FREE LEAGUE

THE ONE RING™

ROLEPLAYING IN THE WORLD OF THE LORD OF THE RINGS™

BASED ON THE WORKS OF J.R.R. TOLKIEN

THE ICE BAY
HIMLING
little lune
HILLS
HALLS OF THE DWARVES
FORLOND
NICHLOND
ARTHEDAIN
GREY HAVENS
WHITE TOWERS
ELOSTIRION
TOWER HILLS
FAR DOWNS
GULF OF LUNE
HARLOND
BELEGAER
THE GREAT SEA
ERIADOR

OF FOROCHEL
THE OLD WITCH-REALM OF ANGMAR
CARN DÛM
FORODWAITH
THE LONE-LANDS
MISTY MOUNTAINS
OF EVENDIM
MT. GUNDABAD
MT. GRAM
NORTH DOWNS
ETTENMOORS
RHUDAUR
FORNOST
ANNUMINAS
MOORS
WEATHER HILLS
the water
HOBBITON
BRANDYWINE BRIDGE
CHETWOOD
MIDGEWATER MARSHES
WEATHERTOP
LAST BRIDGE
TROLLSHAWS
HIGH PASS
MICHEL
DELVING
BREE
the great east road
RIVENDELL
FORDS OF BRUINEN
THE SHIRE
OLD FOREST
BARROW-DOWNS
the Greenway
SOUTH DOWNS
the angle
loudwater
hoarwell
SARN FORD
CARDOLAN
EREGION
HOLLIN
REDHORN PASS
EAST GATE
WEST GATE
OSE-IN-EDHIL
MORIA
LORIEN
THARBAD
swanfleet
glanduin
RUINS OF ARNOR
MINHIRIATH
greyflood
north-south road
ENEDWAITH
LOND DAER
DUNLAND
FANGORN
ISENGARD
ROHAN

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1

PROLOGUE 5

The Twilight of the Third Age 7

ADVENTURING IN THE THIRD AGE 8

The Folk of Eriador 8

PLAYING THE GAME 8

The Shadow of the Past 9

Player-heroes 11

The Loremaster 11

STRUCTURE OF THE GAME 12

The Adventuring Phase 12

The Fellowship Phase 13

Tying it All Together 13

2

ACTION RESOLUTION 15

The One Ring Dice 16

When to Roll 16

Scenes in Brief 16

MAKING ROLLS 17

Who Rolls 17

Which Ability 17

Make the Roll 17

Repeating a Roll 17

How to Read the Dice 17

Target Numbers 18

Degree of Success 18

Die Roll Modifiers 20

CONDITIONS 22

Miserable 22

Weary 22

Wounded 22

Die Roll Procedure 23

THE CHARACTER SHEET 22

A Glossary of Game Terms 24

3

ADVENTURERS 27

Your Characters 28

HEROIC CULTURES 29

Characteristics 29

Attributes 29

Derived Stats 29

Skills and Combat Proficiencies 30

Distinctive Features 30

Languages and Typical Names 30

BARDINGS 32

DWARVES OF DURIN'S FOLK 34

ELVES OF LINDON 36

HOBBITS OF THE SHIRE 38

MEN OF BREE 40

RANGERS OF THE NORTH 42

CALLINGS 44

Captain 44

Champion 44

Messenger 45

Scholar 45

Treasure Hunter 45

Warden 46

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE 46

STARTING GEAR 47

War Gear 47

Travelling Gear 49

Useful Items 49

Hobbit-ponies and Full-sized Horses 50

STARTING REWARD AND VIRTUE 51

THE COMPANY 51

Patron 52

The Safe Haven 53

Fellowship Rating 54

Fellowship Focus 55

EXPERIENCE 55

Skill Points 56

Adventure Points 56

FURTHER ADVENTURES 56

Adventuring Career 56

4

CHARACTERISTICS 59

SKILLS 60

Skill Categories 60

Skills List 61

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES 65

Combat Proficiencies List 65

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES 67

Distinctive Features List 67

ENDURANCE AND HOPE 69

Endurance 69

Hope 71

STANDARDS OF LIVING 72

Standard of Living Descriptions 72

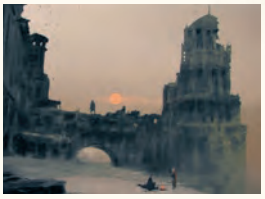
Hoarding Riches 73

WAR GEAR 73

Weapons 73

Armour and Shields 75

5



VALOUR AND WISDOM 77

Wisdom 78

Valour 78

REWARDS 78

Rewards List 79

VIRTUES 80

Virtues List 80

CULTURAL VIRTUES 81

Virtues of the Bardings 81

Virtues of the Dwarves 82

Virtues of the Elves 84

Virtues of the Hobbits 85

Virtues of the Men of Bree 87

Virtues of the Rangers of the North 88

6

ADVENTURING PHASES 91

HOW AN ADVENTURING PHASE WORKS 92
Adventuring Phase Sessions 92
COMBAT 93
The Onset of Battle 93
Combat Sequence 94
Close Quarters Rounds 95
Resolving Attacks 98
Wounds 101
Complications and Advantages 101
Combat Tasks 102
COUNCIL 104
Social Encounters 104
End of a Council 108
JOURNEY 108
The Map 108
The Travelling Company 109
Journey Sequence 109
Event Resolution 112
Describing Journey Events 114

7

FELLOWSHIP PHASES 117

HOW A FELLOWSHIP PHASE WORKS 118
Phase Structure 118
Yule 120
Undertakings 121

8

THE LOREMASTER 125

RUNNING THE GAME 126
Handling Scenes 126
THE MIDDLE-EARTH LOREMASTER 128
The Qualities of a Loremaster 128
Canon and the Loremaster 129
TOOLS FOR THE LOREMASTER 130
The Consequences of Failure 130
Skill Endeavours 131
Sources of Injury 133
LOREMASTER CHARACTERS 135
Distinctive Features 135
Characters and Die Rolls 135
THE SHADOW 136
Shadow Points 136
Sources of Shadow 137
Madness 139
Using Flaws 141
ADVERSARIES 142
Format of Presentation 143
EVIL MEN 146
Hostile Southerners 146
Ruffians 147
ORCS 148
Great Orcs 148
Orcs of the North 149
TROLLS 151
Cave-trolls 151
Stone-trolls 152
UNDEAD 154
Wights 154
Wraiths 155
WOLVES OF THE WILD 156
Wargs 156
Werewolves 157
TREASURE 158
Hoards 158
Creating Precious Objects 159
The Treasure Index 160
Marvellous Artefacts and Wondrous Items 161
Famous Weapons and Armour 162
Cursed Items 167
THE EYE OF MORDOR 169
Eye Awareness 169
The Hunt 172

9

THE WORLD 175

ERIADOR 176
The Shire 176
Lake Evendim 177
The Bree-land 180
The Great East Road 189
The Greenway 192
The Barrow-downs 194
The North Downs 195
The South Downs 198
The Weather Hills 199
Angmar 200
The Ettenmoors 200
Mount Gram 201
The Trollshaws 202
Tharbad 203
Lindon 203
The Blue Mountains 204
ADVENTURING IN MIDDLE-EARTH 207
When? 207
Where? 207
What? 207
Why? 209
Who? 209

A

APPENDIX 211

PATRONS 212
Balin, son of Fundin 212
Bilbo Baggins 213
Círdan the Shipwright 215
Gandalf the Grey 217
Gilraen the Fair 218
Tom Bombadil and Lady Goldberry 219
LANDMARKS 221
There and Back Again 221
Structure of Landmarks 221
THE STAR OF THE MIST 223
Rumour 223
Background 223
Locations 223
Schemes and Trouble 229
NAMELESS THINGS 231
Nameless Things in The One Ring 232
INDEX 238
CHARACTER SHEET 239
JOURNEY LOG 240

CHAPTER 1

PROLOGUE

"The Enemy still lacks one thing to give him strength and knowledge to beat down all resistance, break the last defences, and cover all the lands in a second darkness. He lacks the One Ring."

Dear friend,

I am writing this sitting at our usual table at the Prancing Pony, puffing at my pipe. According to the latest tidings I received, you are many miles away south, riding with the Horse-lords. I trust you brought a good supply of Old Toby! If you didn't, you are going to miss your northern Lone-lands much more bitterly, I assure you.

When I took up the pen, my intention was to elaborate on the reasons why I counseled you not to go to Gondor, yet. You know what troubled me... the Steward is a wise man, and won't waste any time in putting your talents to good use, but his firstborn son is about your age. Denethor is valiant and proud. I feared that this might lead him to ignore your counsel, if not to resent it.

Then, I remembered what I have to tell myself from time to time... the task I chose is to inspire the enemies of Sauron, and to push them to action. I am not here to rob them of their freedom of choice. They say that even the wise cannot see all ends! So, who am I, certainly not the wisest, to tell you what you should do? Only you can decide what to do with the time that is given you.

Please accept one word of advice though, something that I have learnt in more than one adventure: do not face your challenges alone, and choose your companions wisely. There are many brave souls among the various free peoples of the World who can join you in your struggle: Elves, Dwarves, and Men. Even the little folk of the Shire may prove useful. They certainly did prove useful to me! A good friend of mine discovered too late that there is more to those amazing creatures than you would credit them for. I hope you will not commit the same mistake.

Yours in friendship

Gandalf.

"This is the Master-ring, the One Ring to rule them all."

It is the year 2965 of the Third Age and the Shadow is returning. Twenty-four years ago, an alliance of Elves, Men, and Dwarves defeated a horde of Orcs and Wild Wolves, under a sky darkened by Giant Bats, inaugurating a new era of prosperity for the Free Peoples. But twenty years is a long time for peace to last, and in many dark corners of the earth a shadow is lengthening once again.

Rumours of strange things happening outside the borders of civilised lands are spreading with increasing regularity and, while they are dismissed by most as fireside-tales and children's stories, they sometimes reach the ears of individuals who recognise the sinister truth they hide.

These are restless warriors, curious scholars and wanderers, always eager to seek what was lost or explore what was forgotten. Ordinary people call them adventurers and, when they prevail, they hail them as heroes. But if they fail, no one will even remember their names…

This is *The One Ring*, a roleplaying game based on *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, two extraordinary works of fiction by the beloved author and respected academic, John Ronald Reuel Tolkien. With these books, Tolkien introduced readers to his greatest creation, the world of Middle-earth, a mythic land from a remote past. With *The One Ring*, Middle-earth is yours to explore — you will travel the land searching for clues about the return of the Shadow, and have the chance to play a part in the struggle against the Enemy.

Within the pages of this volume you will find the full rules of the game and rich information on the people, places, and adversaries you can encounter in the course of your adventures.

The Twilight of the Third Age

The One Ring is set in the time period running from the events narrated in *The Hobbit* to those told in *The Lord of the Rings*. Encompassing a span of eight decades, this period is ushered in when Bilbo the Hobbit finds the Ruling Ring, and culminates with the war fought by the Free Peoples against the Dark Lord Sauron, and the destruction of the Ring.

Players of *The One Ring* create a Company of heroes — Hobbits, Dwarves, Elves, and Men, seeking adventure in the Lone-lands of Eriador. It is a desolate country, a vast region that once saw the glory of the North Kingdom of the Dúnedain, the Men of the West. Here, many wars were fought, and countless ruins dot its landscape. Shadows move along its paths, and not all of them belong to the living.

It is in Eriador that the One Ring lies, dormant, a seed of the past that will one day bring the end of this age of the world.

THE ONE RING SECOND EDITION

The year 2011 saw the release of *The One Ring* Roleplaying Game – Adventures over the Edge of the Wild. The award-winning game was hailed as the best attempt at bringing Middle-earth to the gaming table to date, thanks to its thematic rules and painstaking attention to detail. For 10 years, players of the game have traveled far and wide across Middle-earth, adventuring for multiple decades of game time.

This new edition of *The One Ring* brings players further into the Twilight of the Third Age and does it with a set of updated and streamlined rules, developed over years of players' feedback and design development, and an entirely new graphic presentation.

Adventuring in the Third Age

Tales and adventures sprouted up all over the place wherever he went, in the most extraordinary fashion.

Adventurers are often simply common individuals born in exceptional times. They have most likely led an ordinary life until the day something happened and changed the way they looked at their world and the people they knew. For some reason, the place they grew up in didn't look as interesting and boundless as before, or they started to realise that they weren't doing enough for the safekeeping of their loved ones by staying at home in idleness, pretending shadows weren't growing nearer and nearer every year.

Adventurers are not soldiers or mercenaries following the commands of a lord, nor are they subtle Wizards trying to weave the threads spun by fate — they are bold souls putting themselves in peril of their own free will, sometimes simply for the love of adventure itself.

The Folk of Eriador

West of Wilderland, between the Misty Mountains and the Sea, is the region of Eriador. Right in its middle is found the Shire of the Hobbits, a quiet land whose folk enjoy a secluded life behind guarded borders. Across the river Brandywine, east of the Shire, lies the Bree-land, a small inhabited region, rising like an island in the midst of the Lone-lands about it.

The Bree-land is traversed by the East-West Road, and in its chief village of Bree is The Prancing Pony, a resort for all weary travellers. These are mainly Dwarves of the Folk of Durin, going east to their far Kingdom Under the Mountain, in Wilderland, or west, on their way to the Blue Mountains. Sometimes, they travel in the company of Northmen from distant Dale, subjects of King Bard the Dragonslayer.

According to ancient stories, the region of Eriador was once the realm of Arnor, a great kingdom of the North, brought to ruin long ago by bitter strife and the machinations of the Enemy. Much of it is now forgotten, for the memory of mortals is short, and the days of the king are celebrated only in songs and proverbs devoid of their original meaning.

But some remember — the mysterious Rangers of the North, lonely hunters of the servants of the Enemy who guard all boundaries against Wights and Trolls, as do the long-lived Elves of Lindon, that at times leave their land along the western coasts to wander across Eriador, to witness with their immortal eyes the fading of the glories of the past.

The land of the Lost Realm of Arnor is described in detail in *Chapter 9: The World*, starting on page 176.

Playing the Game

"The board is set, and the pieces are moving."

The One Ring is what we call a pen-and-paper roleplaying game. Thanks to video and online games, millions of people are familiar with this form of entertainment, where players create fictional heroes and explore shared worlds populated by computer-controlled creatures and, in online games, accessed by a multitude of other players.

In *The One Ring*, players create characters and meet face-to-face around a table or across the world on video, and the computer is replaced by one person taking the mantle of the Loremaster — a director, a referee, and a narrator.

The game can be played with as few as two people (one player plus the Loremaster), and with as many as six players or more. All that is needed are dice, paper, pencils, imagination, and a love for Tolkien's imaginary world.

The Shadow of the Past

The last twenty years or so have seen the resurgence of hope in the lands of the Free Peoples, and then its slow but steady decline, as the world darkens once again.

YEAR 2941: The Wizard Gandalf, Thorin Oakenshield, and twelve Dwarves visit Bilbo the Hobbit in the Shire: they set upon a quest to recover the treasure of Durin's Folk and free the North from the threat of the Dragon of Erebor.

A series of unlikely events leads to the death of Smaug and to the destruction of Lake-town. Dáin of the Iron Hills becomes King of Erebor, while Dwarves, Men, and Elves collaborate in rebuilding new cities in Dale and upon the Long Lake.

YEAR 2942: Bilbo returns to his peaceful life in the Shire. He carries the One Ring with him, not suspecting its true nature. News of the great events that have come to pass spread across the land as he travels home.

YEAR 2949: Gandalf and Balin journey to the Shire to visit Bilbo Baggins. They arrive at Bag End on one autumn evening. They spend some time together, talking of their adventuring times and about how things are going in Wilderland. Balin doesn't hide his disquiet from his good friend, and tries to convince Bilbo to join him in a new adventure. Bilbo is reluctant, and in the end declines the invitation.

YEAR 2951: The Dark Lord Sauron unveils his presence in the black land of Mordor. He is ready to spread his power far and wide, and begins to rebuild his Dark Tower. His will is bent on gathering a vast army in the black land, and his summons are answered by all sorts of wicked creatures. Gollum is among them, and his path slowly turns in the direction of Mordor.

Sauron sends the Nazgûl to reclaim his stronghold in southern Mirkwood, and the forest darkens. Rumours of a new Shadow in the South start to be whispered by many folks in the North. Orcs and Goblins are found bearing the symbol of a lidless Eye.

YEAR 2953: The White Council, a gathering of the Wise, meets to discuss the fate of the Rings of Power. Saruman the White, the head of the Council, declares that the One Ring, the Ruling Ring that Sauron himself made, is lost forever, having been carried by the River Anduin to the Sea.

Saruman claims the impregnable fortress of Isengard as his own abode and begins to restore its defences.

YEAR 2955: Adventurers out of Rivendell signal the presence in Eriador of a new breed of Troll: the Olog-hai. They seem to come from Mordor and directly serve the Dark Lord.

YEAR 2956: Aragorn, son of Arathorn, captain of the Rangers of the North and heir of Isildur, meets Gandalf the Grey, and their friendship begins.

YEARS 2957–65: Rumours of turmoil and strife in Wilderland become more and more common in this decade. Traffic intensifies over the High Pass as more and more travellers from the East cross into the Westlands bringing news of threats to the fragile peace between Men, Elves, and Dwarves.

Player-heroes

With the exception of the Loremaster, each player creates a single Player-hero: a fictional character whose attributes are inspired by those of the protagonists of the stories by J.R.R. Tolkien.

The information found in this volume lets players create adventurers hailing from the Lone-lands of Eriador, a region steeped in old lore and thick with secrets. Players can be courageous Hobbits of the Shire, driven by curiosity to go and see the ruins of Deadmen's Dike; travelling Dwarves, seeking to visit the ancestral halls of Durin's Folk in the Ered Luin; far-reaching Bardings from Wilderland, in search of adventure in the Westlands; Elves from Lindon, tasked with guarding what is kept in the tower of Elostirion; Men of Bree, leaving their quiet village for the first time; or Rangers of the North, sworn to keep dreadful things at bay.

Whatever their choices, players must step into their characters' shoes, to think as a hero would think and react as a hero would react. It is a game of make-believe, a story in the making, created in collaboration with the Loremaster.

Chapter 3: Adventurers presents all the information needed to create a Company of Player-heroes. Players are offered many options for customisation, ranging from their abilities to their carried equipment. But players should be warned: the rules must be used as a painter would use colours — it needs imagination to give depth to a character, to add meaning to the numbers, and to really bring them to life.

The Loremaster

The Loremaster doesn't take the role of a single character, but is instead the player in charge of describing the setting and managing what happens to the Player-heroes when they interact with the game world. The Loremaster begins each session of play by setting the scene, playing the parts of the people and creatures the characters encounter, and adjudicating the consequences of the heroes' actions.

The Loremaster is the eyes and ears of the Player-heroes, in charge of describing the locales where the action is taking place, and playing the parts of the people they meet, using the rules to fairly adjudicate the outcome of their actions. To do this, the Loremaster interprets and reinvents Middle-earth as a setting for the players to explore. The ultimate goal of the Loremaster is to provide the premise for the creation of a new epic, focused entirely around the deeds of the Player-heroes.

ENTER MIDDLE-EARTH

The aim of *The One Ring* is to let players feel what it means to go adventuring in a wild and perilous land from a forgotten past. It is a threatening world that has more in common with the world depicted in epic sagas or the Dark Ages of Europe than with our contemporary world.

Players are invited to leave the age of information and fast travel behind, and adopt the point of view of individuals whose horizons often didn't extend farther than a few miles from their birthplace. For every member of the Wise and the Great there are countless more like Samwise Gamgee: simple people who never crossed the boundaries of their own village or town. For every Wizard there are individuals like Gimli son of Glóin, who ignored the existence of Rohan until he visited it. For every Elven Lord there are women like noble Éowyn, who never encountered an Elf or a Hobbit before the War of the Ring.

The landscape revealed by this perspective is a world with uncertain boundaries, and only vague hints of distant realms and the folks who inhabit them; a place that, for these very reasons, offers plenty of opportunities for exploration and adventure.

A Loremaster should be familiar with the entirety of this volume, but particular attention must be given to the content of *Chapter 8: The Loremaster*. It contains rules and guidelines created to assist the Loremaster in the role of game arbitrator, along with suggestions on how to work with players to create stories that are both engaging and faithful to the world as depicted in the source material.

STRUCTURE OF THE GAME

"Still, I wonder if we shall ever be put into songs or tales. We're in one, of course; but I mean: put into words, you know, told by the fireside, or read out of a great big book with red and black letters, years and years afterwards."

Story-building is a fundamental component of *The One Ring*. It isn't about hearing a story being told, but about creating it over the course of the game, as the result of the interaction between the Loremaster and the Player-heroes at the gaming table.

To facilitate this creative interaction, gameplay in *The One Ring* is structured into two distinct phases:

> An Adventuring Phase, usually taking the largest part of a session, or even multiple sessions, and a closing Fellowship Phase, addressing in detail what in other games is often called 'downtime'.

Following this structure, the gameplay will see the Player-heroes take part in a significant chain of events and follow them through to a conclusive resolution.

The Adventuring Phase and the Fellowship Phase are discussed in detail later on, respectively, in *Chapter 6* and *Chapter 7*. Here follows a summary of what they are about.

THE ADVENTURING PHASE

An Adventuring Phase session of play is played as a series of scenes, connected sequentially in a wider narrative arc. A scene is a single episode focusing on the Company, or part of it, facing some kind of challenge, preparing for one, or recovering from it.

> It is up to the Loremaster to initially frame each scene, especially those that are putting the Company in danger.

To frame a scene, the Loremaster needs to first describe the location where the action is taking place, and who is there among the Player-heroes and their potential adversaries or allies. Then, the Loremaster defines the challenge that the Company is facing, considering the perspective of each involved Player-hero.

> Once the Loremaster is done setting up the scene, the players proceed to describe how their characters react to the situation.

In particular, players need to choose what actions their Player-heroes take to investigate and resolve the challenge facing them. Players have full control over what their heroes do and how they do it, but it is the Loremaster that determines how every part of the world — from Loremaster characters to creatures and the environment — reacts to what the Player-heroes do.

> In general, to play out a scene and determine its consequences, the Loremaster and the players need nothing more than common sense and the rules concerning Action Resolution described in *Chapter 2*.

A notable exception are those scenes that require the application of the rules for Combat, Council, or Journey — those rules are found starting from page 93.

THE PASSAGE OF TIME

Time passes at different rates in *The One Ring*: one evening spent playing may detail a single day in the life of an adventurer, or skim over a month or more of their career.

During most Adventuring Phase sessions, gameplay is articulated in shorter, focused scenes that require players to describe in detail what they do. Time passes relatively slowly, with the players often keeping track of what happens every single day – with the exception of prolonged or time-consuming events, like journeys, or sieges.

Time passes more quickly during a Fellowship Phase, when the Loremaster and the players adopt a broader approach to narration. This is best suited when dealing with endeavours that occur 'off-screen'. Weeks or months may pass before a new Adventuring Phase begins, and a special type of Fellowship Phase (Yule, see page 120) also deals with the advancement of the chronology of the game: the Tale of Years.

The Fellowship Phase

When the Adventuring Phase is concluded, a Fellowship Phase starts with the players narrating what their characters do when they finally return from their adventuring to rest for a while. It is now the Loremaster's turn to act reactively, by listening to their players' propositions and wishes, and making sure that the rules are correctly applied.

During a Fellowship Phase, the players present to the Loremaster their ideas and intentions — for example, choosing where they are going to rest, and deciding what they will do while they are there.

> During the Fellowship Phases, the players can choose one or more undertakings that let them perform downtime activities, directly affecting the gameplay.

Tying It All Together

Usually, an Adventuring Phase will last two or three sessions of play, followed by a Fellowship Phase wrapping up neatly what happened thus far in the adventure.

After a few games, what happens in the two distinct phases of the game will become more and more closely interrelated:

- The events arising during the Adventuring Phase lead the players to make certain choices during the following Fellowship Phase.
- In turn, the Loremaster will find it easy to tie the next Adventuring Phase into what happened during the previous Fellowship Phase.

The final result is an epic that grows out of the ongoing lives of the Player-heroes and their deeds.

CHAPTER 2

ACTION RESOLUTION

Of the various burglarious proceedings he had heard of, picking the trolls' pockets seemed the least difficult…

As seen in the Prologue, a game session of *The One Ring* takes the form of a continuous conversation among the playing group. There are no turns, and the dialogue alternates between the Loremaster and the players who collaborate in bringing to life a series of scenes in which the Player-heroes are the protagonists.

> The main way for the players to participate in a scene is simple — all they have to do is to tell the Loremaster what their Player-heroes are doing, and how they intend to do it. In game terms, this statement of intent is called taking an action.

Once the players are done describing their chosen action, the Loremaster proceeds to evaluate whether to grant them what they want simply based on how they tried to achieve it, or if the circumstances require a die roll.

The One Ring Dice

The One Ring makes use of a specialised set of dice, including six 6-sided dice (also called Success Dice) and two 12-sided dice with two special icons (called the Feat Dice).

Sold separately, *The One Ring Dice Set* contains exactly the right amount of dice for use with the game, but players may find it useful to bring some more as it will be more convenient for each player to have a set close at hand.

USING YOUR OWN DICE

If you already have a set of regular dice you use for games, you can easily use them for *The One Ring*. Just remember that on the 12-sided Feat Dice, the 11 is the Eye of Sauron symbol and the 12 is a Gandalf rune ᚠ. On the 6-sided Success Dice, the 6 has an Elvish ᛉ, which represents an additional level of success.

When to Roll

To put it simply, the Loremaster should ask for a die roll only if there is a possibility that a player's chosen action might fail. If the description of an action does not leave any doubts about its outcome, there's no need to make a roll — the action succeeds automatically.

But this is not all there is to it: resorting to a roll should be considered exclusively if the action or its goal fall into one of the following instances:

1. **DANGER** — *Roll if the action is dangerous.*
   If the Player-hero does not risk anything by failing, do not roll.
2. **KNOWLEDGE** — *Roll if the action aims to obtain information that is not immediately available.*
   If the knowledge that the heroes are looking for is not secret or otherwise hidden, do not roll.
3. **MANIPULATION** — *Roll if the action intends to influence one or more uncooperative Loremaster characters.*
   If what the heroes ask of the Loremaster characters matches their own motives (see *Chapter 9*), do not roll.

Scenes in Brief

Breaking it down, scenes in *The One Ring* work as follows:

1. The Loremaster describes a situation requiring the players to make decisions.
2. The players investigate the situation, considering their options. Once decided, they choose their action and describe it to the Loremaster.
3. The Loremaster evaluates the plan of the players, and adjudicates whether to just 'say yes' and grant them what they want to achieve, or ask for a die roll.

More information about scenes is presented in *Chapter 6: Adventuring Phases*, and *Chapter 8: The Loremaster*, pages 92 and 126, respectively.

Making Rolls

In the end Bilbo won the game, more by luck (as it seemed) than by wits…

Once the necessity for a die roll has been established, it must be determined who is going to make the roll, and which ability is most appropriate for the action.

Who Rolls

Determining who is going to make the roll is easy in the case of actions chosen by the players, but can be less so if the roll is being made as a reaction to something described by the Loremaster.

In general terms, it is highly advisable to have a single player make a roll, except when something involves everyone in the group.

> To do so, the players simply choose the Player-hero who is best suited to the task at hand, eventually applying the rules for support (see Support, page 20).

Which Ability

The ability to use depends mostly on the type of roll:

- Skill Rolls. By far the most common type of actions, Skill rolls are required whenever a Player-hero attempts to do something that can be accomplished using one of the 18 Skills listed on a character sheet.
- Combat Rolls. When involved in a fight, the Player-heroes rely mostly on their Combat Proficiencies to make attack rolls, and on **PROTECTION** rolls to avoid being injured seriously when hit.
- Shadow Tests. The corrupting effect of the Shadow can be resisted by making **VALOUR** and **WISDOM** rolls, prompted by sources such as Dread, Sorcery, and Greed.

Make the Roll

Once the correct ability to be used has been determined, proceed to make the roll employing its numerical rating (all abilities that can be used to make a roll are given a value ranging from 1 to 6):

1. Roll one Feat Die, plus a number of Success Dice equal to the rating of the appropriate ability (roll only the Feat Die if the rating is zero).
2. Add up the numerical results on all dice, comparing the total to the Target Number (TN) associated with the rolled ability.

In general terms, if the rolled total is equal to or greater than the TN, the roll is a success; otherwise, it has failed — a successful roll indicates that the acting Player-hero achieves their goal, while a failure means that something went wrong and that the desired goal was not achieved.

Some rules state explicitly what happens in game terms in case of a failure or a success — combat, for example, or the rules for journeys — while other situations require creativity from the players and the Loremaster.

In any case, the consequences of both a successful and a failed roll always determine a well-defined change in the gameplay (see Degree of Success on page 18 for more about assessing the outcome of a successful roll, and *Chapter 8: The Loremaster*, for additional rules on the consequences of failure).

Repeating a Roll

As a rule, players only have one attempt at anything that is resolved with a die roll — whether they succeed or fail, they have done their best.

> As far as Skill rolls are concerned, if the Loremaster allows it, a failed action can be attempted again by the same Player-hero if the failing Player-hero tries again using a different Skill, effectively representing a different approach to the same problem.

Of course, a Player-hero who is given a second chance must always cope with the consequences of having failed the first time… (see also the Consequences of Failure, on page 130).

How to Read the Feat Dice

Each Feat Die shows numbers ranging from 1 to 10, and two special icons: a Gandalf rune (ᚠ) and the Eye of Sauron (👁). The two icons are normally read as follows:

- The ᚠ rune is the greatest result you can get on a Feat Die. When the die comes up showing the ᚠ rune, the action succeeds regardless of whether the total result of the roll was enough to match or beat the TN or not.
- The 👁 icon is considered to be the worst result possible on a Feat Die. When the Feat Die comes up showing the 👁 icon, the Feat Die result counts as a zero.

How to Read the Success Dice

Success Dice are special 6-sided dice, customised to show the numbers 1, 2, and 3 in outline, and the numbers 4, 5, and 6 in solid black. In addition, a Success icon — the Elvish symbol (ᛉ) — appears along with the number 6. Success Dice are always rolled together with a single Feat Die.

> Add the results on all Success Dice to the result of the Feat die, with any ᛉ icons rolled indicating a superior result on a success (see Degree of Success below).

Target Numbers

All abilities used in the game are associated with a Target Number, a numerical value that the roll result must match or beat.

> Most rolls made by the Player-heroes are made against three Attribute Target Numbers (Attribute TNs, for short), based on the ratings they have in **STRENGTH**, **HEART**, and **WITS**.

During character creation, the players generate three Target Numbers, one for each Attribute, putting a hero's fundamental capabilities right in front of a player's eyes.

> Each Attribute TN is equal to 20 minus its corresponding Attribute score.

EXAMPLE:

Scouting ahead for the Company, Hanar the Dwarf has a chance to notice a group of Goblins setting up an ambush. He has an **AWARENESS** *Skill of (2), so he rolls a Feat die plus two Success dice, adding up the results of all dice rolled. As* **AWARENESS** *is a* **STRENGTH** *Skill, the roll result is compared against Hanar's* **STRENGTH** *TN, which is 13. With the Success dice showing 4 and 5, and the Feat Die an 8, Hanar's player does hardly need to do any maths to know that the Dwarf succeeded.*

Tweaking the Target Numbers

Calculating TNs by subtracting the Attribute scores from 20 results in difficulty thresholds that are appropriate to medium to long campaigns, as they present a challenge to inexperienced individuals, but hold up well as those same characters advance in proficiency. For shorter campaigns or one-shot games the players and the Loremaster may agree to derive the TNs by subtracting their Attributes from 18 instead.

Degree of Success

A roll result that achieves its Target Number (or results in the ᚠ rune) and produces one or more ᛉ icons is an outcome of a superior quality — a musician performs particularly well, a look-out spots enemies at a longer distance, an orator succeeds in galvanizing a larger audience. The greater the number of Success icons rolled, the better:

- (—) If no ᛉ icons were scored, the action was successful, but didn't achieve anything beyond the bare minimum (a success).
- ᛉ If a single ᛉ was scored, then the Player-hero's accomplishment was out of the ordinary (a great success).
- ᛉᛉ+ If two or more ᛉ icons were scored, the result was absolutely exceptional and memorable (an extraordinary success).

Special Successes

When making Skill rolls, if a finer level of detail is desired, players can specify what their superior result means, by 'spending' their rolled ᛉ icons to trigger a number of special results:

> For each ᛉ icon rolled, a Player-hero can choose one of the options listed in the Skill Special Success table on the next page.

If a roll scores multiple Success icons, they are normally used to achieve multiple special results, such as assisting a fellow Player-hero AND doing it silently.

Note that 'spending' a Success icon does not detract from the numerical result of a roll, and does not reduce the overall success level — a great success remains such even when a Success icon is used to trigger a Special Success result.

SKILL SPECIAL SUCCESS TABLE:

SPEND 1 SUCCESS ICON TO...	DESCRIPTION
Cancel a Failure	If a Skill roll involves multiple players, you help another Player-hero who failed; the failed roll is considered a success.
Score 1 Additional Success	If an action requires multiple successes to be achieved, you score 1 additional success.
Gain insight	You gain additional information, not necessarily related to the task at hand. For example, while helping a sick individual with a HEALING roll you discover the trace of poison. Or you spot a sentry while sneaking into a ruin with a roll of STEALTH.
Go quietly	You achieve your goal noiselessly or without otherwise attracting attention.
Make haste	You complete the attempted task in a shorter time (about half the expected time).
Widen influence	You can influence more than the specific number of subjects originally targeted by the action. As a general rule, each Success icon spent corresponds to one additional subject or group of subjects. For example, following a roll of INSIGHT, you spot a second person acting suspiciously at an inn; a roll of ENHEARTEN aimed to affect half a dozen individuals allows you to influence a full dozen.

Die Roll Modifiers

Following are a number of variations upon the core rules of the game. They represent those advantages (and drawbacks!) that affect the Player-heroes as the most explicit demonstration of their heroic stature.

FAVOURED ROLLS

A *Favoured* roll happens when a Player-hero possesses a special affinity for a task.

> When making a *Favoured* roll, players roll two Feat dice instead of one, keeping the best result among the two.

Typical sources of *Favoured* rolls are a Player-hero's *Favoured* Skills (see also Skills page 60), and several Cultural Virtues, abilities that set a hero's capability beyond the usual reach (see Virtues, page 80).

