

# THE HALL OF FIRE FAN WEBZINE

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## GREETINGS,

Salutations... HELLO ALL!

With #46 here, there has been some concern over the lack of chatter on the boards concerning the game along with the (misconceived) loss of *The Hall of Fire*. Well the former is to be expected with Decipher's announcement of nonrenewal of the Lord of the Rings license and the fact that there has been nothing more than idle speculation and rumor about its reemergence. I'm none too worried, this game is more than good enough for me and plenty others so I'm gonna continue with it. As for the worries about *The Hall of Fire*, they are unfounded and, as promised, further announcements about the webzine's fate will be forthcoming.

Now for what you've been waiting for: what's in this issue!! Well we've got a new secret "society", words of wisdom, the first chapter in my earth-shattering 4th Age chronicle, and more!

Good Gaming to All,

**Matthew A. Kearns**  
aka GandalfOfBorg  
Editor/Writer

# THE MRKKK:FN:CA HALL OF FIRE

The Unofficial Lord of the Rings RPG Webzine

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# A RETURN TO POWER

by Matthew Kearns

*A languishing elf in a distant Fourth Age has lost his way, not only in morality but also in his way to Valinor. Thus he seeks a means to force open the road to the Undying Lands that once existed in the First Age – the "straight path" – so that the dwindling power of the Eldar can once again flourish in Middle-earth. To do so he requires powerful artifacts of bygone eras to complete this task. Unfortunately for him and the rest of the world, a secret cult, devoted to Morgoth, thought long gone has discovered the elf's plan and intend to twist it toward their goal of freeing the Dark Lord from his bonds from beyond the reaches of the world.*

"The world is changed; this we now know," Glorfindel said at last, "and gone from it art the Undying Lands. Gone from the Circles of Arda is the Light of Aman, yea a step further from our people than even when it lay across the Sundering Sea..." He trailed off into silence again, and then with a heavy sigh continued. "Tis not the world in which our kindred first awakened; indeed it hast not been since the breaking of Utumno. This we knew. But now this change is greater by far than the sinking of Beleriand, and to me, it signifies all the more the quickening of the Fading."

— In An Age Before

[http://www.academyofbards.org/fanfic/p/phantombard\\_inanagebefore1.html](http://www.academyofbards.org/fanfic/p/phantombard_inanagebefore1.html)

## INTRODUCTION

"A Return to Power" is a campaign for use with *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* by Decipher, taking place in the Fourth Age during any year the Narrator chooses suitable to equate to the passing of 15 kings of the Reunited Kingdom. "A Return to Power" is suitable for a company of 4-5 characters ranging from 5 to 7 Advancements and at least 5 Renown.

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* (each will be specified) for running this adventure.

The campaign begins in Minas Tirith with a special request made by the king and moves across western Middle-earth. The missing *palantiri* are to be recovered, starting with those lost in the North, but another power behind the scenes seeks them as well for purposes unknown to but one other. More is going on than anyone knows with events conspiring to bring about the end of the world!

Players who plan to take part in this adventure should not read any further.

## RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

In the later days of the Fourth Age, the uninhabited lands of the Third Age are becoming more and more populated, but not just with the farmers and woodsmen. The evils of previous ages are beginning to flourish once again as the long peace secured by kings of distant times becomes lax in its watch. Use the tables in this section to create random encounters as scheduled in the adventure and for any other time that you as the Narrator decide that one would be appropriate or just need something to fill in a lull in the story. To determine random encounters during an adventure, roll 1d6 for each of the following things:

- Number of Encounters
- Encounter Environment
- Type of Encounter
- Scale of Difficulty

## NUMBER OF ENCOUNTERS AND ENVIRONMENT

Roll 1d6 on Table 1.

**TABLE 1. Random Encounters**

<u>Result</u>	<u>Number of Encounters</u>	<u>Encounter Environment</u>
1-3	1	Table 2 – Plains Encounters Roll 1d6:
4-5	2	1-4: Table 2 – Plains Encounters 5-6: Table 3 – Forest Encounters Roll 1d6:
6	3	1-3: Table 2 – Plains Encounters 4-5: Table 3 – Forest Encounters 6: Table 4 – Mountain Encounters

## TYPE OF ENCOUNTER BASED ON ENVIRONMENT

Roll 2d6 and refer to Table 2, 3, or 4 based on the result from Table 1 - Random Encounters.



## ENCOUNTER SCALE OF DIFFICULTY

The scale of an encounter other than for ill weather (see Ill Weather Encounters below) and demons is determined by rolling an additional 1d6. Multiply the result of this roll by 5 to determine the TN Equivalent value of the encounter. For example, a result of 1 for TN 5 – a Standard Random encounter as detailed in the Random Encounter article. Another example would be a result of 4 for TN 20. To achieve this from a random encounter, start with the Standard encounter and increase its TN Equivalent value by adding leaders/captains, putting the encounter at its lair, increasing the numbers of individuals, etc. (see Table 0.3 on page 7 in *Fell Beasts and Wondrous Magic* for more ideas).

**TABLE 2. Plains Encounters**

<u>Result</u>	<u>Encounter</u>
2	Undead (see HOF #47); ghostly warriors of ancient battleground
3	Ill weather (Hazardous) (Roll 1d6; 1-2 High Winds, 3-4 Thunderstorm, 5-6 Extreme Weather Event)
4-6	Wolf/warg (see HOF #41)
7-9	Bandit encounter (see HOF #43)
10	Ill weather (Difficult) (Roll 1d6; 1-3 High Winds, 4-6 Thunderstorm)
11	Undead (see HOF #47); spectral sentinels of a burial ground (unarmed)
12	Demon (Roll 1d6; 1-3 Sulrog, 4-5 Gondrog; 6 Ninlindrog)

**TABLE 3. Forest Encounters**

<u>Result</u>	<u>Encounter</u>
2	Troll (see HOF #46)
3	Ill weather (Hazardous) (Roll 1d6; 1-2 High Winds, 3-4 Thunderstorm, 5-6 Extreme Weather Event)
4-5	Orc encounter (see HOF #46)
6	Wolf/warg (see HOF #41)
7-9	Bandit encounter (see HOF #43)
10	Ill weather (Difficult) (Roll 1d6; 1-3 High Winds, 4-6 Thunderstorm)
11	Troll (see HOF #46)
12	Demon (Roll 1d6; 1-3 Sulrog, 4-5 Gondrog; 6 Ninlindrog)

**TABLE 4. Mountain Encounters**

<u>Result</u>	<u>Encounter</u>
2	Undead (see HOF #47); ghosts of lost souls, barrow-wights, etc.
3	Ill weather (Hazardous) (Roll 1d6; 1-2 High Winds, 3-4 Thunderstorm, 5-6 Extreme Weather Event)
4	Troll (see HOF #46)
5	Wolf/warg (see HOF #41)
6-7	Bandit encounter (see HOF #43)
8	Orc encounter (see HOF #46)
9	Troll (see HOF #46)
10	Ill weather (Difficult) (Roll 1d6; 1-3 High Winds, 4-6 Thunderstorm)
11	Undead (see HOF #47); ghosts of lost souls, barrow-wights, etc.
12	Demon (Roll 1d6; 1-3 Sulrog, 4-5 Gondrog; 6 Ninlindrog)

## ENCOUNTER DESCRIPTIONS

### ILL WEATHER ENCOUNTERS

#### Types

There are three types of possible ill weather encounters – High Winds, Thunderstorm, and Extreme Weather Event. Each of these come in two versions: Difficult and Hazardous. Difficult ill weather encounters are hindrances along a group's path, slowing them down and causing injury to the unlucky. In contrast, Hazardous ill weather encounters have a greater potential for danger and likely causing injury to more than one in the group.

