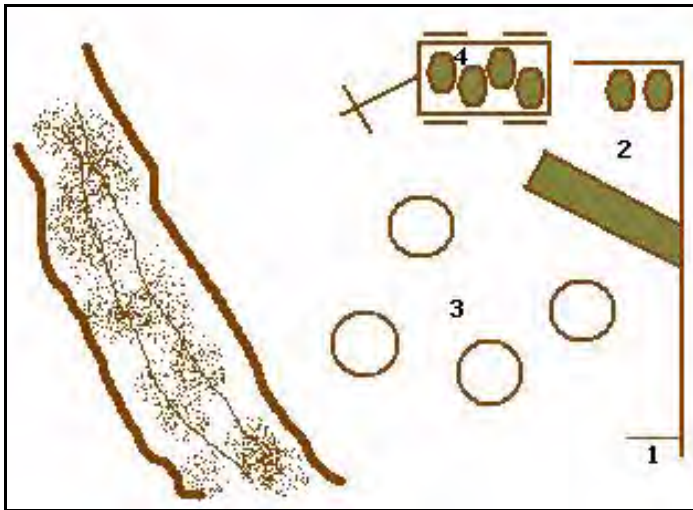
Lastly, Olin has taken up with the worst of folk that the small town has to offer. The thieves have a hideout in the woods and from it they waylay passing merchants and travelers, stealing what they need, and at times killing those they rob.

The PC's will probably start at Wily's to find the young man. If so, the Narrator may read them the following description:

The ramshackle tavern, if tavern it could be called – for it had but two wooden walls and a thatched roof – came into view. A wain was positioned at the back of the 'shelter' upon which sat large casks of both tapped and untapped beer and wine. A makeshift bar counter sat before the wagon from which the proprietor served his drinks to some of the surliest looking folks.

The 'entrance' to the tavern was nothing more than the exposed side of the shelter that sat facing the road and a simple sign, hanging from one of the wooden walls, swung in the morning breeze... it said Wily's.

Dice and cards were seen aplenty as the miscreants of the town spent their idle time, but eyes come up to meet you as you stride through the small gathering.



1. A wood placard reads Wily's.
2. Behind the jury-rigged bar top, a gruff looking man stands tapping an ale from the barrel behind his counter.
3. The round tables are makeshift as well, some just a piece of wood atop two sawhorses, though there are only a couple chairs. There are 2d6 patrons in Wily's at any given time of the day.
4. This is where Olin is hiding if he has heard the he is being looked for; otherwise he will be standing next to a table with two occupants trying to barter a drink for a story about Éorik, a hunter of great renown.

When the PC's head off towards Wily's the Narrator will want to make a secret roll of 1d6 – an odd result will mean that Olin has heard that he is being sought by the constable; even means he has no clue. If he knows, he will ask Wily to hide him and to lie to whoever asks of his whereabouts. The bar owner tells him to climb in the back of the wain and to keep low.

Now Wily is a big man, and a rather despicable person. He follows a code of discreetness regarding his patrons and friends, but he is no hero. He can be bought with coin or if intimidated enough, he will bow to the stronger will. In either case, Wily will point to where he hides the young rogue and step aside to let the PC's do what they must to capture him, but he'll add, "Now don't go breakin' me crocks!"

WILY THE TAVERN-KEEP (only the pertinent character details are given; Narrator may flesh out Wily moreso if necessary)

Attributes: Bearing 8 (+1), Nimbleness 6 (+0), Perception 10 (+2), Strength 9 (+1), Vitality 7 (+0), Wits 9 (+1)

Reactions: Stamina +1, Swiftmess +2, Willpower +3, Wisdom +2

Order: Craftsman (Barkeep)

Order Abilities: Place of Trade (Wily's)

Health: 8

Advancements: 5

Skills: Armed Combat: Blades (Dagger) +5, Appraise +8, Conceal (Hide small items) +9, Debate +6, Games (Cards, Dice) +9, Inquire (Converse) +4, Intimidate (Power) +4, Observe (Spot, Listen) +5, Persuade +4

Edges: Furtive, Stern

Flaws: Crippling Wound (Lame foot), Grasping, Stiff-necked

OLIN (only the pertinent character details are given; Narrator may flesh out Olin moreso if necessary)

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

Reactions: Stamina +1, Swiftmess +4, Willpower +0, Wisdom +2

Order: Rogue

Order Abilities: Fleet-footed, Lurking in Shadows, Scoundrel's Fortune

Health: 9

Advancements: 6

Skills: Acrobatics (Balance) +2, Appraise +4, Armed Combat: Blades (Shortsword) +5, Climb +2, Conceal (Hide small items) +5, Games (Cards, Dice) +6, Jump +2, Inquire (Converse) +3, Legerdemain (Pick Locks) +8, Observe (Spot, Listen) +5, Perform (Sing) +2, Persuade +3, Run +1, Search +2, Stealth +3

Edges: Furtive, Favour of Fortune

Flaws: Grasping, Weak-willed

If he sees that the constable, or the characters are coming for him, or if Wily gives him up, Olin will run and try to get to someplace he can hide. The characters will need to do an opposed Run test to catch the rogue, but this shouldn't be too difficult.