ILL-FAVOURED ROLLS

The opposite of a *Favoured* roll, a roll is made *Ill-favoured* when a Player-hero is suffering from some limitation.

> When making an *Ill-favoured* roll, players roll two Feat dice instead of one, keeping the worst result among the two.

FAVOURED VS ILL-FAVOURED: It is possible for a roll to be both *Favoured* and *Ill-favoured* for different, conflicting reasons – when this happens, the roll is resolved normally (roll one Feat Die only), even if multiple sources would make a roll *Favoured* and only one would make it *Ill-favoured* (or vice versa).

ILL-FAVOURED PLAYER-HEROES: At times, an ability of an adversary or another special rule may directly make a Player-hero *Ill-favoured*, instead of specifying a particular roll – when this happens, the unlucky adventurer is considered *Ill-favoured* on all rolls. For example, Player-heroes whose Shadow score matches their maximum Hope are considered to be *Ill-favoured* on all rolls.

Most often, the source of an *Ill-favoured* roll comes from the adverse effects of the special ability of an adversary (see Adversaries, page 142), Madness (see Madness, page 139), or a Flaw possessed by the Player-hero (see Using Flaws, page 141).

BONUS SUCCESS DICE

It is possible for a Player-hero to be attempting something under favourable circumstances, or employing a particularly beneficial talent. When this happens, the Player-hero may be granted a bonus in the form of a number of additional Success Dice to roll.

> Bonuses are indicated in the text as *gain (1d)* or more, meaning that Player-heroes enjoying the modifier add 1 Success die to those they are entitled to roll for the action.

Most commonly, bonus Success dice are gained by spending Hope, or as the effect of a number of Cultural Virtues.

HOPE BONUS: A character's Hope score is a pool of points representing the reserve of spiritual vigour that heroes draw from when confronted by difficult odds, or when a particularly good result is required by the circumstances.

> A Player-hero about to make a die roll can spend 1 Hope point to *gain (1d)*.

Hope can be spent to gain dice on any roll made by a Player-hero. It is not possible to spend multiple Hope points to gain multiple bonus Success dice.

INSPIRATION: Certain circumstances may result in a Player-hero becoming temporarily Inspired. Inspired Player-heroes double the benefit of spending a Hope point:

> An Inspired Player-hero who spends 1 Hope point to get a Hope bonus *gains (2d)*, instead of *(1d)*.

Inspiration can be achieved mainly through the invocation of a Distinctive Feature (see page 67), or as the effect of a number of Cultural Virtues.

Heroes appealing to their Hope too often must beware though, for they run the risk of depleting their spiritual energies and becoming Miserable (see Miserable on page 22. For more about Hope, see page 71).

SUPPORT: A Player-hero may make an effort to help another member of the Company who is making a Skill roll.

To do so, the supporting character may spend 1 point of Hope to let the active Player-hero *gain (1d)*.

A Player-hero may support another only if the circumstances allow it, and only if the supporting hero possesses at least one rank in an appropriate Skill. Whether a Skill is deemed appropriate to the supporting action is up to the Loremaster. Only one Player-hero can spend Hope to support the active Player-hero.

EXAMPLE

A Hobbit burglar is trying to open a Dwarven door using her **CRAFT** *(2). Her Barding companion spends 1 point of Hope and provides advice on Dwarven mechanisms with his* **LORE** *Skill — the Loremaster approves and the Hobbit gains (1d) on her roll.*

PENALTY SUCCESS DICE

Adventurers wish they were lucky enough to enjoy only favourable circumstances… At times, fortune seems to conspire against them, they may put themselves in danger by their own volition looking for a greater benefit, or they may have fallen victim to some malicious power or spell. When this happens, a Player-hero may suffer from a penalty.

Penalties are normally indicated in the text as *lose (1d)* or more, meaning that a Player-hero rolls fewer Success dice (down to a minimum of zero Success dice).

Usually, penalties come from situational disadvantages, like adopting a less aggressive stance in combat, or suffering from a complication (see *Chapter 6*).

MAGICAL SUCCESS

Enchanted artefacts, like magic rings and cloaks, and ancient spells and uncanny powers, can allow a Player-hero to exceed the possibilities of mere mortals.

Player-heroes possessing a magical talent or artefact can spend 1 point of Hope before a Skill roll to achieve a Magical success — that is, to pass their action automatically, regardless of the Target Number.

In game terms, the roll is made by rolling only the required number of Success dice (to check for higher degrees of success) but disregarding the numerical total obtained.

BONUSES VS PENALTIES

Bonuses and penalties are cumulative – if a Player-hero gains or loses dice from multiple sources, simply add up all gained dice and subtract all lost dice.

For example, if a Player-hero *gains (1d)* from a supporting Player-hero, *gains (2d)* spending Hope while Inspired, and *loses (1d)* from a penalty, the affected roll finally *gains (2d)*.

Narratively, a Magical success is an outcome that can hardly be mistaken for an ordinary success — in other words, the Player-hero has achieved something so unusual that it could not be accomplished without a supernatural aid.

For example, a Player-hero who attempts to intimidate some guards with a roll of **AWE** seems to grow in stature, as the light dims and the shadows lengthen around the character. Or again, a Player-hero rolling **SONG** makes the listeners experience visions of what the music is about.

Player-heroes who have the chance to achieve a magical success can also attempt actions that would be impossible to achieve by someone without a magical aid — for example, climbing a sheer wall of rock without tools, jumping across a chasm six or more yards wide in full gear, or running on fresh snow as if it was firm sand.

NOT-SO-SUBTLE MAGIC

A Magical success is an outcome so remarkable and unusual that it may be unsettling to folk not used to such feats, or raise suspicion in individuals capable of recognising their otherworldly nature. Moreover, overt magical effects, even when invoked for beneficial purposes, may sometimes be misinterpreted, as many associate supernatural occurrences with the working of dark sorcery. (See also the rules for the Eye of Mordor, on page 169).

CONDITIONS

"'A Balrog,' muttered Gandalf. 'Now I understand.' He faltered and leaned heavily on his staff. 'What an evil fortune! And I am already weary.'"

Die rolls can be modified by three special conditions that can affect the Player-heroes. All conditions are recorded on the character sheet by checking the corresponding box.

MISERABLE

The oppressing burden of the Twilight of the Third Age as perceived by the Player-heroes is represented in the game by their Shadow rating. Heroes gain Shadow points in many ways in the course of their adventuring — when their Shadow rating matches or exceeds their current Hope score they become Miserable.

> When a Miserable hero is making a roll, if the Feat die result shows the icon, the action fails, regardless of the total result obtained by the roll.

WEARY

The resistance of the Player-heroes is represented in game terms by their Endurance score. Heroes can lose Endurance in many ways, for example as the consequence of receiving a blow in combat or straining excessively while carrying a heavy burden — when their Endurance drops to a level equal to or lower than their Load score, they become Weary.

> When a Weary hero is making a roll, all the Success Dice that come up showing a result in an outlined number (1, 2, or 3) are considered to have given a result of zero instead.

See pages 49 and 69 for more about Load and Endurance, respectively.

WOUNDED

Serious injuries can cause a hero to become Wounded. While losing and recovering Endurance is an everyday occurrence, being Wounded is a more serious predicament for an adventurer and will affect them for much longer. Heroes are Wounded most often in combat.

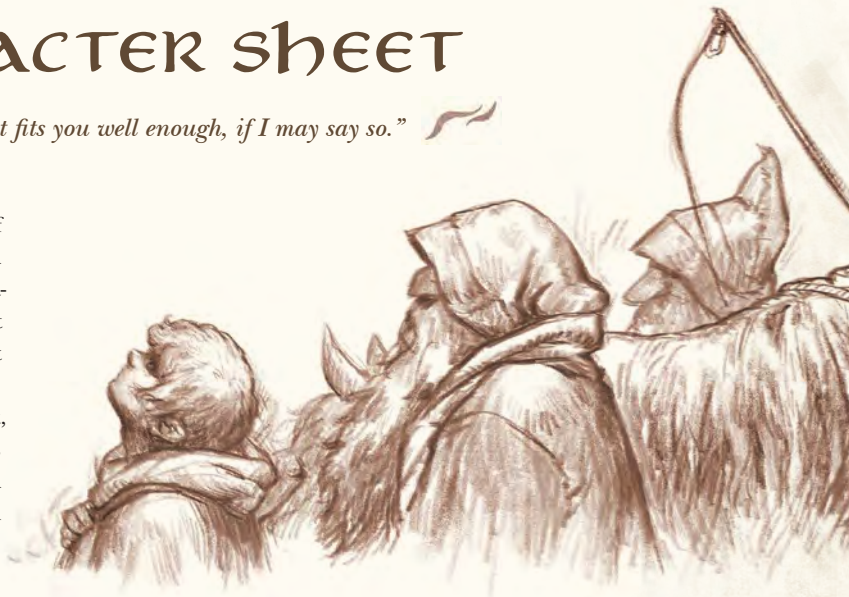
> Wounded heroes who remain active risk being knocked out of combat and recover lost Endurance points more slowly (see Resting, page 71).

THE CHARACTER SHEET

"…I was given a description that fits you well enough, if I may say so."

All Player-heroes are defined in the game by a collection of traits and numbers, describing their physical, spiritual, and mental attributes and the extent of their knowledge and capability as adventurers. These values influence how they interact with the game rules, so it is important that they are close at hand and easy to keep track of.

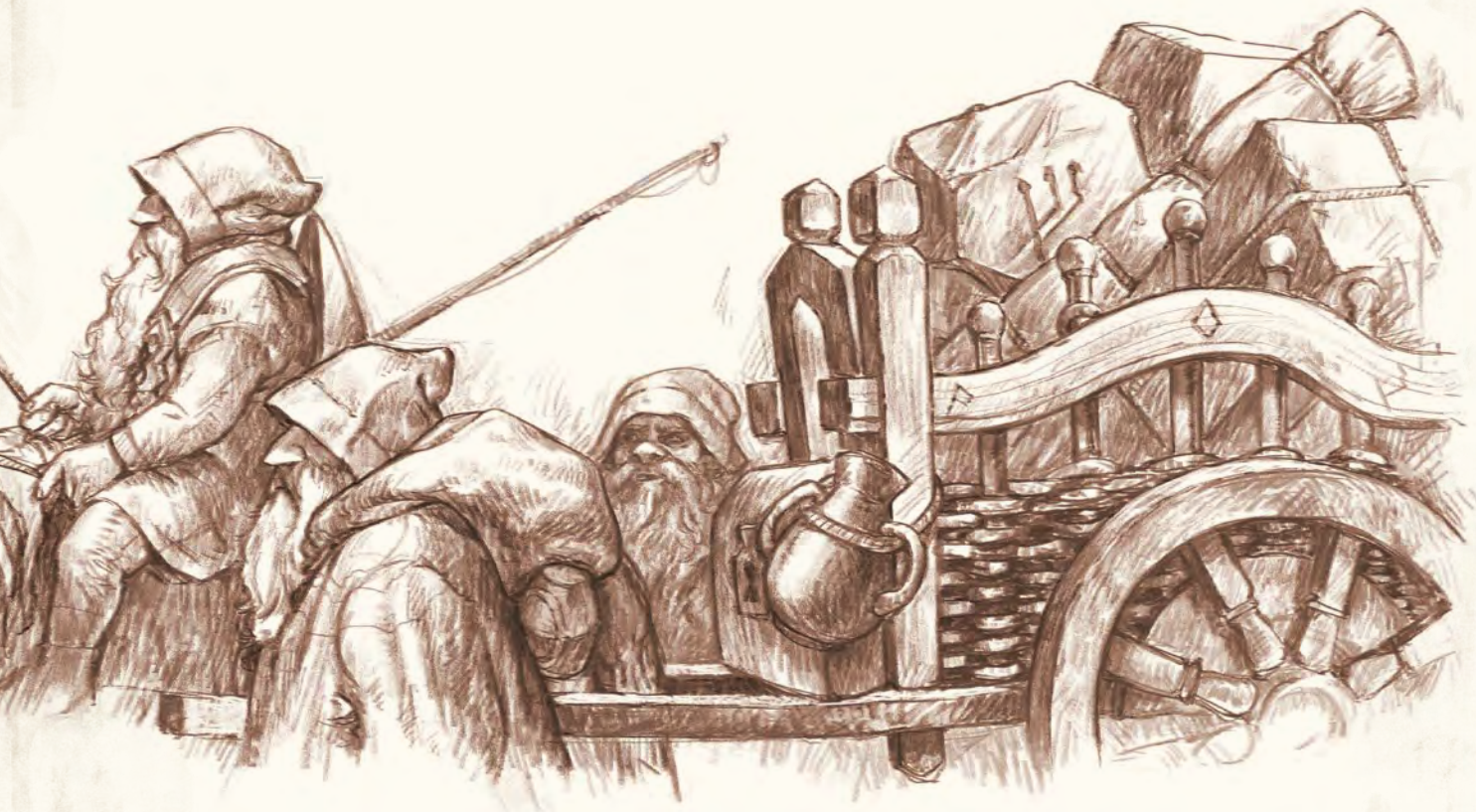
For ease of reference, all players get a character sheet, a descriptive form that is easily compiled and updated as a Player-hero grows. A blank character sheet can be found on page 239, and a PDF version can be downloaded from freeleaguepublishing.com.



DIE ROLL PROCEDURE

Once the necessity to roll dice has been determined, follow the steps below to make a die roll.

1. Define what the Player-hero is trying to achieve with the roll. This is important to determine its consequences, both in the case of success and failure.
2. Select the ability to be used for the roll. Players are encouraged to suggest the appropriate ability. The difficulty for the action is based on the relevant Attribute TN.
3. Take one Feat Die and a number of Success Dice equal to the rating of the chosen ability (or two Feat Dice, if the roll is *Favoured* or *Ill-favoured*). Spend 1 Hope to *gain (1d) – gain (2d)* if Inspired.
4. Make the roll. If the roll is *Favoured*, choose the best result on the Feat Dice, or the worst if *Ill-Favoured*. If you roll a ᚠ, the action is automatically a success. If you are Miserable and you roll an ᛟ, you fail automatically instead.
5. Otherwise, all numerical dice results are added up to get the action result. If you are Weary, all Success Dice results in outline (1, 2 and 3) are ignored. If the total action result is equal or superior to the relevant Target Number, the action is a success. If the result is lower than the Target Number, the action has failed.
6. If the action is successful, the number of ᛉ results rolled indicates the degree of success, and can be spent to achieve a special success.



A GLOSSARY OF GAME TERMS

As can be seen from the sample character sheet shown on these pages, the game makes use of several specific terms. Here are some definitions to help get players started. These are explained in more detail in later chapters.

ADVENTURE AND SKILL POINTS: When they start adventuring, Player-heroes change and grow by gaining and using Adventure and Skill points, accumulated by players after each session.

ARMOUR: Characters wear armour to avoid suffering lasting damage in combat. Usually composed of several layers of protective garments, armour is always burdensome and heavy. Player-heroes can wear a helm to complement their defensive gear.

ATTRIBUTE RATINGS: STRENGTH, HEART, and WITS describe respectively the physical, spiritual, and mental profile of a character. These numerical scores are the primary building blocks of all heroes, and describe their aptitudes and natural capabilities.

ATTRIBUTE TNS: During character creation, all players calculate three Target Numbers (TNs) using a Player-hero's STRENGTH, HEART, and WITS. These scores are annotated on the relevant spaces on the character sheet. These TNs are used to take the Attributes of a hero into account when resolving most rolls.

CALLING: A Calling is what motivates the Player-heroes to seek a life of adventure and keeps them on that dangerous path every day. There are six different callings to choose from, each one exemplifying a different adventurous drive. Player-heroes can be Captains, Champions, Messengers, Scholars, Treasure Hunters, or Wardens. Callings let players customise their character concepts and help them focus on the beliefs and goals that give them a sense of purpose.

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Combat Proficiencies describe a character's expertise with weapons, like swords, axes, spears or bows.

CULTURAL BLESSING: A Cultural Blessing describes a special ability or quality so profoundly ingrained in a given community that in the game it is made available to all its members.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: These peculiar features are used by players to personalise their characters, and to gain an advantage when trying to achieve something related to a character's qualities.

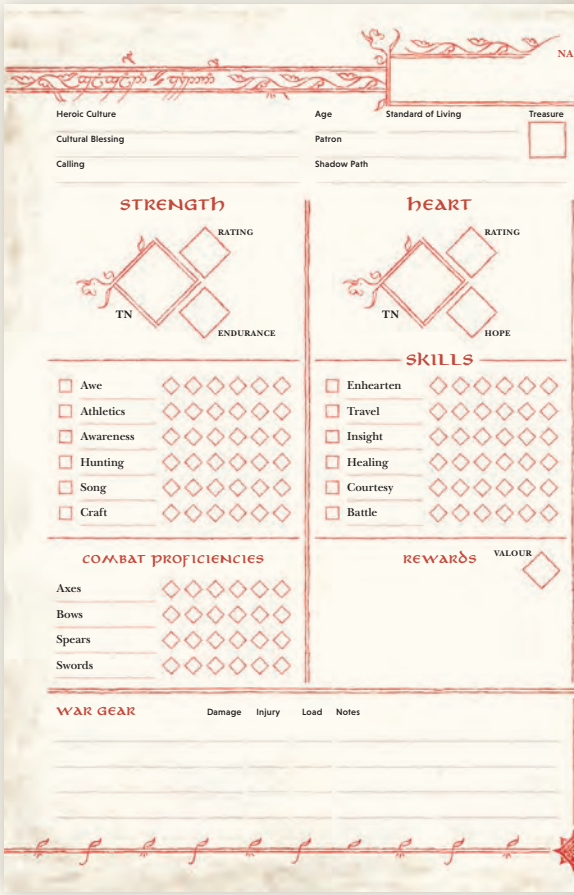
ENDURANCE: Endurance is the expression of a Player-hero's physical stamina and determination. It is reduced when a character is subjected to physical harm, stress, and exhaustion.

FATIGUE: Player-heroes accumulate Fatigue points when on a journey. Fatigue raises a hero's Load total temporarily, making it easier for them to become Weary.

FELLOWSHIP: This is a numerical value, generally corresponding to the number of Player-heroes in the Company and representing the bond of mutual trust enjoyed by all its members.

FLAWS: Under the pressure of the Shadow heroes can develop Flaws, embracing simpler, more primitive emotions, trading respect for arrogance, love for lust, trust for suspicion.

HEROIC CULTURE: The cultural group to which the Player-hero belongs. Choosing a character's Culture is probably the most important choice to be made when creating a Player-hero. There are six playable Cultures in this volume of *The One Ring*: Bardings, Dwarves of Durin's Folk, Elves of Lindon, Hobbits of the Shire, Men of Bree, and the Rangers of the North.

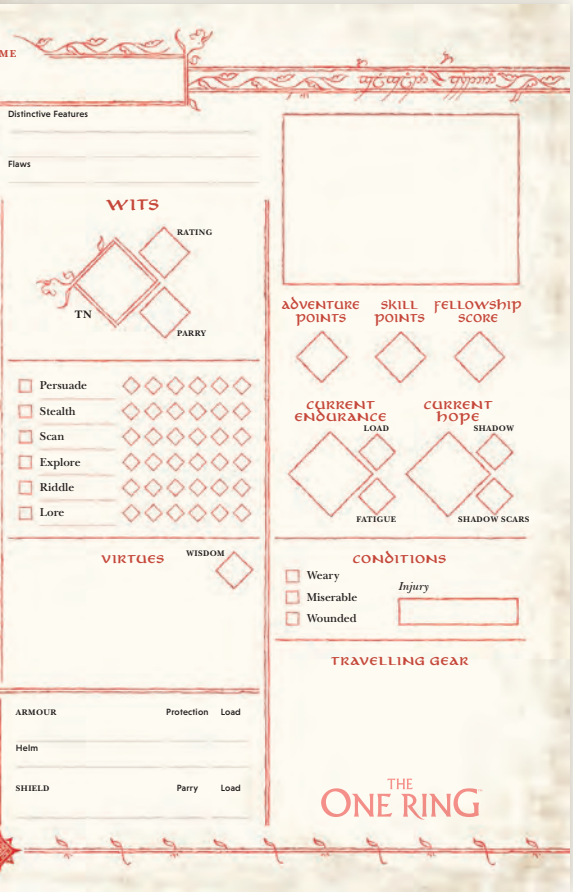


HOPE: A character's Hope score defines the reserves of spiritual vigour that heroes draw upon when in danger.

LOAD: The weight and encumbrance of the gear carried by a Player-hero may limit their performance. Heroes are considered Weary as long as their Endurance score is equal to or lower than their Load total.

MISERABLE: This box is checked when a Player-hero has been made Miserable. A Miserable character finds it harder to accomplish anything — in game terms,

if a die roll produces an Eye of Sauron, the action fails regardless of whether the total result of the roll was enough to match or beat the TN or not.



NAME: Here is where players write the name chosen for their character. As the various folks of Middle-earth follow different naming conventions, players are advised to select a name from those provided as typical examples of each culture.

PARRY: A hero's Parry score reflects their ability to deflect or in any way avoid an incoming blow.

REWARDS: Rewards are pieces of war gear of superior craftsmanship, granted to a Player-hero as an award for their deeds. Players receive a Reward when their Player-hero attains a new VALOUR rank.

SHADOW: The accumulation of Shadow points undermines the Hope score of the Player-heroes, weakening their spirit. Heroes are considered Miserable as long as their Hope score is equal or lower than their current Shadow rating.

SHADOW PATH: This suggests the individual path heroes will follow if they fail to resist the Shadow's influence.

SHADOW SCARS: Heroes can harden their will and trade their current Shadow points for a single permanent Shadow Scar.

SHIELD: Carrying a shield of any type enhances a character's Parry rating.

SKILLS: Skills represent the things a Player-hero has learnt to do. Players record their value by filling in the relevant number of boxes. In some instances during character creation, players are instructed to check the box to the left of a Skill's name, to mark it as *Favoured*. *Favoured* Skills describe a character's peculiar talent in the field described by the ability.

SKILL CATEGORIES: Skills are organised vertically into columns, grouping the abilities by the Attribute that is considered most influential. Thus, there are six STRENGTH Skills, six HEART Skills, and six WITS Skills.

STANDARD OF LIVING: This summarises a culture's level of prosperity. A cultural Standard of Living influences the amount of items a Player-hero receives at the start of the game.

TREASURE: Heroes gain Treasure when they gain possession of materials and items of uncommon worth, like silver, gold, and precious gems. This space is used to record any Treasure points found by a Player-hero.

VALOUR: A character's VALOUR rank describes their stature as a doer of great deeds, and is a measure of courage in the face of dangerous situations or opponents. Each time a Player-hero attains a new VALOUR rank, they receive a Reward, as an acknowledgement of their actions.

VIRTUES: Virtues are unique abilities and special talents, characteristic of a given culture. Players select a new Virtue when their Player-hero rises to a new WISDOM rank.

WAR GEAR: The weapons carried by the Player-hero, along with the corresponding stats and Load ratings.

WEARY: This box is checked when a Player-hero has been made Weary. Weary characters suffer a penalty when taking actions.

WISDOM: A character's WISDOM rank defines their self-understanding and capability for good judgement, and is a measure of their resistance to the corrupting power of the Shadow. Each time a Player-hero attains a new WISDOM rank, they receive a Virtue, as a consequence of this awareness.

WOUNDED AND INJURY: Player-heroes are wounded when the attacks of their enemies successfully overcome their defences and protective gear, resulting in an injury.

CHAPTER 3

ADVENTURERS

He had a strange feeling as the slow gurgling stream slipped by:
his old life lay behind in the mists, dark adventure lay in front.

The following pages show you how to craft a Player-hero drawn from one of six Heroic Cultures. Using the guidelines presented in this chapter, you can create your own hero, complete with strengths and weaknesses, possessions, and aspirations.

The character creation process consists of a number of steps, and aims to create fictional individuals that are as close as possible to their player's wishes, and that at the same time conform to the source material. The Loremaster should assist their players during this process, providing insight into the rules when needed, or simply to advise a player in making choices that are both true to the game's setting and make for a satisfying character to play.

Your Characters

To create a character, each player must first choose a Heroic Culture, selecting the one that is closest to the hero concept that they have in mind. All Cultures presented in this volume belong to the Free Peoples, brave nations that refuse the darkness and are often at open war with it. They represent the main choices for roleplaying in the Westlands of Eriador.

1. Bardings page 32
2. Dwarves of Durin's Folk page 34
3. Elves of Lindon page 36
4. Hobbits of the Shire page 38
5. Men of Bree page 40
6. Rangers of the North page 42

Once they have made their choice, players refer to the appropriate Heroic Culture writeup page and follow the steps described below, copying all information onto the character sheet (see page 24).

1. Record your Cultural Blessing
2. Determine your Attributes, choosing a set or rolling a Success die
3. Calculate your **STRENGTH**, **HEART**, and **WITS** Target Numbers — each TN is equal to 20 minus its corresponding Attribute score
4. Calculate your Derived Stats: Endurance, Hope, and Parry
5. Record your Skill and Combat Proficiency Ratings
6. Choose your Distinctive Features
7. Choose a Name and Age

Answer the Call to Adventure

Players finalise their character creation process by moving on to page 44 and applying the steps described below.

1. Choose a Calling, from among Captain, Champion, Messenger, Scholar, Treasure Hunter, and Warden
2. Spend Previous Experience points
3. Choose your starting Gear
4. Record your **VALOUR** and **WISDOM** scores at 1 and choose your Starting Reward and Virtue

Gather the Company

Last, but not least, all players cooperate in adding details about how their newly-created adventurers met each other and formed a Company (see page 51). A Company may be composed of adventurers of any kind, but the sum of its parts is going to be influenced by the Player-heroes' selection of Heroic Culture and Calling.

Heroic Cultures

Bilbo began to feel there really was something of a bold adventurer about himself after all…

In Middle-earth, the culture to which an adventurer belongs often defines them more profoundly than simply in terms of customs and traditions. For this reason, the most important choice that players must make is to select the Culture of origin of their adventurers.

Each Heroic Culture's writeup is composed along the same format of presentation, illustrated in the following paragraphs.

Characteristics

This section offers a number of details defining the appearance of a typical hero belonging to that culture and includes information about their adventuring age and martial tradition. A character's age is recorded on the character sheet. In general, heroes rarely start their adventuring career before they are deemed fully grown by their culture. On the other hand, if they progress too far into adulthood without answering the call to adventure, then they probably won't heed it at all.

Moreover, it provides the description of their Cultural Blessing — a special ability possessed by all Player-heroes belonging to that culture, from the Stout-hearted quality of the Bardings to the Redoubtable nature of the Dwarves (this part may additionally include information defining a particular weakness or limitation that is associated with all members of the culture).

The section is concluded by a rough indication of the starting resources available to the average adventurer belonging to that culture, in the form of a Standard of Living (see page 72). The game ranks the economic status of a folk in six tiers: Poor, Frugal, Common, Prosperous, Rich and Very Rich.

Attributes

There are three Attributes in *The One Ring*: **STRENGTH**, **HEART**, and **WITS**. These scores describe an adventurer's fundamental physical, emotional, and mental capabilities—the comparison between the three ratings provides a rough outline of an adventurer that is recognisable at a glance: Is your hero physically stronger, or more spiritually robust? Or are their wits their most distinctive quality?

- A Player-hero with a high **STRENGTH** score can be tough and fit, or quick and alert, or physically attractive or imposing. Every aspect of an adventurer that relies on vigour or physical well-being is represented in the game by **STRENGTH**.
- **HEART** measures an adventurer's capacity for emotion, empathy, and enthusiasm. A Player-hero with a high **HEART** score can be fiery, energetic, and hard to daunt. Activities that benefit from a passionate or dynamic temper may be influenced by a Player-hero's **HEART** score.
- A Player-hero with a high **WITS** rating can be clever, attentive, and ingenious. Any action that calls for an adventurer to be sharp-witted, sensible, or wise, benefits from a Player-hero's **WITS** score.

Target Numbers

The three Attribute ratings are used to determine a Player-hero's standard TNs — the default difficulty levels of all rolls made to challenge the characteristics of a hero.

Each Attribute TN is equal to 20 minus its corresponding Attribute score:

- The **STRENGTH** TN is used in conjunction with all **STRENGTH** Skills, and when resolving attack rolls.
- The **HEART** TN is used in conjunction with all **HEART** Skills and when making **VALOUR** rolls, for example to resist the effects of dread.
- The **WITS** TN is used in conjunction with all **WITS** Skills and when making rolls of **WISDOM**, for example to resist the effects of sorcery and greed.

Derived Stats

The Attribute scores of Player-heroes are used to determine three derived stats: their Endurance and Hope maximum scores, and their Parry rating.

Endurance and Hope are the fundamental resources that keep an adventurer going — Endurance points are lost while engaging in strenuous activities, Hope points are spent voluntarily by players when their Player-heroes try to overcome their limits. The Parry score sets the Target Number for all attack rolls targeting a Player-hero.

Skills and Combat Proficiencies

Skills represent those abilities that adventurers employ most often, while Combat Proficiencies reflect the expertise of a Player-hero in fighting. The competence of a Player-hero is represented by a rating, ranging from 0 (lowest) to 6 (highest). Ratings in an ability are recorded by filling in the diamond-shaped boxes to the right of its name.

RATING	SKILL	COMBAT PROFICIENCY
–	Unskilled	Untrained
◆	Poor	Beginner
◆◆	Average	Average
◆◆◆	Good	Experienced
◆◆◆◆	Superior	Veteran
◆◆◆◆◆	Outstanding	Master
◆◆◆◆◆◆	Prodigious	Heroic

MANY TONGUES

Different languages can provide intriguing role-playing opportunities, if the Loremaster and the players are interested. This shouldn't get in the way of the fun, however. While Tolkien used the linguistic differences among the various realms of Middle-earth to good narrative effect, he also found it simpler to avoid steep cultural barriers and gave most ethnic groups (even Orcs and other more fantastical creatures, like Ents) at least a passing knowledge of what constituted a 'lingua franca,' the so-called Common Speech, or Westron. This allows players who don't want to deal with the complex relations between the various peoples and their languages to ignore the entire subject altogether without damaging the setting. But if you are willing to explore this angle, it is certainly worth investigating.

Distinctive Features

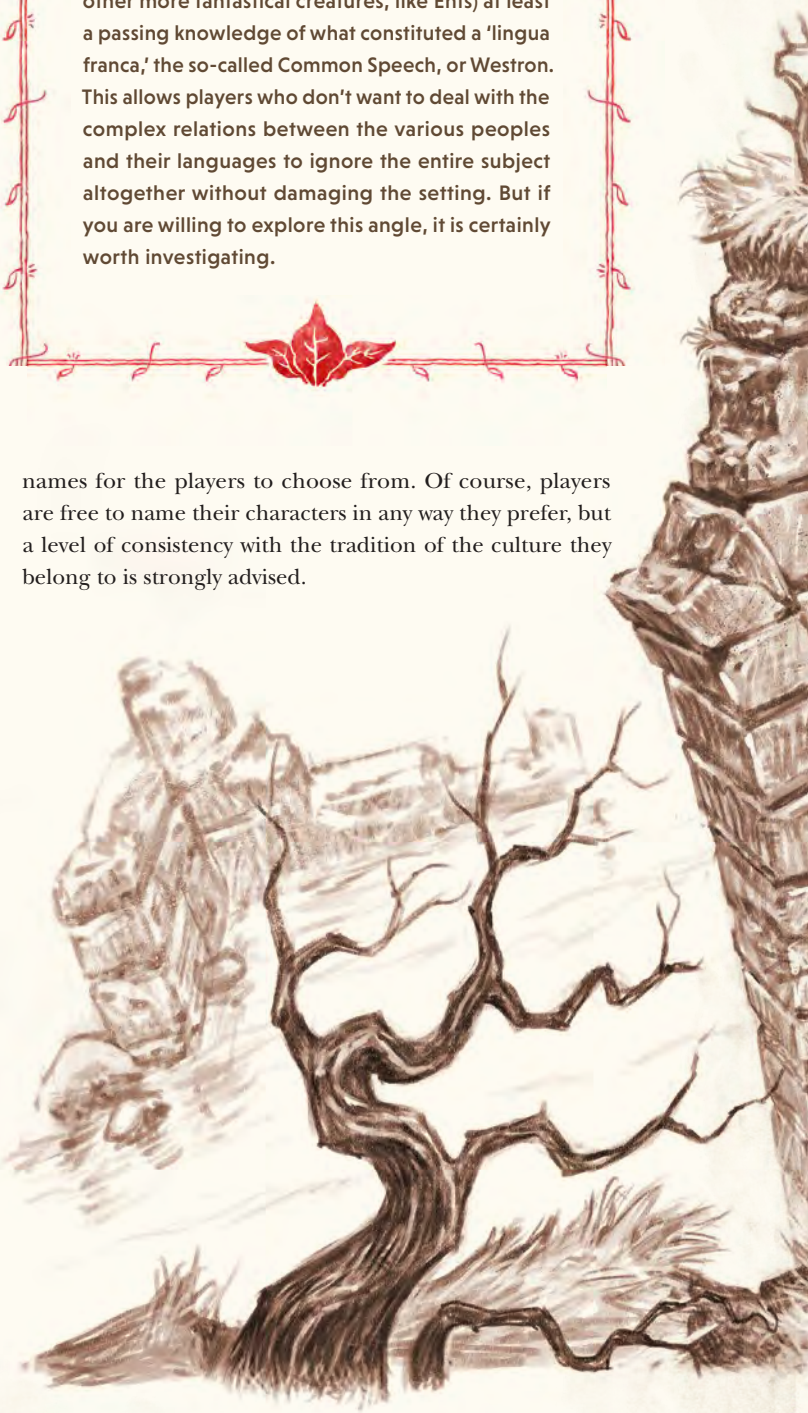
The three Attributes — **STRENGTH**, **HEART**, and **WITS** — give a good impression of an adventurer, but they fall short in defining what sets one individual apart from another. Distinctive Features are traits typically displayed by heroes from a given Culture that are used to add nuance to their personality.

Languages and Typical Names

Every reader of Tolkien knows how much the Professor loved languages — their structure, origins, and evolution — and to what length he laboured to devise the various names native to his fictional world, or to find suitable real-world ones. The language of most folks inhabiting Middle-earth has been given some attention, and the most important ones, like the different Elven tongues, sport a sizable vocabulary and consistent grammatical rules.