#### *High Winds*

High winds come in a couple of forms – insidious gusts of wind coming at inopportune times and kind that would knock you off your feet if you aren't already off them already due to flying debris. The first (Difficult) are the intense gusts of wind that can blow a man over or cause a horse to falter on a precarious precipice. When encountering these kinds of high winds, characters must make a TN 5 x Encounter Table roll result (5, 10, or 15) Quickness to survive the encounter. Every degree of failure causes the character to suffer +1d6 Wound points of damage.

The other (Hazardous) is gale-force winds whipping through the region that break branches off of trees, kick up fierce dust storms, and the like. When encountering these kinds of high winds, characters must make a TN 10 + (5 x Encounter Table roll result) (15 or 20) Quickness to survive the encounter. Every degree of failure causes the character to suffer +2d6 Wound points of damage.

#### *Thunderstorm*

Thunderstorms themselves aren't all that perilous unless you are struck by lightning, but being soaked by rain, blown about by strong winds, slippery footings, etc. make life generally miserable and dangerous for characters. Mild thunderstorms (Difficult) have some lightning, gusting winds, and plenty of rain. When encountering a thunderstorm like this, characters must make a TN 5 x Encounter Table roll result (5, 10, or 15) Stamina test to survive the encounter. Every degree of failure causes the character to lose 1 Weariness Level.

When a thunderstorm is a torrent, thoroughly drenching the area, causing flash floods, the sky exploding with lightning all around and causing avalanches of stone, etc. then the group is in some serious trouble. When encountering violent thunderstorms (Hazardous) such as these, characters must make a TN 10 + (5 x Encounter Table roll result) (15 or 20) Swiftiness to survive the encounter. Every degree of failure causes the character to lose 2 Weariness Levels.

#### *Extreme Weather Event*

Extreme weather events are severe weather conditions such as tornados, typhoons, etc. Unlike high winds or thunderstorms, these only come in one type, Hazardous. Everyone in the party must make a TN 15 Survival (*current environment*) test on a roll of 5 or TN 20 Survival (*current environment*) test on a roll of 6 to survive unscathed; those skilled in Weather-sense gain an affinity bonus from it. For every level of failure, the character will lose 1 Wound Level due to being hit by errant debris, blown away, struck by lightning, etc.



### DEMON ENCOUNTERS

Demon encounters are relatively rare in Middle-earth after the First Age, making the encounter with the Balrog of Moria by the dwarves and subsequently by the Fellowship at the end of the Third Age all the more extraordinary. In the Fourth Age they are virtually non-existent, as much of the magic in the world has left it with the destruction of Sauron, the passing of the Elves into the West, and the loss of a straight path to Valinor. But because of Bronoldo Mordirachas and his quest to unlock the mystic bonds shutting off Valinor from the rest of the world, such beings of dread power become more frequent as the story progresses. The number of demon encounters allowed in each quest is equal to the quest's number (1 demon encounter in Stones of the North, 2 demon encounters in The Osgiliath Stone, etc.); if any other are rolled, re-roll until the result isn't 12. For information on different types of demons, see issues 24 and 25 of *The Hall of Fire*.



# QUEST 1: STONES OF THE NORTH

## CHAPTER 1: THE KING'S REQUEST

### ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

This is the Fourth Age – Eldarion is history, Elessar legend, and now Elendil II sits upon the throne in Minas Tirith as 16th King of the Reunited Kingdom. Peace has generally come to the lands of northwestern Middle-earth with Gondor having quelled most of the barbaric realms that surround the region. The king is seeking the aid of those who are noteworthy and accomplished... he seeks you! The task bidden is to recover the two lost Seeing-stones of the North by any means and return them to Minas Tirith.

### ADVENTURE HOOKS

The Narrator may use the following suggested hooks to bring the characters into the story or may feel free to create her own.

- The characters have accomplished some great feat noticed by a wealthy patron who's given your name to the king.
- The characters have performed a duty for the crown previously and so your services are sought as one known to be trustworthy and honorable.
- The characters hear of the summons through quiet channels of gossip.
- A character, through his own vision or another's, may become aware of a new shadow about to cover the land or some other suitable premonition that their aid is needed by Gondor.

## ACT 1: KING'S AUDIENCE

### THRONE ROOM

Elendil II, the 16th King of the Reunited Kingdom, seeks to recover the lost Seeing-stones that were bestowed upon the ancient Numenoreans during the Second Age – word has come to his ears that they are being sought by enemies of the Free Peoples for some nefarious purpose. The crown of Gondor is known to be in possession of two stones; the Minas Tirith stone was left upon the Denethor's pyre, the fateful resting place of the last Steward of Gondor, and the Orthanc stone is in the tower of the High Library of Gondor under guard, lock, and key (the king doesn't share the information of their locations). The king requests of the group to seek out the two lost *palantiri* of the north and return them to Minas Tirith; the other stones' whereabouts are being sought out by others (though the king doesn't say this either). The last known location of these missing stones is in Forochel, the Ice Bay of the North but the characters

will have to discover this information on their own. He gives the fellowship leave to gather provisions as they see fit for the expedition, reminding them though to go light and fast as this quest will soon reach the ears of those seeking ill against Gondor and its allies. If asked about further information about the seeing-stones, the king will grant access to all the libraries of Minas Tirith with the Master Librarian at their disposal; there they can find out some of the lore of the *palantiri*.

### KING ELENLIL II

**RACE:** Dunadan, Man (Man of Minas Tirith)

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

**ATTRIBUTES:** Bearing 13 (+3)\*, Nimbleness 10 (+2), Perception 12 (+3)\*, Strength 10 (+2), Vitality 8 (+1), Wits 10 (+2)

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

**ORDERS:** Noble (Gondorian Lord), Warrior\*, Captain\*

**ORDER ABILITIES:** Air of Command, Domain, Favoured Weapon (AC: Blades [Longsword]), Fires of Devotion, Leadership, Noble Mien, Warrior-born

**ADVANCEMENTS:** 21

**SKILLS:** Armed Combat: Blades (Longsword) +10, Climb +3, Debate (Oratory) +6, Inspire (Gondorians) +8, Intimidate (Majesty) +6, Language: Sindarin +5, Language: Westron +6, Lore/History: Gondor +4, Lore/Race: Men (Dunedain) +3, Lore/Realm: Gondor (Minas Tirith) +4, Lore/Other: Heraldry +4, Observe (Listen, Spot) +5, Persuade (Charm) +5, Ranged Combat: Bows (Longbow) +5, Ride (Horse) +6, Run +3, Siegecraft (Infantry) +8

**EDGES:** Ally 5 (Rulers of the Free Peoples), Bold, Command 4 (High Commander of Gondor's Armies), Indomitable, Lion-hearted, Rank 5 (King of Reunited Kingdom), Valiant, War-wise, Weapon Mastery (AC: Blades [Longsword])

**FLAWS:** Duty (Rule Reunited Kingdom), Enemy 2 (Tribes of Harad, Tribes of Rhun), Proud

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

**DEFENCE:** 12

**HEALTH:** 10

**COURAGE:** 6

**DESCRIPTION:** Elendil II was named aptly as even from a young age he looked the spitting image of the ancient king of Gondor who died at the hands of Sauron. As he grew, he came to inherit many of his predecessor's more well-known traits of combat prowess and great wisdom. Though he's fought in few battles and had little difficulty in his reign, the king sits upon his throne more than ready to meet such challenges. As his time as ruler of the Reunited Kingdom comes to its close, he consults the *palantir* in the High Library often, seeking out the cause of a shadowy threat that haunts his nights and sometimes even days.

## HIGH LIBRARY OF GONDOR

The following guidelines apply to the High Library of Gondor which houses the Archive of the White Tower (consult the *Answering Questions in Libraries* section in *Paths of the Wise*, page 79).