Once the PC's have Olin, the rogue will be genuinely surprised about his niece's disappearance. He will be nervous but he will truly have no idea of how it happened. By questioning Olin, and if the 'treasure box' is mentioned, Olin will mention that he gave the young girl a special present – a gold bracelet of fine make. If asked where the young rogue procured such a gift, Olin will be hesitant to answer.

Olin will need to be Intimidated, or Persuaded, with an Extraordinary Success in an opposed test, and then the characters must achieve an Inquire test TN 15 for him to reveal where he got the bracelet. If the players succeed at these, Olin will tell them of the crypt he found at the ruined, old longhouse higher up on the mountainside. Inside the crypt was where he discovered a few treasures (some of which he has buried on the hill just up from Guthláf's home), and had decided to take them.

Until the required tests above are made, Olin will reveal nothing even though the girl's life could be at risk. Instead he will lead the characters to other places where he had taken the girl 'adventuring'. The Narrator can lead the party around the surrounding hills of the town as they please, but of course, nothing will turn up. While Olin does this, his 'friends' have some business they need to take care of (see Scene 3). The Narrator can bring Scene 3 into play at anytime during Olin's attempts to keep the PC's busy.

Perceptive characters will see the young rogue is bothered by something, though he doesn't reveal it. What it is is that his young niece, whom he truly loves, could be in grave danger, and he is afraid to reveal that he has been grave robbing.

Note to Narrator: If the PC's achieve the tracking skills in Scene 1 that lead to the longhouse, Scene 2 and 3 are not really necessary, as Olin is not captured and his 'friends' will not be worried about him squealing. Still, to keep the fun and length of the adventure, the Narrator may want to change the test requirements for the Tracking so it is not possible to achieve (or at least would require all the Courage points a character has plus a pretty phenomenal roll).

SCENE 3—FRIENDS IN LOW PLACES

Olin has made a few bad contacts in his young life so far, and with them he has committed a number of crimes that could get a man hanged – including been part in a murder!

There is no honor, or trust amongst these 'friends', and the capture of Olin will cause them to become a bit uncomfortable – especially knowing how easily the youth can be persuaded or intimidated.

Now in town, the constable has a bit of power to wield and it is enough to 'keep the peace', but outside of the town his influence greatly depreciates – so much so that the band of rogues have never feared the 'law'. The little town has always been so far out of the way (albeit on a major roadway) that the king in Imladris has never sent more than a token of enforcers to aid the constable. The equation has changed a little with the appearance of the heroes (PC's).



When Olin is taken from Wily's, by the constable and/or the PC's, a few of these 'associates' watch from a distance and when they get the chance, run out of town to tell the others in their group. Just outside of the town, also in the higher foothills of the mountains (but in the opposite direction of the longhouse), Olin's associate rogues have a sanctuary. They will gather here while the PC's are looking around the town with Olin and come to the conclusion that Olin will break down and reveal his crimes, his associates, and the sanctuary. Once done, it will take no time before the King hears and an Éored comes to clear them out.

These bandits decide the best thing to do is to silence Olin, the PC's, and the constable if necessary!

The Narrator may set up an ambush for any of the places that Olin takes the company to look for Erin. No matter what, the bandits will get a +10 test modifier to any Ambush or Stealth tests due to the many spies that they have in the town.

There are a total of 8 bandits and their chieftain. The necessary stats for them are given below; along with a Mook statistic block (should the Narrator decide that he wants to do quick combat). If the Mook stats are employed, the Narrator may want to increase the number of bandits so that the PC's will be challenged:



BANDITS (only the pertinent character details are given; Narrator may flesh out moreso if necessary)

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

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

Order: Rogue

Order Abilities: Treacherous Blow

Health: 9

Skills: Armed Combat: Blades (Shortsword) +9, Climb +2, Conceal (Hide small items) +5, Jump +2, Observe (Spot, Listen) +5, Ranged Combat: Bows (Shortbow) +5, Run +1, Stealth (Hide) +5

BANDITS (mooks)

Skills: Armed Combat: Blades (Shortsword) +9, Climb +2, Conceal (Hide small items) +5, Jump +2, Observe (Spot, Listen) +5, Ranged Combat: Bows (Shortbow) +5, Run +1, Stealth (Hide) +5

Leader will take 5 hits to kill

Bandits will take 3 hits to kill

<u>Leader</u>	<u>Hit # penalty</u>
1	-1 to all actions
2	-3 to all actions
3	-5 to all actions
4	-7 to all actions
5	Dead
<u>Bandit</u>	<u>Hit # penalty</u>
1	-3 to all actions
2	-5 to all actions
3	Dead

Like most rogues, the group of bandits will only be tough if they have the upper hand in any way - be it in surprise, or strength of numbers.

Should the PC's get the advantage by opposing the bandits' ambush, or should they begin to take the advantage in any melee, the bandits will turn tail and run. They will disappear into the mountain highlands and it will take a great deal of time and effort to find any of them - time when poor Erin will still be in danger.

One thing will be certain; the PC's can eliminate Olin's bandit associates as the kidnappers for she is neither among them nor in their sanctuary. Unfortunately, the young girl has fallen victim to a much worse entity... a vile shadow of the Enemy!

Note to Narrator: The Narrator may design a sanctuary and any locations that they wish to 'dress' this scene up for the players. Understand that the locations that Olin leads the PC's to are not important, nor is the bandit sanctuary. But if the players want to investigate each thoroughly, the Narrator will want to be ready.