Every name in *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* has been carefully crafted, building upon solid linguistic foundations, and represents a precise cultural influence. The native language of every character-type presented in this chapter has been identified, and a list of personal names appropriate to each Culture is provided.

Players will find notes about the languages known by members of each particular people, and a list of character names for the players to choose from. Of course, players are free to name their characters in any way they prefer, but a level of consistency with the tradition of the culture they belong to is strongly advised.



BARDINGS

He was a descendant in long line of Girion, Lord of Dale, whose wife and child had escaped down the Running River from the ruin long ago.

The Bardings are Northmen of noble origins hailing from Wilderland, far off to the east. They rebuilt their city of Dale from its ashes after the slaying of the Dragon Smaug and they earned a new prosperity trading with nearby kingdoms of Elves and Dwarves.

Each year, Barding merchants reach new faraway lands, as they look outside their borders to expand their trade and influence. Sometimes, warriors follow in their wake, hoping to prove their mettle against worthy adversaries, inspired by their King's slaying of the Dragon.

CHARACTERISTICS

Strong in body and fearless in spirit, the Northmen are the denizens of Middle-earth that many consider to be nearest in kin to the Men of the West. They are strong-limbed, with fair hair, although dark or even black hair is not unknown. Barding men tend to keep beards, and often let their hair grow to reach their shoulders. Women adventurers braid their hair in long, tight tresses.

Bardings rarely become adventurers before their 18th year, and retire in their forties, when they return home to serve their family and folk. When abroad they may be recognised by their gear, as they often carry equipment of superior make. Unlike most denizens of Wilderland, Bardings prefer to use swords over axes, and naturally favour the bow, after the example of their King.

CULTURAL BLESSING — STOUT-HEARTED

Stories tell that the Bardings lived under the shadow of a great Dragon for decades.

Your VALOUR rolls are *Favoured*.

To the lineage of Gondor he added the fearless spirit of the Northmen…

STANDARD OF LIVING — PROSPEROUS

Thanks to its successful trading connections the city of Dale prospers. Those among the Bardings who choose a life of adventure are usually members of less affluent families — yet, their wealth is still superior to that of most of the denizens of Eriador.

ATTRIBUTES

Choose one set of Attributes, or roll a Success die:

ROLL	STRENGTH	HEART	WITS
1	5	7	2
2	4	7	3
3	5	6	3
4	4	6	4
5	5	5	4
6	6	6	2

DERIVED STATS

Calculate the following scores based on your chosen Attribute ratings:

Endurance	STRENGTH + 20
Hope	HEART + 8
Parry	WITS + 12

SKILLS

Copy the listed Skill ranks onto the character sheet; then, choose one Skill among the two underlined and mark it as *Favoured*.

AWE	1	ENHEARTEN	2	PERSUADE	3
ATHLETICS	1	TRAVEL	1	STEALTH	0
AWARENESS	0	INSIGHT	2	SCAN	1
HUNTING	2	HEALING	0	EXPLORE	1
SONG	1	COURTESY	2	RIDDLE	0
CRAFT	1	BATTLE	2	LORE	1

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES

Copy the following Combat Proficiency ranks onto the character sheet, selecting a preferred Proficiency when offered a choice.

Bows OR Swords	2
Choose one Combat Proficiency	1

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Choose two Distinctive Features among those listed: Bold, Eager, Fair, Fierce, Generous, Proud, Tall, Wilful.

LANGUAGES AND TYPICAL NAMES

All Bardings speak Dalish, a language that can be described as a very old form of the Common Speech. As far as their names are concerned, they are usually composed of one or two elements (for example, Dag — Day, or Lif-stan — Life Stone). Like most Northmen, Bardings often name their children after a renowned ancestor or relative, or choose a name beginning with the same sound or sharing one element with that of the father (whose name is often given with their first name when introduced formally — for example, Lifstan, son of Leiknir, or Ingrith, daughter of Ingolf).

MALE NAMES

Aegir, Arn, Brandulf, Domarr, Egil, Erland, Farald, Finn, Gautarr, Hafgrim, Hjalmar, Ingolf, Jofur, Kolbeinn, Leiknir, Lomund, Munan, Nari, Nefstan, Ottarr, Ragnarr, Reinald, Sigmarr, Steinarr, Thorald, Torwald, Ulfarr, Unnarr, Vandil, Varinn.

FEMALE NAMES

Aldis, Asfrid, Bera, Bergdis, Dagmar, Eilif, Erna, Frida, Geira, Gudrun, Halla, Hild, Ingirun, Ingrith, Lif, Linhild, Kelda, Runa, Saldis, Sigga, Sigrun, Thora, Thordis, Thorhild, Ulfhild, Ulfrun, Una, Valdis, Vigdis, Walda.

Dwarves of Durin's Folk

Only on the Road would travellers be found, most often Dwarves, hurrying along on business of their own, and with no help and few words to spare for strangers.

The Dwarves are an ancient and proud folk, whose customs and traditions are mostly unknown to outsiders. A dwindling people, they have recently recovered some of their lost greatness, and a Dwarven King reigns once again under the Lonely Mountain, in Wilderland.

Many Dwarves cross into Eriador from the East, on their way to their mines in the Blue Mountains. They can often be seen marching along the East-West Road that runs through the Shire and ends at the Grey Havens.

Characteristics

The Dwarves are exceedingly strong for their height, and hard to break or corrupt, but often at odds with other folks over old quarrels or new slights. They are short and stocky, with robust limbs and heads crowned with long hair and longer beards that give them their typically elderly appearance. When on a journey or in battle they plait their forked beards and thrust them into their belts.

Dwarves generally start their life on the road in their fifties, and do not usually consider retiring before their nineties. Around that time, many among them choose to dedicate themselves solely to the perfection of their crafts. In battle most Dwarves use axes and swords, but those belonging to their easternmost kin wield heavy two-handed mattocks, a weapon derived from their mining tools.

Cultural Blessing — Redoubtable

Dwarves make light of burdens, especially when it comes to wearing armour.

> You halve the Load rating of any armour you're wearing (rounding fractions up), including helms (but not shields).

Gimli the dwarf alone wore openly a short shirt of steel-rings, for dwarves make light of burdens…

Naugrim

Dwarves are shorter than Men, but their work as miners and smiths endows them with powerful arms and shoulders. Yet, they still favour shorter weapons over longer ones.

> Dwarven adventurers cannot use the following pieces of war gear: great bow, great spear, and great shield.

Standard of Living — Prosperous

With the fabulous Dragon-hoard of Erebor reclaimed and their kingdom restored, the Dwarves are much richer today than in the past.

Attributes

Choose one set of Attributes, or roll a Success die:

Roll	Strength	Heart	Wits
1	7	2	5
2	7	3	4
3	6	3	5
4	6	4	4
5	5	4	5
6	6	2	6

Derived Stats

Calculate the following scores based on your chosen Attribute ratings:

Endurance	Strength + 22
Hope	Heart + 8
Parry	Wits + 10

SKILLS

Copy the listed Skill ranks onto the character sheet; then, choose one Skill among the two underlined and mark it as *Favoured*.

AWE	2	ENHEARTEN	0	PERSUADE	0
ATHLETICS	1	TRAVEL	3	STEALTH	0
AWARENESS	0	INSIGHT	0	SCAN	3
HUNTING	0	HEALING	0	EXPLORE	2
SONG	1	COURTESY	1	RIDDLE	2
CRAFT	2	BATTLE	1	LORE	1

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES

Copy the following Combat Proficiency ranks onto the character sheet, selecting a preferred Proficiency when offered a choice.

Axes OR Swords	2
Choose one Combat Proficiency	1

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Choose two Distinctive Features among those listed: Cunning, Fierce, Lordly, Proud, Secretive, Stern, Wary, Wilful.

LANGUAGES AND TYPICAL NAMES

All Dwarves speak the Common Tongue, but preserve a knowledge of a secret Dwarvish language. They receive a true name at birth that they do not reveal to members of other folks, and adopt another name in the tradition of their neighbours. This custom has been in use for so long that a number of names have become traditionally associated with Dwarves, and are used almost exclusively by them. Dwarves of renown are sometimes given an honorific title, celebrating an exceptional deed or distinctive quality (for example, Thorin Oakenshield or Dáin Ironfoot).

MALE NAMES

Ai, Anar, Beli, Bláin, Borin, Burin, Bruni, Farin, Flói, Frár, Frerin, Frór, Ginar, Gróin, Grór, Hanar, Hepti, Iari, Lófar, Lóni, Náli, Nár, Niping, Nói, Núr, Nýrád, Ónar, Póri, Regin, Svior, Veig, Vidar.

FEMALE NAMES

Adís, Afrid, Agda, Bersa, Birna, Dagrún, Dís, Drífa, Edda, Elin, Fenja, Frida, Geira, Gísla, Hadda, Hón, Ida, Ilmr, Jóra, Kára, Kóna, Líf, Línhild, Már, Mist, Nál, Oda, Ósk, Rán, Rinda, Sefa, Syn, Tóra, Trana, Úlfrún, Vírún, Yrr.

ELVES OF LINDON

'Yes, it is Elves,' said Frodo. 'One can meet them sometimes in the Woody End.'

The Fair Folk of Eriador have dwelt in the Westlands since before the drowning of Beleriand. They are all members of the Firstborn, displaying a wisdom beyond the reach of Men. They rarely leave their sanctuaries in the Grey Havens, for these are their fading years.

More and more leave Middle-earth sailing West on grey ships, never to return. Those who still remain live mostly along the western coasts, where once were found great kingdoms of their kindreds. Wandering Elves can at times be encountered on the roads leading east in spring and autumn, when their companies leave their lands beyond the Tower Hills.

CHARACTERISTICS

All Elves are endowed with tremendous vitality and great vigour. They are not subject to illness or old age, and thus can dwell within the circles of the world until they choose to leave it, or are slain.

Elves may leave their homes at any time after they reach adulthood (at about a century of age). Adventurers older than 300 years are rare, as in time all Elves find the sea-longing that lies deep within their hearts to become irresistible. In battle, most Elves carry bows and spears. Many wield swords too, but by ancient tradition some still favour axes.

CULTURAL BLESSING — ELVEN-SKILL

By virtue of their birthright, Elves are capable of reaching levels of finesse unattainable by mortals.

> If you are not Miserable, you can spend 1 point of Hope to achieve a Magical success on a roll when using a Skill in which you possess at least one rank.

"Keen are the eyes of the Elves," he said. "Nay! The riders are little more than five leagues distant," said Legolas.

THE LONG DEFEAT

The Elves find it hard to forget the taint of the Shadow once it has left its mark on their spirit.

> When it is time to remove accumulated Shadow during the Fellowship Phase, you can only remove a maximum of 1 point (see Spiritual Recovery, page 119).

STANDARD OF LIVING — FRUGAL

The Fair Folk live in harmony with Middle-earth and have little or no use for those things that others consider precious. They lack nothing, and craft beautiful things using the richest materials, but they don't profit from their wealth the way other folks do.

ATTRIBUTES

Choose one set of Attributes, or roll a Success die:

ROLL	STRENGTH	HEART	WITS
1	5	2	7
2	4	3	7
3	5	3	6
4	4	4	6
5	5	4	5
6	6	2	6

DERIVED STATS

Calculate the following scores based on your chosen Attribute ratings:

Endurance	STRENGTH + 20
Hope	HEART + 8
Parry	WITS + 12

SKILLS

Copy the listed Skill ranks onto the character sheet; then, choose one Skill among the two underlined and mark it as *Favoured*.

AWE	2	ENHEARTEN	1	PERSUADE	0
ATHLETICS	2	TRAVEL	0	STEALTH	3
AWARENESS	2	INSIGHT	0	SCAN	0
HUNTING	0	HEALING	1	EXPLORE	0
SONG	2	COURTESY	0	RIDDLE	0
CRAFT	2	BATTLE	0	LORE	3

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES

Copy the following Combat Proficiency ranks onto the character sheet, selecting a preferred Proficiency when offered a choice.

Bows OR Spears	2
Choose one Combat Proficiency	1

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Choose two Distinctive Features among those listed: Fair, Keen-eyed, Lordly, Merry, Patient, Subtle, Swift, Wary.

LANGUAGES AND TYPICAL NAMES

In addition to the Common Speech, all Elves speak their own, fair tongue — the Sindarin speech. For the most part, the Elves of Lindon bear names fashioned in that language.

MALE NAMES

Amras, Aredhel, Beleganor, Belegon, Calanhir, Carmagor, Dagorhir, Durandir, Edrahil, Ellahir, Fincalan, Fuindor, Galdagor, Galdor, Hallas, Hirimlad, Ithildir, Lascalan, Linaith, Mablin, Malanor, Nauros, Orgalad, Pelegorn, Sargon.

FEMALE NAMES

Anórel, Aranel, Arbereth, Baraniel, Calanril, Celebrindal, Celenneth, Elanor, Elwing, Eraniel, Fimbrethil, Gloredhel, Idril, Irilde, Laurelin, Lôrwend, Lothíriel, Meneloth, Moriel, Narieth, Narniel, Nimloth, Nimrodel, Níniel, Tarandîs.

HOBBITS OF THE SHIRE

…he wished to go and see the great mountains, and hear the pine-trees and the waterfalls, and explore the caves, and wear a sword instead of a walking-stick.

Hobbits are a small and merry folk, possessing a love for time-honoured traditions and respectable ways, and a strong dislike for anything out of the ordinary. If Hobbits had their way, the days would go by in an unchanging world, as they have since anyone can remember. At least, in their land, the Shire.

But since the return of Mr Bilbo Baggins from his adventure with a group of Dwarves and a travelling Wizard, something has changed. Stories about remote lands, dark woods, Giants, Elves, and forgotten halls beneath the earth have started to circulate among Hobbits of a more adventurous sort. And with every year, another one or two discreetly disappear to go and have adventures.

CHARACTERISTICS

Hobbits are much smaller than Men, even smaller than Dwarves, and might be mistaken for children of Men by those who do not know of their existence. They have never been warlike, but for all their gentle appearance they are surprisingly tough, and difficult to intimidate or kill. A merry folk, Hobbits possess a cheerful spirit and a friendliness that makes them good companions.

Hobbits do not abandon their comfortable lives easily, but when they do they usually wait for their coming of age at 33. A particularly reckless fellow might feel the call to adventure when in their tweens, as Hobbits call their twenties. When pushed to resort to weapons, Hobbits choose short swords and hunting bows, which they can shoot with uncanny precision.

CULTURAL BLESSING — HOBBIT-SENSE

Hobbits have learned their place in the world a long time ago, and they display a robust capacity for insight that many folks mistake for lack of courage. No visions or wild fantasies can tempt them, as they do not seek power or control over others.

Your **WISDOM** rolls are *Favoured*, and you *gain (1d)* on all Shadow Tests made to resist the effects of Greed.

… they have a fund of wisdom and wise sayings that men have mostly never heard or have forgotten long ago.

HALFLINGS

Due to their reduced size, Hobbits cannot use larger weapons effectively. The weapons available to Hobbits are:

Axe, bow, club, cudgel, dagger, short sword, short spear, spear. Additionally, Hobbits cannot use a great shield.

STANDARD OF LIVING — COMMON

Hobbits live in peace, their land is well-tilled and their borders protected, but theirs is an isolated island in the middle of a desolate region, and trading is an uncommon occurrence.

ATTRIBUTES

Choose one set of Attributes, or roll a Success die:

ROLL	STRENGTH	HEART	WITS
1	3	6	5
2	3	7	4
3	2	7	5
4	4	6	4
5	4	5	5
6	2	6	6

DERIVED STATS

Calculate the following scores based on your chosen Attribute ratings:

Endurance	STRENGTH + 18
Hope	HEART + 10
Parry	WITS + 12

SKILLS

Copy the listed Skill ranks onto the character sheet; then, choose one Skill among the two underlined and mark it as *Favoured*.

AWE	0	ENHEARTEN	0	PERSUADE	2
ATHLETICS	0	TRAVEL	0	STEALTH	3
AWARENESS	2	INSIGHT	2	SCAN	0
HUNTING	0	HEALING	1	EXPLORE	0
SONG	2	COURTESY	2	RIDDLE	3
CRAFT	1	BATTLE	0	LORE	0

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES

Copy the following Combat Proficiency ranks onto the character sheet, selecting a preferred Proficiency when offered a choice.

Bows OR Swords	2
Choose one Combat Proficiency	1

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Choose two Distinctive Features among those listed: Eager, Fair-spoken, Faithful, Honourable, Inquisitive, Keen-eyed, Merry, Rustic.

LANGUAGES AND TYPICAL NAMES

Hobbits speak only the Common Speech, preserving the use of a few words and names of their own forgotten tongue. Names are composed of a first name and a family name. First names for men are usually simple and short, with women being often given names of flowers or precious stones, but among the older families a custom survives of giving more heroic and high-sounding names, whose origin can be traced back to a time before the Shire.

MALE NAMES

Andwise, Berilac, Bungo, Cottar, Doderic, Dudo, Erling, Fastred, Ferumbras, Folco, Gorhendad, Griffo, Halfred, Hamson, Ilberic, Isembold, Isengar, Longo, Marmadas, Marroc, Mungo, Odo, Orgulas, Otho, Posco, Reginard, Robin, Rudigar, Sadoc, Saradas, Tobold, Tolman.

FEMALE NAMES

Adaldrida, Amaranth, Asphodel, Belba, Bell, Berylla, Camellia, Daisy, Eglantine, Estella, Gilly, Hanna, Lily, Malva, Marigold, May, Melilot, Menegilda, Mentha, Mirabella, Myrtle, Pearl, Peony, Pervinca, Pimpernel, Primrose, Primula, Prisca, Rosamunda, Ruby, Salvia.

FAMILY NAMES

Baggins, Boffin, Bolger, Bracegirdle, Brandybuck, Brown, Brownlock, Bunce, Burrows, Cotton, Gamgee, Gardner, Goldworthy, Goodbody, Goodchild, Grubb, Headstrong, Hornblower, Maggot, Noakes, North-tooks, Proudfoot, Puddifoot, Roper, Rumble, Sackville, Smallburrow, Took, Twofoot, Whitfoot.

MEN OF BREE

"…four miles along the Road you'll come upon a village,
Bree under Bree-hill, with doors looking westward."

The inhabitants of the Bree-land and its four villages lying about Bree-hill are the descendants of the ancient people that first dwelt in the region known today as Eriador, the Lonelands. Few have survived the turmoils that have ravaged the area, but they are still there now.

Today, the Men of Bree live at an old meeting of ways, and even if the traffic was far greater in former days, travellers of various sorts still make their way along those roads. Whoever enters the common room of the Inn of Bree is sure to hear strange tales and news from afar, and maybe be swept away by them.

CHARACTERISTICS

Most Men of Bree are brown-haired and rather short, and tend to be stocky and broad. This, combined with their cheerful disposition, is the reason why they do not appear as outlandish as most foreigners do to their neighbours, the inhabitants of the Shire. But like Hobbits, their appearance can be deceiving: the Men of Bree can be simple and friendly, but they are independent and wise in their own way.

Actual adventurers from Bree-land are rare indeed. If they leave their villages at all, they do it when the vigour of youth is in their limbs, and usually return home to settle down before their fortieth year. Not being of a warlike disposition, the Bree-folk favour simple weapons, derived from everyday tools and hunting implements.

CULTURAL BLESSING — BREE-BLOOD

Due to the position of their homeland, the Men of Bree enjoy better relationships with Hobbits, Dwarves, Elves, and other inhabitants of the world about them than is considered usual.

Each Man of Bree in the Company increases the Fellowship Rating by 1 point.

The Men of Bree were brown-haired, broad, and rather short, cheerful and independent: they belonged to nobody but themselves…

STANDARD OF LIVING — COMMON

Bree-land is not as wealthy as it once was, but these days the inhabitants of the four villages are no more rustic than their neighbours in the Shire, and no less well-off.

ATTRIBUTES

Choose one set of Attributes, or roll a Success die:

ROLL	STRENGTH	HEART	WITS
1	2	5	7
2	3	4	7
3	3	5	6
4	4	4	6
5	4	5	5
6	2	6	6

DERIVED STATS

Calculate the following scores based on your chosen Attribute ratings:

Endurance	STRENGTH + 20
Hope	HEART + 10
Parry	WITS + 10

SKILLS

Copy the listed Skill ranks onto the character sheet; then, choose one Skill among the two underlined and mark it as *Favoured*.

AWE	0	ENHEARTEN	2	PERSUADE	2
ATHLETICS	1	TRAVEL	1	STEALTH	1
AWARENESS	1	INSIGHT	2	SCAN	1
HUNTING	1	HEALING	0	EXPLORE	1
SONG	1	COURTESY	3	RIDDLE	2
CRAFT	2	BATTLE	0	LORE	0

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES

Copy the following Combat Proficiency ranks onto the character sheet, selecting a preferred Proficiency when offered a choice.

Axes OR Spears	2
Choose one Combat Proficiency	1

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Choose two Distinctive Features among those listed: Cunning, Fair-spoken, Faithful, Generous, Inquisitive, Patient, Rustic, True-hearted.

LANGUAGES AND TYPICAL NAMES

The Men of Bree have forgotten their ancient, native speech, and speak the Common Tongue, albeit slightly altered in a local dialect. They use names that to foreign ears sound similar to those used by Hobbits in the Shire (Hobbits beg to differ, of course).

MALE NAMES

Alfred, Artie, Bill, Bob, Carl, Ed, Fred, Giles, Herb, Larry, Nob, Oswald, Percy, Perry, Sid, Tom, Harry.

FEMALE NAMES

Daisy, Emma, Etta, Fay, Fern, Flora, Gert, Holly, Lily, Myrtle, Poppy, Rose, Sage, Tilly, Violet.

FAMILY NAMES

Appledore, Asterfire, Bellsap, Briarcleave, Butterbur, Cherryborn, Chesterstout, Droverwind, Ferny, Foxglow, Goatleaf, Hardybough, Heathertoes, Hedgedon, Kettlegrass, Lilyhawk, Mossburn, Mugworts, Oakstout, Pickthorn, Pollenroad, Rushlight, Shrubrose, Sweetroot, Thistlewool, Wayward.

RANGERS OF THE NORTH

…in the wild lands beyond Bree there were mysterious wanderers.
The Bree-folk called them Rangers, and knew nothing of their origin.

The Rangers of the North are a secret people, severely diminished in number with the passing of a thousand years. They wander in disguise among the ruins of what was once their kingdom of Arnor, tirelessly patrolling its many paths and roads.

While the years have lengthened, the task of the Rangers has always been the same: to keep the folk of Eriador free from care and fear. They labour secretly, keeping to themselves, and rarely giving their names to the travellers they save or to the folk whose farms they guard at night, when evil things come out from dark places.

CHARACTERISTICS

The Rangers are the last descendants in the North of the Dúnedain, kings among Men that once came to Middle-earth over the Sea out of Westernesse. When they do not disguise their features, they are tall and lordly, towering above most Men. They are often silent and grim of countenance, and look wise and mature beyond their years.

Rangers take to the Wild around the age of twenty, but may begin to go on adventures even at a younger age. They retain their strength of body and will longer than most Men, but usually cease to travel far from Eriador when they reach their fifties. When in the Wild, they wear comfortable but weather-beaten garments, favouring high leather boots and heavy cloaks of dark grey or green cloth, with ample hoods that can be cast over a worn helm.

CULTURAL BLESSING — KINGS OF MEN

Some say that the lordship of the folk of Arnor is a thing of the past. Yet, the Rangers of the North have inherited the sinews of those Men who wrested the Ring from the burning hand of Sauron.

Add 1 point to one Attribute of your choice.

They were fair of face and tall, and the span of their lives was thrice that of the Men of Middle-earth.

ALLEGIANCE OF THE DÚNEDAIN

The Rangers are devoted to fighting Sauron and his minions by an ancient tradition of war and strife. This obligation makes it harder for them to put their spirit at ease even when enjoying a respite from adventuring.

During the Fellowship phase (not Yule) you recover a maximum number of Hope points equal to half your HEART score (rounding fractions up).

STANDARD OF LIVING — FRUGAL

Rangers rarely wear or carry anything whose worth cannot be measured in a practical way. Their gear or garments are never considered precious for the gleam of stone or gold, but for their capability to endure long journeys and strenuous fights.

ATTRIBUTES

Choose one set of Attributes, or roll a Success die:

ROLL	STRENGTH	HEART	WITS
1	7	5	2
2	7	4	3
3	6	5	3
4	6	4	4
5	5	5	4
6	6	6	2

DERIVED STATS

Calculate the following scores based on your chosen Attribute ratings:

Endurance	STRENGTH + 20
Hope	HEART + 6
Parry	WITS + 14

SKILLS

Copy the listed Skill ranks onto the character sheet; then, choose one Skill among the two underlined and mark it as *Favoured*.

AWE	1	ENHEARTEN	0	PERSUADE	0
ATHLETICS	2	TRAVEL	2	STEALTH	2
AWARENESS	2	INSIGHT	0	SCAN	1
HUNTING	2	HEALING	2	EXPLORE	2
SONG	0	COURTESY	0	RIDDLE	0
CRAFT	0	BATTLE	2	LORE	2

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES

Copy the following Combat Proficiency ranks onto the character sheet, selecting a preferred Proficiency when offered a choice.

Spears OR Swords	2
Choose one Combat Proficiency	1

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Choose two Distinctive Features among those listed: Bold, Honourable, Secretive, Stern, Subtle, Swift, Tall, True-hearted.

LANGUAGES AND TYPICAL NAMES

The native language of the Dúnedain is the Westron, or Common Speech. Some still learn the Sindarin Elven-tongue, as it is handed down from generation to generation. They retain an ancient tradition of naming their children using that fair speech.

MALE NAMES

Adrahil, Amlaith, Arvegil, Baranor, Belecthor, Bergil, Celepharn, Cirion, Damrod, Dírhael, Duinhir, Egalmoth, Eradan, Findemir, Forlong, Golasdan, Hallas, Hirluin, Ingold, Iorlas, Malvegil, Ohtar, Orodreth, Tarannon, Targon.

FEMALE NAMES

Anwen, Arbereth, Berúthiel, Baraniel, Calanril, Celenneth, Elnîth, Eraniel, Finduilas, Gilraen, Gilraeth, Gloredhel, Idril, Ioreth, Ivorwen, Lôrwend, Lothíriel, Luindîs, Meneloth, Moriel, Morwen, Narieth, Narniel, Orothêl, Tarandîs.

CALLINGS

He found himself wondering at times, especially in the autumn, about the wild lands, and strange visions of mountains that he had never seen came into his dreams.

Leaving home and setting off on the road is a courageous choice, often considered reckless by a hero's family and folk. Adventurers leave behind all they know and love, so what is it that motivates and pushes them towards danger and the unknown?

Whatever it is that motivates the Player-heroes, it must be something that for them is worth the risk of crossing swords with the curved blades of Orcs. In *The One Ring*, this motivation is represented by an adventurer's Calling.

> Choosing a Calling provides a player with a starting drive, the reason that pushed their character to become an adventurer. It is not meant to represent a profession or trade, but the sum of the ambitions and aspirations that eventually set them on the road.

There are six Callings for a hero to answer:

1. Captain page 44
2. Champion page 44
3. Messenger page 45
4. Scholar page 45
5. Treasure Hunter page 45
6. Warden page 46

Each player should select the Calling that best adheres to their character concept, keeping in mind that coupling each Calling to a Heroic Culture results in 36 combinations — a Hobbit Treasure Hunter has very different reasons to go adventuring than a Hobbit Scholar, but this is probably even more true if that Treasure Hunter is a Dwarf, or an Elf.

Callings follow a standard presentation:

- **FAVOURED SKILLS.** Each Calling lists three Skills. When you select a Calling, you choose two Skills among those listed and mark them as *Favoured* Skills.
- **ADDITIONAL DISTINCTIVE FEATURE.** Those who answer the same Calling share a peculiar ability, in the form of a unique Distinctive Trait.
- **SHADOW PATH.** An adventurer's Shadow Path suggests the individual fate a Calling typically leads to if they fail to resist the Shadow's influence.

CAPTAIN

He stood up, and seemed suddenly to grow taller. In his eyes gleamed a light, keen and commanding.

When the world is on the brink of ruin, it is the duty of all individuals of worth to rise and take the lead, whatever the risk. You have chosen to put your judgement to the service of others, to guide them in this dark hour. But you don't want others to heed your commands out of fear or obedience — you want them to follow you because they trust you.

FAVOURED SKILLS

Choose two Skills among **BATTLE**, **ENHEARTEN**, and **PERSUADE** and mark them as *Favoured*.

ADDITIONAL DISTINCTIVE FEATURE: LEADERSHIP

You possess the ability to direct others to action. When under pressure, other people naturally turn to you for guidance.

SHADOW PATH: LURE OF POWER

When individuals are given a position of authority, either by rank, lineage, or stature, they may end up mistaking their own aggrandisement for the greater good of the people they should be guiding or keeping safe. Power is the quintessential temptation, and provides the Shadow with an easy way to win the hearts of those who desire it.

CHAMPION

"War must be, while we defend our lives against a destroyer who would devour all…"

You deem that there is but one way to oppose the return of the Shadow, and that it is to conquer it by strength of arms. You are recognised as a warrior among your folk, a valiant fighter, onward into battle. For you, the road to adventure leads straight to wherever your foes prowl or hide.

FAVOURED SKILLS

Choose two Skills among **ATHLETICS**, **AWE**, and **HUNTING** and mark them as *Favoured*.

ADDITIONAL DISTINCTIVE FEATURE: ENEMY-LORE

Enemy-lore is not a single Distinctive Feature; you must select the type of enemies it applies to, choosing from Evil Men, Orcs, Spiders, Trolls, Wargs, and Undead. This Distinctive Feature gives you knowledge of the characteristics, habits, strengths, and weaknesses of your chosen enemy.

SHADOW PATH: CURSE OF VENGEANCE

Individuals who live by the sword are ever tempted to draw it, either literally or figuratively, when their will is thwarted or when they deem their honour to have been impugned by an insult. As corruption spreads in their spirit, their behaviour worsens, leading to more extreme violent reactions.

Messenger

"Elrond is sending Elves, and they will get in touch with the Rangers, and maybe with Thranduil's folk in Mirkwood."

The Wise hold that evil days lie ahead, and that to keep hope, all who fight the Enemy must be as one. Yet, many miles and centuries of isolation separate the Free Peoples, and estrangement breeds mistrust. You have decided that it is your duty to travel to distant lands, carrying tidings and warning people of the coming danger.

FAVOURED SKILLS

Choose two Skills among **COURTESY**, **SONG**, and **TRAVEL** and mark them as *Favoured*.

ADDITIONAL DISTINCTIVE FEATURE: FOLK-LORE

You possess some knowledge of the many traditional customs, beliefs, and stories of the various communities that compose the Free Peoples. Likely the result of your wanderings, this information may help you when dealing with strangers, allowing you to come up with some useful facts regarding their folk or a smattering of the appropriate language.

SHADOW PATH: WANDERING-MADNESS

Travelling afar might be the duty chosen by a messenger, but it carries the risk of never finding a place to fight for. The Road goes ever on and on, it's true, but whither then?

Scholar

"Speak no secrets! Here is a scholar in the Ancient Tongue."

For you, knowledge makes the wild world a less threatening place. Yellowed maps in lost books replace a fear of the unknown with curiosity and wonder, songs composed in ages past strengthen the weariest of hearts. A love of learning guides your every step, and illuminates the way for you and those who listen to your advice.

FAVOURED SKILLS

Choose two Skills among **CRAFT**, **LORE**, and **RIDDLE** and mark them as *Favoured*.

ADDITIONAL DISTINCTIVE FEATURE: RHYMES OF LORE

Rhymes of Lore are short verses created by many Cultures to help them remember significant facts from ancient history which might otherwise be lost. Scholars of Middle-earth credit much of their ancient knowledge to such rhymes.

SHADOW PATH: LURE OF SECRETS

Inquisitiveness and curiosity are desirable virtues in an individual, but knowledge can be put to malicious use, and learned individuals can look down on others as ignorant fools. Secrets are dangerous, as the very desire of uncovering them may corrupt the heart.

Treasure Hunter

Far over the Misty Mountains cold, To dungeons deep and caverns old. We must away ere break of day, To seek the pale enchanted gold.

The world has seen the passing of the glory of many Dwarven kings and Elven lords, and their heritage is now buried in Orc-infested dungeons. Hoards of stolen gold and jewels, guarded by fell beasts, beckon all who dare to find them. You seek to recover what is lost, even when it means braving unspeakable dangers.

FAVOURED SKILLS

Choose two Skills among **EXPLORE**, **SCAN**, and **STEALTH** and mark them as *Favoured*.

ADDITIONAL DISTINCTIVE FEATURE: BURGLARY

This venerable talent includes pickpocketing, lock picking and, in general, any shadowy way to get hold of the possessions of others or access protected areas.

SHADOW PATH: DRAGON-SICKNESS

Adventurers who find themselves on the Road to seek lost riches run the risk of catching the age-old disease capable of turning a pile of enchanted gold into bitter ashes. As the Shadow tightens its grip on their hearts, the world shrinks around them and their closely guarded possessions.

Warden

"Travellers scowl at us, and countrymen give us scornful names."

In this age of the world, when shadows grow deeper with every passing year, you have sworn to defend all who cannot defend themselves. Often, your choice forces you to forsake civilised areas, to better guard their inhabitants from what lurks right outside their fences. This has made you a stranger in the eyes of the common folk, a threatening figure like those you are protecting them from.

FAVOURED SKILLS

Choose two Skills among **AWARENESS**, **HEALING**, and **INSIGHT** and mark them as *Favoured*.

ADDITIONAL DISTINCTIVE FEATURE: SHADOW-LORE

You have recognised that there is a hidden thread unifying most of what is malicious, dark, and terrible in Middle-earth, and that the thread is thickening year after year. A quality shared by the wise of the land, the truth behind this knowledge is becoming clearer as time passes.

SHADOW PATH: PATH OF DESPAIR

Self-doubt is often the way that the Shadow chooses to reach the heart of those who oppose it. For they know that the Enemy is strong and terrible and that those they protect are too naive or weak to fend for themselves. Every day they ask themselves: will my strength be enough to prevail, or will I drag down the innocent in defeat?