- Routine Search test for Table 4.5
- The information concerning the lost palantiri of the north is a Difficult Lore test for Table 4.7
- Refer to Table 5 for examples of information discovered

**TABLE 5. Research Results**

<u>Success</u>	<u>Results</u>
Marginal	Brief description of the <i>palantiri</i> (size, weights, how they interact with one another)
Complete	Description of each of their powers
Superior	Last known location
Extraordinary	Theories on how to detect them

Finishing their research, the fellowship may wish to seek more information about Arvedui's stones. If asked, the Master Librarian will advise them to see Bronoldo, who is in the ancient elven refuge of Imladris for more information about the palantiri.

If the fellowship returns to the king with information gleaned from the libraries mentioning the Lossoth and/or Arvedui, the king gives the fellowship a curious ring from his right hand, two serpents intertwined with green gems for eyes – the Ring of Barahir. They are told that this token should get them the aid they require from the Lossoth.

## ACT 2: WAYLAD ON THE GREENWAY

Whether or not the fellowship makes its way towards Forochel or Rivendell, they are overtaken by a group of bandits on the road between Tharbad and Bree. They don't give much of a fight and are easily defeated. Little of any worth is found upon any fallen bodies. By the looks of them, they seem to be local folk and a purse of 5 sp each is found on all dead or captured.

### Aftermath

The experience is based on a Standard Bandit encounter as detailed in *The Hall of Fire*, Issue #43. If a TN 20 Search is successful, a coin is found on one of the bandits, made of black iron and embossed with the symbol of a crown. Upon further scrutiny, that one looks less similar in feature and manner than the others. Any captured alive won't speak willingly and know very little other than being paid to waylay any that fit the description of the fellowship.



## OPTIONAL ACT: THE PRANCING PONY, BREE

This act could be skipped depending upon the route taken and may be played out prior to Chapter 2, Act 1. Not much happens directly here and the fellowship can interact with the town in any way they see fit: gain information about the area, purchase supplies, etc. A TN 10 Inquire test will reveal information as detailed in Table 6.

**TABLE 6. Inquire Results**

<u>Success</u>	<u>Results</u>
Marginal, Complete	Rumors coming west of how the goblins in the mountains are multiplying like crazy and seem more organized and opportunistic than before.
Superior	The goblins seem to have either good scouts or spies or can see long distances without detection because the places raided had little to no protection while skirting the more heavily fortified or reinforced routes and holds.
Extraordinary	Word from a merchant from across the Misty Mountains saying Dale and Erebor have had their hands full being on the defensive without being routed at times while unable to secure their lands against further incursions.



## ACT 3: RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Refer to [Random Encounters](#) for the types of encounters based on the resulting encounter environment.

## ACT 4: THE LAST ELF OF THE LAST HOMELY HOUSE

The fellowship finally arrives at Imladris. The refuge is diminished a great deal from the stories any have heard of before, even maybe a distasteful taint can be detected in the air here. It certainly is not what any expected. The fellowship is greeted by what seems to be the elf's assistant, a man no less. He leads them to the elf, where they find Bronoldo engrossed in study over tomes and scrolls. Conversation concerning the *palantiri* uncovers no more information than can be found in the CRB about them. If he is questioned about what he is currently researching, he'll just say precognition allowed him to be studying the topic prior to the fellowship's arrival; TN 20 Wisdom test is required to reveal the deception as he has been studying them for some time and is in search of any lore that would aid in his crafting a new one. If they show him the coin, he recognizes the symbol to be that of the Iron Crown of Morgoth.

A TN 15 Insight or Perception test will uncover that Sador is actually disturbed at this discovery. If queried further about his reaction, he'll spin some story about hearing about and reading tales of the First Age; it will require a TN 25 or greater Wisdom test to reveal the deception. All other conversation will be treated as idle chit-chat and dismissed as unimportant; he is eager to return to his study and may act terse and even rude to the fellowship. His final words are to continue to seek out the Lossoth as they should have some unique knowledge in finding Arvedui's lost stones and if they find any of the stones, bring them to Rivendell immediately so they can remain safe until the fellowship decides to return to Minas Tirith.

**TABLE 7. Chapter 1 Rewards**

<u>Accomplishment</u>	<u>Reward</u>
Skill tests indicated in text	XP is the result rolled, +5 for each level of success
Any skill tests not in text that Narrator deems worthy of reward	XP is the result rolled
Combat encounters	XP is the TN Equivalent value
Aids Master Librarian	25 XP and +1 Renown for each PC to aid
Adds knowledge or tome/scroll(s) Narrator deems worthy of including in the library	Seniority edge (prerequisites waived, gains future admittance to the library without need of donation, membership, or king's leave
Extraordinary success in researching <i>palantiri</i>	See page 81, Table 4.8 in <i>Paths of the Wise</i>
Completed chapter	100 XP and +2 Renown (double reward if Sador is unmasked)

**BRONOLDO** (S. "Last [Surviving] Noldo")  
**MORDIRACHAS** (S. "Elf [of] Dark Despair")

**RACE SUB-RACE:** Elf, Noldor (Lothlorien)

**RACIAL ABILITIES:** The Art, Beast-skill, Comfort, Elven Form, Elven-sense, Elven-sleep, Farsightedness, Ghost-scorn, Lightfootedness, Swift Healing, Inner Light, Noldorin Lore

**ATTRIBUTES:** Bearing 12 (+3)\*, Perception 11 (+2)\*, Nimbleness 11 (+2), Strength 7 (+1), Vitality 6 (+0), Wits 10 (+2)

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

**ORDER:** Magician (Student of the Secret Arts), Wizard, Loremaster, Artificer

**ORDER ABILITIES:** Ancient Scripts, Artificer Masterwork, Charm of Power (Defense), Craft Imitation, Determined Craftsman, Enchanting Skill, Charm, Quick Caster, Sanctum, Sanctum Power, Scroll Hoard 3, Spellcasting 4, Spell Specialty (Sorcery), Student of the Shadow, Weaving Sorcery, Wizard Spellcasting 4, Wizardly Power

**ADVANCEMENTS:** 51

**SPELLS:** Blast of Sorcery, Bladeshattering, Blinding Flash (80 ft), Command, Crafting-spell, Create Light, Display of Power, Enslave Beast, Evoke Fear, Farseeing (3200 mi), Holding-spell, Mind-speaking, Sense Power (ability), Shatter, Sheath of Ice, Spellbinding, Spoken Thoughts, Sundering, Veil, Voice of Command, Voice of Suasion, Vulnerability to Sorcery, Waste, Word of Command

**SKILLS:** Craft: Jewels +12, Debate (Negotiate, Parley) +6, Insight +8, Intimidate (Fear) +7, Language: Black Speech +6, Language: Quenya +6, Language: Sindarin +6, Language: Westron +6, Lore/Group: Nazgul (Rings of the Nine) +2, Lore/History: Elves (Craftsmen) +6, Lore/Race: Elves +6, Lore/Realm: Dol Guldur +3, Lore/Realm: Eregion (Ost-in-Edhil) +6, Lore/Realm: Lothlorien (East-realm) +6, Lore/Realm: Mordor (Barad-dur) +4, Lore/Realm: Umbar (Umbar city) +2, Lore/Spellcraft: Sorcery +12, Lore/Other: Palantiri +8, Lore/Other: Silmarils +8, Observe (Sense Power, Spot) +7, Persuade (Charm) +6

**EDGES:** Craftmaster, Curious, Fair, Hardy, Hoard, Honey-tongued, Swift Recovery, Tireless 2, Wise 2

**FLAWS:** Arrogant, Proud, Stiff-necked

**HEALTH:** 7 (Medium, 6 Wound levels)

**COURAGE:** 3      **RENOWN:** 16      **DEFENCE:** 12

**GEAR:** Palantir of Barad-dur, Duathmir (Jewel of Shadow)



## BACKGROUND

The Three Rings and their keepers have passed on beyond the bounds of Middle-earth and the beauty of the land, once stoic and unchanging in the care of the Eldar is evolving into something unknown to its long-lived caretakers. Middle-earth is now in the hands of Men as the few remaining Eldar seek out the swan-ships bound for Valinor. But one does not – he cannot – for his pride and arrogance has caught him up in a vain attempt to reestablish the power and dominance of the Firstborn. Bronoldo Mordirachas is the last Noldo on the shores east of the great sea and he despairs both at leaving the lands of which he's known for millennia and the fate of the Eldar if they remain: the fading of both form and power. This defiance has caused him to seek out the dark arts of Man, learned from the ancient Dark Lords and led him to hinder the expansion of Man, both of friendly Dunedain and barbarians of the East. The acts he has taken have barred him from returning to Valinor in any shape or form, making his plight all the more sad. He is not inherently an evil person, but his actions are so arrogant and selfish that he is blind to what disaster could await him if he fails or even succeeds.