SCENE 4—THE LONGHOUSE

One hundred years ago, the mountain men with blood descent to that of the men of Dunharrow, still resided in the lower mountain foothills east of Edoras. The relations between these pockets of folk and the Rohirrim were strained to say the least, but the king had ordered that these people were to be left alone. Eventually these people intermingled with the commoners of Rohan and their cultures were slowly lost to time.

The things that were not lost so quickly were the longhouse settlements that the mountain men had built. It is one of these longhouses that play into our tale here. The family name that had settled the area long ago is lost, but the stone walls of their home still sit in a clearing that has slowly overgrown.

Along with the longhouse, the settlers had built surrounding homes, tilled the earth, and had dug a tomb to house their dead. Also in the clearing had been dug a cellar for cold storage.

Time passed as it does and soon the abandoned ruins came to the attention of a wandering fell-spirit of the Shadow. Its name was Ar-taminzûl and it had been haunting the world since its corruption during the fall of Númenor. The longhouse was appealing for the fact that it was secluded yet close enough to other settlements and along a major roadway - all of which would provide for sustenance of the living.

Like most other creatures, the undead prefer their own and thus two other spirits came to reside in the area (particularly the mountain men tomb) - barrow-wights. These creatures began to build a network of tunnels under the settlement, between the longhouse, the few standing houses, the tomb, and cellar.

Either by raiding the village that lies further down the mountainside, or by setting traps for wandering rogues and treasure-seekers, Ar-taminzûl and his neighbors haunt the region, in service to themselves and to the Dark Lord in Mordor.

Note to Narrator: Some of your players may be very familiar with Tolkien lore and thus the languages that he created. If so, they will recognize the "Ar" in our main antagonist's name, Ar-taminzûl, to mean king. Taminzûl was never a king, but took the title upon his undeath to dishonour it.

The longhouse and its surrounds are further described but Narrators want to convey to the players an eeriness and pall that hangs over the 'dead' settlement. The characters must each perform a Willpower test TN 10 upon arrival to the longhouse and its surrounds or suffer a -1 test penalty to all tests due to unease. This penalty may be negated by an Inspire test result that equals the characters Willpower modifier +10, but understand that only one test may be made per visit.

Note to Narrator: The longhouse ruin, and its occupants, is now to be described, but a Narrator may certainly seed the area with more or less threats as they desire – the ultimate goal is to create a challenge for the players. The scene is also not seeded with any treasures so that the Narrator may keep with her style of gaming. So, a little preparation will need to be done prior to running this quick adventure.

During the day, Ar-taminzûl may be encountered in any chamber of the longhouse. There is a numeric range listed in the title of each chamber that the Narrator will roll 2d6 against to determine if he is in the room (a success if the rolled sum is within the listed range). If he is never encountered, the wraith is merely sizing up the characters to wait to attack at night.

The same applies to the barrow-wights, but their numeric values are for areas outside of the longhouse, as Ar-taminzûl does not want them in his domain. The wights will most often be together in any encounter, unless the Narrator deems otherwise.

At night, the Narrator may bring the wraith or the wights into an encounter as they please.

The settlement is further described:

1. Longhouse Entrance Hall (2-3)—The two large wooden doors, that allow access into the longhouse, still hang securely on their hinges. Still, it will require a Strength test of TN 12 for the doors to be opened due to rust and other debris and growth that have built itself up over the years.

Once inside, the room is well lit due to the large holes that pepper the roof of the longhouse. It is evident the chamber had been used for gatherings of these people for any ceremonies, celebrations, and nightly feasts. A long table and accompanying benches still sits in the back part of the hall (see Area #7) and three large stone braziers are evenly placed to allow for light and warmth. Two cobwebbed candelabras are in the entrance hall as well, one stands to the left of the entrance and the other lays on the floor to the right.

Upon entering the entrance hall, the players must make a Willpower test TN 10 to keep from jumping as large crows (Crebain) flutter out of nests and fly up to the rafters above (the Crebain, being servants of the Shadow themselves, are the only creatures that can tolerate, or are tolerated by the undead). There is no other living thing that can be seen.

The Crebain are skittish for the most part and will try to get away from anyone that approaches, but if cornered or if their nest is endangered, they will lash out. If one commences an attack, the rest will join in, swooping down and pecking at a target.

Crebain use the Carrion Bird statistics on pages 57-8 of *Fell Beasts and Wondrous Magic*.

2. Sleeping Chambers (2-10)—These three rooms were once sleeping chambers for the village leader, his family, and his men-at-arms.

The larger room housed the village leader and it has more luxuries within, but these things have fallen into ruin with the rest of the building. A heavy scent of mold hangs in the air and mottled furs lay on the floor; broken wooden furnishings sit about, covered in cobwebs and bird droppings.

The two smaller chambers house what used to be bunks; their rotten bolsters littering the floor.

3. Kitchen (2-5)—The smell of death is heavy in this area. When the characters enter the kitchen, they will see an old counter that had once been used to prepare food. They will also see a great cooking pot, and a log fire oven. In one corner is a smoke box for curing meat that still smells strongly of hickory. Still in stacks are wooden platters, and there is a crock that used to contain metal utensils; it is cracked in pieces and its contents rust on the floor.

The stench comes from a dead Crebain that lies on the counter. It has been pecked and torn apart by its hungry, living fellows.