Previous Experience

"…we have had to earn our livings as best we could up and down the lands, often enough sinking as low as blacksmith-work or even coal mining."

The ability levels of all newly-created Player-heroes can now be raised, to represent their experiences prior to their life as adventurers.

Players have 10 points to spend on raising Skills and Combat Proficiencies. The cost of raising each ability is shown in the two tables to the right. The first table gives the costs for Skill levels, while the second shows the costs for Combat Proficiency levels.

Players are free to raise their abilities as they see fit, as long as they have enough points to buy the desired level. Players can also buy ranks in Skills or Combat Proficiencies that their Player-heroes didn't possess at all, or buy multiple ranks in the same ability, as long as they pay the cost of each level individually.

EXAMPLE:

A player wanting to go from **LORE** ᚱ *to* **LORE** ᚱᚱᚱᚱ *would spend a total of 10 points (2 to raise the Skill from* ᚱ *to* ᚱᚱ*, 3 to go from* ᚱᚱ *to* ᚱᚱᚱ*, and 5 to go from* ᚱᚱᚱ *to* ᚱᚱᚱᚱ*).*

SKILL COSTS:

SKILL LEVEL TO ATTAIN	COST
From – to ᚱ	1 point
From ᚱ to ᚱᚱ	2 points
From ᚱᚱ to ᚱᚱᚱ	3 points
From ᚱᚱᚱ to ᚱᚱᚱᚱ	5 points

COMBAT PROFICIENCY COSTS:

LEVEL TO ATTAIN	COST
From – to ᚱ	2 points
From ᚱ to ᚱᚱ	4 points
From ᚱᚱ to ᚱᚱᚱ	6 points

STARTING GEAR

…he got to Bywater just on the stroke of eleven,
and found he had come without a pocket-handkerchief!

All heroes start their adventuring career fully equipped with all the personal items and gear they consider best suited to a life on the road. In the game, such possessions are represented by an adventurer's war gear, travelling gear, and useful items.

WAR GEAR

Adventuring is a demanding task, often requiring heroes to march for hours on end, along mountain paths or traversing fast-flowing rivers — wise heroes should fight the urge to choose the biggest weapons and the heaviest suits of armour, as a weighty and cumbersome burden is bound to seriously hamper their capabilities.

Before the game starts, players get to choose the weapons and armour they want their characters to carry, using the War Gear lists found overleaf (more details are found in the Gear section, on page 73).

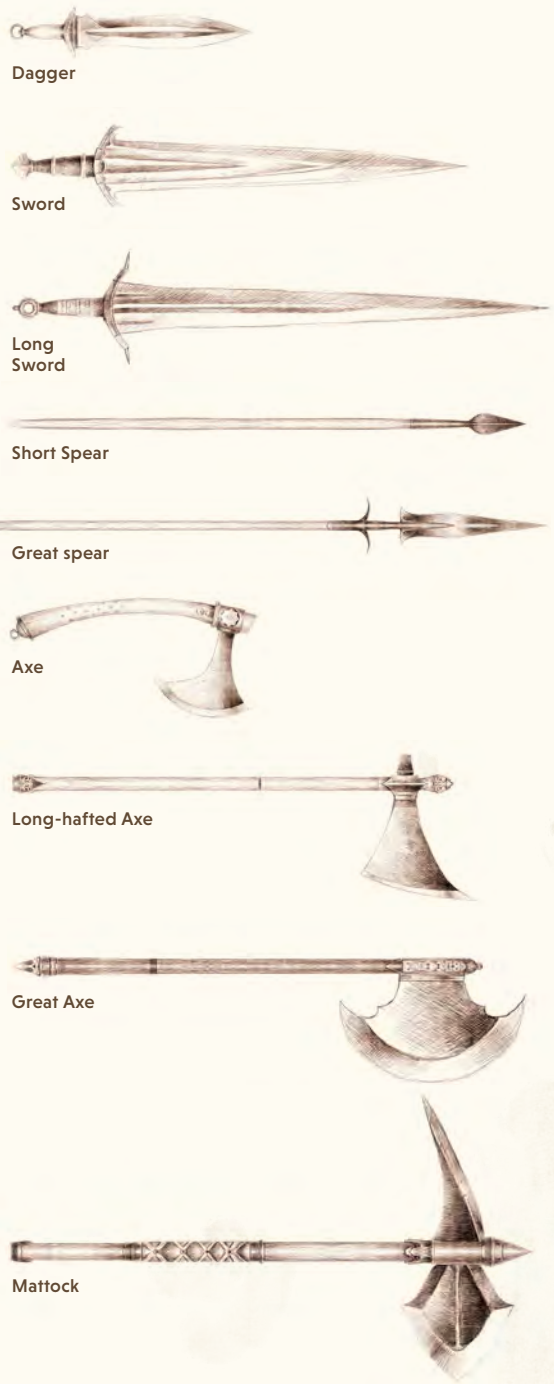
> Starting heroes can choose one weapon for each Combat Proficiency for which they have a rating, and their preferred selection of armour, helms, or shields.

Players should record their chosen weapons, armour and shields on their character sheets, paying attention to the following notes:

> The **PROTECTION** score of a coat of armour is recorded separately from that of a helm (as sometimes, during combat, a hero might resort to dropping it to reduce the carried Load and avoid becoming Weary too soon).

Shields do not offer direct protection, but make a hero less likely to be hit, by providing a bonus to Parry.

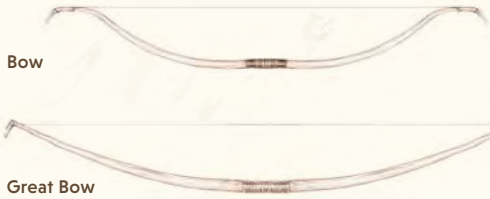
> A shield's rating is recorded separately from the main box devoted to Parry, as a shield can be smashed by an opponent's blows.



WEAPONS:

WEAPON	DAMAGE	INJURY	LOAD	COMBAT PROFICIENCY	NOTES
Unarmed	1	–	0	Brawling*	Includes throwing stones. Cannot cause a Piercing Blow
Dagger	2	14	0	Brawling*	Can trigger Pierce as if it was a Sword (see page 99)
Cudgel	3	12	0	Brawling*	–
Club	4	14	1	Brawling*	–
Short Sword	3	16	1	Swords	–
Sword	4	16	2	Swords	–
Long Sword	5	16 (1h)/18 (2h)	3	Swords	Can be used 1 or 2-handed
Short Spear	3	14	2	Spears	Can be thrown
Spear	4	14 (1h)/16 (2h)	3	Spears	Can be 1 or 2-handed. Can be thrown
Great Spear	5	16	4	Spears	2-handed
Axe	5	18	2	Axes	–
Long-hafted Axe	6	18 (1h)/20 (2h)	3	Axes	Can be used 1 or 2-handed
Great Axe	7	20	4	Axes	2-handed
Mattock	7	18	3	Axes	2-handed
Bow	3	14	2	Bows	Ranged weapon. 2-handed
Great Bow	4	16	4	Bows	Ranged weapon. 2-handed

* Weapons used to make Brawling Attacks (see page 67).



Bow

Great Bow

Mail-shirt

Coat of Mail

Helm

ARMOUR:

ARMOUR	PROTECTION	LOAD	TYPE
Leather Shirt	1d	3	Leather armour
Leather Corslet	2d	6	Leather armour
Mail-shirt**	3d	9	Mail armour
Coat of Mail**	4d	12	Mail armour
Helm*	+1d	4	Headgear

* May be removed in combat to lower Load.

** See Standard of Living requirements on page 100.

SHIELDS:

SHIELDS	PARRY MODIFIER	LOAD
Buckler	+1	2
Shield**	+2	4
Great Shield**	+3	6

** See Standard of Living requirements on page 100.

Buckler

Shield

Travelling Gear

A hero's travelling gear includes the belongings that adventurers carry when on a journey, in addition to their weapons and armour. In winter, this includes boots and thick, warm clothes — a jacket, a fur-lined cloak, woollen hose (trousers), and blankets. During the warmer months, the adventurer may do away with the heaviest items, and just include light clothes and cloaks.

> Travelling gear does need to be annotated in detail on a character's sheet only if a player wishes to do so, and is not given a Load rating.

Useful Items

Any tool, instrument, or device carried by a Player-hero to perform one or more specific tasks is a useful item. Things like a hammer, or a hunting knife, a coil of good rope, a lantern, or flint and steel to start a fire, and so on.

These are items that may gain the Player-heroes an advantage in game terms, but that also may allow them to do things that could not be done at all without them — for example, digging a hole in frozen ground can hardly be accomplished without a pickaxe.

Players are free to choose their useful items, possibly inventing a reason why a particular object is so handy — options include a particular craftsmanship, or another exotic feature. The item can also be some form of consumable or perishable goods, like a bottle of liquor, or a balm — in that case, the Player-hero is considered to always have a supply that will last for the length of the Adventuring Phase.

Useful items are listed on a Player-hero's character sheet. To determine if they gain a Player-hero an advantage, they must be associated with a Skill, possibly along with a brief definition of their use.

> If a Player-hero is making a roll outside of combat using a Skill associated with a useful item, and the Loremaster deems that this should grant the hero an advantage, the Player-hero *gains (1d)*. Only one item can benefit the same die roll.

All Player-heroes start the game with a number of useful items based on their Standard of Living, according to the table below.

USEFUL ITEMS:

STANDARD OF LIVING	CULTURE	NUMBER OF USEFUL ITEMS
Poor	—	none
Frugal	Elves, Rangers	1 item
Common	Hobbits, Men of Bree	2 items
Prosperous	Bardings, Dwarves	3 items
Rich or Very Rich	—	4 items

LOAD

Selecting the right amount of things to carry is the first test of a hero's mettle, and a light pack on a traveller's back is an indication of their experience in the trade.

In game terms, the hindrance that carried items cause to an adventurer, both in terms of weight and discomfort, is represented by a Load rating.

> Load is monitored only as far as War Gear and Treasure is concerned. All heroes are considered to carry without discomfort a reasonable amount of personal items and gear for a life on the road (their Travelling Gear, carried also with the help of their pack animals — see Hobbit Ponies and Full-sized Horses, on page 50).

An adventurer can carry a total Load up to the character's maximum Endurance. Since the Endurance score determines when a hero starts getting tired, it is generally much wiser to keep that total much lower than the maximum allowed (see Endurance, on page 69).

> Players keep track of their hero's Load score on their character sheets, and must update it should it change during play — If they add or remove pieces of War Gear or Treasure to what the Player-hero normally carries, the Load rating is immediately adjusted to reflect the increased or reduced burden.

EXAMPLES OF USEFUL ITEMS

- A knife for skinning rabbits, a little box of salt to cook (HUNTING),
- A coil of rope with grappling hook to climb (ATHLETICS),
- A wind-proof lantern (SCAN)
- An exotic musical instrument (SONG)
- A balm to soothe pain (HEALING)
- A suit of expensive clothing, earrings of pearl (AWE or COURTESY)
- A liquor to infuse strength (ENHEARTEN)
- A sunstone to navigate in bad weather (EXPLORE)
- A fine pipe to find comfort (INSIGHT)
- A detailed set of maps (TRAVEL)
- A set of instruments to carve stone (CRAFT).

The usefulness of ponies and horses as far as journeys are concerned is based on their Vigour rating.

While travelling, all Player-heroes gain a number of points of Travel Fatigue, as a result of journey events. At the end of a journey, Player-heroes travelling with a mount reduce their Fatigue total by their beast's Vigour rating (see the rules for journeys, on page 108).

Additionally, ponies and horses can be laden with those riches the Player-heroes discover in the course of their adventuring (see Treasure, on page 158).

Each pack animal can carry Treasure up to 10 points of Load.

"In the end he would only take two small chests, one filled with silver, and the other with gold, such as one strong pony could carry."

Hobbit-ponies and full-sized horses

The best asset of an efficient travelling Company is an appropriate number of ponies or horses to ride or to employ as baggage-carriers. The number and quality of the mounts available to the Player-heroes depends on their individual Standard of Living (see the table below) but are kept track of as a shared asset.

Ponies are sturdy little beasts; they cannot go much faster than a normal walking pace, especially when loaded with stores and tackle, but are good to help the Player-heroes cope with the toil of spending long hours on the road. Horses can go faster (see the Journey chapter, page 108), but few such animals are seen in the North, and most are used as pack animals or draught beasts.

PONIES AND HORSES:

STANDARD OF LIVING	MOUNT TYPE AND QUALITY	VIGOUR
Poor or Frugal	The hero cannot afford a mount	–
Common	The hero brings an old horse, or half-starved pony	1
Prosperous	The hero brings a decent beast	2
Rich or Very Rich	The hero brings a fine beast	3

STARTING REWARD AND VIRTUE

He took from the box a small sword in an old shabby leathern scabbard.

There are many things that may betray the true nature of adventurers. It may be their weather-beaten look, or the grim determination that surfaces when they set themselves to a difficult task. In game terms, nothing defines the stuff heroes are made of better than their special abilities and superior gear.

The growth in stature of a hero in terms of power and renown is tracked in the game using two values — **VALOUR** and **WISDOM**. Both ratings are ranked from 1 to 6, reflecting the gradual transformation of a novice adventurer into a veteran hero.

> At the beginning of the game, the Player-heroes have yet to prove their worth, and start with a rating of 1 in both characteristics.

Among their various effects on gameplay, **VALOUR** and **WISDOM** grant players special abilities: Abilities granted by gaining a new rank in **WISDOM** are called Virtues, while those gained by an increased rank in **VALOUR** are called Rewards.

- Virtues give the Player-heroes access to the peculiar abilities of their folk.
- Rewards are upgrades that enhance a hero's war gear.

At the start of the game, all players get to choose 1 Virtue and 1 Reward, selecting them among those listed in *Chapter 5*.

STARTING REWARDS (PAGE 79)

1. Close-fitting (armour or helm) – Add +2 to the result of your **PROTECTION** roll.
2. Cunning Make (armour, helm or shield) – Reduce your Load rating by 2.
3. Fell (weapon) – Raise the Injury rating of a weapon by 2.
4. Grievous (weapon) – Raise the Damage rating of a weapon by 1.
5. Keen (weapon) – Attack rolls score a Piercing Blow on a 9+.
6. Reinforced (shield) – Raise a shield's Parry bonus by +1.

STARTING VIRTUES (PAGE 80)

1. Confidence – Raise your Hope by 2.
2. Dour-handed – Add +1 to damage on a Heavy Blow, and +1 to Feat Die on a Pierce.
3. Hardiness – Raise your Endurance by 2.
4. Mastery – Choose two Skills and make them *Favoured*.
5. Nimbleness – Raise your Parry rating by 1.
6. Prowess – Reduce one Attribute TN by 1.

THE COMPANY

"I am looking for someone to share in an adventure that I am arranging, and it's very difficult to find anyone."

Adventurers know that burdens are easier to bear when shared with others. That's one of the reasons why they gather in a Company, a group united by a common cause — be it to fight the Enemy, lead a hunt for a prized prey, or scour the land seeking lost or stolen treasure.

The creation of the Company is a procedure that can be used to wrap a character creation session, or that can take place right before the first Adventuring Phase. The players introduce their adventurers and determine the circumstances that brought them together — in general, it is good to assume that the Company has been together for some time already

when the game begins. The Loremaster assists the players, providing suggestions and advice.

To create the Company, the players and the Loremaster must follow the sequence described below:

1. Choose a Patron
2. Choose a Safe Haven
3. Determine the Company's Fellowship rating
4. Choose Fellowship Focuses

Patron

A Company may be brought together by chance or design. If it's not chance, then the meeting of the Player-heroes might have been directly arranged by one of the Wise and the Great of Middle-earth — their Patron.

A Patron is an influential individual who has taken an interest in the group, and that in the course of the game will offer the Company additional reasons to go adventuring, often providing both support and counsel. All Patrons work with the Player-heroes from time to time, following a personal agenda, but in general hoping to influence the events that are going to shape Middle-earth in the years to come.

The Company starts the game choosing one Patron among those listed below (but additional ones may be added in the course of the game).

To select their Patron, the players should check their characteristics, and pick the one whose potential agenda seems more in agreement with their own goals as a group — for example, the list of Callings favoured by a Patron can be used as a good indication of what that individual might ask a Company as a favour or service in the course of play. The identity of the chosen Patron is recorded on the Company log sheet.

As can be seen by consulting the table below, all Patrons may provide a Fellowship Bonus, effectively raising the number of Fellowship points available to the members of the Company, and another peculiar form of advantage, usually connected to the expenditure of Fellowship points (see Fellowship Rating, page 54).

Player-heroes gain the opportunity to go and see a Patron when they are in the same place during a Fellowship Phase, choosing the Meet Patron undertaking (see page 121).

STARTING PATRONS:

PATRON	FAVOURED CALLINGS	FELLOWSHIP POINTS	ADDITIONAL ADVANTAGE	AGENDA
Balin, son of Fundin	Captain, Champion	+1	Spend Fellowship to make a combat roll *Favoured*.	Reclaim lost strongholds, eliminate enemy lieutenants, etc.
Bilbo Baggins	Treasure Hunter, Scholar	+2	Raise Fellowship by +1 when choosing the Meet Patron undertaking to visit Bilbo.	Recover lost lore and lost things.
Círdan the Shipwright	Messenger, Scholar	+1	Spend Fellowship to roll again all dice in a roll. Choose the Meet Patron undertaking to receive a rumour.	Rekindle hope, preserve the lore of the Ages.
Gandalf the Grey	Messenger, Captain	+2	Spend Fellowship to make a Shadow Test *Favoured*.	Warn the Free Peoples, inspire them to action.
Gilraen, daughter of Dírhael	Champion, Warden	0	Resolve Journey Events within the old realm of Arnor as if in a Border Land. Choose the Meet Patron undertaking to receive a rumour.	Fight the Enemy, defend the weak.
Tom Bombadil and Lady Goldberry	Warden, Treasure Hunter	+2	Spend all your Fellowship to call Tom or Goldberry's intervention anywhere in Tom's country.	Protect the land, find and preserve what was buried.

The Safe Haven

The safe haven of the Company is a location that works as the starting base of operations for the group, and as its refuge to repair to for the Fellowship Phase. Usually, it's the place where the Player-heroes gathered for the first time.

> In Eriador, the ideal choice for a starting safe haven is certainly the village of Bree, as it stands at the crossroads of the East Road and North Road, and everyone who journeys across the land stops at The Prancing Pony for a pipe to smoke in comfort (see *Chapter 9* for more information about Bree and its inn).

In the course of their exploration of Eriador the Company will find new places suitable to be used as safe havens, widening their options — for example, a Company might eventually add the city of Tharbad and Rivendell as possible safe havens.

The Inn of Bree … was a meeting place for the idle, talkative, and inquisitive among the inhabitants, large and small, of the four villages; and a resort of Rangers and other wanderers, and for such travellers (mostly dwarves) as still journeyed on the East Road, to and from the Mountains.

LONG HAVE I WANDERED BY ROADS FORGOTTEN

Telling the story of how a Player-hero reached the location where the Company first meets is a good way of introducing a character. Such a tale tells the other players where heroes come from, why they left, and possibly something about their abilities and aspirations.

Fellowship Rating

The group of Player-heroes is more than a band of roving mercenaries brought together by mere necessity. At its foundation are communal goals and a mutual respect. This feeling of trust is recreated in the game by the Company's Fellowship score.

Expressed by a numerical value, Fellowship is a pool of points shared among all Player-heroes that is mainly spent to recover lost confidence:

> During the Adventuring Phase, Player-heroes can spend points of Fellowship to recover points of Hope when resting (see page 71),

Additionally, Fellowship can be spent to trigger special effects tied to the Company's Patron (see Patrons, page 52).

The starting Fellowship score of the Company is equal to the number of Player-heroes in the group; this value can be augmented by a number of Virtues or Cultural Blessings, and by a bonus associated with the Company's Patron.

Once calculated, the Company's Fellowship score is recorded by all players on their character sheets, in the designated space. For every point of Fellowship spent, all Player-heroes must adjust the amount on their character sheet.

When all points have been used, the Company cannot spend any more Fellowship. Fellowship points are fully refreshed at the end of each gaming session.

Since Fellowship is a common pool of points shared by all Player-heroes, any expenditure must be agreed upon by all Player-heroes in the Company.

Fellowship Focus

A Company's Fellowship rating represents the loyalty that adventurers feel towards each other. But some of them might share an additional level of companionship with another member of the Company. Such a bond may be due to the respect felt for someone wiser or nobler, a special friendship shared with an old acquaintance, the kinship shared with a fellow compatriot, the deep affection for a dear family member, or even pity for someone considered to be weak or unfit for adventuring.

Each player can choose one member of the Company as their Player-hero's Fellowship Focus (players can also opt for choosing their Fellowship Focus later, at any point during a game).

Players are free to indicate any other Player-hero as their choice, even one that has already been chosen by someone else. The bond doesn't have to be mutual: a hero who has been chosen by another hero as a Fellowship Focus is free to choose any other character as their own.

In game terms, Player-heroes provide a greater advantage when they help their Fellowship focus:

Player-heroes providing support to their Fellowship Focus make them *gain (2d)* instead of *(1d)*.

But the benefit of caring for someone comes at a price:

Player-heroes gain 1 Shadow point whenever their Fellowship Focus is Wounded, suffers a bout of madness, or is otherwise seriously harmed (this Shadow gain cannot be prevented with a Shadow Test — see page 137).

EXAMPLE:

As seen in the example for support on page 21, a Hobbit burglar is receiving support from her Barding companion to open a locked Dwarven door. The support action gains the Hobbit a bonus Success die. If the burglar was the Barding's Fellowship Focus, the Hobbit would gain (2d) instead of (1d).

Experience

Somehow the killing of the giant spider, all alone by himself in the dark without the help of the wizard or the dwarves or of anyone else, made a great difference to Mr Baggins.

Characters in *The One Ring* change as the game progresses. As they overcome the obstacles that fate presents them and complete the tasks they have set out to accomplish, they find themselves deeply transformed by the experience, much like people in real life.

In game terms, players earn points at the end of each session and at the end of the Adventuring Phase. Then, they spend them during the Fellowship Phase, to improve their adventurers' abilities or to acquire new ones.

There are two types of Experience points: Skill points, that are spent to acquire new ranks in any Skill, and Adventure points, that are used to improve Combat Proficiencies or gain new ranks in **VALOUR** or **WISDOM**.

SKILL POINTS

The capability of heroes to profit from their experiences and hone their abilities as a result is represented in the game by earning and spending Skill points.

Players earn Skill points as follows:

All players gain 3 Skill points each at the end of every gaming session they attend.

Finally, during each Yule Fellowship Phase, all players earn a number of additional Skill points equal to their adventurers' **WITS** rating (see page 120).

EXAMPLE:
In the last Adventuring Phase, Folco the Hobbit has taken part in 3 gaming sessions, for a total of 9 Skill points. When the next Yule arrives, he will earn 6 additional points — his **WITS** *rating.*

ADVENTURE POINTS

The sense of accomplishment of the Player-heroes, their confidence and skill at arms, and the hard-earned respect paid to them by their peers are represented by the award of Adventure points.

Players earn Adventure points as follows:

All players receive 3 Adventure points each at the end of every gaming session they attend.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

(Bilbo) … he had no close friends, until some of his younger cousins began to grow up. The eldest of these, and Bilbo's favourite, was young Frodo Baggins.

There are several ways that a hero's adventures might come to an end. Adventurers can die fighting against the servants of the Dark Lord, or their will can finally break under the burden of the Shadow. Or, if they are lucky, they can retire from adventuring willingly, to return to their own land in peace and spend their remaining years amongst loved ones.

But the struggle against the Shadow knows no respite, and before heroes abandon it they should choose someone to take their place, lest they see their legacy be lost.

ADVENTURING CAREER

The life of an adventurer is hard for members of any culture. Dwarves and Elves may be long-lived in comparison to Hobbits and especially Men, but their ability to deal with the harsh struggle against the Shadow isn't really superior to others — In fact, it is rare for heroes from any Culture to go adventuring for more than two decades.

Player-heroes are expected to rise to excellence in about 10 years of game time — meaning, to reach ranks of 5+ in **VALOUR** and **WISDOM**, and comparable levels in a Combat Proficiency.

Heroes who get this far with their body and spirit intact should consider themselves very lucky and seriously think about retiring. But much before they do that, they should choose an heir — only by doing so can heroes pass along as much of their experience as they can, before a well-aimed blow finally ends their career, or sorrow and regret nest too deeply into their soul.

RAISING AN HEIR

Designating and raising an heir is the only way to continue playing with an adventurer that is related to their Player-heroes upon their death or retirement — Players who see their heroes die or leave active play without a ready heir must create a new, unrelated Player-hero using the usual rules.

A Player-hero's heir can be anyone: a sister or a brother, a son or daughter, or a close or distant cousin fostered to follow in the footsteps of the adventurous relative; it doesn't have to be a family member at all — heroes who have no relatives to designate may choose someone else entirely.

To designate an heir, players must choose the Raise an Heir undertaking during any Yule Fellowship Phase (see page 120). Then, they must spend up to 5 Treasure points and an equal number of Adventure

points to form the heir's Previous Experience reserve: for each Adventure point spent, raise the reserve by 1.

The first time the Raise an Heir undertaking is chosen, players choose a name for their adventurer's heir, writing the name down on their character sheet. Once the heir has been named, players are free to choose again the Raise an Heir undertaking to spend up to 5 more Treasure and Adventure points and increase their heir's reserve.

A Player-hero's heir is ready to continue the Player-hero's legacy upon reaching 10 Previous Experience points. Player-heroes who prefer not to retire yet (and who don't die!) may continue to choose the Raise an Heir undertaking, adding points to the Previous Experience reserve, up to a maximum of 20 points.

CREATING THE HEIR

When the time comes for the Player-hero to retire, it is time to create the heir, making use of the usual rules for character creation, with the following exceptions:

- Players designate one of their hero's *Favoured* Skills as their family heritage. The heir receives this heritage ability as a free, additional *Favoured* Skill.
- The starting Standard of Living of the heir is equal to that of the retiring Player-hero (instead of that of the culture).
- Instead of receiving 10 points to raise a hero's starting Skills and Combat Proficiencies, players can spend the amount of points accumulated in their Previous Experience reserve, using the Skill and Combat Proficiency costs tables on page 46 (Skills cannot be raised above the fourth rank, and Combat Proficiencies cannot go beyond the third rank).

Finally, if the Previous Experience reserve of the designated heir is equal to 15+, a single item in possession of the original Player-hero is passed on to the chosen heir as an Heirloom. If the Previous Experience reserve is equal to 20, a second Heirloom can be passed on.

An Heirloom is an item that has been upgraded with one or more Rewards, or a Wondrous Artefact or Famous Weapon or Armour.

Famous Weapons or Armour have their first quality automatically activated when they are taken up by an heir. Further qualities can be 'awoken' in the manner described on page 78, as the new Hero gains levels of **VALOUR**. In the case of a Wondrous Artefact, its Blessings are revealed upon passing the item to the heir.

SESSION LENGTH AND ADVANCEMENT RATE

The average length of a session of play is considered to clock at approximately three hours.

If a more granular rate of Experience points gain is desired, Player-heroes can be considered to earn 1 Skill point and 1 Adventure point for each hour of gaming.

This advancement rate is of course a rough estimate, and can be adjusted to suit the playing style of a particular group. If a group considers to be able to pack more action into an hour of gaming than what is considered usual – for example, they complete in one evening an adventure that is presented as requiring two or more sessions – the advancement rate can be raised, to give 1.5 points per hour of gaming, or even more.

CHAPTER 4

Characteristics

"… you have been chosen, and you must therefore use such strength and heart and wits as you have."

Heroes reveal themselves through their actions, as their strengths and weaknesses emerge when they are put to the test. They are a diverse folk, each with a unique combination of abilities and traits — some favour their strength and prowess to overcome the threats and difficulties they encounter, some rely on their fortitude and integrity to endure, and others appeal to their reasoning and astuteness to find a solution.

SKILLS

"There is food in the wild," said Strider;
"berry, root, and herb; and I have some skill as a hunter at need."

In *The One Ring*, almost every action heroes can attempt is resolved using a Skill: whether a Player-hero is traversing the land trying to get back home (**TRAVEL**), running away from a threat (**ATHLETICS**), or listening intently to an orator's speech to weigh their words (**INSIGHT**).

In game terms, Skills and their ratings represent what Player-heroes are able to do and how good they are at doing it.

When using a Skill, players roll one Feat die and a number of Success Dice equal to the acting Player-hero's Skill rank — rolling only one Feat die if a Player-hero is unskilled (rank 0). To succeed, the roll result must match or beat the Attribute TN corresponding to the used Skill.

FAVOURED SKILLS

A number of Skills can be marked as *Favoured* on a character sheet, checking the box to the left of their name. *Favoured* Skills highlight those abilities that come most naturally to a Player-hero.

All rolls made using a *Favoured* Skill are *Favoured* rolls — the acting player rolls two Feat dice, keeping the best result.

SKILL CATEGORIES

Each Skill belongs to one of three categories, based on which Attribute TN it's rolled against. For ease of reference, the Skills are organised on a character sheet in three columns placed right under the Attribute box they depend on.

STRENGTH SKILLS

All Skills in this category rely largely on the Player-hero's physical aptitude. An adventurer with a high **STRENGTH** score is more likely to be imposing (**AWE**), to have a clear singing voice (**SONG**), to be fit and agile (**ATHLETICS**), to have good sight and hearing (**AWARENESS**, **HUNTING**), and to possess skilful hands (**CRAFT**).

STRENGTH Skill rolls are resolved using a Player-hero's **STRENGTH** Target Number.

HEART SKILLS

The Skills under this category depend on the Player-hero's force of spirit more than anything else. An adventurer with a high **HEART** score may be a charismatic leader (**ENHEARTEN**, **BATTLE**), an energetic guide (**TRAVEL**), a gracious gentleman (**COURTESY**), be able to read the hearts of others (**INSIGHT**), or to understand their hurt and how to heal them (**HEALING**).

HEART Skill rolls are resolved using a Player-hero's **HEART** Target Number.

WITS SKILLS

A Player-hero's mental aptitude affects those Skills that rely on quick thinking and creativity. A hero with a high **WITS** value will quickly learn witty oratory (**PERSUADE**), the arts of a burglar (**STEALTH**), show attentiveness (**SCAN**, **EXPLORE**), and will be clever and studious (**RIDDLE**, **LORE**).

> **WITS** Skill rolls are resolved using a Player-hero's **WITS** Target Number.

SKILL LIST:

SKILL CATEGORIES			SKILL GROUPS
Strength	Heart	Wits	
AWE	ENHEARTEN	PERSUADE	Personality
ATHLETICS	TRAVEL	STEALTH	Movement
AWARENESS	INSIGHT	SCAN	Perception
HUNTING	HEALING	EXPLORE	Survival
SONG	COURTESY	RIDDLE	Custom
CRAFT	BATTLE	LORE	Vocation

SKILLS LIST

The 18 Skills cover wide areas of knowledge and ability, enabling players and the Loremaster to resolve most situations encountered during play.

The following list presents the Skills in alphabetical order. A brief description is provided, to help players and the Loremaster to identify the type of actions that can be accomplished using each Skill.

ATHLETICS

ATHLETICS is a broad Skill, covering most of the physical activities that a hero might undertake while adventuring, including running, leaping, climbing, and swimming. Heroes with high **ATHLETICS** Skill scores exhibit a winning combination of physical prowess, grace, and control, generally gained through continuous exercise and daily exertion.

A successful **ATHLETICS** roll produces a satisfactory outcome in the physical activity, while a failed roll might lead to serious harm, depending on the circumstances. A superior result suggests a spectacular achievement.

Poor Mr Baggins had never had much practice in climbing trees, but they hoisted him up into the lowest branches of an enormous oak that grew right out into the path, and up he had to go as best he could.

SKILL GROUPS

The 18 Skills can be considered to be categorised together also by affinity into six 'Skill groups' of 3 Skills each, with each group being associated with a different type of activity. Players may find this categorisation useful when identifying the right ability to use for a task.

- Personality Skills (**AWE**, **ENHEARTEN**, **PERSUADE**). A hero's personality comes through in their capacity to impress, encourage, and influence others. A good level of proficiency in all three Skills in this group is the mark of a leader.
- Movement Skills (**ATHLETICS**, **TRAVEL**, **STEALTH**). Overcoming obstacles, enduring long journeys, and moving secretly are the stuff adventurers are made of.
- Perception Skills (**AWARENESS**, **INSIGHT**, **SCAN**). The ability to catch hidden details often pays off, be it noticing an odd noise that gives away an ambusher, catching the gleam in the eyes of a liar, or spotting the crack in the wall that reveals a secret door.
- Survival Skills (**HUNTING**, **HEALING**, **EXPLORE**). The three Skills of this group, essential for a roving adventurer, make for an invaluable member of a company.
- Custom Skills (**SONG**, **COURTESY**, **RIDDLE**). While heroes are often held to be uncivilised brutes by the common folk, their lives can sometimes depend on knowing the proper words, wisest song, or cleverest answer. Excelling in these Skills is considered a noble achievement.
- Vocation Skills (**CRAFT**, **BATTLE**, **LORE**). Before their resolve hardened and pushed them on the road to adventure, adventurers probably led a life much like that of ordinary individuals: learning a trade, defending their people, and absorbing their accumulated wisdom.

AWARENESS

The **AWARENESS** Skill represents a hero's readiness to react and the ability to notice something unexpected, out of the ordinary, or difficult to detect. A high Skill score reflects both keen senses and the experience to understand what is seen or heard — a high level of watchfulness is extremely useful if a Player-hero serves as a look-out for the Company.

As Frodo watched he saw something dark pass across the lighter space between two trees, and then halt.

AWE

This Skill measures the capacity to evoke respect in onlookers, and determines the impression the Player-heroes make on someone they meet for the first time. Depending on the circumstances and on the player's intentions, it can be used to instil wonderment, admiration, or even fear. **AWE** arises from a hero's native charisma, but can also be engineered by a dramatic entrance or impressive attire.

Successful use of the **AWE** Skill evokes the chosen effect, while failure can lead to the opposite result. Achieving a superior success means that a hero has won the hearts of the onlookers or cowed them into silent submission.

For a moment it seemed to the eyes of Legolas that a white flame flickered on the brows of Aragorn like a shining crown.