To accomplish his goal of reestablishing the ancient power of the Eldar in Middle-earth, Bronoldo believes he must open the "Straight Road" once again to the Uttermost West as it had been before the sinking of Numenor at the end of the Second Age. To do this, he must be able to see his way back – meaning he must acquire all of the *palantiri*. Knowing that the Stone of Elendil, the one that looked into Valinor, had been taken back, the acquisition of the other stones was paramount to allow him to study their construction and make a sister stone to the Elendil stone. Finally, the only way to garner enough power to open the way back like Earendil, he must also seek out the one of the remaining Silmarils – the one supposedly lost to a fiery chasm by Maedhros or the other tossed into the sea at the hand of Maglor.



## SADOR (S. "Faithful")

**RACE, SUB-RACE:** Man, Dunadan (Man of Minas Tirith)

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

**ATTRIBUTES:** Bearing 11 (+2)\*, Perception 10 (+2)\*, Nimbleness 7 (+0), Strength 8 (+1), Vitality 6 (+0), Wits 11 (+2)

**REACTIONS:** Stamina +1, Swiftsness +2, Willpower +2, Wisdom +2\*

**ADVANCEMENTS:** 8

**ORDER:** Loremaster (Minas Tirith Scholar), Spy

**ORDER ABILITIES:** Ancient Scripts, Friends in Low Places (Minas Tirith), Secretive

**SPELLS:** None

**SKILLS:** Armed Combat: Blade (Longsword) +2, Climb +1, Conceal +2, Debate (Oratory) +4, Insight +4, Language: Westron +6, Language: Sindarin +4, Language: Quenya +4, Lore/Group: Angren-ri +1, Lore/History: Beleriand +4, Lore/History: Gondor +4, Lore/Realm: Gondor (Minas Tirith) +5, Lore/Realm: Rivendell +5, Observe (Listen, Spot) +3, Perform (Act) +5, Persuade (Charm) +5, Ranged Combat: Thrown +2, Run +1, Search (Research) +4, Stealth (Hide, Sneak) +4

**EDGES:** Honey-tongued, Natural Archivist, Rank 2 (Angren-ri Lord)

**FLAWS:** Enemy (Kingdoms of the West)

**HEALTH:** 7 (Medium, 6 Wound levels)

**COURAGE:** 4

**RENOWN:** 6

**DEFENCE:** 10

**GEAR:** Fancy robes, medallion of Angren-ri (hidden, TN 17 Search), longsword, 3d6 tharni

## BACKGROUND

Sador is the "faithful" servant of Bronoldo Mordirachas in his efforts to bring the old days to Middle-earth. He is the deepest in the counsels and knowledge of Bronoldo; this puts him in the position of knowing all there is to know about the elf's machinations, yet blinds him to Sador's true purpose. In truth, the man is one of the Angren-ri, the Cult of the Iron Crown. His mission was to seek out others to recruit to the cause of Morgoth, but found a means to the cult's ultimate goal of freeing the Dark Lord. By studying Bronoldo's work, Sador seeks to twist the goal of seeking Valinor to breaking into the Void and releasing the Dark Lord Morgoth from his bonds.

## SADRON O ANGREN-RI (S. "[The] Faithful of [the] Iron Crown")

This dark cult has existed since the First Age; its roots are found among the ancient Easterlings that Morgoth twisted into his service. After the sinking of Beleriand and reemergence of Sauron in Mordor, the cult spread to Umbar and other southern Numenorean colonies more susceptible to corruption. It helped overthrow the rulers of these colonies and installed puppet regimes secretly loyal to Mordor, biding their time until they chose to unveil their alliance. Soon the Black Numenoreans, railing against The Faithful under Elendil but never wholly given to Mordor, took over the majority of the cult enclaves and used it for their greedy purposes. But as all know, soon even their dark hearts hearkened to the call of The Shadow.

When Sauron was seemingly destroyed at The Last Alliance, the Black Numenoreans struck out to consolidate their power over the barbarians and former faithful colonies in the south. The cult became the institutional religion of the realms with the rulers taking up the role of head priest. These practices continued for millennia through the end of the Third Age when The One Ring, Sauron, and his Nazgul were destroyed. But even before Elessar and Eomer began their campaigns upon the southern realms, the cult began to lose cohesion.

With its power base shattered through insurrection from within the realms and the all-consuming struggle against the Reunited Kingdom and Rohan, Sadron o Angren-ri fractured, scattering to

all corners of northwestern Middle-earth, finding themselves in small enclaves hiding from those that would oppose the cult's goals. For many years the cult continued to exist in this way until a means to achieve their whole purpose was discovered. It was Sador who was sent in search of more followers to bring into the fold when he happened upon Bronoldo, last of the great Noldor in Middle-earth. Gaining the elf's trust, he began laboring to twist the elf's work into a means to free Melkor Morgoth from his eternal bonds within the Void.



# RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

## ORCS by Matthew "GandalfOfBorg" Kearns

In the mountains of the North, the dark forests of Mirkwood, or the grim plains of Nurn, orcs are everywhere.

**Description:** This encounter is comprised of orcs, generally of the subtype where the encounter occurs.

**Type:** Combat

**Numbers:** (Standard) Size of the Fellowship  
(Advanced) +3 TN for each doubling of the size of the Fellowship

**Locales:** Orcs can be encountered in pretty much any environ except Urban unless it/they are half-orcs.

## ENCOUNTER PROBABILITY

Roll 2d6 to determine if there is an encounter. If there is, roll a 1d6 for the encounter's difficulty.

TERRAIN TYPE	RESULT	DIFFICULTY
Forest	4-9	1-4 Standard, 5-6 Advanced
Plains	5-8	1-3 Standard, 4-6 Advanced
Mountains	4-9	1-4 Standard, 5-6 Advanced
Desert	6-7	Always Advanced
Swamp	5-8	1-2 Standard, 3-6 Advanced
Tundra	6-7	Always Advanced
Underground	2, 3, 11, 12	1-2 Standard, 3-6 Advanced
Sea Coast	2, 12	1 Standard, 2-6 Advanced
At Sea	2	Always Advanced

## STATS

Additional stats and unique abilities can be found in *Fell Beasts and Wondrous Magic* along with issues 20 and 22 of *The Hall of Fire*.

## UNIT STATS

See HOF #25 for how to create a mass combat unit. For units using orkish subtypes, you can apply the appropriate environmental unit ability.



## SPECIAL ENCOUNTER UNIQUE ABILITIES AND MODIFIERS

The Bandits random encounter template can be used to augment the Orc random encounter.

### ANCIENT ENMITY

If the unit's clan has a particular grudge against a particular group of people (Elves of Mirkwood, Dunedain, Dwarves of Durin's Clan, etc.), then its leader can make a TN 12 Siegecraft test with an affinity bonus from Inspire to increase either the unit's Toughness or Strength by +1 per level of success. This bonus lasts for the duration of the encounter or until the leader is nullified.

### ATTACK THE WEAK

Orkish units that are matched by units made up of commonfolk become frenzied in their attacks for they relish having the upper hand. For every point of Toughness (max 3) reduced, the orc unit may increase its Movement or Strength (select one stat) by an equal amount. Only if the unit has a leader can it stop the effects of this ability once it has been activated.