4. Dry Storage (2-3)—The chamber off of the kitchen was used to store all manners of dry goods. Salt is abundant, along with molded flour and other seasonings. There are also rusted metal hooks in the rafters though they no longer hold any items.
5. Guest Quarters (2-10)—It was here that visiting guests to the master of the house slept. Like the bedchambers of the village leader and his people, this room has nothing of any worth.
6. Servant Quarters (2-6)—It was here that the servants to the master of the house slept. Like the guest quarters, this room has nothing of any worth.
7. Dining Hall (2-6)—The back area to the entrance hall contains a long wooden table. Bird droppings and broken nests litter the entire room, but there is one grisly item that sits at the end of the table, nearest the entrance to the longhouse – a bleached out skull. It too has been covered with bird droppings, but the current resident of the longhouse left it to warn the living.
8. Storage (2-3)—The wooden door that used to close this room off from the hallway is broken and lies on the floor. Beyond is a triangular-shaped room that is lined with shelves from top to bottom. Clay crocks still sit on the shelves, while others lie broken upon the floor. Also in the room is the rib bones of what appear to be a pig or sheep (the latter more likely for sheep and goats are abundant in the mountain foothills).

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Entrance Hall | 9. Rained Home | — Rabble |
| 2. Sleeping Chambers | 10. Tomb | ★ Underground access point |
| 3. Kitchen | 11. Tomb | |
| 4. Dry Storage | 12. Rained Home | |
| 5. Guest Quarters | (B) Brazier | |
| 6. Servants Quarters | (C) Candelabra | |
| 7. Dining Hall | (T) Tomb Entrance | |
| 8. Storage | | |



One square = 5 feet

A thorough search of this room will reveal rotten and moldy food stuffs that had been potted for winter reserves. The characters will also uncover a large grey, paper-like sack on one of the higher shelves. Unfortunately, this is a large hornet's nest and they will immediately swarm if the nest (or the shelves nearby) is disturbed. If the adventure is taking place in winter, the insects will be slower to react due to their semi-hibernating state.

The hornet swarm use the Swarm of Bees statistics on pages 57 of *Fell Beasts* and *Wondrous Magic*, but the poisonous sting will be changed to the following - (Type: Injury; Onset: 1 round; Potency: ± 1 ; Treatment: ± 0 ; Primary effect: $1d6+1$ damage; Secondary effect: $\frac{1}{2}d6 + 1$; Stages: 3).

9. Ruined Home—These three structures are in different states of ruin. One, the four walls are all that remain and there is no roof, doors, nor any evidence of the materials that once were a roof or door. The houses are otherwise empty.
10. Root cellar (2-6)—The cellar is covered by a large piece of shingled wood that is obviously part of a roof from one of the still standing structures. A Search test TN 15 will reveal that the plank had been lifted recently and that there are some foot prints about in the muddy soil. The old wooden stairs that lead down into the root cellar have rotted away and getting down will require a Jump TN 12, or Climb TN 8. To get back out will require a Climb TN 10 test. The cellar is dark and characters will suffer a ± 5 TN penalty unless they have some form of light. This applies to any of the myriad of tunnels that honeycomb the grounds around the longhouse.

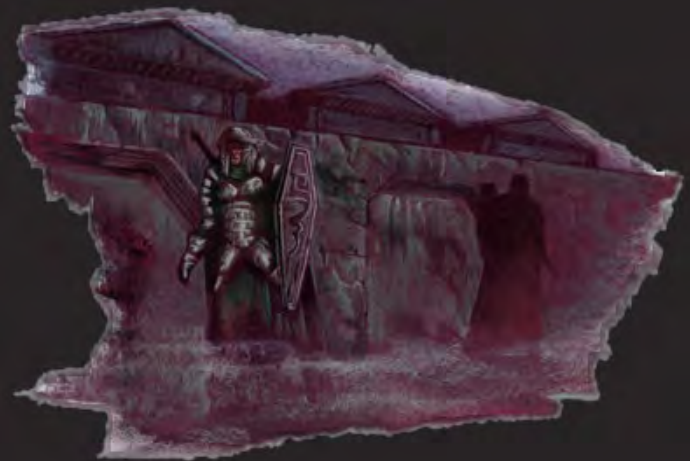
Like the dry storage in the longhouse, the cellar contains all the crocks that were packed with preserved foods that needed to stay cool. Tunnels pepper the walls of the small underground room and lead off in different directions. They are roughly 3'x3' and would require a person to crawl and a group to go in single file. The tunnels are dug earth and are muddy. They are filled with grubs and worms and roots of plants hang about. These tunnels wind about underground but may be accessed from here, the tomb, or any star on the map. The tunnels are not mapped, but the Narrator may draw as needed.

11. Tomb (2-10)—The resting place of the mountain men that had built this place long ago. The tomb was capped by a large tablet of stone that can be shoved (Strength test TN 18, TN 12 if there is a tool to allow leverage) off the bricks that were laid to support the entrance.

Once open, the same bricks that make up the support are also laid as series of stairs down into the darkness; in fact, the underground room is walled and floored with bricks. In different places, the bricks have been torn away and dug tunnels (as described in Area #10) disappear into the blackness. The tomb is dark and characters will suffer a ± 5 TN penalty unless they have some form of light. This applies to any of the myriad of tunnels that honeycomb the grounds around the longhouse.