BATTLE

A rating in this Skill shows a firm grasp of the rules of battle and the capability to maneuver appropriately when involved in a violent confrontation. The **BATTLE** Skill can be used to gain an advantage when fighting against a group of foes, or leading a company of troops in open battle and maintaining order in the midst of chaos (individual fighting talents are covered by Combat Proficiencies on page 65).

"Fools!" laughed Bard, "to come thus beneath the Mountain's arm! They do not understand war above ground, whatever they may know of battle in the mines."

COURTESY

The Free Peoples recognise common norms of decency and ancient conventions of behaviour. Observing these traditions demonstrates respect and is a way of quickly establishing a friendly footing even with complete strangers.

Succeeding in a **COURTESY** roll might mean the Player-heroes know what to say at the right moment to make a good impression with their host, or are mindful of their manners when receiving guests.

"You have nice manners for a thief and a liar," said the Dragon.

CRAFT

The **CRAFT** Skill doesn't really cover the whole range of abilities of smiths, wrights, and other artisans, but reflects a talent for making or mending things by hand. **CRAFT** can be used to repair the wheel of a cart, or construct an improvised raft with wood found on a river shore, or to start a fire on a windy hill.

A high **CRAFT** score may indicate that the Player-hero was a craftsperson before starting a life of adventure. Some Cultures, such as the Dwarves and Noldorin Elves, revere crafts as the highest expression of creativity.

… the only craft little practised among them was shoe-making; but they had long and skilful fingers and could make many other useful and comely things.

ENHEARTEN

Player-heroes can use the **ENHEARTEN** Skill to instil positive feelings in others, urging them to act on the matter at hand. They achieve this mainly through example, charisma, and personal conviction, rather than through the effective use of words (which falls under **PERSUADE**). This Skill can be used on individuals, but is particularly effective in influencing crowds. Player-heroes with high **ENHEARTEN** ratings can be forceful orators, passionate agitators, and well-loved leaders.

A successful **ENHEARTEN** roll awakens a chosen feeling in the subject, as long as it is not in opposition to their current mood. A superior success is enough to influence wholly disinterested individuals, or turn rivals into supporters.

…he returned to the walls, and passed round all their circuit, enheartening the men…

EXPLORE

Player-heroes rely on the **EXPLORE** Skill when they move through an unfamiliar area of the Wild. An **EXPLORE** roll may be required during a journey to find out where the Company is heading, or to get back on track after a detour; to cope with adverse weather conditions or other natural hazards; to create paths through the wilderness suitable for others to follow; or to choose a suitable place to set up camp. A high **EXPLORE** rating is an invaluable resource if a Player-hero is acting as a scout for the Company.

"We have found a dry cave," they said, "not far round the next corner; and ponies and all could get inside."

HEALING

The knowledge of how to relieve pain and apply remedies to restore health to the suffering is an ancient one, and treatments differ from culture to culture. However, almost all

traditions agree on the treatment of serious injuries, which must be tended immediately to keep from worsening.

The **HEALING** Skill includes bone setting and the use of herbs or salves, but the outcome relies on the ability of the healer to understand what ails the sufferer and determine what should be done to help them.

As a matter of fact, Gandalf, who had often been in the mountains, had once rendered a service to the eagles and healed their lord from an arrow-wound.

HUNTING

Knowing how to hunt is a fundamental skill, shared by most cultures of Middle-earth. A **HUNTING** roll may be required when pursuing a creature through wild areas, or to follow tracks and identify a quarry by its spoor. The **HUNTING** Skill also covers preparing traps and the training and use of hunting dogs or birds.

In wilder areas, hunters learn to apply their trade to more dangerous quarries — such as Orcs, Spiders, or Wargs — or else risk becoming the prey.

They dwelt most often by the edges of the woods, from which they could escape at times to hunt, or to ride and run over the open lands by moonlight or starlight…

INSIGHT

INSIGHT represents the ability to see beyond appearances and to recognise the hidden thoughts and beliefs of people. **INSIGHT** does not reveal if someone is lying, but the information it yields can be used to draw useful conclusions about people's motives. Heroes with a high **INSIGHT** score are often recognised as being sensible and discerning individuals, and many may seek their counsel.

A successful **INSIGHT** roll provides the Player-heroes with a reliable, but partial, portrait of the person they are observing. A superior success allows them to correctly guess additional details about an individual's state of mind. **INSIGHT** tests may be rolled in opposition to an adversary trying to sway or convince a Player-hero of something.

"There are locked doors and closed windows in your mind, and dark rooms behind them," said Faramir. "But in this I judge that you speak the truth."

LORE

LORE expresses a love for learning: be it a fascination with descriptions of distant lands or an interest in family genealogy. Whenever an action involves knowledge of some kind, a **LORE** test is required.

Player-heroes are considered to be knowledgeable in the traditions of their own people, and so the Loremaster should

rarely require a player to make a **LORE** roll for information regarding their own character's Culture or the area they originally came from.

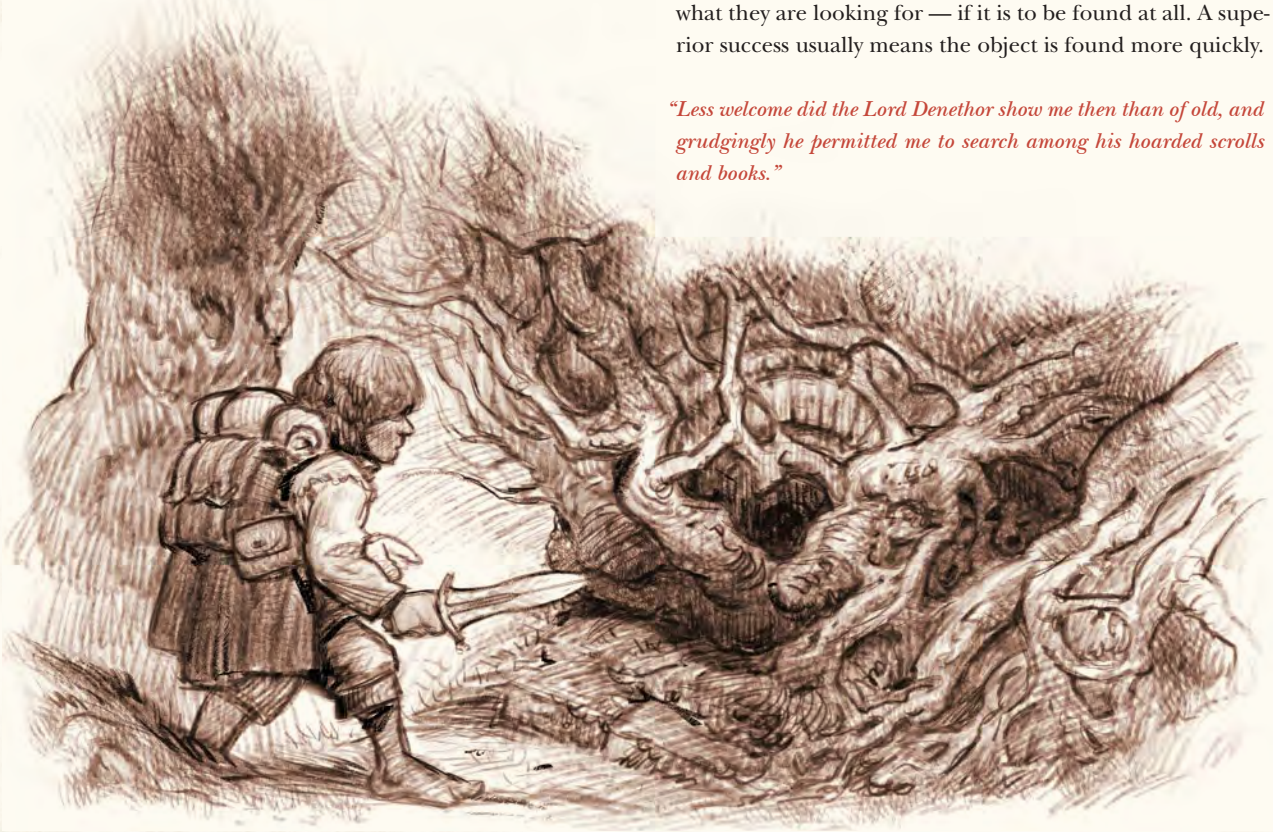
He knew many histories and legends of long ago, of Elves and Men and the good and evil deeds of the Elder Days.

PERSUADE

This Skill allows the Player-heroes to apply their reasoning to convince other individuals of an idea or course of action. It can be used to influence small groups of listeners, but only if used in an appropriate context, such as a common hall. Persuasion requires more time than other Personality Skills, but can have a more lasting impact on other characters' actions. A high **PERSUADE** score denotes an uncommon eloquence, a love of speech and knowledge of its proper use and its effect on listeners. Wise people, advisers to chieftains and kings, and their messengers all share this passion for the spoken word.

The successful use of the **PERSUADE** Skill allows a Player-hero to convince an audience that their current position regarding a matter is flawed. A superior success convinces listeners of the quality of a hero's stance, and may even turn them into ardent believers.

Aragorn laughed. "Every man has something too dear to trust to another. But would you part an old man from his support? Come, will you not let us enter?"



RIDDLE

Owing its name to the ancient game, the **RIDDLE** Skill represents the ability to draw conclusions from seemingly unconnected scraps of information by deduction, reasoning, and intuition. Adventurers also rely on **RIDDLE** whenever they are forced to talk about a subject but prefer to conceal part of what they know; for example, to tell something about themselves without revealing their identity.

As an accepted custom among many cultures, speaking in riddles is usually allowed among strangers meeting for the first time and wanting to speak guardedly. This Skill is also used to gain helpful insight from a spoken or written riddle.

"A Hobbit waded out into the water and back; but I cannot say how long ago." "How then do you read this riddle?" asked Gimli.

SCAN

Player-heroes can use the **SCAN** Skill when examining something closely or attentively. This Skill allows a Player-hero to skim through a book to locate a piece of relevant information, look for concealed doors or hidden inscriptions, recognise a familiar face in a crowd, or locate a set of tracks on the ground. **SCAN** rolls are generally initiated by the players rather than the Loremaster. One roll is required for each inspection of a small area, such as a room. **AWARENESS**, rather than **SCAN**, is used to see if a hero passively notices something.

A successful **SCAN** roll generally lets Player-heroes find what they are looking for — if it is to be found at all. A superior success usually means the object is found more quickly.

"Less welcome did the Lord Denethor show me then than of old, and grudgingly he permitted me to search among his hoarded scrolls and books."

SONG

Hobbits and Men, Elves and Dwarves, even Goblins and maybe Orcs: all creatures of Middle-earth celebrate by playing music and singing songs. Great deeds and grim misfortunes are remembered in verse, and pleasant or comic stories are told to ease spirits and find comfort.

The **SONG** Skill is used to recite poems, sing songs, or play instruments suitable to a character's Culture. It can also be used to learn new works or create original compositions.

As they sang, the Hobbit felt the love of beautiful things made by hands and by cunning and by magic moving through him, a fierce and jealous love, the desire of the hearts of Dwarves.

STEALTH

Player-heroes resort to **STEALTH** whenever they need to act in a furtive or secret way. The Skill includes hiding, moving quietly, and shadowing others. These activities often rely on quickness and precision, so a stealthy Player-hero combines practised caution with the ability to judge the right moment to take a chance. Hunters, burglars, and solitary fighters use **STEALTH** to prosper in their trade.

A successful **STEALTH** roll indicates that the hero has gone unnoticed, while failure almost certainly attracts unwanted attention. A superior success produces an outcome so flawless that it may even be impossible to notice the deed after the fact.

So silent was his going that smoke on a gentle wind could hardly have surpassed it, and he was inclined to feel a bit proud of himself as he drew near the lower door.

TRAVEL

In the Third Age, the cities, villages, and towns of Middle-earth are often separated by many leagues of wild or deserted areas. Roads that used to lead safely to distant realms now end in broken trails that go nowhere. Whichever way the Company chooses to go, it will be a long and weary way before they get there.

A successful roll of **TRAVEL** may let a Player-hero estimate the length of a journey, read a map, and even evaluate whether a group of strangers on the road can be approached safely or if they should be left alone instead. A good **TRAVEL** Skill is an invaluable asset for the Guide of the Company when on a journey (see page 108).

The country was much rougher and more barren than in the green vale of the Great River in Wilderland on the other side of the range, and their going would be slow…

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES

Legolas shot two through the throat. Gimli hewed the legs from under another that had sprung up on Balin's tomb. Boromir and Aragorn slew many.

Adventurers start with a number of Combat Proficiency ratings corresponding to the martial tradition of their Culture of origin. In game terms, Combat Proficiencies express how well Player-heroes conduct themselves when engaged in battle.

> Rolls made using Combat Proficiencies are resolved as Skill rolls, rolling one Feat Die and a number of Success Dice equal to the rank possessed in the Combat Proficiency used. If you try to use a weapon you don't possess a rating for (rank 0), you roll only a Feat Die.

Combat Proficiencies are not divided into categories, as they are all rolled against the **STRENGTH** TN when making Attack rolls (see Combat, page 93 and following). For ease of reference, they are all listed on the character sheet in a column placed right under the **STRENGTH** box.

Unlike Skills, Combat Proficiencies can never be *Favoured*, and they can be improved only by spending Adventure points (not Skill points).

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES LIST

There are four different Combat Proficiencies in *The One Ring*: **AXES**, **BOWS**, **SPEARS**, and **SWORDS**. Each one represents a level of familiarity with a number of weapons of similar kind, allowing a Player-hero to attack using any weapon covered by that specific Proficiency.

Descriptions and characteristics of the various weapons corresponding to each Proficiency can be found on page 73 in the Gear section.

AXES

Axes and other bashing weapons are often preferred to swords by warriors who favour a more brutal approach to fighting. Historically, the axe is the weapon of choice for most Dwarves, and for their folk it surpasses the sword in both nobility and respect. Dwarven weaponsmiths apply their cunning to making axes of many different shapes and uses, and from metals of various colours.

The **AXES** Combat Proficiency allows a Player-hero to use an axe, a great axe, a long-hafted axe, but also a mattock.

He was clothed in a tunic of wool down to his knees, and was leaning on a large axe.

BOWS

A traditional hunting weapon, the bow is also commonly used in warfare. Made from a single piece of wood, or from a composition of wood, horn, or even metal, bows are a versatile weapon. They can be used during sieges, from horseback, in dense woodland, or in the open field. Archers usually carry another weapon to draw when the enemy gets closer; they seldom carry shields, as they can't use them when shooting a bow.

The **BOWS** Combat Proficiency enables a Player-hero to make ranged attacks using a bow or a great bow.

"Praised be the bow of Galadriel, and the hand and eye of Legolas!"

SPEARS

The spear is arguably the most widespread weapon across Middle-earth, arming kings and soldiers, riders and infantry. It is often no more than a long wooden shaft, tipped by a leaf-shaped metal head, but some spears are works of majestic artisanship, valuable heirlooms of noble households. The length of a spear varies according to the use it is designed for. Spears can be wielded one or two-handed to thrust and lunge, cast to pierce from a distance, or used from horseback as lances. Warriors equipped with a spear typically use it in conjunction with a shield, and they usually carry an additional weapon, such as a sword or axe.

The **SPEARS** Combat Proficiency allows a hero to make ranged and close combat attacks using a short spear or a spear, or to fight in close combat using a great spear.

He advanced until the point of his spear was within a foot of Aragorn's breast.

SWORDS

The sword with a straight blade has always been the weapon of choice among free Men and Elves. A mark of nobility or rank, swords of superior make are passed down by generations of warriors, and arms of ancient lineage are often imbued with spells and curses, the bane of the servants of the Shadow. Swords vary in size, shape, and quality as diverse as the folks that craft them. Many malevolent creatures have devised swords after their own fashion, usually crude counterfeits of those made by Men and Elves.

The **SWORDS** Combat Proficiency enables a Player-hero to attack in close combat using short swords, swords, and long swords.

"There is work for the Sword to do."

COMBAT PROFICIENCY	WEAPONS
AXES	Axe, Great Axe, Long-hafted Axe, Mattock
BOWS	Bow, Great Bow
SPEARS	Short Spear, Spear, Great Spear
SWORDS	Sword, Short Sword, Long Sword

BRAWLING ATTACKS

Adventurers who must leave behind their trusted weapons may find themselves forced to fight unarmed, or to rely on a simple dagger, or even a thrown stone. When this happens, they rely on their martial training to save themselves.

Player-heroes performing an attack while unarmed, or using a dagger, club, or an improvised weapon, roll a number of dice equal to their highest Combat Proficiency, but suffer a disadvantage: they *lose (1d)*.

Distinctive Features

They are quick of hearing and sharp-eyed, and though they are inclined to be fat and do not hurry unnecessarily, they are nonetheless nimble and deft in their movements.

Distinctive Features describe aspects of an adventurer's build or temper, personality traits or physical peculiarities that provide them with an additional descriptive level. These features help players to picture their adventurers, and encourage deeper roleplaying.

Players are invited to take into account their heroes' Distinctive Features throughout the game and to use them as guidelines, in particular when choosing a course of action for their adventurers.

Additionally, players can invoke a Distinctive Feature to improve their chances to succeed at a roll using a Skill. When this happens, the Player-hero is considered to be Inspired.

A trait can be invoked on a roll only if, based on its description, it is reasonably plausible for someone with that quality to fare better than an individual without it.

EXAMPLE:

One evening at the inn, Folco the Hobbit invites his companions to dance the Springle-ring, a rather vigorous dance, while he sings a song from the Westfarthing. Folco is a Merry fellow, and he chooses to make his **SONG** *roll Inspired — If he spends a point of Hope, he gains (2d) instead of (1d).*

A full description for each trait is provided below.

CHANGING A DISTINCTIVE FEATURE

Players who have played the same adventurer for a long time might eventually grow tired of the Distinctive Traits chosen for their Player-hero and feel the need for a change.

Players can replace an old trait with a new one during a Yule Fellowship Phase, by choosing the Recount a Story Undertaking.

Players should always exercise some common sense when they choose the new Distinctive Feature (and the old one being replaced) to avoid completely reinventing their Player-hero.

Distinctive Features List

There are 24 Distinctive Features in *The One Ring*. Six additional ones are exclusive to Callings, and are described in the relevant section of character creation (see page 44).

BOLD

You trust your capabilities to the point that you are not easily daunted, readily placing yourself in danger.

CUNNING

Your wit is sharp, and you are ready to use it to your advantage.

EAGER

You are filled with excitement and impatience when an endeavour piques your interest.

FAITHFUL

You are steadfastly devoted to those ideals or individuals you have chosen to follow, and your unwavering loyalty often supports you in your deeds.

FAIR

You are considered attractive by most people, even by those not belonging to your folk.

FAIR-SPOKEN

Your speech and manners are naturally pleasant and respectful, and your words rarely provoke offense.

FIERCE

When provoked, or when you deem it necessary, you may allow your savage side to emerge.

GENEROUS

You give with open hands and heart, always mindful of the needs of others.

HONOURABLE

You believe in acting fairly and doing what is morally right.

INQUISITIVE

Your curious nature is easily aroused, often by what is often not your concern. The positive side is that you are not easily deceived by appearances.

KEEN-EYED

The keenness of your eyesight surpasses that of most folk.

LORDLY

Your dignified bearing arouses feelings of reverence and respect in onlookers.

MERRY

Your spirit is not easily discouraged, and you can find light in the darkest of shadows.

PATIENT

You are slow to lose your temper and can suffer fools, delays, or even hardship without complaint.

PROUD

You hold your feats and achievements, or those of your people, in high esteem.

RUSTIC

Your ways are simple, some might say even uncouth, but you know that not all that is gold does necessarily glitter.

SECRETIVE

You do not easily share your thoughts and prefer to conceal your intentions from the eyes of others, especially outsiders to your folk.

STERN

You possess a severe nature and express it in your behaviour, body language, and speech.

SUBTLE

You may not be a Wizard, but often the ways you choose to achieve your goals are crafty, if not devious.

SWIFT

You move swiftly and are quick to take action.

TALL

You tower above most of your folk.

TRUE-HEARTED

You are sincere, and your words and actions show your honest intentions.

WARY

You are always mindful of your surroundings and observant of the speech and behaviour of strangers.

WILFUL

You are firm in temperament and belief, and usually base your actions solely on your own judgement.

ENDURANCE AND HOPE

Health and hope grew strong in them, and they were content with each good day as it came, taking pleasure in every meal, and in every word and song.

Endurance and Hope are what keep adventurers on the road, providing them with reserves of energy and with that additional momentum that sometimes is the only chance a hero has to prevail.

Both ratings are calculated during character creation, and are based on a hero's Culture of origin and on their **STRENGTH** and **HEART** stats.

The resulting values are maximum scores: during play, heroes lose Endurance points as the result of exertion and of suffering harm, and they spend Hope voluntarily when they must succeed against difficult odds.

Players record their maximum Endurance and Hope values on their character sheet using the boxes found under the corresponding stats, while they use the Current Endurance and Current Hope boxes to keep track of any changes that occur during play (alternatively, players can track them using different coloured counters or glass beads).

ENDURANCE

Endurance represents a Player-hero's resistance and is taken into account whenever an adventurer is subjected to some form of harm. In particular, Player-heroes lose Endurance during combat, when they suffer physical damage from any other source, or as a consequence of any strenuous task requiring great effort.

Player-heroes whose Endurance is reduced to zero drop unconscious, and wake up after one hour with 1 Endurance point (unless they are also Wounded, see Wounds, page 101).

WEARY

Used in conjunction with a hero's carried Load (see Gear, page 47), Endurance determines when the weight and bulk of any equipment starts to affect a Player-hero's performance.

FATIGUE

Travelling causes the Player-heroes to accumulate Fatigue points, representing a form of exhaustion caused by protracted loss of sleep and the general discomfort of spending days in the open. Fatigue enters play exclusively in conjunction with the rules for journeys (see page 108).

When gained, Fatigue points temporarily raise a travelling Player-hero's total Load, effectively making it easier to become Weary.

Heroes become Weary if their Current Endurance score becomes equal to or lower than their total Load. When this happens, the Weary box on their character sheet is checked.

Player-heroes remain Weary until their Endurance score rises above their Load again (see below).

RESTING

Player-heroes regain lost Endurance points by resting. The extent of the Player-heroes' recovery depends on whether they take a short rest, or a prolonged one.

SHORT REST: Under most circumstances, a day of adventuring allows for a maximum of one short rest, usually in the middle of the day. If precise timing is needed, a short rest may be said to correspond to at least one hour of inactivity.

With a short rest, adventurers recover a number of lost Endurance points equal to their **STRENGTH** rating (Wounded heroes do not recover any points at all).

PROLONGED REST: Under normal circumstances, the Company is allowed to take a single Prolonged Rest each day (usually, a night's sleep). The Loremaster may allow the group to take more than one Prolonged Rest if the Player-heroes are recovering in a safe and comfortable place.

Player-heroes taking a prolonged rest recover all lost Endurance points, or a number of Endurance points equal to their **STRENGTH** score if their Wounded box is checked.

hope

Hope is a hero's reserve of spiritual fortitude and positivity. A hopeful character can keep going when physically stronger heroes have already succumbed to despair.

During play, players can spend Hope to gain a Hope bonus on any die roll, or to trigger the effects of certain Cultural Virtues.

Player-heroes whose Hope score is reduced to zero are spiritually drained — it is impossible for them to find the energy required to push themselves beyond their limits.

MISERABLE

In the course of the game, Player-heroes face threats capable of shaking their determination and will to fight. As a consequence, they accumulate Shadow points.

Heroes become Miserable when their Shadow score matches or overcomes their current Hope.

When this happens, check the Miserable box on the character sheet. A Player-hero remains Miserable until their Hope rating surpasses their Shadow score again, either because they regain Hope, or because they find a way to get rid of Shadow (see The Shadow, page 136).

RECOVERING HOPE

Recovering Hope points indicates that the Player-heroes are reaffirming their lost sense of confidence. There are three main ways to recover Hope:

SPEND FELLOWSHIP: During the Adventuring Phase, whenever the Company is resting, the Player-heroes may spend any number of Fellowship points to distribute an equal number of Hope points among the Player-heroes (all players must agree on the distribution).

TAKING A BREAK FROM ADVENTURING: During the Fellowship Phase, all Player-heroes recover a number of Hope points equal to their **HEART** score, and they recover them all at Yule (see Fellowship Phases, page 119).

RESTING: Finally, Player-heroes who are down to zero Hope recover a single point of Hope once they take a Prolonged Rest.

SERIOUS INJURIES

Endurance loss should not be confused with being Wounded. While being hit in combat results in a loss of Endurance, adventurers are only at risk of death when hit by a Piercing Blow – a precise attack that threatens to bypass their armour and defences completely and cause serious injury (see the rules for Combat on page 93 and following, for the effects of Wounds and their severity).

STANDARDS OF LIVING

Bilbo was very rich and very peculiar, and had been the wonder of the Shire for sixty years, ever since his remarkable disappearance and unexpected return.

The characters in *The One Ring* are adventurers: individuals used to relying on their abilities to find sustenance in the wild, rather than by putting their hands into their money bags. To avoid the need for overly-detailed rules for economics, the game provides each of them with a Standard of Living.

In addition to affecting a hero's starting gear (see page 47), Standards of Living come into play whenever it must be determined whether an adventurer can afford to pay for some out-of-pocket expenses, like buying a meal at the inn, or paying a fisherman for renting a boat.

Using the descriptions found below, the Loremaster and the players should be able to judge in most circumstances what a Player-hero can afford.

STANDARD OF LIVING DESCRIPTIONS

There are six Standards of Living: Poor, Frugal, Common, Prosperous, Rich, and Very Rich. At the start of a game, Player-heroes are ranked based on their culture of origin — players must make a note of their starting Standard of Living, and record the corresponding worth in Treasure points using the Treasure space on their character sheets.

POOR

Impoverished folks are probably suffering from a bad harvest season, a fell winter, or the aftermath of a disease or war. They struggle every day to find what they need to survive, and have no time or resources to look for anything beyond the bare necessities, let alone equip themselves for adventure.

FRUGAL

Frugal folk usually live off the produce of their own lands and pastures. They wear simple clothes at most times, although they may possess finer garments for special gatherings like seasonal festivals, marriages, or funerals. Any jewels and other superior ornaments are treasured as possessions belonging to the community, and are passed down through generations of appointed keepers.

Adventurers coming from a Frugal folk do not usually carry anything of unusual worth (unless as part of their war gear), with the possible exception of one or two pieces of expensive clothing or common jewellery, like a rich mantle or a golden necklace or bracelet; (probably a token of their status among their peers). Consequently, Frugal Player-heroes can rarely afford to pay for anything, and prefer to find or make what they need instead.

♦ **STARTING TREASURE RATING:** 0

COMMON

A folk benefitting from a Common Standard of Living probably hasn't suffered meaningful setbacks in recent years. Wealth is more widespread than among a Frugal folk, but may be distributed unevenly. Poverty is rare, as is excessive wealth.

Player-heroes enjoying a Common Standard of Living have enough resources to look after themselves, and to pay for such things as simple accommodation and meals. Ever mindful of the cost of any luxury, they often lead an austere life, or resort to haggling to lower the price of whatever they are trying to get hold of.

♦ **STARTING TREASURE RATING:** 30

PROSPEROUS

Almost all families belonging to a Prosperous Culture can afford to live in separate, private houses. Important individuals wear fine clothing and often have one or two attendants in their service at home, like a gardener and a butler.

Player-heroes coming from a Prosperous Culture can usually pay for their share of any out-of-pocket expenses encountered along their journey, and might even pay for another member of the Company, if need be. This includes, for example, paying for comfortable accommodation, spending some time drinking in Company at an inn, and hiring beasts of burden.

♦ **STARTING TREASURE RATING:** 90

RICH

This level of prosperity is usually a transitory condition for a folk, as great wealth can easily attract the attention of many enemies. Members of a Rich Culture live amidst many luxuries, reaping the fruits of a flourishing trade or an extensive

treasure. Although those less well-off warn that affluence can easily lead to spiritual or even physical weakness, the availability of material wealth may instead set an individual free to focus on more lofty matters, like the perfection of a trade or art.

Rich adventurers fare even better than their Prosperous fellows, but not excessively so. Their life on the move does not let them take full advantage of their resources, as a good proportion of their wealth will be made up of land and riches that are not portable.

♦ **STARTING TREASURE RATING:** 180

VERY RICH

No culture in Middle-earth enjoys this level of prosperity. To reach it, Player-heroes must spend years adventuring, looking for hoards of gold and defeating the creatures jealously guarding them. If they do not die in the attempt, they deserve to spend their remaining years without any monetary concern, as they can afford anything that might take their fancy.

Hoarding Riches

Having several chests filled with gold under the bed makes it far easier for an adventurer to go around with a pouch filled with coins. The worth of all valuables that Player-heroes can find in the course of their adventures is expressed in terms of Treasure points.

Players record their heroes' individual Treasure ratings on their character sheets. As their Treasure rating rises, Player-heroes see their Standard of Living go up accordingly.

Player-heroes begin the game with a starting Treasure rating corresponding to their cultural Standard of Living. They attain a superior rank when their Treasure score matches that of the rank above theirs, as shown in the table below.

IMPROVE STANDARD OF LIVING:

STARTING STANDARD OF LIVING	TREASURE RATING
Frugal	0
Common	30
Prosperous	90
Rich	180
Very Rich	300+

War Gear

The Company took little gear of war, for their hope was in secrecy not in battle. Aragorn had Andúril but no other weapon, and he went forth clad only in rusty green and brown, as a Ranger of the wilderness.

All heroes start their adventuring career fully equipped with all the war gear they consider best suited to a life of adventure. In the game, this gear is represented by an adventurer's Weapons and Armour.

Weapons

Here follow flavourful descriptions for each type of weapon available to adventurers just setting out in Middle-earth.

AXE

A fighting variation on the common woodcutting tool, axes hang from the belt of many adventurers raised in or near forests.

BOW

The simple bow is not very different from a hunting-bow. It never measures more than five feet in length, so as to be strung more quickly.

CLUB

A club is probably the simplest form of weapon. It may consist of a crude, heavy piece of wood, a nasty instrument reinforced with iron, or an elaborately-carved staff used also as a symbol of status.

CUDGEL

A cudgel is any bashing implement used with one hand, like a small club or short staff.

DAGGER

One-handed blades have a range of uses, from skinning animals to settling disputes among brutes. Daggers and knives are very common, and in the wild areas of the land, no-one is found without one in their belt.

GREAT AXE

The great axe is an impressive weapon that can only be wielded with two hands. Its heavy head can leave both a deep dint on armour as a club and cleave it as a sword.

GREAT BOW

As tall as a Man and offering superior potency, a great bow can only be used by warriors with the height and stature to bend it fully. An arrow from a great bow can pierce the toughest of armour.

GREAT SPEAR

With a shaft longer than any other spear, a great spear cannot be used as a ranged weapon, and must be wielded with two hands.

LONG-HAFTED AXE

Borne with one or two hands, a long-hafted axe is designed to hack through the toughest of armour. It is difficult to manoeuvre but when mastered it is a fearful weapon. A skilled fighter learns to fight with the long haft as well as the heavy axe head.

LONG SWORD

Only superior smiths can produce longer blades. These wonderful Elven and Dwarven weapons, and the keen blades forged from strange metals by the Men of the West, are often known as long swords. A long sword may either be wielded with one hand, or used to hack and sweep with two hands.

MATTOCK

A heavy digging implement sporting a curved head with a point on one side and a spade-like blade on the other. It was used to fearsome effect by the Dwarves who followed Dáin Ironfoot during the Battle of Five Armies.

SHORT SPEAR

Approximately six feet in length, a spear can be hurled as a javelin, or deftly thrust with one hand.

SHORT SWORD

Large daggers and knives, or smaller swords created for close-quarters combat.

SPEAR

Maybe the most versatile weapon of all, a spear can be thrown, or used with one or two hands.

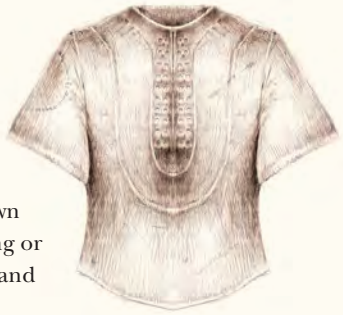
SWORD

A straight-bladed, two-edged sword, wielded in one hand to hew or thrust. This is the most common type of sword.

Armour and Shields

A suit of defensive gear is an essential asset for any warrior. Its level of protection, weight, and beauty depends on the material used and the cunning of its maker.

A newly-created character starts with one suit of armour, and may choose to wear a helm and carry one shield.



LEATHER ARMOUR

The simplest suit of armour available, leather armour is made of layers of cured and hardened animal hide sewn together. It is ideal for hunting or travelling as it is lightweight and comfortable, especially compared to mail armour. Leather armour may be crafted as a shirt, or a close-fitting corslet with long sleeves, extending its protection to the wearer's hips.

MAIL ARMOUR

Mail is the most effective type of armour encountered in Middle-earth at the end of the Third Age. These suits of close-fitting metal rings are created to protect from cutting and thrusting weapons. From the shining hauberks of Elven lords to the black mail of Orc-chieftains, mail armour appears in widely different qualities. Ancient coats of Dwarf-make, when found, are matchless and prized possessions.

A mail shirt is a chain garment protecting the back, chest, and abdomen of its wearer, while a coat of mail is a shirt with long sleeves.

HELM

Worn in battle or for ceremonial purposes, helms are usually made of leather or iron, but sometimes of more precious metals. The shape of a helm or its decoration is often distinctive, as it helps identify the wearer or their folk. More often than not, the protective features of the helm, especially nose-guards or close-fitting cheek-guards, obscure the face and make it impossible to recognise the wearer otherwise.

SHIELDS

Armour is often ineffective against the heaviest of weapons, such as hammers or other blunt instruments of war, and many warriors use shields to deflect incoming blows. Usually made of wood covered in leather and reinforced with metal, shields vary in form and purpose.

BUCKLER: Circular and made of wood reinforced by a protruding metal boss, bucklers are usually smaller and lighter than regular shields.

GREAT SHIELD: Kite-shaped, round or barrel-shaped, these shields are carried by the sturdiest of warriors, and are used to carry back their bodies should they fall, but are considered too cumbersome and unwieldy by some.