# TROLLS

by Matthew "GandalfOfBorg" Kearns

The twisted mockeries of Ents, trolls are an ancient and difficult enemy to all the Free Peoples.

**Description:** This encounter is comprised of trolls, generally of the subtype where the encounter occurs.

**Type:** Combat

**Numbers:** (Standard) 1 per 5 advancements  
(Fellowship's average)

(Advanced) +3 TN for each additional troll

**Locales:** Excluding Olog-hai, trolls require to be near a location that they can hide from the day's sun, so it's mostly mountains and forests.

## ENCOUNTER PROBABILITY

Roll 2d6 to determine if there is an encounter. If there is, roll a 1d6 for the encounter's difficulty.

TERRAIN TYPE	RESULT	DIFFICULTY
Forest	5-8	1-5 Standard, 6 Advanced
Plains	6-7	1-3 Standard, 4-6 Advanced
Mountains	4-9	1-3 Standard, 4-6 Advanced
Desert	12	Always Advanced
Swamp	5-8	1-3 Standard, 4-6 Advanced
Tundra	6-7	Always Advanced
Underground	5-8	1-2 Standard, 3-6 Advanced
Sea Coast	2, 12	1 Standard, 2-6 Advanced
At Sea	N/A	N/A

## STATS

Additional stats and unique abilities can be found in *Fell Beasts and Wondrous Magic* along with issues 23 and 42 of *The Hall of Fire*.

## UNIT STATS

See HOF #25 for how to create a mass combat unit. For units using troll subtypes, you can apply the appropriate environmental unit ability.

## SPECIAL ENCOUNTER UNIQUE ABILITIES AND MODIFIERS

The Bandits random encounter template can be used to augment the Troll random encounter.

Unless they have a leader, trolls are considered to have the Beast description.



## DEFINITIONS

**Fellowship:** Number of characters, PC and NPC, in group

**Standard:** This is the base number of foes suitable for a beginning level group (0-3 advancements)

**Advanced:** This refers to the base creature template from above augmented with options in the section about special encounter abilities and modifiers.

# FAN FLAVOUR

## I - ENEG by Matt "GandalfOfBorg" Kearns

### INTRODUCTION

I-Eneg (*S. 'The Six'*) is the council of elf-lords of the who rule over the remaining elf-kingdoms in Middle-earth after the destruction of The One Ring and the passing of Elrond, Galadriel, and the Ring-bearers into The Uttermost West. They confer with one another over great distances by means only known to them, one of their few remaining gifts of power before it is all spent. The purpose of this group is to replace The White Council, but they only confer amongst themselves unless it is felt necessary to contact Gondor. Mostly their concern is the welfare of the remaining elves in Middle-earth maintaining the roads to the havens, and their own realms as Man has now fully taken over the stewardship of Endor.

Celeborn is the head of the I-Eneg, residing now in Rivendell upon the surrender of his seat in Lorien to his faithful and most-trusted advisor, Laegnauth. The Grey Havens, though not headed formally by a royal family, is still under the oversight of Cirdan the Shipwright. Thranduil remains the lord of the woodland-realm of Eryn Lasgalen, even after his son, Legolas, leads a colony of elves to reside in Ithilien. Though he stays long enough for the establishment of the southernmost elf-realm, Legolas does not remain its leader for long, opting to travel with his friend, Gimli, and leaving the stewardship of the new realm to his younger brother, Harnduil. The final leader of I-Eneg is Silael, the Medui Mirdan (*S. Last Smith*). As her title speaks, she is the last of the great elf-smiths in Middle-earth, being the one who Elrond entrusted with the reforging of Narsil into Anduril. With the permission of Elrond before his departure, she took a small colony of her own to reinhabit Eregion and restore its proud tradition of smithwork.

Celeborn, Cirdan, and Thranduil we know, so below tells a bit of the stories of the other three lords of the last elf-realms in Middle-earth.

### LAEGNAUTH (*S. Keen-thought*)

**RACE:** Elf, Sindarin (Elf of Lorien)

**ORDER:** Loremaster, Noble

**RENOWN:** 15

#### BACKGROUND:

While Galadriel was surrounded by her handmaidens almost constantly when away from her husband, Celeborn, too, was not alone with Laegnauth by his side. The two were friends from an early age and the young Laegnauth followed his friend and lord from Beleriand into the little-known reaches of Laurelindórenan to found a new elf-realm among the golden mallorn. He became chief in counsel to the lords of Lorien, skillfully offering counterpoints to their arguments and did advise against allowing the Fellowship to enter the realm.

When the Lady left Middle-earth, Celeborn grew weary of Lorien as it reminded him so of his departed mate and came to his friend to ask a favor: become lord of Lothlorien in his stead while he removed himself to Rivendell. With a heavy heart, he accepted the burden out of love for his lord and friend.

Laegnauth remained Lord of the Golden Wood until the last of the Fair Folk departed. He stayed with the land, knowing that there was nothing for him on the other side of the great sea. Before his spirit completely faded, he witnessed the fate of the daughter of Elrond and stood over her body until it was wholly consumed by the land, at which his spirit blew into the West upon a warm breeze.





# A FIELD GUIDE TO THE CREATURES OF MIDDLE-EARTH

## GIANT SPIDERS by David "Issachar" D.

### OVERVIEW

One of the most evocative creatures on earth, the spider occupies our cellars, our metaphors, and our nightmares. In Tolkien's Middle-earth, monstrously large spiders lurk in shadowy caves and forests, capturing whatever unfortunate prey wanders too close to their lairs. These giant spiders share some attributes of their tiny, mundane counterparts, but in other ways they are horribly different – evil aberrations and intruders in the natural world. This quick one-shot article will give you some useful information when using giant spiders in your game.

### APPEARANCE AND ANATOMY

All spiders, both giant and ordinary, have eight legs and two body segments connected by a thin waist that permits the two segments to move in different directions. The head is fused to the forward segment, the thorax, which also supports all eight of the creature's legs. The rear segment is the abdomen, which contains digestive organs and the spinnerets, from which the spider produces its silk.

### SENSORY ORGANS

A majority of spiders have eight eyes, though some species have two, four, or six. Normally, there is one primary pair of eyes that are larger than the others. The visual acuity of these eyes varies widely from species to species. Spiders that make extensive use of webs to catch prey have relatively poor eyesight, while spiders that hunt their prey have sharp eyesight, can judge distances accurately, and can even see in colour. Giant spiders, unlike their ordinary counterparts, have eyes that glow faintly in the dark, and their vision is quite sharp. They are also able to hear sound at least as well as a man.

A spider's sense of touch is as important as its eyesight, if not more so. Spiders are sensitive to vibrations conducted through their webs, through the ground, or even changes in air pressure caused by the movements of other creatures. From the account of Bilbo's encounter with the spiders of Mirkwood, we can surmise that giant spiders cannot detect vibrations in the ground or air as keenly as ordinary spiders, since Bilbo was able to elude them by putting on his magic ring and becoming invisible. Giant spiders are still able, however, to feel the vibrations of prey struggling in their webs.

### MOUTH AND FANGS

Ordinary spiders lack mouths that are capable of chewing food (although the mandibles at the front of the head are large enough in some species to crush prey for easier consumption). Instead, a spider secretes digestive fluids into their prey and sucks in the dissolved tissues through a small proboscis.

The mouths of giant spiders are far more complex and developed, for they are capable of speech, with a sibilant quality. They feed primarily on the blood and juices of their prey, but can also ingest solid foods. (The orcs refer to Shelob eating meat, and Gollum – who must have observed her feeding habits – expected only Frodo's and Sam's bones to be left, which he could pick through to find his Precious.)