There are a series of cubbies that desiccated forms still lie within along with four stone tablets that sit in the center of the room. Upon one tablet is a ruined corpse, two others are bare, but on the fourth lies a small child. Two shadowy shapes stand over her and a distant voice can be heard chanting. A fearsome looking blade glows in the hand of one of the shadows.

12. Ruined Home—Like the three structures described in Area #9, but this ruin is larger than all others.



AR-TAMINZÛL

Race: Wraith (Dwimmerlaik, Fell-spirit)

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

Reactions: Stamina +4, Swiftiness +4*, Willpower +3, Wisdom +3

Defence: 11

Movement Rate: 3 (Incorporeal Floating)

Skills: Intimidate (Fear) +6, Language: Westron/any +6, Observe (Smell) +5, Stealth (Shadow) +10, Unarmed Combat (any) +8

Spells: Evoke Fear, Veiling Shadow – Dwimmerlaiks need not make Stamina tests or use gestures to cast spells

Edges: None

Special Abilities: Daylight Weakness, Icy Grasp, Scent of Blood, Shadow Form, Terror, Undead Stamina, Vulnerability (fire and enchanted weapons inflict half damage)

Size: Medium

Health: 10

Courage: 3

TN Equivalent: 15

Unique Special Abilities

Daylight Weakness: Dwimmerlaiks are weakened by daylight and suffer a -3 penalty on all tests made while exposed to the sun.

Icy Touch: A dwimmerlaik's grasp is cold and lethal. Every successful hit by an Unarmed Combat test, or every round held in a grab by the Dwimmerlaik, drains the victim of 2 points of Strength and Vitality (may make a Stamina save TN 12 + the Dwimmerlaik's Bearing modifier). The victim is paralyzed when either attribute reaches 0, and when both attributes reach 0 the victim dies. If the victim is not killed lost points return normally (see CRB p. 247), or are fully restored upon the application of a Healing-spell.

Scent of Blood: Dwimmerlaiks smell the blood of living creatures, giving them +2 to Observe (Smell) tests to find them. They also benefit from a +4 test bonus to track bleeding creatures.

Shadow Form: A dwimmerlaik consists of insubstantial shadow. Dwimmerlaiks float above the ground and can pass through solid matter unhindered, but cannot manipulate physical objects by their own means. Dwimmerlaiks are immune to heat, cold, falling, normal weapons, poison, and corrosives. However, they are vulnerable to fire and enchanted weapons (any weapon with at least a +1 enchantment bonus, or appropriate bane-spell).

Undead Stamina: Dwimmerlaiks need never eat or drink, take no damage from physical attacks, heal all injuries at five times the normal rate, do not have Weariness levels, and need never make Stamina tests to resist weariness, and cannot be affected by critical hits (from superior or extraordinary successes, although the Narrator may apply additional affects), stun attacks, poison or disease.

Description

From the Elder Days to the late Third Age, undead abominations beyond reckoning were unleashed by Morgoth and Sauron, by whose dark power wicked souls were somehow bound to Middle-earth even after death. Some of these corrupt spirits remained disembodied and became ghostly phantoms haunting dark places. Such is the fate of the dwimmerlaik, a cursed specter that retains the cunning and intelligence possessed in life – and the hate and malevolence. Dwimmerlaiks are shadowy, translucent wraiths in a shape vaguely like their form in life. They often appear with dim, ethereal versions of the garments and gear they bore while living.

Habitat

Dwimmerlaiks are usually bound to a particular place strongly connected to their downfall. Their bounded habitat can sometimes be a large area (like an entire mountain), and dwimmerlaiks always assault the living that trespass into their domain. In some respects they are similar to ghosts, though dwimmerlaiks are cursed to serve forever the power of the Shadow and hold no hope of release. Dwimmerlaiks likely inhabit many dark places in the White Mountains, for Éowyn knew of them and called the Witch-king of Angmar by that name during their confrontation (since she did not know the



BARROW-WIGHTS

Race: Wraith (Fell-spirit)

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

Reactions: Stamina +5, Swiftmess +4, Willpower +4*, Wisdom +3

Defence: 11

Movement Rate: 6

Skills: Armed Combat: Blades (Longsword) +6, Intimidate (Fear) +6, Language: Westron +4, Observe (Spot) +5, Stealth (Hide) +8, Track (Scent) +5, Unarmed Combat (Brawling) +7

Spells: Bladeshattering, Create Light, Evoke Fear, Fog-raising, Forgetfulness, Holding-spell, Spellbinding; also may be known, Blast of Sorcery, Command, Misdirection, Power of the Land, Shadow of Fear, Slumber, Veiling Shadow

Special Abilities: Icy Touch, Undead Stamina, Vulnerability (sunlight, 2d6 per round)

Size: Medium (6 wound levels, 1 healthy)

Health: 13

TN Equivalent: 15

Unique Special Abilities

Icy Touch: A wight's grasp is cold and lethal. Every successful hit by an Unarmed Combat test, or every round held in a grab by the wight, drains the victim of 2 points of Strength and Vitality (may make a Stamina save TN 12 + the wight's Bearing modifier). The victim is paralyzed when either attribute reaches 0, and when both attributes reach 0 the victim dies. If the victim is not killed lost points return normally (see CRB p. 247), or are fully restored upon the application of a Healing-spell.