SHIELD: Round or oval, shields are made of several layers of wood, often reinforced by a large central iron boss, usually decorated and engraved. A regular shield offers good protection from arrows, and is very effective at close quarters.

CHAPTER 5

VALOUR AND WISDOM

"There is more in you of good than you know, child of the kindly West. Some courage and some wisdom, blended in measure."

The heroic stature of an adventurer can be measured in different ways. *The One Ring* uses two gauges to show how an adventurer grows over the course of the game: **VALOUR** and **WISDOM**. These scores increase as a Player-hero overcomes challenges that others dare not undertake. They are profoundly different to other types of characteristics, both in what they represent and in their influence on the game.

WISDOM or **VALOUR** affect the game in a few ways: they provide Player-heroes with special abilities and superior equipment, and allow them to resist the dangerous influence of the Shadow (see The Shadow, page 136).

- Rolls made using **VALOUR** and **WISDOM** are resolved as usual, rolling a Feat Die and a number of Success Dice equal to the appropriate rating in the challenged ability.
- The difficulty is the **HEART** TN for rolls based on **VALOUR**, and the **WITS** TN for rolls based on **WISDOM**, as modified by the source that originated the roll.

Wisdom

WISDOM expresses the Player-heroes' trust in their own capabilities, their self-confidence and capacity for good judgement. It is a characteristic with deeply personal implications, because it develops and improves through struggle and strife, and reflects an adventurer's growth in stature in the eyes of those folk that prize such qualities.

If a player chooses **WISDOM** over **VALOUR** when spending Experience points, it suggests that adventuring is affecting the Player-hero subtly but profoundly. Starting out as a naive individual with an adventurous spirit, adventurers can achieve the maturity and sagacity of the Wise.

Valour

VALOUR is a measure of a hero's courage, as tempered by dangerous deeds. Individuals of valour are willing to place themselves in danger for the safety of others. In times where new threats arise each day, courage is highly prized, and a valiant adventurer is often esteemed above all others. For this reason, the **VALOUR** rank of Player-heroes reflects the level of renown they have attained as doers of great deeds.

If a player decides to favour **VALOUR** over **WISDOM** in the course of the game, the status of the Player-hero in the eyes of others will be determined primarily by their actions and deeds. Even from the lowliest start as a wandering adventurer, adventurers may one day earn the repute and respect of famous heroes or kings.

Rewards

Háma knelt and presented to Théoden a long sword in a scabbard clasped with gold and set with green gems. "Here, lord, is Herugrim, your ancient blade…"

In a world of growing darkness, trade is mostly limited to small areas and is often practised only among trusted individuals. Finely crafted weapons or suits of armour cannot be purchased, but may — rarely — be awarded for service or heroic deeds. Rewards represent the characteristics of such high-quality weapons and defensive gear, priceless instruments of war given to heroes by their own folk or family, or by generous lords honouring them by letting them choose a weapon or a suit of armour from their personal armoury.

Rewards are upgrades that players can select to raise the effectiveness of their war gear. Each Reward affects a single characteristic of an item, for example improving its Load rating, its Damage, etc.

Heroes from all Cultures choose a first Reward during character creation, and may choose a new one each time they gain a new rank in VALOUR.

It is up to the players to decide whether a Reward represents the discovery of a previously unknown property of an item, or an entirely new weapon or suit of armour. Whatever their choice, they are encouraged to integrate the decisions into a narrative, telling the tale of how they received a gift or had their equipment improved.

Rewards List

There are six types of Rewards. Each one indicates in brackets the type of gear that can receive that upgrade. All upgrades can be applied only once to the same piece of gear.

CLOSE-FITTING (ARMOUR OR HELM)

A skilful smith has made this piece of protective equipment more difficult to overcome with a piercing blow.

- When you make a **PROTECTION** roll while wearing a close-fitting armour or helm you add +2 to the result.

CUNNING MAKE (ARMOUR, HELM, OR SHIELD)

A skilled craftsman has made this piece of equipment lighter or less cumbersome than its lesser counterparts.

- Reduce the Load rating of the selected item by 2 (to a minimum of 0 Load).

FELL (WEAPON)

Hard and straight, a Piercing Blow from a Fell weapon is stopped less easily by a suit of armour.

- Add 2 to the Injury rating of the selected weapon.

A weapon that can be wielded with one or two hands gets the bonus to both its Injury ratings.

GRIEVOUS (WEAPON)

The weapon is strong and heavy, inflicting more harm on its targets.

- Add 1 to the Damage rating of the selected weapon.

KEEN (WEAPON)

Sharp or better-balanced, this weapon is now more likely to produce a Piercing Blow when hitting its target.

- Attack rolls made with a Keen weapon score a Piercing Blow also on a result of 9 on the Feat die.

REINFORCED (SHIELD)

The shield's structure is reinforced, possibly with a metal rim or a larger iron boss, letting its wearer parry blows with greater ease.

- Add 1 to your shield's Parry bonus.

ITEMS OF SUPERIOR WORTH

If a hero loses or breaks any piece of war gear during play, they can replace it or fix it at no cost at the next settlement they reach or during another appropriate moment in the narrative. At most, a small favour may be demanded, such as performing a task, or simply a song or tale, especially if the settlement is not of their own Culture.

On the contrary, items upgraded with one or more Rewards enjoy a degree of 'plot immunity', and as such they should never be lost, broken, or be otherwise taken from a Player-hero (for example, a shield enhanced by a Reward cannot be smashed).

For the same reason, they cannot be handed over to other Player-heroes to use, not even in the case of character death (prized items are usually buried with their owners). After all, a Reward is a token of recognition of a hero's renown, and that cannot be taken away or transferred.

NAMED WEAPONS

Warriors and adventurers often name items of war gear that prove themselves worthy. This is most common with blades and spears, rarer with helms and shields – and almost unknown with armour.

Elves and Men follow similar naming traditions, bestowing titles upon their weapons – such as 'Orc-cleaver', 'Foe-hammer', or 'Battle-friend' – that glorify their effectiveness in battle. However, weapons with loftier or more poetic names – such as 'Snow Point' or 'Cold Star' – are almost always items of nobler lineage or greater antiquity, and are rarely given as Rewards.

Weapons of worth are so highly esteemed among the Bardings that they often name their sons and daughters after pieces of war gear – 'Bard' can be translated as 'Battle-axe'. The Dúnedain treasure their ancient blades, and pass them down through generations of warriors.

Hobbits and Bree-landers rarely give titles to their weapons. If they do, it is probably because such an item has saved their lives. In any case, they tend to choose simple or otherwise unpretentious names taken from ordinary life.

Dwarves do not use names for their weapons at all, even renowned artefacts, which are most likely to be known by their legendary owners (such as the Axe of Durin). Of course, it is entirely possible that they do give names to their weapons but keep them secret.

VIRTUES

They … were believed to have strange powers of sight and hearing, and to understand the languages of beasts and birds.

Virtues are special abilities that complement a hero's arsenal of Skills and Combat Proficiencies, describing aptitudes that come naturally to an adventurer, or that arise through time and practice. Much more than simple talents, Virtues define the heroic stature of the Player-heroes.

Heroes from all Cultures choose a first Virtue during character creation, and may choose a new one each time they gain a new rank in **WISDOM**.

VIRTUES LIST

There are six Virtues for players to choose from. Each Virtue can be acquired only once.

CONFIDENCE

Overcoming difficulties has reinforced your spirit and renewed your faith in a brighter future.

- Raise your maximum Hope rating by 2 points.

DOUR-HANDED

Your blows have become more forceful and your aim steadier, allowing you to do greater harm.

- When inflicting Special Damage in combat, add +1 to your **STRENGTH** rating on a Heavy Blow, and +1 to the Feat Die numerical result on a Pierce.

HARDINESS

Your determination and stamina have improved through hardship and toil.

- Raise your maximum Endurance rating by 2 points, or by your **WISDOM** rating, whichever is higher.

MASTERY

You have practised certain skills until they have become as natural as breathing.

- Choose two Skills and make them *Favoured*.

NIMBLENESS

Your skill (or fortune?) in battle has increased with your growth in wisdom.

- Raise your Parry rating by 1 point.

PROWESS

Adventuring is honing your inborn talents.

- Lower one of your Attribute TNs by 1.

CULTURAL VIRTUES

"I am Bard, of the line of Girion; I am the slayer of the Dragon!"

The following pages describe a number of Cultural Virtues, special abilities that allow for a greater individualisation of a hero. They represent the secret talents of the dwellers of Middle-earth, and let adventurers accomplish things that are seen as extraordinary, if not magical, by ordinary folk.

All Cultural Virtues describe abilities that can be employed under specific circumstances, at a cost, or else requiring a die roll — Players are advised to read each description carefully.

All Heroic Cultures feature six Cultural Virtues that can be chosen exclusively by members of that Culture, when they gain a new rank in WISDOM (in place of a standard Virtue), and only starting with WISDOM 2.

VIRTUES OF THE BARDINGS

The Bardings are Northmen of the noblest blood — a valiant people with a tradition of powerful kings. Considered lost for many long years, their ancient heritage has been tempered anew in dragon-fire, and is today once again in capable hands.

CRAM

You have been taught the ancient recipe of cram, a biscuit-ish cake that keeps good indefinitely, made by your folk for long journeys. Albeit certainly not entertaining (and in fact, mostly a chewing exercise), it is doubtlessly sustaining and very nutritious.

- Each time you gain Fatigue from a Journey Event, you gain 1 point less.
- Additionally, when you take a Short Rest, you and all members of the Company regain an extra amount of lost Endurance equal to your **WISDOM** rating.

…they rested for a while and had such a breakfast as they could, chiefly cram and water.

DRAGON-SLAYER

The legend of Bard the Bowman has inspired many young men and women from Dale, so much so that they long to prove their worth with the killing of a great monster. As many have before you, you have long pondered on the ways to deal with large creatures, hoping one day to gain renown defeating them.

- When you are fighting creatures with Might 2 or more, all your attack rolls are *Favoured*.

"I am Bard, and by my hand was the dragon slain and your treasure delivered."

DWARF-FRIEND

The days of the Dragon have forged a strong alliance between the Bardings and the Dwarves of Erebor.

- If your Fellowship focus is a Dwarf, whoever among you is fighting in a Defensive stance may attempt the Protect Companion combat task to benefit the other as a secondary action.
- Additionally, Dwarves are always considered to be Friendly towards you during the Interaction stage of a council.

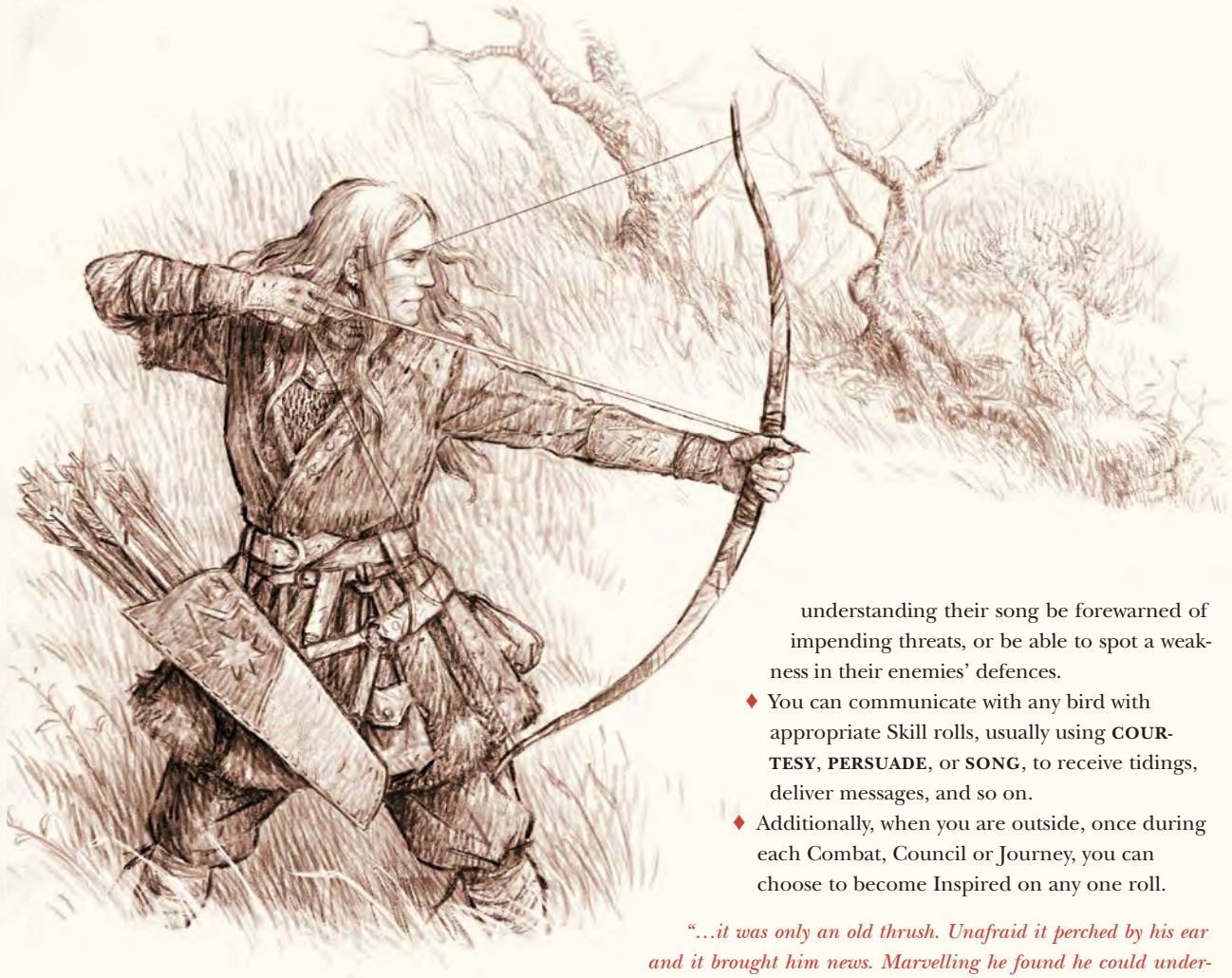
"Nowhere are there any men so friendly to us as the Men of Dale."

FIERCE SHOT

The Black Arrow that brought down Smaug the Dragon may have been fated to do so, but the hand that sent it flying so fiercely was exceedingly strong. When you throw a spear or bend your bow, you make sure that your grip is steady and your aim true.

- When you score a Piercing Blow on a ranged attack, the **PROTECTION** roll of the target is *Ill-favoured*.

The great bow twanged… the arrow… smote and vanished, barb, shaft and feather…



HIGH DESTINY

Stories tell that those who belong to the bloodline of Dale are destined for greatness, a fact proven true by your King and his story. Do you share the same destiny of those of the line of Girion?

- Raise your maximum Endurance rating by 1. The first time that you receive a Wound that would normally kill you — a deadly wound — you are saved by some miraculous circumstance that leaves you Wounded but alive, and you immediately raise your maximum Hope rating by 1 point. Then, your destiny is completed (you can do this only once).

"Bard is not lost!" he cried. "He dived from Esgaroth, when the enemy was slain. I am Bard, of the line of Girion …"

THE LANGUAGE OF BIRDS

Stories told in the North speak of how Dalemen can become so wise as to comprehend the speech of birds, and so by understanding their song be forewarned of impending threats, or be able to spot a weakness in their enemies' defences.

- You can communicate with any bird with appropriate Skill rolls, usually using **COURTESY**, **PERSUADE**, or **SONG**, to receive tidings, deliver messages, and so on.
- Additionally, when you are outside, once during each Combat, Council or Journey, you can choose to become Inspired on any one roll.

"…it was only an old thrush. Unafraid it perched by his ear and it brought him news. Marvelling he found he could understand its tongue…"

Virtues of the Dwarves

The reserved and surly character of Dwarves has often been misinterpreted by others as hostility or untrustworthiness. Their secretiveness has even led other folks to believe that they possess strange and uncanny powers.

BARUK KHAZÂD!

The secret tongue of the Dwarves is guarded as a treasure of the past, yet their battle-cry is well-known and feared by their chief foes.

- Once per combat, when you fight in a Forward stance you can make your attack roll *Favoured* and attempt the Intimidate Foe combat task as a secondary action.

"Baruk Khazâd! Khazâd ai-mênu!" An axe swung and swept back. Two Orcs fell headless. The rest fled.

BROKEN SPELLS

In ancient times, the Dwarves made mighty spells. You have been taught fragments of old enchantments that retain some power to this day.

- Choose three Skills in which you possess at least one rank and mark them with a dot (or rune!) on your character sheet. Whenever you use any one of the three marked Skills, you can spend 1 Hope to achieve a Magical success.

…they spoke fragments of broken spells of opening…

DARK FOR DARK BUSINESS

Your kind is not troubled by mere darkness in itself, as most of the members of other cultures are. On the contrary, you have grown to like the dark better than the light, finding yourself at ease in its cold embrace.

- When you are in the dark (at night, or underground) you are Inspired on all your rolls.

"We like the dark," said the dwarves. "Dark for dark business! There are many hours before dawn."

DURIN'S WAY

The Dwarves have fought many wars in deep places beneath the earth. You have been taught how to best defend yourself while fighting underground. As a result, you know how to exploit corners, darkness, and other natural obstacles to your advantage.

- Add +2 to your Parry rating when fighting underground, or in otherwise cramped quarters, like inside a building.

That was the beginning of the War of the Dwarves and the Orcs, which was long and deadly, and fought for the most part in deep places beneath the earth.

STONE-HARD

The Dwarves were made to be strong and to endure, for they came unto the world when a great evil ruled Middle-earth. As long as your spirit supports your strength, you can resist any hurt of the body more hardily than most.

- Raise your maximum Endurance rating by 1. All your **PROTECTION** rolls are *Favoured*, as long as you are not Miserable.

They are (…) secretive, laborious, retentive of the memory of injuries (and of benefits) …

UNTAMEABLE SPIRIT

Dwarves were made from their beginning to resist any form of domination. You have strengthened your resolve against all but the most subtle of the weapons of the Enemy.

- Raise your maximum Hope rating by 1 point. You *gain (1d)* on all Shadow Tests made to resist the effects of Sorcery.

Though they could be slain or broken, they could not be reduced to shadows enslaved to another will…

Virtues of the Elves

Elves are synonymous with magic for most inhabitants of Middle-earth. The word 'magic' itself invokes images of their grace, the products of their craft, and their unearthly beauty.

AGAINST THE UNSEEN

Elves can perceive creatures that dwell in the wraith-world, be they spirits or ghosts, even when they are normally invisible to the eyes of the living and appear only as a chilling whisper of voices. You have learnt to strengthen your heart against such terrors.

- All your Shadow Tests due to Dread are *Favoured*, and you additionally *gain (1d)* on those rolls forced upon you by an evil spirit or ghost (including creatures possessed by one).

"I also will come," said Legolas, "for I do not fear the Dead."

DEADLY ARCHERY

Elves possess a natural talent for hitting the mark when using their bows. You have honed this talent almost to perfection, and your arrows find their target with uncanny precision.

- When using a Bow (not a Great Bow) and fighting in Rearward Stance, you may attempt the Prepare Shot combat task as a secondary action.

…their small knives… would have been of no use against the arrows of the Elves that could hit a bird's eye in the dark.

ELBERETH GILTHONIEL!

The name of Elbereth, the Queen of the Stars, is revered by all the Eldar still dwelling in Middle-earth. You have resorted to calling on her name in moments of great need, asking the Kindler to bestow her grace upon you.

- Raise your maximum Hope rating by 1 point. During the Adventuring Phase you can become Inspired on a number of rolls equal to your **WISDOM** rating.

"Elbereth Gilthoniel!" sighed Legolas as he looked up.

ELVISH DREAMS

The spirit of Elves is so strong that their bodies recover swiftly from many ills and injuries. As your **WISDOM** has grown you have felt less and less the need to lie down to get better. Instead, you can recover from your exertions while awake, finding repose in the secret way of your folk.

- You don't need to sleep, as long as you can engage in simple, repetitive activities. When you take a Short Rest you are considered to have had a Prolonged Rest instead.

…he could sleep, if sleep it could be called by Men, resting his mind in the strange paths of elvish dreams, even as he walked open-eyed in the light of this world.

GLEAM OF WRATH

Your folk have seen many defeats, and many fruitless victories in their wars against the Shadow. The deadly rage that your kindred harbour for the Enemy infuses your weapons with a gleam of chill flame.

- On a successful attack roll your adversary additionally loses one point of Hate or Resolve, plus one point for each Success icon (ᘓ).

The Elves were the first to charge. Their hatred for the Goblins is cold and bitter.

MEMORY OF ANCIENT DAYS

Long centuries and uncounted generations of Men seem but a little while to the Elves. Your memories go back to a time before Eriador became desolate, and your knowledge of the land is returning to you now that you are traveling again outside the boundaries of your realm.

- When you are targeted by a Journey Event while you are in a Wild Land, roll on the Journey Events table as if you were in a Border Land, and as if you were in a Wild Land if you are in a Dark Land. Moreover, in addition to your chosen role you are always allowed to cover the Scout role.

"But it is not your own Shire," said Gildor. "Others dwelt here before hobbits were; and others will dwell here again when hobbits are no more."

VIRTUES OF THE HOBBITS

Hobbits rarely display Virtues considered to be heroic by other Cultures, which partly explains their absence from history as written by Elves and Men. But to the discerning eye, these merry fellows reveal subtle qualities, often excelling in fields where stronger individuals might fail.

ART OF DISAPPEARING

Hobbits are said to have little or no magic about them, but the way they can choose to disappear quickly and quietly can be described by others only as supernatural. You have learnt to choose exactly the right moment to turn away from the attention of others, sometimes unconsciously anticipating the need to disappear.

- If a location or a situation offers even the smallest opportunity to hide or sneak silently away, make a **STEALTH** roll: if you succeed, you simply disappear.

If anyone expects you to be there, it will seem as if you have vanished into thin air. You can choose to reveal yourself at any moment by simply stepping out into the open from your hiding place.

They possessed from the first the art of disappearing swiftly and silently, when large folk whom they do not wish to meet came blundering by…

BRAVE AT A PINCH

One of the Wise once said that you have to put a Hobbit in a tight place before you find out what is in them. You prefer to avoid finding yourself in one, but you are also sure you would be able to take good care of yourself in the circumstances.

- As long as you are Miserable, Weary, or Wounded, you are Inspired on all your rolls.

"…he is one of the best, one of the best — as fierce as a dragon in a pinch."

SMALL FOLK

Hobbits are a little people, but their resourcefulness far exceeds their stature. You have learnt how to exploit your small size to your advantage in a fight.

- When you are engaged in close combat with a creature bigger than you (very often!) you add +2 to your Parry rating. Additionally, you can assume a Rearward stance in combat even if there is only one other Company member fighting in a Close Combat stance.

For they are a little people, smaller than Dwarves…

SURE AT THE MARK

Hobbits are nimble and keen-eyed, qualities that make them good archers. You have honed this natural talent to perfection, so much so that you just need to stoop for a stone to find yourself armed with a deadly weapon.

- All your ranged attacks are *Favoured*. If you attack by throwing a stone, the roll produces a Piercing Blow on a result of Ᏽ, with an Injury rating of 12.

They shot well with the bow, for they were keen-eyed and sure at the mark. Not only with bows and arrows.

THREE IS COMPANY

The Wise say that it is sometimes best to trust to friendship than to great wisdom. This is particularly true for Hobbits, as everyone knows that it is hardly possible to separate them from their friends. You have given your trust to your fellow Company members, and a true friendship has grown from the bond unifying you.

- Raise your Company's Fellowship rating by 1 point. Additionally, you may select a second Fellowship Focus.

"We hobbits ought to stick together, and we will. I shall go, unless they chain me up."

TOUGH AS OLD TREE-ROOTS

They say that Hobbits are difficult to dismay or kill, and that they recover their health at a prodigious pace if allowed to enjoy some peace and quiet. You have discovered that you recover wonderfully from falls and bruises (at the cost of some considerable pain).

- When you are Wounded and must roll to determine the severity of your injury, you roll two Feat Dice instead of one and choose the better of the two results. In addition, double your **STRENGTH** score when calculating the number of Endurance points you recover when resting.

"They are a remarkable race," said the Warden, nodding his head. "Very tough in the fibre, I deem."

Virtues of the Men of Bree

The Bree-folk live a sheltered life, it is true; but there is an upside in being fond of a warm hearth and the company of friends — you know there is something worth fighting for.

BREE-PONY

Bree-ponies are very similar to their owners, the Bree-folk — they don't seem to have anything special compared to their peers in other parts of Middle-earth, and yet some of them display uncommon courage and exceptional memory. You have acquired an unusually brave and intelligent beast that follows you everywhere.

- Raise your maximum Hope rating by 1 point. Additionally, your pony has a Vigour rating of 4 (regardless of your Standard of Living).

Your pony never leaves your side. If you are forced to abandon it, for example to enter an underground passage, you can choose to find the pony where you left it when you return, or to have it find its way back to Bree.

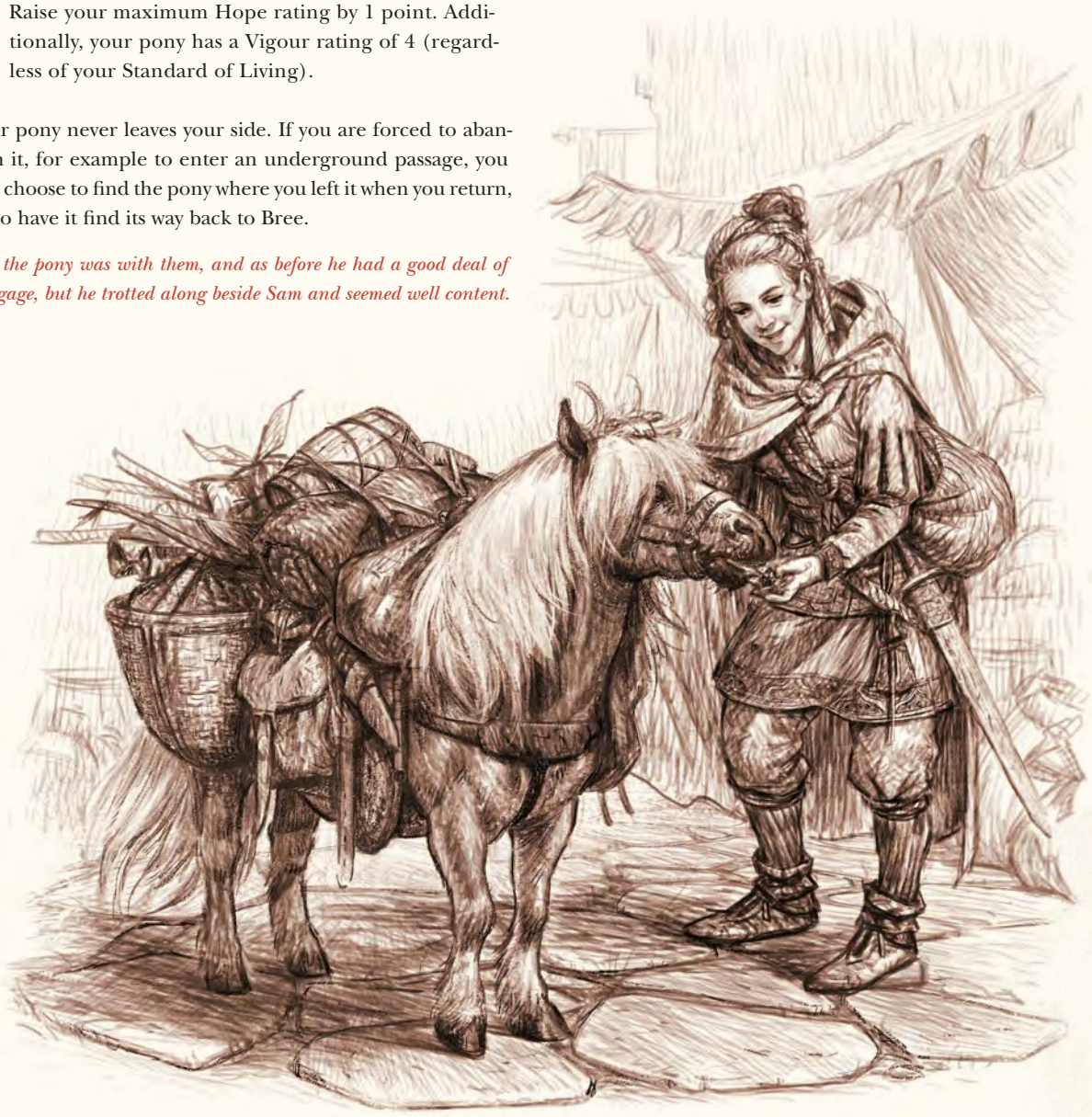
Bill the pony was with them, and as before he had a good deal of baggage, but he trotted along beside Sam and seemed well content.

DEFIANCE

Many realms have risen and fallen in the Lone-lands of Eriador since the Elder Days. Only ruins remain to mark their boundaries. Yet, the Bree-men have endured, revealing an unexpected reserve of strength and vigour in the face of adversity.

- Raise your maximum Endurance rating by 1. At the end of each Combat scene, if you are not Wounded or Miserable, you recover a number of Endurance points equal to your **HEART** or **WISDOM** score.

Few had survived the turmoils of the Elder Days; but when the Kings returned again over the Great Sea they had found the Bree-men still there…



DESPERATE COURAGE

You have lived all your life on the edge of the Wild, but the worst news that has come to Bree in your time concerned only brigands or packs of hungry wolves. You don't know yet what the likes of you can do against the Shadow in the East, but you are sure you will stand against it, no matter the cost.

- When you choose to spend Hope on a roll, you can choose to also gain 1 Shadow to be Inspired for that roll.

"Are you still willing to help me?" "I am," said Mr. Butterbur. "More than ever."

FRIENDLY AND FAMILIAR

Since you started your adventures, you have realised that your folk's custom of trading with foreigners may help you in your endeavours. Your nice manners and friendly demeanor easily gain the sympathies of those you meet, and your ability to inquire about the doings of strangers, without letting curiosity get the better of you, provide you with many opportunities to learn from those you meet along the way.

- Raise by 1 the maximum number of Skill rolls that you may attempt in the course of a council. Additionally, the folk encountered are always considered Friendly towards you.

…they were more friendly and familiar with Hobbits, Dwarves, Elves, and other inhabitants of the world about them than was (or is) usual with Big People.

STRANGE AS NEWS FROM BREE

It is indeed true that the affairs of the four villages are the chief concern of the Bree-folk, but the most inquisitive among the inhabitants are always ready to gather what tidings come from distant lands. You have learnt that listening to the strange tales that travellers often talk about can prove to be very precious.

- During each Fellowship Phase, you receive a rumour from the Loremaster. In addition, if you are in the Bree-land, you gain (1d) on all **INSIGHT** and **RIDDLE** rolls.

Strange as News from Bree was still a saying in the Eastfarthing, descending from those days, when news from North, South, and East could be heard in the inn…

THE ART OF SMOKING

You have mastered the art of smoking pipe-weed, and you always carry your pipe with you, as well as a bag of tobacco, for using it grants you patience and clarity of mind.

- Whenever you regain one or more points of Hope, you recover one additional Hope point (regardless of whether it's the Adventuring or Fellowship Phase).

And certainly it was from Bree that the art of smoking the genuine weed spread in the recent centuries…

VIRTUES OF THE RANGERS OF THE NORTH

The Rangers are what remains in the North of the great people that came to Middle-earth out of Westernesse, the Númenóreans. Their nobility of blood is exemplified by their many talents, even if their number has dwindled and their struggle has destined them to a life of secrecy.

ENDURANCE OF THE RANGER

They say that a Ranger with a clear trail to follow can never be weary. You hope the saying will prove true, as it will be your fate to often travel in haste, to seek distant lands on urgent errands or to relentlessly hunt your enemies.

- Raise your maximum Endurance rating by 1 point. If you wear a suit of Leather armour (with no helm) or no armour at all, and carry no shield, you never gain Fatigue during a journey.

"Hardy is the race of Elendil!"

FORESIGHT OF THEIR KINDRED

The Rangers of the North still possess a measure of the foresight that their ancestors possessed in full. In the Twilight of the Third Age, this gift manifests as a sense of watchfulness, and of fear, arising to warn a Ranger of a danger that has not yet come to pass.

- During an Adventuring Phase, you may invoke your gift of foresight a number of times equal to your **WISDOM** rating, to bestow it upon yourself or on another member of the Company. This gift can be spent at any moment to reroll all the dice involved in any one roll, whether made by the Player-hero or an adversary targeting them.

"And I say to you: if you pass the doors of Moria, beware!"

HEIR OF ARNOR

The days of your folk have darkened, and not many of you remain; but ever the memory of the Kings is passed from generation to generation. An artefact going back to the days of Lost Arnor has been in possession of your family in line unbroken. Now you have been deemed worthy to become its keeper.

- With the help of the Loremaster, use the rules on page 161 to create either a Marvellous Artefact, or a Famous Weapon possessing a single Enchanted Reward and up to 2 normal Rewards.

"Here is the ring of Barahir," he said, "the token of our kinship from afar; and here also are the shards of Narsil. "

ROYALTY REVEALED

Your kin belongs to a bloodline of kings, but they have learnt to hide from their enemies in the twilight years of their kingdom. Should you choose to reveal your heritage, your noble bearing will cause your allies to cast away their doubts. You reveal yourself by shouting an ancestral battle-cry, or unsheathing a weapon of high lineage, or by showing a device or coat of arms.

- Once per combat, when you fight in an Open stance you may attempt the Rally Comrades combat task as a secondary action. Additionally, all members of the Company (you included) are Inspired on all their rolls in the following round.

Aragorn threw back his cloak. The elven-sheath glittered as he grasped it, and the bright blade of Andúril shone like a sudden flame as he swept it out. "Elendil!" he cried.

STRENGTH OF WILL

You have been raised in a land dotted with desolate ruins and burial mounds. You have heard the dead whisper with cold voices out of lonely barrows, while ghostly lights dance on haunted hills. When your will strengthens your heart, there is hardly anything in this world that can dismay you.

- You *gain (1d)* on all Shadow Tests made to resist the effects of Dread.

"Does he feel no fear?" muttered the Dwarf.

WAYS OF THE WILD

The Rangers of the North roam ceaselessly, hunting for wicked things and guarding all frontiers. For you the Wild has become as familiar as the road that leads home is familiar to Hobbits, and the land itself may reveal useful tidings.