Both mundane and giant spiders can inject venom through their fangs. Giant spiders possess two different types of venom glands and can employ either type of venom when they bite a victim. One venom is a deadly toxin that kills the victim outright; the other paralyzes the victim, leaving it alive but unconscious.



## SPINNERETS

At the back of the spider's abdomen are three pairs (usually) of silk-producing glands called spinnerets, clustered close together. Inside the spinnerets, protein compounds stored in gel form are drawn through ducts that remove water and organize the proteins into silken thread.

Each pair of spinnerets produces silk with different properties. Some silks are sticky and used for capturing prey in a web; other silks are tough, used to anchor webs or bind and immobilize prey. The silk of giant spiders is extraordinarily tough; the largest spiders produce cords that can only be hewn one at a time by sharp blades.

Both ordinary and giant spiders are able to consume their own silk, and often eat their old webs before producing new ones.

## EXOSKELETON AND COLORATION

Spiders have a rigid, chitinous exoskeleton that they must periodically shed in order to grow. After the moulting process is complete and the outer skin discarded, the soft cuticle underneath dries and hardens rapidly, in a matter of hours. During this short period, the spider grows and attains its new size.

Giant spiders, however, do not appear to undergo the moulting process. Shelob's hide was described as thickening with new growth from within, but the outer layers were not discarded. Presumably a giant spider's exoskeleton cracks and splits minutely as newer layers are grown beneath it, so that truly aged spiders are armoured far better than younger ones.

Although ordinary spiders exist in a wide variety of colours, giant spiders are descended from creatures of darkness and shadow, and their hides are always dark in hue, most often grey or black.

## HISTORY

The dread creature of darkness Ungoliant is the ancestral mother of all giant spider-kind in Middle-earth. Ungoliant's origins are not known, but she was almost certainly one of the fallen Ainur who assumed physical form, the shape of a hulking spider.

Melkor sought Ungoliant's aid in destroying the light of the two holy Trees of Valinor. Concealed by a shroud of Un-light that Ungoliant wove about them, the two crept unseen into the heart of Valinor. Melkor thrust his black spear to the core of each Tree, and Ungoliant drank the living sap that poured from the terrible wounds, growing larger and stronger as the Trees diminished and finally died.

Ungoliant the all-ravenous was not sated by her meal, and attacked even Melkor himself when he refused to give her the Silmarils he had stolen after smiting the two Trees. Ungoliant had grown so great that Melkor was overcome, and only the intervention of a host of Balrogs saved him from being devoured.



Ungoliant fled to the deep caves beneath the mountains called Ered Gorgoroth, where other monstrous spiders dwelt already. Ungoliant mated with these creatures, and devoured them afterwards, and her offspring increased and migrated to other blighted and evil places.

The greatest of Ungoliant's offspring in the latter Ages was Shelob, who made her lair in the pass of Cirith Ungol on the western bounds of Mordor. Shelob was already ancient when she entered into the tale of Frodo and the One Ring. For many lives of men she had bred monstrous offspring, which in turn spawned lesser creatures of their kind.

## ETYMOLOGY OF NAMES

The derivation of Tolkien's names for giant spiders and their haunts is interesting:

**Attercop**—From the Old English word *attorcoppe*, meaning “poison head”. The name of the poisonous snake called the adder derives from the same word. Players of Dungeons & Dragons will notice similarities to the name of the monster called the ettercap.

**Cob**—From “coppe”, a shortened form of the aforementioned “attorcoppe”. Cob appears in the term *cobweb*, and in Bilbo Baggins' improvised song taunting the spiders of Mirkwood, “Lazy Lob and Crazy Cob”.

**Lob**—From *lobbe*, another Old English word for a spider. This term also appears in the word *lobster*. Tolkien probably devised Shelob's name by appending a feminine prefix (“she”) to “lob”.

**Ungol**—This term appears in the names Ungoliant and Cirith Ungol. Ungoliant derives from the Quenya *ungwë liantë*, “dark spider”. Although “ungol” is from the portion of the phrase meaning gloom or dark shadow, it came to indicate spiders, so that Cirith Ungol translates as “the pass of the spider”.



## ECOLOGY AND BEHAVIOR

### HABITAT

Giant spiders, like the majority of mundane spiders, seek dark crevices to serve as their lairs. Thick forests and mountain caves make ideal homes.

Most of Shelob's brood resided beneath the dark canopy of Mirkwood at the end of the Third Age. The presence of Sauron in Dol Guldur cast a shadow over the forest and made it an appealing place for creatures that loved darkness. However, less dense populations of giant spiders can be found in the border mountains of Mordor, as well as in the Misty Mountains, the Grey Mountains and the Iron Hills. Forested areas of Rhûn may also host small communities of giant spiders, or lone individuals.

### HUNTING AND FEEDING HABITS

Giant spiders employ all the techniques that their ordinary counterparts use to capture prey, only with greater sophistication and cunning. Firstly, a spider can rely on its webs to entangle a victim, especially non-intelligent animals without the strength or the tools to escape the sticky strands. When the spider detects vibrations in its web, it can descend and dispatch the struggling victim at its leisure.

Alternatively, a spider can forego spinning its web and simply lie in wait for prey in a dark crevice or beneath dense foliage, then spring out and deliver its poisonous bite before the target can react. This method depends on the spider knowing locations where potential prey tends to pass by frequently.

Giant spiders can also be active hunters. Although they cannot run as swiftly as deer or other prey animals, they are relentless pursuers who will follow a victim until it tires, and then close in for the kill.

Some giant spiders have learned the trick of creating a net of webbing between their front limbs, with which they can instantly snare a target when they pounce. This makes it easier to render the prey immobile while the spider delivers its bite.

If a giant spider does not need an immediate meal, it uses its sickening poison to render the prey paralyzed or unconscious, then wraps the prey in silk and hangs it above the ground. Later – but not usually more than a day or two later – the spider returns to deliver a flesh-rending bite and drink the blood that flows out, then slowly consumes the meat afterwards.

Giant spiders have no lust for treasure, and discard the parts or possessions of their victims that prove to be inedible. They have discovered, however, that the bright baubles of past victims can serve as an effective lure for intelligent (if unwise) prey.



### LIFE CYCLE AND SOCIETY

Like some ordinary spiders, female giant spiders frequently devour the (usually smaller) males after mating with them. The female then encases her fertilized clutch of eggs in a cocoon of silk. Within this egg sac, the young spiders proceed through the larval stage until they attain their adult forms and emerge. Dozens of infant spiders may hatch from a single egg sac.

A newly-hatched spider must learn to fend for itself quickly. Giant spiders are hateful creatures and will kill one another in a quarrel unless kept in check by a dominant leader. (They are also united in their hatred for all other forms of life, which outweighs their animosity toward each other.) Giant spiders grow slowly over many years and can achieve enormous size if they survive long enough.

Unlike most mundane spiders, giant spiders are capable of living communally without destroying each other. The spiders that Bilbo and the dwarves encountered in Mirkwood represent the largest community of giant spiders in Middle-earth; elsewhere spiders congregate in far fewer numbers.

Giant spiders in a community will assist one another in hunting prey and are capable of using pack tactics to surround their victims. However, when excited or enraged, the spiders frequently abandon intelligent hunting techniques and merely rush headlong in the direction of their prey, as Bilbo discovered when he taunted them while invisible.

A female spider of exceptional size is normally found at the center of a spider community. This matriarch rules through fear and ruthless ferocity until her death, which might be at the claws of a rival strong enough to defeat her. Other spiders fit into the social hierarchy roughly according to their size and strength. Lone spiders occasionally leave the group to seek territory of their own.

### SPEECH

Though giant spiders resemble their ordinary counterparts in form, they are fundamentally different creatures, descended from unnatural monsters of terrible and malicious intelligence. Even the lesser descendants of these ancestral beasts are as intelligent as men and are also capable of speech.