Undead Stamina: Wights need never eat or drink, take no damage from physical attacks, heal all injuries at five times the normal rate, do not have Weariness levels, and need never make Stamina tests to resist weariness, and cannot be affected by critical hits (from superior or extraordinary successes, although the Narrator may apply additional affects), stun attacks, poison or disease.

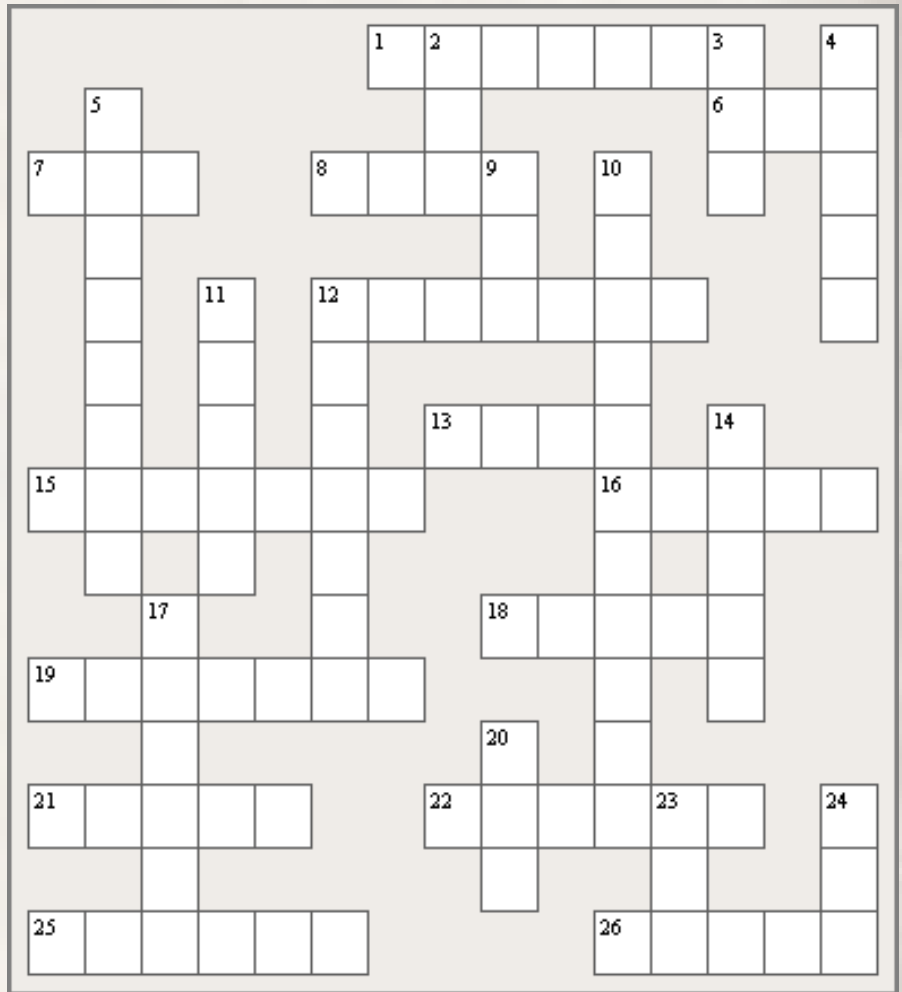


CROSSWORD

by Matthew "GandalfOfBorg" Kearns

ACROSS

- 1. Elf-realm of Thingol
- 6. One of thirteen
- 7. Faithful servant
- 8. One ___ To Rule Them All
- 12. Iron fortress
- 13. Intelligence
- 15. People of the kingdom of Dale
- 16. Evil creation of Morgoth, twisted to mock the Ents
- 18. Meriadoc Brandybuck
- 19. The White
- 21. Nephew of Thengel and heir to throne of Rohan
- 22. Near Bree
- 25. Blade that was broken
- 26. Father of the dwarves



DOWN

- 2. One of thirteen
- 3. Hall of Fire abbrev.
- 4. ___ Mountains
- 5. Child realm of Arnor
- 9. GandalfOfBorg abbrev.
- 10. Capitol of Gondor
- 11. Ringbearer
- 12. Weathertop
- 14. Destroyed Witch-king
- 17. Realm of Witch-king
- 20. Twisted creation of Morgoth in mockery of Elves
- 23. The One
- 24. Second-born

ANSWERS

- | | |
|--|---|
| 26. Durin
25. Narsil
23. Eru
20. Orc
19. Gandalf
17. Angmar
14. Eowyn
12. Amon Sul
11. Frodo
10. Minas Tirith
9. GOB
5. Cardolan
4. Misty
3. HOF
2. Oin
Down | 21. Eomer
18. Merry
16. Troll
15. Barding
13. Wits
12. Angband
8. Ring
7. Sam
6. Ori
1. Doriath
Across |
|--|---|

WISDOM OF THE MASSES

TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS FROM YOUR FELLOW GAMERS

NYBBLES ON RUNNING A CHRONICLE:

"When describing the scene before your players, make it as vivid as possible, try to use a language similar to that found in the professor's writings. This will go a long way to add flavor and style to your game. Not to mention help the players visualize their characters surroundings and this will improve their experience and their playing."