- Whenever you are making a roll using **EXPLORE**, **HUNTING**, or **TRAVEL**, you can spend 1 Hope to achieve a Magical success. Additionally, you are always allowed to cover more than one role during a journey.

"Where sight fails the earth may bring us rumour,' said Aragorn. 'The land must groan under their hated feet."

CHAPTER 6

Adventuring Phases

Even the good plans of wise wizards like Gandalf and of good friends like Elrond go astray sometimes when you are off on dangerous adventures over the Edge of the Wild …

Right-minded, respectable folk know that adventures are disturbing, uncomfortable things. Not only do they make people late for dinner, but they often imperil the lives of those who embark upon them. Those few who dare cross the desolate regions of Eriador are another breed entirely. Some are enthusiastic explorers seeking the last remaining artefacts of a forgotten age. Others are valiant defenders of their people, venturing forth to push back the dark forces that threaten to engulf the land.

Perhaps the most heroic of all are the common folk who put aside their reluctance to leave their homes to do what needs to be done for the greater good. They are destined to confront the unknown, to brave dangers deemed insurmountable, and face foes believed to be invincible. Such is the life of adventurers.

How an Adventuring Phase Works

"I guess that you have been having adventures, which was not quite fair without me. I want a full account…"

The largest part of the gameplay of *The One Ring* is made up of a series of Adventuring Phases. As the name suggests, it is during an Adventuring Phase that most of the action takes place, as opposed to the Fellowship phases, where the events happening between adventures are described.

During an Adventuring Phase it is the job of the Loremaster to challenge the players, putting them in difficult circumstances, setting fiendish riddles for them to solve, and confronting them with formidable opponents. The gameplay is a dynamic narrative, as the players take action to explore the situations they encounter. The Loremaster then describes what happens as a result of their actions, and the players again react to the new circumstances, and so on.

The Loremaster keeps the story flowing through a mixture of preparation and improvisation. (See *Chapter 8: The Loremaster*, for more about running an Adventuring Phase).

Adventuring Phase Sessions

An average Adventuring Phase should last between two and three sessions of play, with each session clocking in at around 3 hours of gaming.

Generally speaking, every session tends to follow the same structure:

1. Introduction
2. Scenes
3. End of the Session

1 Introduction

Each session starts with the Loremaster presenting the current situation to the players. This usually sets a date or time of the year (when), a location (where), and defines an introductory situation (what) that should include information that allows for the involvement of the Company (why).

> If the session is the first one of an Adventuring Phase, all the elements listed above are now used by the Loremaster to frame an opening scene. If it's not the first session of play, then the opening scene picks up from where the Adventuring Phase broke off at the end of the previous session. Again, a date is set, a location chosen, and the present circumstances defined.

2 SCENES

Once a session has started, the gameplay transitions from one scene to another, with each scene describing a situation requiring the players to make meaningful decisions. To build a coherent narrative, the Loremaster frames each scene based on the consequences of the previous one and on the choices of the players (see *The Loremaster*, page 128).

Each scene can vary in duration from less than an hour of play time (a short but meaningful encounter), up to the entire length of the session (a council taking many hours of game time to be completed). Between a number of main scenes and secondary scenes, a session of play should not last more than three or four hours.

3 END OF A SESSION

When the time allocated for the game session is up, the Loremaster and the players face two possible situations, depending on whether the Company has reached the end of the narrative arc that sees the involvement of the Player-heroes, or if more time is needed to get to the end of it.

If the session ends without the players reaching a satisfactory conclusion, the gameplay will resume at a later date with another Adventuring Phase session. When the Company meets again, the Loremaster starts the new session by summarising what happened in the previous one.

If, on the contrary, the current narrative arc has reached its conclusion, the Loremaster draws the final curtain on the gaming session. The Adventuring Phase is over, and the session of play progresses with the Fellowship Phase, or a Fellowship Phase is scheduled to start at the beginning of the next session, depending on the available time (see *Chapter 7: Fellowship Phases*).

HEROIC VENTURES

A truly seasoned adventurer is familiar with the trials and challenges that accompany the dangerous lifestyle of a wandering hero —travelling to distant or unknown places, fighting dangerous enemies, and meeting new people or important personalities.

This section offers detailed rules for those activities that adventurers will undertake most often, the building blocks of any adventure set in Middle-earth.

COMBAT

There was a ring and clatter as the Company drew their swords.

Every age of the world has seen conflict and strife. With the influence of the Shadow extending again over the land, the choices to confront it without taking up arms grow shorter every day.

That's why combat is a frequent occurrence in the life of an adventurer. Frequent, but not less tragic — The lives of all members of a Company are at stake, and they can consider themselves fortunate if they see the end of even a victorious fight without suffering from the consequences of the blows they received.

On average, a Company will experience at least one combat encounter in one out of every two sessions of play. Whenever combat occurs, the normal flow of play is interrupted so that the players and the Loremaster can collaborate to create a tense description of how the heroes and their foes confront each other.

THE ONSET OF BATTLE

Combat is a dramatic and momentous event for any group of players that should not have its significance dulled by bland repetition. In the books, the episodes featuring fights and battles vary wildly in presentation, set as they are in diverse locations and born out of differing narrative needs.

Before combat even begins, the Loremaster should make sure that not all battles unfold in the same way, basing the circumstances on the ongoing story and paying particular attention to the plans and preparations of the players and their strategic options.

Is the Company fleeing from a greater threat and needs to open a way through their enemies' ranks? Are they fighting to protect a place — or a person? Are they following a dangerous mountain path, or were they encamped among thick trees? Is it raining, or is the battlefield rough and snow-covered?

Whenever possible, the descriptive details employed by the Loremaster should have repercussions on how combat will be resolved; for example, influencing how many opening volleys to allow, if any, or whether any combatants should be made unavailable as eligible targets for engagement (see page 96).

Combat Sequence

Once a combat encounter is initiated, the following steps must be applied in order to keep the action flowing:

1. Opening Volleys
2. Close Quarters Rounds

Opening Volleys

At the start of a battle, the sides involved in the confrontation are still separated by a distance, potentially allowing for a brief exchange of volleys using ranged weapons before combat at close quarters is initiated.

The Loremaster must now determine how many volleys to allow, if any at all, based on the circumstances of the fight as defined during the Onset.

- Under most circumstances, all combatants are entitled to at least one volley using a bow or a thrown weapon (a spear or a short spear).
- If the two sides are separated by a greater distance, then the Loremaster might allow combatants using a bow to let loose two volleys, or even more.

All volley attacks are resolved as normal ranged attacks (see page 98). Player-heroes carrying a shield double its Parry modifier if aware of the incoming attack (a hero advancing to join a confrontation definitely would be).

Normally, the volley exchange is resolved with the Player-heroes launching their volleys first, unless the Loremaster considers the circumstances to favour the opposition.

When the opening volleys are completed, the combatants cover the distance that separates them and begin fighting at close quarters.

Close Quarters Rounds

Once fighting at close quarters is initiated, the gameplay is broken down into a cycle of rounds, played one after the other until the end of the battle.

The sequence of each Close Quarters Round is explained in detail on the next page.

SURPRISE ATTACKS

A surprise attack happens when the Company is ambushed by a foe, or when the Company succeeds in springing a trap upon unsuspecting enemies (if all sides involved in combat are aware of the presence of enemies, skip this phase).

In all cases, the Loremaster must consider the circumstances and decide whether a test is required to resolve the situation or not — for example, a well-planned ambush made against an enemy without lookouts or individuals on watch allows the opposition to attack automatically with the benefit of complete surprise.

If the Loremaster considers that a roll is required, then the following guidelines must be applied.

THE COMPANY IS AMBUSHED: When enemies are trying to take the Company by surprise, all Player-heroes in the Company must make a roll of **AWARENESS**.

> Player-heroes who fail their roll have been caught off-guard — they won't be able to make an opening volley roll nor to take actions in the first Close Quarters Round.

AMBUSHING ENEMIES: If the Company is trying to waylay their enemies, they must make a **STEALTH** roll. All players participating in an ambush must succeed in their roll for the surprise attack to succeed.

> If the ambush attempt is successful, the surprised enemies won't be able to make opening volleys and *lose (1d)* on all combat rolls in the first Close Quarters Round.

AMBUSHING OPTIONS

Other plausible Skill choices to avoid being surprised include BATTLE which represents military preparation; or HUNTING, especially when in the wild or if the ambushing enemy is a wild creature.

As far as ambushing enemies is concerned, BATTLE is particularly appropriate when the situation involves larger groups, but only if there is sufficient time for careful planning. The HUNTING Skill is more appropriate in areas offering ample opportunities for hiding, and when the encounter isn't expected and you have not been able to prepare beforehand. STEALTH can be the best choice when you need to get close to your opponents, and when remaining silent is most important; for example, when the action is taking place inside a building.

CLOSE QUARTERS ROUNDS SEQUENCE

Each round fought at close quarters follows the sequence set out below:

1. **STANCE:** The Company chooses their stances.
2. **ENGAGEMENT:** All combatants in Close Combat are paired with one or more opponents.
3. **ACTION RESOLUTION:** The actions of all combatants are resolved in Stance order from Forward to Rearward.

1 STANCES

All players select a combat stance for their heroes at the start of each round, choosing one of four available options (adversaries do not choose stances: this rule portrays exclusively a Player-hero's point of view).

Combat stances describe the attitude of a Player-hero during a round of combat, from boldest to most cautious:

> There are three Close Combat stances (Forward, Open, and Defensive) and one Ranged Combat stance (Rearward).

The first three stances (Forward, Open, and Defensive) allow combatants to exchange blows in the thick of the fight using close combat weapons. The Rearward stance is the only one which allows a Player-hero to make Ranged attacks after the opening volleys.

> Heroes can freely assume any close combat stance at the start of the round, while the ranged combat stance can be selected only if a number of requirements are met (see its description).

Certain circumstances may result in the Loremaster allowing more Player-heroes to assume a Rearward stance than would normally be possible — for example, if the Company is fighting on a narrow ledge, a mountain path, or other similar features which makes ranged attacks easier. The same reasoning applies to situations where the Company outnumbers the opposition by at least two adventurers to one human-sized enemy fighter (or four adventurers to one greater than human-sized opponent).

FORWARD STANCE (CLOSE COMBAT)

You seek to exploit any opportunity to attack, to the point of exposing yourself to the retaliation of your enemies.

- Your attack rolls *gain (1d)*. All close combat attacks aimed at you *gain (1d)*.
- Combat task: Intimidate Foe.

OPEN STANCE (CLOSE COMBAT)

You fight without sparing yourself, but giving proper attention to your enemies' actions.

- No advantage or disadvantage.
- Combat task: Rally Comrades.

DEFENSIVE STANCE (CLOSE COMBAT)

You fight conservatively, trying to protect yourself or others and holding your ground.

- All close combat attacks aimed at you *lose (1d)*. Your attack rolls *lose (1d)* for each opponent engaging you.
- Combat task: Protect Companion.

REARWARD STANCE (RANGED COMBAT)

You stay away from the press of the fighting to attack your foes from a distance.

- You can attack your adversaries using only ranged weapons, and you can only be targeted by attackers using similar weapons.
- Combat Task: Prepare Shot.

Player-heroes are allowed to assume a Rearward stance only if the total number of enemies isn't more than twice the number of adventurers in the Company. Furthermore, for each Player-hero in Rearward there must be two other adventurers fighting in Close Combat stances.

2 ENGAGEMENT

Once all players have determined their stance, all combatants fighting in close combat must engage one or more opponents (Player-heroes in Rearward cannot be engaged). Using miniatures, cardboard stand-ups, or tokens to represent the Player-heroes and their opponents can speed up this process a lot.

As shown in the following paragraphs, how this plays out depends on the number of enemies compared to the total number of Player-heroes in the Company — since characters from either side can be killed, knocked out, or forced to leave the fight, altering the odds, the engagement process is likely to change from round to round.

MORE ENEMIES THAN PLAYER-HEROES: When a round sees more enemies than Player-heroes, engagement is handled by the Loremaster as follows:

1. The Loremaster assigns one opponent to each unengaged Player-hero fighting in a Close Combat stance.
2. Then, for each remaining foe, the Loremaster chooses between engaging a Player-hero in a Close Combat stance who is already engaged, or standing back, possibly to attack using a ranged weapon. Enemies who stand back to use a ranged weapon may attack any Player-hero involved in the fight.

MORE PLAYER-HEROES THAN ENEMIES OR SIDES EQUALLY MATCHED: When a round sees the Company outnumbering its foes or matching them in number, engagement is chosen by the players as follows:

1. Player-heroes in a Close Combat stance choose an unengaged adversary to face, from among those introduced by the Loremaster as eligible targets. If there are not enough free enemies to engage, Player-heroes in Close Combat left without an adversary must engage an enemy already engaged by another Player-hero.
2. If one or more of the Company is fighting in Rearward, it is possible that there will be enemies left when everyone fighting in close combat has engaged an adversary. If this happens, the Loremaster chooses whether the 'spare' enemies engage a Player-hero who is already fighting in a Close Combat stance, or stand back to attack with a ranged weapon (enemies who stand back to use a ranged weapon may attack any Player-hero involved in the fight).

3 ACTION RESOLUTION

The actions of all combatants are now resolved, with all members of the Company going first. When all Player-heroes have resolved their actions, the Loremaster will resolve the actions of all the adversaries involved in the fight.

PLAYER-HERO ACTIONS: When it is the Company's turn to act, all players resolve their actions in stance order, with Player-heroes in Forward stance going first, and progressing through the stances until those in a Rearward have acted (if two or more Player-heroes are fighting in the same stance the order of action is up to the players).

> When it is their turn to act, players must choose one main action for their Player-hero to perform, and one secondary action, to accomplish before or after the main one.

A main action is a task that requires a hero's full attention — it is generally used to make an attack roll, or to complete a Combat Task like those described on page 102. Secondary actions are faster, simpler undertakings, or tasks that can be accomplished while focusing on a main action.

Examples of main actions other than attacking or performing a Combat Task include:

- Recovering your position after a knock-back.
- Recovering your weapon, helm, or shield that was previously dropped.
- Carrying a fallen comrade to safety.
- Moving across the battlefield, and so on.

Examples of secondary actions include:

- Advancing or retreating while fighting.
- Trying to locate someone on the battlefield.
- Drawing a weapon.
- Removing a helm or dropping a shield or weapon, for example to reduce Load.

ENGAGEMENT LIMITS

Usually, Player-heroes can be engaged in Close Combat by up to three human-sized creatures or two large creatures (such as Trolls). Heroes engaged by multiple foes choose which adversary to attack when it is their turn to act.

Conversely, up to a maximum of three Player-heroes may engage in Close Combat against a human-sized opponent at the same time, while up to six can engage an enemy greater than human-sized (such as a Troll). When an enemy is engaged by multiple Player-heroes, the Loremaster chooses which opponent they attack when their turn comes.

UNENGAGED HEROES

During a combat round, it may happen that a hero who was previously engaged in close combat finds themself unengaged when their turn to act comes – for example, their main adversary has been killed by another Player-hero's attack, or the enemy escaped from the field of battle. When this happens, the hero is free to choose another adversary to attack in close combat from among the available foes (engaged or unengaged), keeping in mind the engagement limits detailed above.

OTHER ACTIONS

Combat Tasks include a number of non-combat action options, but players can always surprise the Loremaster by proposing something unusual or unexpected (this is usually a sign that they are enjoying the game, and the Loremaster should encourage it by allowing the action whenever possible).

The factors to consider when resolving actions other than the combat actions described in this chapter are time, difficulty, and consequences.

- Can you perform the action in one round, or will it take more time? The Loremaster must decide, but for such cases consider a round to last a maximum of 30 seconds.
- Does the action require a die roll? If so, both success and failure must have clear consequences. Generally, if succeeding at an action will grant an advantage to the Company, a failure should cause a disadvantage of equal importance.

LOREMASTER ACTIONS

When it is the enemies' turn to act, the Loremaster chooses their actions, again in stance order (using the stance of the Player-hero they are attacking). The actions of enemies who stood back unengaged to attack with ranged weapons are resolved last.

> In general terms, adversaries may perform a main action and a secondary action, just like the Player-heroes do. Often, the Loremaster will opt to have them simply take one main action to speed up gameplay.

The description of an adversary, and their special abilities in particular, should guide the Loremaster in making tactical choices (see The Shadow, page 136) but much can also be derived from the context of the adventure itself.

What is the enemy trying to do (apart from harming the Company)? Are they trying to protect a place? Or are they looking for something, or someone? Having the sketch of a plan in mind can provide the Loremaster with many helpful twists to make combat exciting and fun. To make just one example taken from the stories, when the Fellowship was assaulted at Parth Galen, the Uruk Hai's goal was to capture the Hobbits, not simply battle to the bitter end.

RESOLVING ATTACKS

Player-heroes attack their enemies as a main action. They attack in close combat by fighting in Forward, Open, or Defensive stance, or from a distance using ranged weapons from a Rearward stance.

Adversaries make close combat attacks if they are engaged in a Close Combat stance, and can use ranged weapons only if they stand back and remain unengaged.

ATTACK ROLL

An Attack roll is made using the Combat Proficiency corresponding to the weapon used.

- As seen on page 65, the difficulty of all attack rolls is based on a Player-hero's **STRENGTH** TN, modified by the Parry rating of the targeted enemy.
- The difficulty of all attack rolls made by adversaries against Player-heroes are equal to the target hero's **PARRY** score instead.

A successful attack roll inflicts damage on its target in the form of an Endurance Loss based on the weapon used, and may inflict additional Special Damage types based on the Quality of Success of the roll. Finally, attacks may cause more long-lasting injuries if a Piercing Blow is scored.

ENDURANCE LOSS

A well-placed blow always has unpleasant consequences for its target, whether or not the hit is successful in producing long term damage: a combatant can be disoriented by the sudden pain, be winded, or be sent reeling by the powerful impact.

> When a melee or ranged attack roll succeeds, the target suffers an immediate loss of Endurance equal to the Damage rating of the weapon used.

As seen previously, Player-heroes seeing their Endurance decrease to match or go below their total Load score become Weary; if their Endurance is reduced to zero, they drop unconscious instead.

Adversaries do not normally become Weary due to Endurance loss, but are normally eliminated upon reaching zero Endurance (for more about Adversaries in combat, see page 142).

KNOCKBACK: Sometimes, an attack is so powerful that a fighter prefers to 'roll with the punches' and reduce the force of the blow by giving ground:

Once each round, Player-heroes can halve the Endurance loss caused by a successful attack (rounding fractions up) by choosing to be knocked back: they will spend their next main action recovering their fighting position.

Adversaries cannot choose to be knocked back.

SPECIAL DAMAGE

They say that the combatant that strikes the first blow, if they strike it hard enough, may need to strike no more.

If a successful attack roll produces one or more Success icons (ᘐ), they can be used to trigger one or more special results, based on the war gear of the attacker.

Multiple Success icons can be used to trigger different results, or the same one multiple times.

HEAVY BLOW — ANY WEAPON: You have hit your opponent with great force and precision — Spend 1 Success icon to inflict to your adversary an additional loss of Endurance equal to your **STRENGTH** rating. Raise the loss of Endurance by an additional +1 if you are using a 2-handed weapon.

FEND OFF — ANY CLOSE COMBAT WEAPON: You exploit your successful attack to place yourself in an advantageous position — Spend 1 Success icon to modify your Parry rating for the round by +1 using Axes and all Brawling weapons, +2 using Swords, and by +3 using Spears.

PIERCE — BOWS, SPEARS AND SWORDS: You have hit a less-protected part of the adversary's body — Spend 1 Success icon to modify the Feat die numerical result of your attack by +1 if using Swords, +2 if using Bows, and by +3 if using Spears, up to a maximum of 10 — thus possibly triggering a Piercing Blow (ᚠ and ᚠ results are unaffected).

SHIELD THRUST — SHIELD: You bash your opponents with your shield, pushing them back — If your **STRENGTH** is greater than the target's Attribute Level, spend 1 Success icon to push back your target. The adversary is inflicted a penalty, losing *(1d)* for the length of the round (in the rare case this special damage is triggered multiple times, it must be employed to push back different opponents).

PIERCING BLOWS

During combat, fighters can see their stamina being slowly whittled away, as exhaustion and blows suffered take their toll, or they can be suddenly and unexpectedly cut down by a vicious stroke that penetrates through their protective equipment and draws blood.

In addition to causing the loss of Endurance points, any successful attack may inflict a Piercing Blow.

An attack roll produces a Piercing Blow on a 10 or ᚠ result on the Feat Die.

Characters hit by a Piercing Blow must immediately roll a Feat Die, plus a number of Success Dice equal to the **PROTECTION** value of the armour worn (if the attack made the character Weary, the **PROTECTION** Test is made before the Weariness sets in).

The Target Number for the roll is equal to the Injury rating of the weapon used by the attacker.

If the roll fails, then the target of the attack has received a life-threatening blow — a Wound (see page 101).

TALKING WITH THE ENEMY

Often, the Company faces creatures capable of speech. Orcs and the most intelligent among Trolls speak a debased version of the Common Tongue, for example, and Dragons can outwit in conversation even the smartest adventurer. This means that violence need not be the only way to survive a combat encounter...

Some good roleplaying and clever thinking might allow the Player-heroes to find a way out of a dangerous situation, for example, tricking an excessively powerful enemy into thinking that the heroes are much stronger than they really are, or by outright deceiving them. Think of Gandalf tricking the Stone-Trolls, or Bilbo challenging Gollum at the Riddle Game, and then entertaining Smaug with a clever conversation. But a wicked Loremaster should remember that the opposite is also possible – a cunning adversary might find a way to trick the Player-heroes and lure them into a trap, or put them in a disadvantageous position using only words.

WEAPONS:

WEAPON	DAMAGE	INJURY	LOAD	COMBAT PROFICIENCY	NOTES
Unarmed	1	–	0	Brawling*	Includes throwing stones. Cannot cause a Piercing Blow
Dagger	2	14	0	Brawling*	Can trigger Pierce as if it was a Sword (see page 99)
Cudgel	3	12	0	Brawling*	–
Club	4	14	1	Brawling*	–
Short Sword	3	16	1	Swords	–
Sword	4	16	2	Swords	–
Long Sword	5	16 (1h)/18 (2h)	3	Swords	Can be used 1 or 2-handed
Short Spear	3	14	2	Spears	Can be thrown
Spear	4	14 (1h)/16 (2h)	3	Spears	Can be 1 or 2-handed. Can be thrown
Great Spear	5	16	4	Spears	2-handed
Axe	5	18	2	Axes	–
Long-hafted Axe	6	18 (1h)/20 (2h)	3	Axes	Can be used 1 or 2-handed
Great Axe	7	20	4	Axes	2-handed
Mattock	7	18	3	Axes	2-handed
Bow	3	14	2	Bows	Ranged weapon. 2-handed
Great Bow	4	16	4	Bows	Ranged weapon. 2-handed

* Weapons used to make Brawling Attacks (see page 67).

ARMOUR:

ARMOUR	PROTECTION	LOAD	TYPE	MINIMUM STANDARD OF LIVING
Leather Shirt	1d	3	Leather armour	–
Leather Corslet	2d	6	Leather armour	–
Mail-shirt	3d	9	Mail armour	Common
Coat of Mail	4d	12	Mail armour	Prosperous
Helm*	+1d	4	Headgear	–

* May be removed in combat to lower Load.

SHIELDS:

SHIELDS	PARRY MODIFIER	LOAD	MINIMUM STANDARD OF LIVING
Buckler	+1	2	–
Shield	+2	4	Common
Great Shield	+3	6	Prosperous

Wounds

Most adversaries are killed outright when Wounded (see Adversaries, page 142). Player-heroes, on the other hand, can resist being Wounded once without serious consequences, but risk their lives if injured a second time.

When Player-heroes are Wounded for the first time they immediately check the Wounded box on their character sheet, and then proceed to roll on the Wound Severity table below using a Feat die, to determine the extent of their injury.

As seen under Resting on page 71, Player-heroes whose Wounded box is checked recover Endurance slowly.

Player-heroes who are wounded a second time (they receive a Wound when their Wounded box was already checked) see their Endurance drop to zero, they fall unconscious and are now Dying.

A second Wound is not recorded on the character sheet, and the severity roll is skipped.

First Aid

Player-heroes may reduce the severity of their injury with a **HEALING** roll. Player-heroes who are not unconscious may attempt the roll themselves.

A successful **HEALING** roll reduces the severity of an injury by 1 day, plus 1 day for each ᛉ icon scored (to a minimum of 1 day).

Each hero may be administered a successful First Aid only once. A failed **HEALING** roll cannot be repeated until at least a day has passed, as the failure of the treatment isn't immediately apparent.

Dying Heroes

Heroes are considered to be Dying if they are Wounded twice, or if they roll an on their Wound severity roll (or as the result of some sources of injury — see page 133).

Dying heroes must receive a successful **HEALING** roll within approximately 1 hour or they will die.

If the roll is a success, their life has been saved and they come back to their senses in about 1 hour, at 1 Endurance. If Wounded, heroes must add 10 days to the time required for their injury to mend (minus the days removed by the **HEALING** roll).

Finally, their injury leaves a permanent mark (the details are up to the player — a scar, a limp, a missing finger).

Complications and Advantages

The difficulty of an attack can be affected negatively by a range of factors — such as shooting an arrow or throwing a spear at long range, in the dark, fighting during a rainstorm, or while knee-deep in icy water, mud, or in other difficult terrain.

On the contrary, combatants may find themselves enjoying an advantage — such as having the high ground, standing on a vantage position allowing them to pepper the enemy with arrows, or fighting with their flanks protected by natural barriers.

Using the examples provided by the tables overleaf, the Loremaster can set a level of complication or advantage, imposing a bonus or a penalty to the attack rolls made by a combatant involved in the fight (either a Player-hero or an adversary).

WOUND SEVERITY:

FEAT DIE ROLL	DESCRIPTION	EFFECT
ᛉ	Moderate Injury	The blow received was violent enough to expose you to the risk of worse consequences if injured again, but no real lasting damage was inflicted. At the end of the combat you will recover fully in a matter of hours (remove the Wounded box check).
1–10	Severe Injury	The value indicates how long it will take for the injury to mend, expressed in days (write the result in the Injury box on the character sheet).
	Grievous Injury	You are knocked unconscious with zero Endurance and are now Dying (as if Wounded twice).

If the Loremaster deems it appropriate, a Player-hero can make a BATTLE roll as their main action for the round to impose o remove a complication or to gain an advantage, based on the description of the battlefield and the tactical choices of the combatants.

On a success, the acting player can either gain an advantage on their next attack roll, remove a complication from it, or impose a complication on the next attack roll made against them (again, refer to the table below for examples). The modifier can benefit an additional Player-hero for each ᛉ icon rolled.

COMBAT TASKS

Here are described a number of special tasks commonly employed by adventurers involved in combat. In general, these tasks require a Player-hero to fight in a specific stance and to succeed at a Skill roll.

As usual, players must describe what their Player-heroes are doing to achieve the effect described by the Combat Task.

INTIMIDATE FOE — FORWARD STANCE

Brave warriors fighting in a Forward stance can attempt to intimidate their foes, to make them waver, break, or even flee.

To do so, the acting player makes an AWE roll as the main action for the round.

On a successful roll, the enemy's morale has been shaken and all opponents with Might 1 are made Weary for the length of the round. If the roll produces a single Success icon ᛉ, then also all adversaries with Might 2 suffer the same penalty. If the roll produces two Success icons ᛉ or more, the penalty is applied to all adversaries in the fight.

RALLY COMRADES — OPEN STANCE

Fighters keeping an Open stance are always heedful of their surroundings, and may attempt to rally their comrades when the battle is wearing them out. Only one Player-hero may choose to Rally Comrades in any given round.

To do so, the acting player makes an ENHEARTEN roll as the main action for the round.

On a successful roll, all members of the Company fighting in a Forward stance *gain (1d)* on their attack rolls in the following round. If the roll produces a single Success icon ᛉ, then also all those fighting in Open stance gain the same bonus. If the roll produces two Success icons ᛉ or more, the bonus is applied to all Player-heroes fighting in a close combat stance.

COMPLICATIONS:

ATTACKER IS...	MODIFIER	EXAMPLES	RANGED ATTACK CIRCUMSTANCES
Moderately hindered	*Lose (1d)*	Standing on difficult terrain, suffering unfavourable weather conditions, or in cramped quarters.	Target is at medium range, or is under good cover (trees in a sparse wood).
Severely hindered	*Lose (2d)*	Almost blinded by heavy snow, knee-deep in mud or swift-running water, or in darkness.	Target is at long range, is very small (a bird), or protected by darkness or ample cover (trees in a dense wood).

ADVANTAGES:

ATTACKER ENJOYS A...	MODIFIER	EXAMPLES	RANGED ATTACK CIRCUMSTANCES
Moderate advantage	*Gain (1d)*	Attacking from the high ground, exploiting a favourable terrain feature.	Target is moving slowly, is big, or available cover is scarce.
Greater advantage	*Gain (2d)*	The defender is hindered, is blinded by heavy snow, knee-deep in mud or swift-running water, etc.	Target is stationary, is very big (a Dragon), or without available cover.

PROTECT COMPANION — DEFENSIVE STANCE

A Player-hero assuming a Defensive stance may choose to protect another hero fighting in a close combat stance.

To do so, the acting player makes an **ATHLETICS** roll as the main action for the round.

On a successful roll, the next attack aimed at the protected Player-hero *lose (1d)*, plus another *(1d)* for each Success icon ᘐ rolled.

PREPARE SHOT — REARWARD STANCE

Player-heroes fighting in a Rearward stance may take the time to aim carefully and get a clearer shot at their targets with their ranged weapons.

To do so, the acting player makes a **SCAN** roll as the main action for the round.

On a successful roll, the attacker *gains (1d)* on their next ranged attack, plus another *(1d)* for each Success icon ᘐ rolled.

EXAMPLE:

At the Battle of Azanulbizar (or Nanduhirion, in the Elven speech), Náin, son of Grór, faces Azog the great Orc of Moria. Náin is Weary, for he has been fighting for long hours already, while Azog has just entered the fray. Driven by hatred and trying to compensate for his weariness, Náin charges into a Forward stance, attempting a great stroke with his mattock. But the monster is full of guile… using his Snake-like Speed ability he makes the attack roll Ill-favoured! Azog darts aside, so that the mattock hits the stone where Azog stood an instant before. Now that Náin has lost his balance, Azog swings his sword with Horrible Strength, hewing at his neck. Azog hits Náin with a Heavy Blow worth 12 points of damage and scoring a Piercing Blow!

FLY, YOU FOOLS!

Player-heroes facing insurmountable odds and intending to leave the fight have two options:

1. **They can first assume a Rearward stance, and then choose to escape when their turn to act comes. No roll is required to do so. The same applies to adversaries who chose to stand back and thus remained unengaged.**
2. **Otherwise, they can assume a Defensive stance, rolling for their attack normally: If their attack roll is a success, they do not inflict any damage but they manage to leave the battlefield instead. If the attack roll fails, the combatant remains engaged.**

COUNCIL

'You will soon hear all you wish to know,' said Gandalf.
'We shall have a Council, as soon as you are well enough.'

Adventurers meet many travellers and wanderers along the road. Whenever they deal with strangers, they should exercise some caution, as theirs is a trade considered peculiar and sometimes dangerous by the common folk. Even when meeting foes of the common Enemy, Player-heroes should watch their tongues and be mindful of their manners, as even trusty friends can be quick to anger in days of doubt.

When the Company meets one or more Loremaster characters in a formal gathering, a council occurs. While much of what transpires in a council can be played out as a dialogue between the Company and the Loremaster, the rules presented in this chapter are particularly appropriate to determine the progress of a meeting and its consequences.

SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS

Councils represent social events of extraordinary importance, gatherings vital for the success of the Company's aims and goals that can be influenced by how they behave. The rules presented in this section should not be adopted for every verbal exchange between the Company and the Loremaster characters — everyday circumstances are better represented using the standard rules for Skill rolls.

To qualify as a council, a meeting must be a formal gathering during which the stakes are high and, depending on the outcome, the Company stands to win or lose something valuable.

- To achieve their goal in a council, the Company must achieve a number of successful rolls matching its Resistance value.
- To accomplish this, the participating Player-heroes have a limited number of attempts at their disposal (their time limit).

COUNCIL SEQUENCE

A council is set up and resolved applying the following three steps:

1. Set Resistance
2. Introduction
3. Interaction

When the council is concluded, a final step is used to assess its consequences (see End of a Council, page 108).

1 SET RESISTANCE

When the Company travels to Rivendell to petition Master Elrond, or asks to see the Mayor of the Shire in Michel Delving, they do it with a purpose in mind.

Before the council even begins, the players should all agree on what the Company hopes to achieve from the meeting, and possibly on how to achieve it.

> What are they asking for? What kind of help are they hoping to get? How do they intend to get it? Is there something they are willing to give in return — or to sacrifice?

The Resistance rating of a council reflects how hard it will be for the Company to achieve their stated goal, and it is set by the Loremaster at a value of 3 (a reasonable request), 6 (a bold request), or 9 (an outrageous request).

To make the evaluation, the Loremaster evaluates the import of the objective chosen by the Company, in relation with the motivations and expectations of the folk they are encountering.

- In general terms, a reasonable request (Resistance 3) is one where the encountered folk do not lose anything by helping the Player-heroes, or if the Company is offering something in return of approximately equal import.
- A bold request (Resistance 6) corresponds to a goal that is profiting the Company more than it does the people encountered.
- An outrageous request (Resistance 9) happens when the Player-heroes are asking the encountered folk to do something that is dangerous, or has scarce or no possibilities for reward.

COUNCIL STRUCTURE:

At the beginning of a council, the players should focus on a goal and choose their course of action accordingly.

STAGE	DESCRIPTION	USEFUL ABILITIES (EXAMPLES)
Introduction	The spokesperson presents the Company. The roll result sets the time limit for the council.	AWE to impress strangers quickly, revealing much about yourself; COURTESY to ask for support, especially from friends; RIDDLE to extract information without revealing too much.
Interaction	The main part of a council. Successful rolls accumulate to match or exceed Resistance.	ENHEARTEN to address crowds and uplift spirits INSIGHT to observe and evaluate; PERSUADE to make a point; RIDDLE to gather information; SONG to garner approval.