A giant spider's speech is sibilant, like that of Gollum, and is punctuated with clicks and clacks as their mandibles strike together. When angered, spiders might spit when they talk, the liquid partly poison and partly digestive juices.

Giant spiders understand and speak the local dialects spoken by nearby Free Folk – usually Westron. Their intelligence permits them to learn other languages as well; a few spiders of Mirkwood have acquired a rudimentary understanding of Sindarin from the Elves of the Woodland Kingdom.



## GIANT SPIDERS IN YOUR CHRONICLE

A small group of three to six giant spiders, or a single large individual, presents a significant challenge to most bands of heroes. Play up the spiders' cunning, and allow them to play cat-and-mouse for a bit with the PC's, as Shelob did when Frodo and Sam wandered into her lair. The creepy atmosphere of a giant spider's territory can be as daunting as the physical danger the creature poses.

Giant spiders are independent creatures. They serve no master unless compelled to do so by force, and are driven only by their insatiable hunger. Thus they make an interesting change of pace from conventional villains with more far-reaching aims.

### ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT

**Torches:** Giant spiders do not love fire, and fire can also burn through their webs, though the thick cords are not consumed as quickly as the silk of ordinary spiders.

**Enchanted blades:** Swords forged by the great artificers among Dwarves and Elves have such a virtue of sharpness that they can cleave easily through giant spiders' webs, which mundane blades can only sever with much time and labor.

### ASSOCIATED SPELLS

**Flame of Anor:** One of the most effective spells against giant spiders, for as descendants of Ungoliant, the personification of consuming darkness, they fear the pure light of the Valar. A giant spider who witnesses the use of this spell must make a TN 10 Willpower test or flee.

**Veiling Shadow:** Some giant spiders of great age actually learn to cast this sorcerous spell themselves. Just as Ungoliant spun a shroud of Un-light about herself, a spider uses the Veiling Shadow spell to conceal its webs and make its lair a place from which no prey can hope to find escape.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Over the years, *The Hall of Fire* has published a few articles that pertain to the brood of Ungoliant:

- HOF 13:23-25, 31-32 – The undead spider Gorvorsang and her lair.
- HOF 14:22-25 – The combat between Shelob and Sam, played out round by round according to the CODA rules.
- HOF 23:4-5 – A description of the conflict between the Elves of Thranduil's realm and the giant spiders of Mirkwood.
- HOF 38:2-3 – A description of the perils of Shelob's lair.

# HOSTILE HAUNTS

## SWORDFANG'S LAIR by David "Issachar" D.

### BACKGROUND

A creature of special cruelty and ambition, Swordfang was a child of the matriarch of a large spider colony deep in the heart of Mirkwood. The unusually long fanged tips of her mandibles earned Swordfang her name, and her "swords" only became more prominent as she devoured many kills, growing large and strong.

It seemed to Swordfang that her destiny was to replace her mother as the dominant spider of that territory, but though cunning, she was rash and overconfident, and made her move too early. The great matriarch was prepared to deal with such a coup, and Swordfang barely escaped with her life.

She made her way east toward the edge of the forest, eventually approaching the Eastern Bight of Mirkwood, where many settlements of Woodmen dwell. Here Swordfang made her new lair. In encounters with two other lone spiders, she proved the stronger, and forced the others into her service. The three of them now claim a large area of the forest as their hunting grounds, and more than a few of the Woodman folk have fallen prey to them after straying too far into the forest.

### THE SPIDERS

**Silkrunner** is the youngest and smallest of the three spiders, and the only male. He is grey-brown in colour, and is about the size of a large dog. He uses the statistics of a Lesser Giant Spider in *Fell Beasts and Wondrous Magic*.

On Swordfang's orders, Silkrunner acts as a lookout, watching for desirable prey and potentially dangerous enemies. High up in the branches of the trees, he has woven screens of silk and covered them with leaves on one side to create a sort of hunter's blind from which he can watch movements below, unseen. These blinds, coupled with the distance from the ground, grant Silkrunner a +10 bonus on his Stealth (hide) tests. Silkrunner has also rigged walkways of webbing high off the ground, which he can use to move from site to site unhindered and often undetected.

Next in the hierarchy is **Bonebiter**, a large, dark grey female spider. Bonebiter rivals Swordfang in size but lacks the other's intelligence. Her tactics are simple, and generally effective: leap at the target and deliver a poisoned bite before it can react. Even if a victim manages to avoid the venomous fangs, Bonebiter can almost always overwhelm an opponent with sheer size and strength. When Silkrunner reports a large prey or an enemy moving into the spiders' territory, Bonebiter is quick to respond.

Bonebiter's statistics are those of a Greater Giant Spider in *Fell Beasts and Wondrous Magic*, except that she has one point of Armour, as well as six ranks in Jump. She often leaps upon her enemies in a charge attack, attempting to bear them to the ground.

**Swordfang** leads the trio, and has designs on expanding both her territory and the number of spiders under her rule. Her shiny carapace is as black as night and her eyes glow with a faint reddish tinge. She spends most of her time near the center of her hunting grounds, content to let Bonebiter do the majority of the slaughter and retrieval of prey (a task the other spider relishes).

Swordfang's statistics are those of a Greater Giant Spider in *Fell Beasts and Wondrous Magic*, with the following changes:

- Her Wits score is one higher than normal
- She has two points of Armour
- Her oversized fangs deal 2d6+4 points of damage
- She has the Dodge and Wary edges

In combat, Swordfang prefers a hit-and-fade style of attack, using her first action to rush in, her second to attack, and then an extra action (at a penalty) to withdraw, preferably behind cover. If she is forced to remain in melee, she uses one Dodge action per round to improve her chances of avoiding being hit.

Swordfang has also mastered the technique of using a net of webbing between her front legs to catch victims. She can take a single action to reach her front legs beneath herself and retrieve several strands of webbing from her spinnerets. She then moves on six legs while holding the webbing stretched tight between her forelegs. If she hits while attacking with this webbing, the target is permitted a Swift test whose TN is equal to Swordfang's attack test result. On a failure, the target is entangled in the webbing and suffers a -5 penalty to all physical tests until freed. (A TN 15 Strength test is required to break free from the silken cords.)

In a pinch, Swordfang can even use this webbing to parry attacks made on her with bladed or blunt weapons (she cannot parry piercing attacks, such as spears). If her parry attempt is successful, a bladed weapon cuts through the webbing without harming Swordfang, but a blunt weapon sticks to the webbing. Its wielder must make an immediate opposed Strength test against Swordfang to free the weapon; if the attacker loses, the weapon is pulled from his grasp.

## APPROACHING THE LAIR

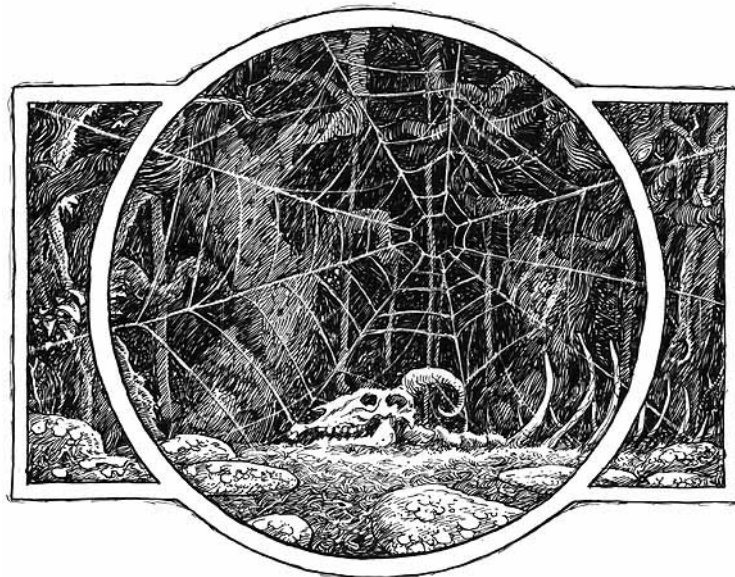
Swordfang's hunting territory covers roughly a league in all directions outward from the central lair. One edge of the territory has begun to overlap the area used by a settlement of Woodmen in the Eastern Bight of Mirkwood to trap hares and hunt deer. In recent months, two or three Woodmen have been lost to the spiders' predations, which might be a factor that draws the PCs into the situation.