ERELGAL ON CHARACTER BACKGROUND AFFECTING STATS:

"For example, the character has Survival (Forest) +4. This could be due to his home was in a wooded area where the family hunted and gathered food in the wilds to supplement their meager farm. Being from a region in the northern reaches of Middle-earth, he knew how to take care of himself in almost any weather condition adequately. See *The Hall of Fire*, Issue #3, for more detail on this method."



INTERVIEWS

MATT KEARNS (GANDALFOFBORG)

THE PERSON

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

My name is Matthew Kearns. I live and work in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, but my home truly is in Washington State. I am a Systems Engineer.

THE EXPERIENCE

2. How long have you been in gaming?

I have been gaming consistently for the last 10 years, but I got into it about 15 years ago.

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

I like Star Trek, Call of Cthulhu, Serenity, Mutants & Masterminds, and the occasional D'n'D (mostly Eberron). Unfortunately, most of my gaming of late at the table has been D'n'D as it's been really hard to find those who want to play the other 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've been running and playing Lord of the Rings online for the past three years. I am running two Lord of the Rings games: Emissaries to the East (last 3 years) and The Thin Grey Line for a number of months on the Decipher boards. I am playing in Tomcat's online game where my current character is a young Dunedan noble who rebelliously joined the military and looks to start the forerunner elite warrior group to be the predecessor to the Rangers of the North. Another character I am playing is a Ranger of the South in the War of the Ring period. The last character is the last heir to the stewardship of Minas Ithil at the time of the siege, prior to the city's fall.

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've been a fan of Lord of the Rings for as long as I can remember. My love of RPG's and LOTR just fit. I had picked up MERP but was wholly put off by its munchkin aspects and was eager to see LOTR by Decipher as I had been a long time fan of their Star Trek CCG. I managed to pick up one of the few copies at Gen Con and have been loving it ever since.

No I'm not a part of the game in any official capacity (to my eternal sadness), so the creation of the webzine is my way of doing my part to further the game.



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

I own at least one of every LOTR RPG product. My favorite is a tie between Moria and Paths of the Wise. Least favorite would probably be the movie/book sourcebooks as they don't do much for my gaming. I would also have to say I'm a bit disappointed in the Wondrous Magic part of FB&WM as it was quite a bit on the thin side.

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

The best production-wise is the same as in #6, though I wish Paths of the Wise were in print; it'd probably be my absolute favorite. The worst production was probably the Narrator's Guide: fuzzy picture, wrong tables, etc. The only good thing to come out of it was the intro adventure enclosed.

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

If only one more were completed, then I guess Return of the King Sourcebook just for completeness sake, otherwise I'd go for an Order book detailing extra goodness on the rest of the Orders (so we could get them all instead of piecemeal).



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

I would make it without Orders and only use them as templates, add a mass combat example to go along with the new rules, make weapon damage and successes in combat a little more explicit than leaving it to the Narrator to decide on house rules. Also, I would plainly just make up a generic CODA SRD similar to what I have in my CODA BSR.

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

My, what an irrelevant question... just look who you're asking ;)

THE HALL OF FIRE

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

As writer and editor of the webzine, it'd be pretty silly to answer this question.

12. What do you think of it? What's your favorite section(s)?

Of course I think it's great; the best thing since sliced bread. I really don't have any favorite sections, though I do love coming up with new mechanics and character traits/abilities.

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

Other than the usual suspects (books, etc.), I find my actual play to help give me more ideas for all sorts of articles and what to use or change in other games.

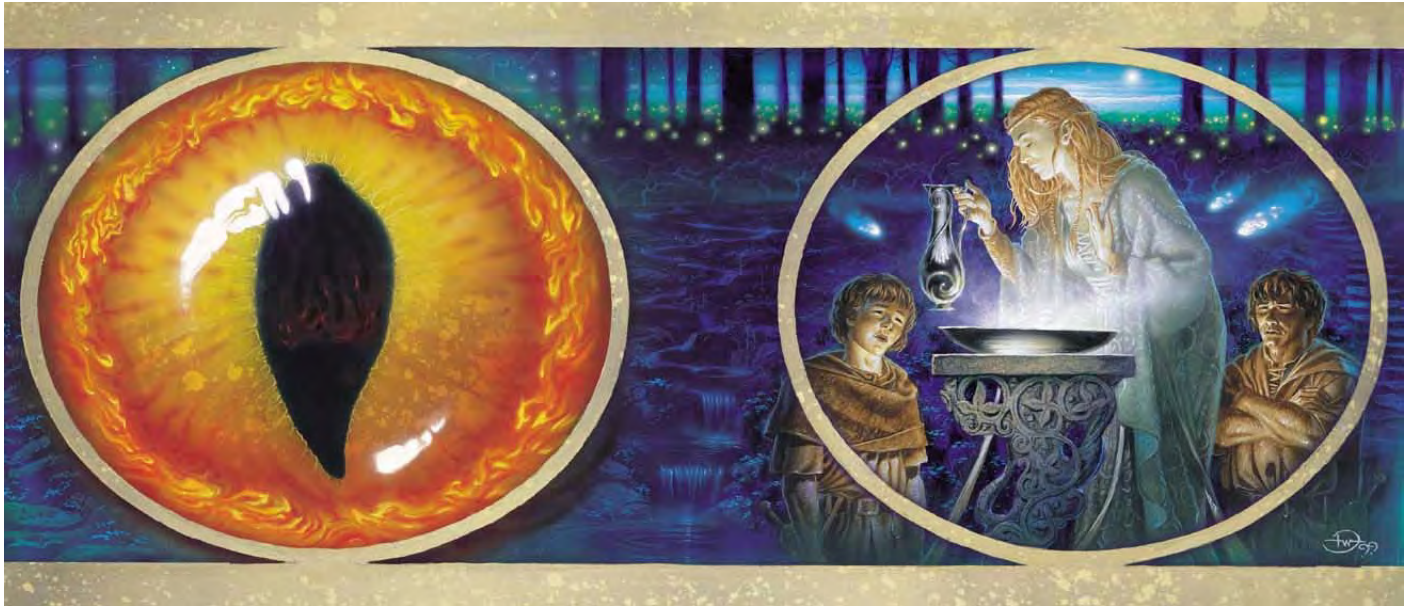
THE SOURCE

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

A friend of mine back in junior high got me interested. I was in the school library one day and was completely bored with the selections there (very small library) and he suggested The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings (and, of course, telling me the order in which to read them). From there, I just couldn't get enough. I've read the set nearly as many times as I have seen the original Star Wars trilogy (and that's saying a lot... yes, I know I'm a freak).

15. What did you think of the movies?

I thought the movies were great... for movies. Everyone has their little nits to pick about different things but that's what would happen if anyone made them, but I am satisfied that they finally made it to the big screen.



GREGG HAMMERQUIST (ZEHNWATERS)

THE PERSON

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

My name is Gregg Hammerquist (ZehnWaters on the boards) and I'm from Nampa, Idaho. I am a student at Boise State University.

THE EXPERIENCE

2. How long have you been gaming?

5 years.

3. What games are you into (besides Lord of the Rings, of course)? What is your favorite game to play (rule-wise)? Setting?

I'm into Star Wars, Buffy and Marvel. Unisystem and its Buffy the Vampire Slayer setting has got to be my favorite game ruleset; it's by far the easiest and most flexible system I've ever used.

THE GAME YOU PLAY

4. Are you running/playing in a game right now? If so, tell us about the format (table-top, Play-by-post, etc). Tell us about it and your character.

Right now I'm running an alternate universe Lord of the Rings game. My brother is an extra hobbit (Folco Boffin, though undoubtedly different than Tolkien intended him (he's a trick-shot archer)). When they reach Rivendell a different Fellowship will be assembled. Faramir, Glorfindel and Olin son of Ori replace Boromir, Legolas and Gimli, respectively.

THE GAME ITSELF

5. How were you attracted to the game? Have you been involved in the creation or playtesting of the line?

As others have said -- it's Lord of the Rings! How could I NOT be attracted to it. More particular I was interesting in playing a Mariner/Wizard when first thumbing through it. I haven't been involved with its creation or playtesting.

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

I own all of the books and the maps. My favorite has got to be Moria and The Paths of the Wise.

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

The best part would be how beautifully they're all presented. All of the pictures are colorfully done. No other RPG books that I have are nearly as pretty. The worst is by far the lack of proof-reading. Glaring grammatical errors can be found far too often.

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

The Guide to Rogues and Minstrels, which I feel are the two least useful classes. Leastwise I rarely use them, unless in conjunction with another class. Otherwise I'd have to say The Return of the King SB. I cannot stand it when things aren't finished; it's like taking a bite out of something really good and then not eating anymore.

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

Shrugs I've never been good with technicalities or rules. Things work fine enough for me.

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

The CODA system works fine for the Lord of the Rings universe; I wouldn't use anything different for running a LotR game.

THE HALL OF FIRE

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

I've read the webzine since the first issue. It's positively enthralling. I've even submitted a few things here and there. I heard about it from the RPG message boards of course!

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

I positively love it. My favorite sections are the ones with NPC and articles that expand Orders and Elite Orders.

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

I like to use things like vaguely described events brought up by Tolkien, such as the Battle of Greenfields. I've created a campaign just because I wanted to showcase new characters I had created.

THE SOURCE

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

The Movies. I saw the Fellowship and knew I had gotten into something I'd be obsessed with. Plus my mom had been demanding that I read the books for ages.

15. What did you think of the movies?

I love them. The Two Towers was vastly disappointing in some ways, and yet awesome in others. All in all it's still my favorite, and least favorite, to watch.



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 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/ CHRONICLES OF THE NORTH http://roleplay.avioc.org/index.htm</p>	<p>THE LAST ALLIANCE http://thelastalliance.com RPG TOOLS FOR DECIPHER'S CODA GAMES http://groups.yahoo.com/group/rpgtools/ 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 THE ONE RING.COM http://www.theonering.com/ THE ONE RING.NET http://www.theonering.net/ VALINOR http://sauron.misled.us</p>
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CALLING ALL GAMERS!

Interested in submitting...

- A mini or side adventure?
- New creatures, or fell beasts?
- New Orders or Elite Orders?
- Racial / Order packages?
- NPC's?
- Weapons / equipment / magical items?
- Fan Art?

If so, write to us for details on submission at: codawebzine@hotmail.com with 'Fan Content' in the subject line. Please include your name and/or pseudonym (handle/online identity) and email address(es) with which one of our editors may contact you.

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

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

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

If you would like to post an advertisement for:

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

Write to us at codawebzine@hotmail.com with 'Ad' in the subject line along with your advertisement. The advertisement must be less than 100 words and any graphic to go with it must be 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.