The first spider the PCs encounter will be Silkrunner, though they might not be aware of his presence above their heads unless they are looking upward as well as around them. Silkrunner will observe the PCs from hiding for a short while, sizing them up and trying to determine their strength.

When Silkrunner thinks he can get away without being spotted, he will leave his blind and run along his walkway of webbing to a nearby tree, and then to another, until he is no longer within sight of the group. However, luck is against Silkrunner on this occasion, for his sudden movement startles a squirrel who shrieks and chatters as it runs away, drawing the PCs' attention upward to the source of the sound. Now they are likely to spot Silkrunner as he attempts his escape.

Silkrunner will do what he can to elude the group, sticking to the higher tree branches and hiding if he is unable to flee. If he gets away, he will climb down to the ground and immediately run in search of the other two spiders. As soon as Bonebiter gets the report, she hastens off to confront the intruders. If Silkrunner reported that the group is very large or has special powers such as magic, Bonebiter will make an effort to circle around behind the PCs and attack from the rear. Otherwise, she simply emerges from the dim shadows ahead of the party and charges them headlong.

Swordfang's reaction to the news of intruders is far more cautious. She prepares her central lair to give her the best advantage and waits for them to arrive, should they manage to overcome the vicious Bonebiter.



## THE CENTRAL LAIR

The lair is a rocky rise in the land featuring a boulder large enough for Swordfang to hide behind and the thick bore of an ancient tree at the top of the hill.

Between the trees around the perimeter, Swordfang has strung lines of silk inches from the ground to act as tripwires (TN 12 Observe (spot) test to notice). A PC who walks into a tripwire must make a TN 10 Swifttest to avoid falling prone. If such a person is separated from the rest of the group by a little distance, Swordfang chooses that moment to emerge from hiding and strike at the disadvantaged PC.

A stone's throw away from the hill, a thin shaft of dusty sunlight pierces the canopy and illuminates a patch of ground where a small pile of items is heaped. Swordfang has intentionally broken away this part of the canopy (at night, of course) and piled the possessions of her victims in the sunlit area to distract enemies who venture too close to her sanctum. During the day, the sunlight and the metallic glints from the pile are visible through the trees for quite some distance.

The treasure proves to be meager: five silver pennies, a handful of arrowheads, two brass and three iron buckles, an empty glass vial, three knives, and a cloak clasp set with a large oval moonstone.

## EPILOGUE

Award the PCs 100 XP apiece for defeating Swordfang and Bonebiter. The smaller spider, Silkrunner, will flee as soon as it appears that his queen is outmatched. He will not return to trouble the area again.

The skeletal remains and clothing of the missing Woodmen are concealed near the foot of the rocky hill. If a Woodman was captured very recently, he is weak but still alive, bound with cords and hanging high among the branches of the tree atop the hill. His family will reward the PCs for rescuing him, if they are able.

# WORDS OF WISDOM

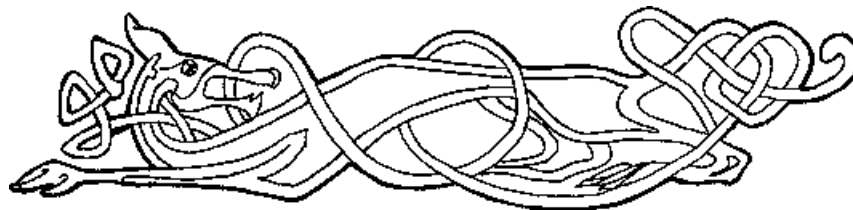
## YNGVAR ON RUNNING THE CHRONICLE

"Description is not a drag. To evoke the spirit of Middle-earth in the game, look at the language used to describe the landscape. The lands are wild and much of it is untamed. Use it to create an air of mystery for the PCs. You don't have to be a literary genius or professional storyteller for this – just keep a few descriptive phrases handy or write out the description of places you expect the PCs to go. Another tip is has a list of about 12 to 15 names, both male and female, of the peoples you expect the PCs to encounter. It helps when trying to ad hoc something after the PCs have yet again driven a massive battering ram through your nice plot.

For example, I am an English graduate – which should help but far from guarantees anything will be easy – but have loved Tolkien for the past 20 years. Rereading gives me some ideas on the landscape and how the PCs may view it. I have lists of names sample professions, etc. on a single A4 sheet to help me when my PCs head off somewhere I had not prepared for and I need ideas quickly and NPCs quickly."

## NYBBLES ON RUNNING THE CHRONICLE

"Keep the players interested in the task at hand so they will continue to walk the correct path, bored players lead to bad games. When the players decide to go in a different direction than you had intended, try to roll with it as much as possible. This will undoubtedly happen more than once during your game sessions. Players are ingenious creatures and will think of things you as a Narrator had not. Don't worry if the game seems to have been derailed, go with the flow. As long as everyone is still enjoying their gaming experience, your mission is successful."



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## WHAT'S OUT THERE

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

DECIPHER'S LORD OF THE RINGS RPG HOME <a href="http://lotrrpg.fanhq.com">http://lotrrpg.fanhq.com</a> DECIPHER'S LOTR RPG BOARD <a href="http://forums.fanhq.com/viewforum.php?f=164">http://forums.fanhq.com/viewforum.php?f=164</a> THE HALL OF FIRE WEBZINE SITE <a href="http://halloffire.org">http://halloffire.org</a> ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ARDA <a href="http://www.glyphweb.com/arda/default.htm">http://www.glyphweb.com/arda/default.htm</a> FAN MODULES FOR MIDDLE-EARTH <a href="http://groups.yahoo.com/group/fan-modules">http://groups.yahoo.com/group/fan-modules</a> SCOTT'S RPG CENTRAL <a href="http://www.geocities.com/scott_metz/">http://www.geocities.com/scott_metz/</a> CHRONICLES OF THE NORTH <a href="http://roleplay.avioc.org/index.htm">http://roleplay.avioc.org/index.htm</a> MERPCOM <a href="http://www.merp.com">http://www.merp.com</a> OTHER MINDS MAGAZINE <a href="http://www.othermindsmagazine.com">http://www.othermindsmagazine.com</a>	THE MAD IRISHMAN <a href="http://www.mad-irishman.net">http://www.mad-irishman.net</a> THE LAST ALLIANCE <a href="http://thelastalliance.com">http://thelastalliance.com</a> RPG TOOLS FOR DECIPHER'S CODA GAMES <a href="http://groups.yahoo.com/group/rpgtools/">http://groups.yahoo.com/group/rpgtools/</a> THE STEWARD AND THE KING <a href="http://www.stewardandking.net">http://www.stewardandking.net</a> THE TOWER HILLS <a href="http://homepage.mac.com/jeremybaker/towerhills">http://homepage.mac.com/jeremybaker/towerhills</a> TREK-RPG.NET <a href="http://forum.trek-rpg.net/index.php">http://forum.trek-rpg.net/index.php</a> CODA WEBZINE REPOSITORY <a href="http://groups.yahoo.com/group/coda_webzine">http://groups.yahoo.com/group/coda_webzine</a> THE ONE RING.COM <a href="http://www.theonering.com/">http://www.theonering.com/</a> THE ONE RING.NET <a href="http://www.theonering.net/">http://www.theonering.net/</a>
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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](mailto:codawebzine@hotmail.com) with 'Fan Content' in the subject line. Please include your name and/or pseudonym (handle/online identity) and email address(es) with which one of our editors may contact you.

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

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

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

### *If you would like to post an advertisement for:*

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

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