2 INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of a council, the Company must present themselves. To do so, the Company elects a spokesperson, possibly taking full advantage of their best speaker.

To introduce the Company, the spokesperson must make a Skill roll: the roll result determines the time limit of the council — that is, the total number of attempts that the Player-heroes are granted as a group to present their case, before they are finally dismissed.

- If the roll is a failure, the time limit is equal to 3.
- If the roll is a success, the time limit is equal to 4, plus 1 for each ᘔ icon rolled.

The Skills that are particularly useful in setting up a good Introduction are listed below, with details of their uses and consequences.

- **AWE** — A roll of Awe conveys a powerful message using few words. Player-heroes can use it to impress someone and overturn a negative early reaction, or to quickly set the terms for the coming discussion. Using **AWE** has a downside though, as the spokesperson voluntarily mentions the lineage, deeds and other personal information of the various members of the Company for full effect.
- **COURTESY** — A polite introduction is the best way to smooth a relationship before asking for support or other form of assistance. It is particularly useful if the Company (or at least the spokesperson) is already on friendly terms with the opposing party; on the contrary, to unfriendly ears, a courteous speaker might sound duplicitous. Finally, it is possible to politely refuse to reveal too much about the identity of the group.
- **RIDDLE** — If the Company has doubts about the opposite party's intentions, the spokesperson can craft questions and answers in a way so as to extract a lot of information from others in exchange for very little. However, a poor performance is sure to provoke mistrust in the opposing party.

3 INTERACTION

This is the main, and most challenging, part of most social gatherings — from a birthday party to an official audience with a Lord or Lady.

It is during this stage that the players engage with the Loremaster in playing out the scene, and make Skill rolls to accumulate enough successes to match or exceed the Resistance rating of the council.

The players choose their own course of action as they see fit, but their Skill rolls can be modified by the attitude of the people they encounter. To this end, the Loremaster chooses whether the audience of the Player-heroes is Reluctant, Open, or Friendly:

- Reluctant — *lose (1d)*. The encountered group has reasons to be unwilling to help the Company, possibly due to a level of prejudice or other source of concern.
- Open — (no modifier). This is the default attitude for an audience, representing a general inclination to listen to what the Company has to say.
- Friendly — *gain (1d)*. The audience is very interested in hearing what the Player-heroes have to say, and are willing to hear their plea. Maybe the Company was introduced by someone of note, or the spokesperson belongs to the same Culture as the opposing party.

During this stage, the Loremaster keeps track of the total number of successful rolls scored by the Company (as seen on page 18, each rolled ᘔ icon counts as an additional success).

USEFUL SKILLS: The Skills listed below can be used to various effects during Interaction.

- **ENHEARTEN** — This Skill requires a crowd of listeners, or, at least, the complete attention of a single individual; Player-heroes may attempt a Skill roll using **ENHEARTEN** to raise the spirit of an endangered community, or that of a downcast leader. The objective of the Skill attempt must be obvious; otherwise, even if the roll is a success, its effect will be weak.
- **INSIGHT** — This Skill is useful to evaluate the emotions of who the Company is interacting with, possibly revealing unspoken purposes or hidden feelings.
- **PERSUADE** — Player-heroes can use their persuasiveness to win the minds of their listeners, or to strengthen their hold on an already-captivated audience. Unlike **ENHEARTEN**, **PERSUADE** may be used discreetly during any kind of social interaction.
- **RIDDLE** — This Skill can be used in a social environment, either to formally play the ancient riddle-game — practised and respected even by the unlikeliest of wicked creatures — or to gather information and news. In the latter case, a successful **RIDDLE** roll allows a Player-hero to put together all sorts of tidbits that incautious speakers might accidentally give away in their conversation, or simply to gather interesting facts, all the while seeming to appear uninterested or unconcerned.
- **SONG** — A good song or tune is almost never out of place at a relaxed social gathering, but they can also be powerful diplomatic devices if the singer finds the proper song or intones well-chosen words.

AWARDING EFFECTIVE ROLEPLAYING

The players and the Loremaster may ask themselves about how much impact the interaction between them should have on the final outcome of a council. Should a good die roll be considered more important than a clever decision by a player? The right answer is to give both equal weight.

As happens with any action that implies the possibility of failure, players during a council describe their conduct, and then an appropriate Skill roll is made to evaluate the result.

> If the delivered speech touches topics that are relevant to the Company's goal and that are deemed important by their audience, then the Loremaster can allow the Player-heroes to *gain (1d)* or even *(2d)* on their Skill roll.

End of a Council

A council can end in three different ways:

- **SUCCESS:** The Company reaches the number of successful rolls required by the council's Resistance — the Player-heroes achieve what was chosen as their objective at the start of the council.
- **FAILURE, OR SUCCESS WITH WOE:** The Company scores a number of successful rolls, but fails to match or beat the Resistance rating within the time limit — the Player-heroes can now choose to simply fail, and be refused what they asked for, OR, with the approval of the Loremaster, they can opt to achieve their stated goal, but at a price. For example, they gain from the council much less than what they asked for, or they end up acquiring one or more enemies from among their audience. The price doesn't need to be immediately apparent, and may lead to an unexpected challenge to be faced another day.
- **DISASTER:** The Player-heroes fail all their available rolls, or score a number of successful rolls but fail to match the Resistance after a botched Introduction — The Company is now seen as a threat by the folk encountered — the Player-heroes may end up being imprisoned, or even attacked.

Journey

He then gave a full account of their journey from the time when they left Hobbiton.

A Company will often end up travelling across long leagues of inhospitable and unfamiliar areas in the course of their errands and quests. But a journey is much more than simply a means of getting to a destination. Travelling Player-heroes see the world outside the borders of their own lands, witness wondrous events, and face challenges that put their capabilities to the test. In short, a journey is synonymous with adventuring.

Gameplay during a journey is less focused on details — whenever possible, everyone involved should try to avoid explicitly referencing the rules, and rather blend the structure into an ongoing narrative.

Applying the rules for journeys requires the use of a map of the traversed region, and the collaboration between the Loremaster and the players to determine what happens along the way.

The rules detailed in this chapter are best applied using a journey log (available on page 240 and for download from freeleaguepublishing.com), a summary sheet used to keep track of all the details concerning a journey. Experienced players might eventually find its use unnecessary, but they might consider continuing to use one anyway, as compiled journey logs work as a journal of sorts, recording the accomplishments of the Company of adventurers.

The Map

The rules for travelling in *The One Ring* assume that the Company is trying to reach a specific destination. If the Company must visit a number of different locations, reaching each of them must be considered as a separate journey.

As obvious as it may seem, the members of a travelling Company must know at least approximately where their destination is located to be able to reach it. At the end of the Third Age, Middle-earth is a dangerous place, and the folks inhabiting it have been long sundered from each other, to the point that most people do not know the precise whereabouts of places just a few days away — if they are aware of their existence at all.

The front end papers contain the Players' Map, and represents the geographical lore of experienced adventurers — that is, a deeper knowledge than that possessed by the average denizen of Eriador.

All the locations indicated as villages or towns are places that the Company may choose as their destination. Not every settlement that exists in the Third Age is shown on the map — even a sparsely populated region like Eriador counts dozens of unmarked villages and isolated homesteads, what remains of what was once a large kingdom of Men.

Players can update their geographical lore during play, by making a copy of the map and writing directly on it, adding the places they visit.

THERE AND BACK AGAIN

The rules for journey resolution have been devised to make travelling across the land a vital component of gameplay, but they are not meant to be used every time the Company is on the road. In particular, they should rarely be used when the heroes are on their way back home. This is because the main effects of adventuring on the Player-heroes is not very relevant if the members of the Company are headed for a safe haven where they can rest without problems, or if they are travelling without any concern for the amount of time it will take them to make the trip. On the contrary, the journey back should be played out in detail in those cases where an Adventuring Phase may profit from a 'closing act', or when reaching their destination was just part of the Player-heroes' mission – for example, if they are escorting someone back with them.

The Travelling Company

The members of the Company assume different roles during a journey. A journey role summarises roughly what a Player-hero is doing for the length of the trip and comes into play when the Company experiences an event (see Journey Sequence).

There are four journey roles to cover: Guide, Hunter, Look-out, and Scout.

JOURNEY ROLES:

ROLE	FUNCTION
Guide	In charge of all decisions concerning route, rest, and supplies.
Hunter	In charge of finding food in the wild.
Look-out	In charge of keeping watch.
Scout	In charge of setting up camp, opening new trails.

ASSIGN JOURNEY ROLES

A travelling Company must cover all four available roles. If there are more than four Company members, more than one Player-hero may be assigned the same role — with the exception of the Company's Guide (there can be only one Guide, but more than one Player-hero can stand as a Look-out or Hunter, etc.). Conversely, if the Company counts less than four Player-heroes, then one or more adventurers will have to take on the duty of multiple roles (still, only one Player-hero can be the Guide).

Journey Sequence

If a Company is undertaking a very long Journey (more than 20 hexes), the Loremaster should split the itinerary into a number of legs, to be considered as separate journeys.

Journeys are resolved by applying the following sequence:

1. Set Journey Path
2. Make Marching rolls
3. Ending the Journey

SET JOURNEY PATH

1 Using the Player's map, the Company shows the Loremaster the route that they intend to follow. The itinerary must connect the location where the Company is at the start of the journey, and the location chosen as destination.

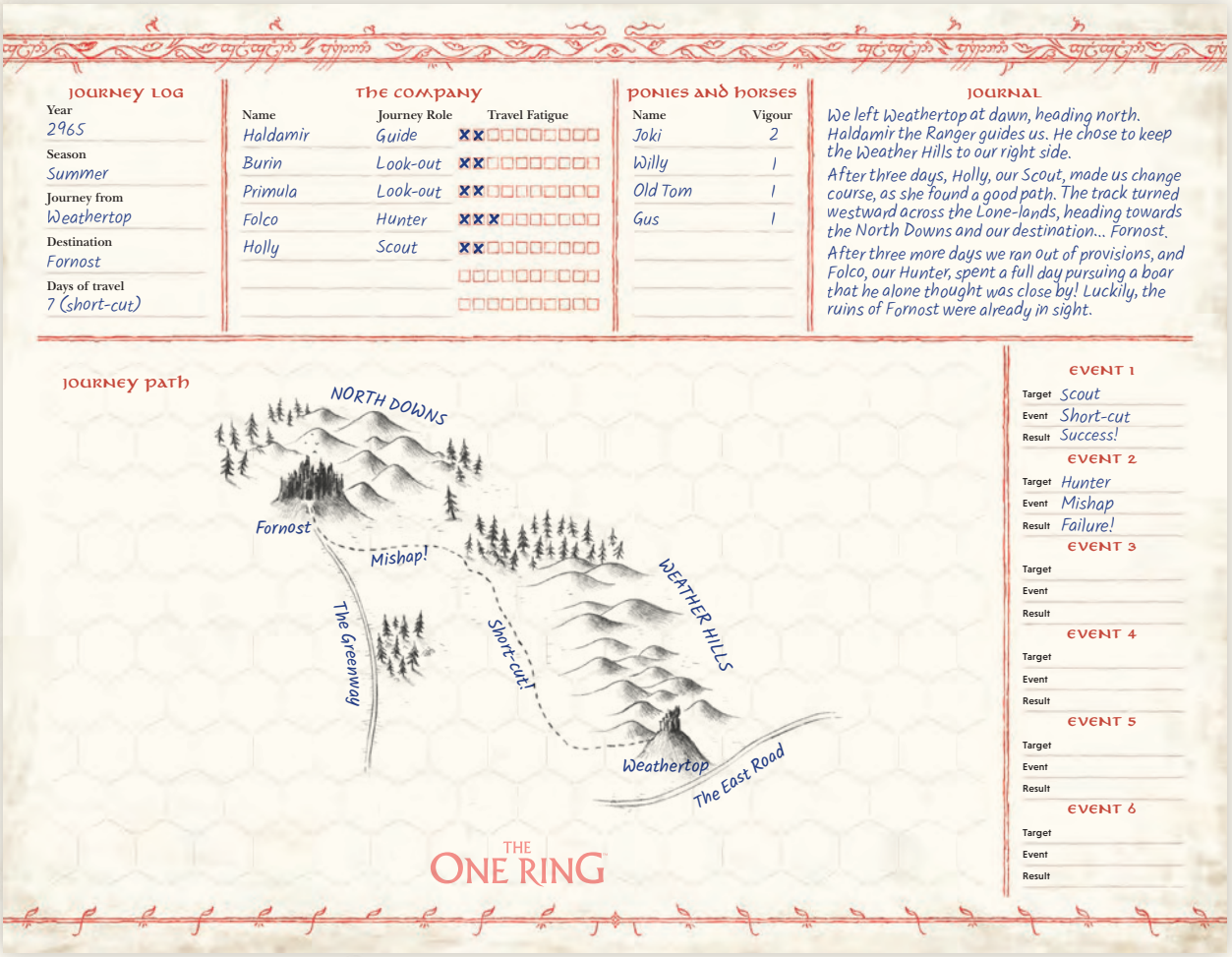
When tracing their journey path, the players must consider that their itinerary can rarely be drawn 'as the crow flies' — that is, connecting the starting point to the destination in a straight line. Instead, due consideration must be given to the lie of the land.

For example, high mountain ranges and swift-running rivers can be traversed only across passes or over bridges or fords.

Then, the Loremaster checks the map on the back end papers and draws the Company's itinerary on a copy of the journey log, using its hex grid, as a path traversing a number of hexes equal to those required to reach the destination (not counting the starting hex).

The path drawn on the journey log must not necessarily conform to the shape of the path as traced by the players on the map — the only requirement is that it must be composed of the same number of hexes.

This notwithstanding, the players are encouraged to annotate any prominent landmarks they are traversing or passing by, like ruins, or river fords and bridges. Players may also mark those hexes that contain different types of terrains, as seen on the region map, to eventually facilitate the Loremaster in assessing the duration of the journey.



2 MAKE MARCHING TESTS

Journeys can be dangerous (and exciting!), as a travelling Company experiences along the way a number of events representing threats and unexpected occurrences.

> Events take place in specific spots along the journey path of the Company. To determine exactly where, the Guide of the Company must make a Marching Test, rolling **TRAVEL**.

As soon as the Company leaves, the Guide makes a first Marching Test, and counts a number of hexes along the journey path based on the outcome of the **TRAVEL** roll:

- If the **TRAVEL** roll was a failure, the event occurs 2 hexes away along the journey path in Summer and Spring, and only 1 hex away if it's Winter or Autumn.
- If the **TRAVEL** roll was a success, the event takes place at a distance of 3 hexes, plus 1 for each Success icon.

The Loremaster finds the precise spot by counting the appropriate number of hexes, starting from the current position of the Company and proceeding towards its destination — the last hex reached by counting is the spot where an event takes place. If the Company is using a journey log, the event is marked on the appropriate hex.

> To determine the precise nature of an event, the procedure described under Event Resolution must be applied (see page 112).

Once the event has been resolved, the Guide must make a new Marching Test to see if another event happens further along the Company's journey path.

3 ENDING THE JOURNEY

A journey continues until the Guide's Marching Test result matches or exceeds the number of hexes left between the Company's current position and their point of arrival — when this happens, the Company has reached its destination and the journey is over.

More specifically, a journey ends when the Company reaches its intended destination, and the players take part in a new scene, or when an unexpected occurrence engages the Company in a different activity for a significant amount of time — in that case, the Loremaster adjudicates whether this ends the journey or not.

TRAVEL FATIGUE: Fatigue represents a deeper level of weariness that a Player-hero accumulates while travelling and that manifests itself fully when the journey is finally over.

In game terms, the Player-heroes will likely end their journey with a number of Fatigue points each, as a result of journey events. A hero's Fatigue total lowers their carrying capacity and ability to function effectively. Fatigue points are recorded on the journey log sheet, and cannot be shaken off while the journey lasts.

- At the end of the journey, Player-heroes with a mount first reduce their total Fatigue by their mount's Vigour rating (see page 50).
- Then, all Player-heroes can further reduce their accumulated Fatigue with a roll of **TRAVEL**. A success reduces the total Fatigue of a Player-hero by 1, plus 1 point for each ᘔ icon rolled.

Any remaining Fatigue is recorded on the character sheets of the affected Player-heroes. They will get rid of it at the rate of 1 point of Fatigue for each following Prolonged Rest they take in a sheltered and safe refuge (i.e.: not 'on the road').

JOURNEY LENGTH: If, at the end of the journey, the Loremaster and the players wish to know precisely how long the Company has been travelling, they can check the region map and count the number of hexes in the Company's journey path, adding 1 day for each hex suggesting a hard terrain (hills, woods, marshes, etc.) — the resulting total is the length of the journey in days.

If the entire Company is travelling on horseback, halve the resulting total (rounding up) to give the number of days travelled (the Loremaster should consider that riding is normally possible only along roads and good paths — certain areas, like heavily wooded regions, do not allow the Company to proceed on horseback at all).

FORCED MARCH: The members of a Company can press themselves while on a journey, and march for more hours each day than they would otherwise dare.

If the Company undertakes a forced march, count one day for each two hexes in the journey path instead of one, but each Player-hero accumulates 1 additional point of Fatigue for each day of forced march.

PERILOUS LOCATIONS

A number of locations on the Journey Map aren't marked with hexagons — these are areas that are considered particularly hard or dangerous to cross. These are patches of thick woodland, steep mountain passes, treacherous marshes, and other hazardous terrain types.

In game terms, all Perilous Areas are rated for their dangerousness with a numerical value — their Peril rating. When a Marching roll would lead the Company inside or across a Perilous Area, apply the following:

1. The travelling Company stops in the Perilous area as soon as it enters it.
2. Before the Player-heroes can leave the area, they must face a number of Events equal to its Peril rating (all normal rules apply).
3. Once all Events have been resolved, the Company continues the journey normally, resuming their Marching rolls from the first hex along the journey path outside the boundaries of the Perilous Area.

Supplements for the game may provide special Journey Events Tables based on specific Perilous Areas.

EVENT RESOLUTION

Journeys can be long but uneventful, or made exciting by many unexpected occurrences. Using the Journey Sequence described in the previous pages, each journey may end up featuring one or more events, based on the length of the journey.

Once the Loremaster has identified the location where an event is going to take place, apply the following sequence:

1. Select Targets
2. Determine Event
3. Resolve the Event

1 SELECT TARGETS

The Loremaster selects who will face the journey event by rolling a Success Die and using the Event Target table below.

> The table identifies the possible targets, among those Player-heroes covering the roles of Scouts, Look-outs and Hunters. The table also shows the ability that will be challenged by the journey event.

EVENT TARGET:

SUCCESS DIE ROLL	TARGET	SKILLS
1–2	Scouts	EXPLORE
3–4	Look-outs	AWARENESS
5–6	Hunters	HUNTING

JOURNEY EVENTS TABLE:

FEAT DIE	EVENT	CONSEQUENCES OF THE SKILL ROLL	FATIGUE POINTS GAINED
	Terrible Misfortune	If the roll fails, the target is Wounded.	3
1	Despair	If the roll fails, everyone in the Company gains 1 Shadow point (Dread).	2
2–3	Ill Choices	If the roll fails, the target gains 1 Shadow point (Dread).	2
4–7	Mishap	If the roll fails, add 1 day to the length of the journey, and the target gains 1 additional Fatigue.	2
8–9	Short Cut	If the roll succeeds, reduce the length of the journey by 1 day.	1
10	Chance-meeting	If the roll succeeds, no Fatigue is gained, and the Loremaster improvises an encounter favouring the Company.	1
	Joyful Sight	If the roll succeeds, everyone in the Company regains 1 Hope.	–

2 DETERMINE EVENT

To determine the nature of the event, the Loremaster must check the map to see in which Region type the event is taking place, and then makes a roll:

- If it is within a Border Land, the Loremaster makes a *Favoured* Feat die roll.
- If it is within a Wild Land, the Loremaster rolls one Feat die.
- If it is within a Dark Land, the Loremaster makes an *Ill-favoured* Feat die roll.

The roll result is then checked on the Journey events table on page 112. All entries detail a type of occurrence that the Loremaster uses to describe what happens to the travelling Company, specifying precisely what happens in game terms.

More specifically:

- Each journey Event features a unique effect that must be resolved with a Skill roll made by a Player-hero among those covering the role that was singled out as the target.
- All events additionally cause everyone in the Company to gain an amount of Fatigue points.

3 RESOLVE THE EVENT

To resolve the event, one Player-hero among those selected as the targets must now make a roll, using the Skill identified in step 1; up to one Player-hero covering the same role can choose to support the roll (see Support, page 20).

ROADS AND HARD TERRAIN: If the event takes place in a hex suggesting a hard terrain, the Player-hero making the roll *loses (1d)*. Conversely, if the event happens along a road, the Player-hero *gains (1d)*.

CONSEQUENCES: Each entry in the Journey table specifies what happens in game terms, based on whether the Skill roll fails or succeeds. A consequence indicating 'the target' concerns the Player-hero who made the roll (eventually including the one who gave support).

FATIGUE: The rightmost column of the table indicates how many Fatigue points are gained by each Player-hero in the Company.

Describing Journey Events

When resolving Events, the Loremaster should be ready to improvise a short scene describing what is happening to the Company, based on the information that the event resolution system has provided (who in the Company is facing the challenge, which Skill is tested, etc.) and the current gameplay circumstances.

The aim is not only to provide the players with a narration providing context to the journey rules, but also to weave what happens to the Company on the road into the wider landscape of the ongoing gameplay.

EVENT TYPES

The following paragraphs provide a number of suggestions on how to improvise scenes based on all event types.

TERRIBLE MISFORTUNE: Something went so badly that the Company is trudging wearily and the target of the event risked being seriously harmed. The Hunters were injured when a prey proved to be too dangerous, the Scouts suffered harm from the extreme cold, a Look-out fell from a tree while standing watch, etc.

Slowly they moved off, and were soon toiling heavily. In places the snow was breast-high, and often Boromir seemed to be swimming or burrowing with his great arms rather than walking.

DESPAIR: The Company has been so unlucky as to have been subjected to a terrible ordeal, an occurrence that is most likely connected to the slow rising of the Shadow. Examples of such an experience include: the Company stumbled into a blighted area, discovered the grisly remains of other travellers murdered by Orcs, felt the chilling presence of an evil spirit, witnessed the passage of some powerful servant of the Enemy, and so on.

The sun, a pale and watery yellow, was gleaming through the mist just above the west wall of the hollow in which they lay; north, south, and east, beyond the wall the fog was thick, cold and white. The air was silent, heavy and chill.

ILL CHOICES: Failing the event caused the target much grief or frustration. Maybe the Scout couldn't decide on the right way and lost precious sleep finding a good path, the Hunter worried about scanty provisions, the Look-out feared constantly about putting the Company in danger, etc.

"You give the choice to an ill chooser," said Aragorn. "Since we passed through the Argonath my choices have gone amiss."

MISHAP: Some adversity has caused the Company to slow its pace, or to stop altogether, and caused the target to suffer more from the effects of Fatigue. Anything from not having brought the correct travelling gear or enough provisions and having to hunt or fish, or having to choose a longer and more difficult itinerary.

"Rope!" he muttered. "No rope! And only last night you said to yourself: 'Sam, what about a bit of rope? You'll want it, if you haven't got it.' Well, I'll want it. I can't get it now."

SHORT CUT: A successful roll by the target allowed the Company to progress faster. For example, the Look-out located a shorter path, the Scout opened the way quickly and efficiently, or a bountiful hunt didn't require the Company to stop.

We could save a quarter of the distance if we made a line for the Ferry from where we stand.

CHANCE-MEETING: The Player-heroes encounter someone who proves useful to their current circumstances. It may be nothing more than a fortuitous encounter with other travellers, or friendly denizens of the traversed region, providing the Company with food, water, or particularly accurate directions, but the Loremaster can take the chance to create a more meaningful episode involving a major character, a patron for example.

"…that has been averted - because I met Thorin Oakenshield one evening on the edge of spring in Bree. A chance-meeting, as we say in Middle-earth."

JOYFUL SIGHT: The Loremaster must describe how the Company witnessed an exceptional occurrence, connected to the subtle magic of Middle-earth and its denizens, and capable of lifting the spirit of those who observe it.

Examples of such sights include: witnessing the passage of a company of Wandering Elves, seeing a congregation of Great Eagles flying high above, feeling the presence of a benevolent spirit in a glade or waterfall, encountering by chance one of the Wise and Powerful, and so on.

"Come with me, Frodo!" cried the dwarf, springing from the road. "I would not have you go without seeing Kheled-zâram."

CHAPTER 7

Fellowship Phases

When winter first begins to bite
and stones crack in the frosty night,
when pools are black and trees are bare,
'tis evil in the Wild to fare.

Heroes are not always busy navigating deep caverns, fighting back the Shadow, or fleeing from dangers beyond their ability to face. Even the most eager of adventurers needs some time to rest, to gather their wits, and allow time for their hurts to mend. Whether the Player-heroes spend it in pursuit of a personal goal, or simply resting comfortably to recover their energies before setting out on the road once again, the time between adventures is called the Fellowship Phase.

How a Fellowship Phase Works

They stayed long in that good house, fourteen days at least, and they found it hard to leave.

A Fellowship Phase is a gameplay instance driven by the players' choices — while during the Adventuring Phase players react to the Loremaster's storytelling prompts, during a Fellowship phase they get to elaborate upon their Player-heroes stories and ambitions, and to mark their adventurers' progression. The Loremaster is invited to sit back and follow what the players have to say about their characters.

Players are encouraged to narrate in detail what they do during a Fellowship Phase, not necessarily limiting themselves to those activities with a direct gaming effect. For example, the adventurers might inquire about leads, problems, and opportunities that have arisen during the preceding Adventuring Phase.

When they do so, the players must always keep in mind the length of a Fellowship Phase and its geographical limits. Moreover, they must not introduce new background information — such as exploring a location their Player-hero has never visited before, making the acquaintance of personalities they haven't encountered yet, and so on (in short, they should not do what is better suited to an Adventuring Phase).

A Fellowship Phase marks the conclusion of each Adventuring Phase, and, as such, ideally takes place at the end of a gaming session. Otherwise, it can open a new session, and precede the next Adventuring Phase.

Fellowship Phase Structure

All Fellowship Phases are structured as follows:

1. Set duration
2. Choose destination
3. Perform Updates
4. Choose Undertakings

1 SET DURATION

A Fellowship Phase usually covers a longer period of time than the average Adventuring Phase. Events are described in broader strokes — days and weeks pass while the Player-heroes relax, or busy themselves with their own personal work or studies.

To give the Player-heroes a real break from active adventuring, a Fellowship Phase should last a minimum of one week, up to an entire season.

Normally, the longest Fellowship Phase is taken during the mid-winter festivities (see Yule, on page 120).

2 CHOOSE DESTINATION

Once the length of the Fellowship Phase has been determined, the players must decide where they will spend it. Generally, the Player-heroes stop at a safe

haven to spend the phase as a group, unless the year's end festivities are near.

To keep the gameplay authentic, the players should choose a place within a reasonable distance from the area where the Company was adventuring during the recent sessions of play, also taking into consideration how long the Fellowship Phase will last.

> The players are free to select any location the Company has visited so far. The journey required to reach the chosen destination is considered to take place 'behind the scenes', unless the players have a mind to play out the details.

Places like the town of Bree or Rivendell are the ultimate safe havens, as they are particularly suited to resting and the mending of wounds, and are inhabited by a host willing to welcome travellers.

3 PERFORM UPDATES

The players may now spend their accumulated Experience Points, to improve their Player-heroes' Skills and Combat Proficiencies, and to acquire new **VALOUR** or **WISDOM** ranks. Additionally, the time spent in front of a cosy hearth while enjoying an everyday life confirms to the Player-heroes that their efforts are not wasted, and restores their faith in a brighter future.

TRAINING: Players spend Skill points to develop their Player-hero's Skill ratings, using the Experience Points Costs table below. They don't have to spend all their points at once — Skill points can be saved to acquire more expensive upgrades during a later Fellowship Phase. Any remaining points are kept track of by using the appropriate space on the character sheet.

EXPERIENCE POINTS COSTS:

NEW SKILL OR COMBAT PROFICIENCY LEVEL	NEW VALOUR OR WISDOM RANK	SKILL OR ADVENTURE POINT COST
◆	–	4
◆◆	2	8
◆◆◆	3	12
◆◆◆◆	4	20
◆◆◆◆◆	5	26
◆◆◆◆◆◆	6	30

> During a single Fellowship Phase, players can buy a maximum of one rank in each Skill.

GROWTH: Players spend Adventure points to buy a new rank in either **WISDOM** or **VALOUR**, or to enhance an adventurer's Combat Proficiencies. As with Skill points, players do not have to spend all their Adventure points at once, but can save them to acquire more expensive upgrades later.

Players may buy a rank in a Combat Proficiency, **VALOUR**, or **WISDOM** if they have enough Adventure points to attain the new rating as set out in the Experience Points Cost table. When Player-heroes reach a new **VALOUR** or **WISDOM** rank, they also gain a new Reward or Virtue (see page 78).

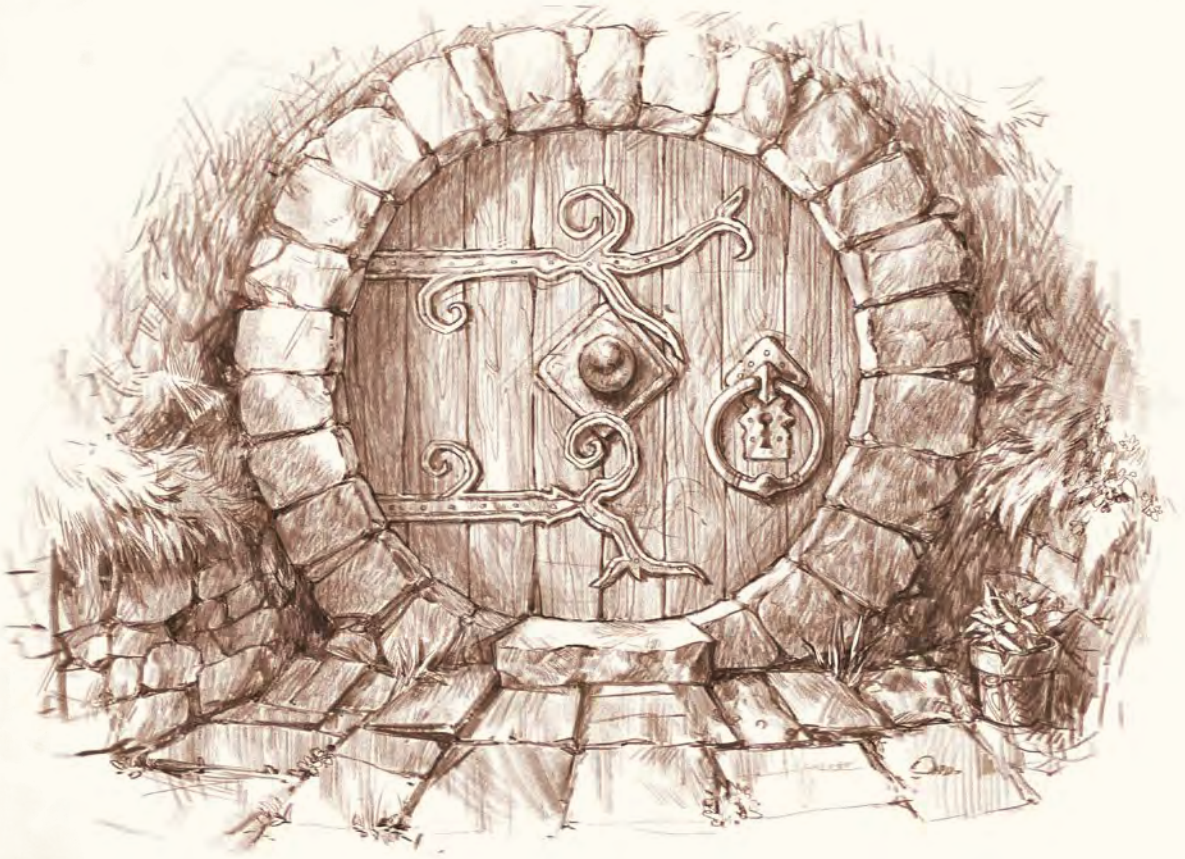
> During a single Fellowship Phase, players can acquire a maximum of one rank in each Combat Proficiency. They can also buy a rank in either **WISDOM** or **VALOUR**, but not in both. If a new attribute value is attained, the scores of all related abilities and features must be updated accordingly.

SPIRITUAL RECOVERY: During each Fellowship Phase, all Player-heroes automatically recover a number of Hope points equal to their **HEART** score, and they recover them all at Yule.

Then, if the Adventuring Phase resulted in what can be considered a positive outcome in the fight against the encroaching Shadow, all members of the Company get to remove a number of Shadow points.

If that's the case, the Loremaster must then weigh the actions of the Company against the broader context of the Twilight of the Third Age, and allow them to remove from 1 to 3 Shadow points, based on how noteworthy their accomplishments are deemed to be.

- If the Company's actions can be considered to have at least marginally interfered with the return of the Shadow, each Player-hero removes 1 Shadow point;
- If their deeds can be considered to have actively hindered or damaged the Enemy, each Player-hero removes up to 2 Shadow points;
- If the Player-heroes have committed feats that would gain the attention of the Dark Lord himself, or at least that of one of his major servants, then the Player-heroes can remove up to 3 Shadow points.



4 CHOOSE UNDERTAKINGS

Undertakings are time-consuming endeavours that Player-heroes can accomplish exclusively during a lengthy stop like a Fellowship Phase.

> Players select a number of activities, based on whether the Fellowship Phase is an ordinary one, or if it's Yule, the end of a year (see Fellowship Phase Undertakings on page 121).

Yule

Approximately once every three Fellowship Phases, winter comes, and with it the end of the current year. Normally, the Company spends the entire cold season as a single, prolonged Fellowship Phase. Life in the wild is unforgiving, and adventurers prefer to have a roof over their heads when the wind is howling, and the land is buried in snow.

In most cases, the Company disbands temporarily on occasion of the Yule festivities, as each Player-hero takes the chance to return home and enjoy some time among family and folk. Three months are enough for any Player-hero to return home from any location other than the most remote.

THE PASSAGE OF THE YEARS

When Yule comes, it means that all Player-heroes have aged one year. Luckily, time does not only slay kings and ruin towns, but may bring wisdom — the time the Player-heroes spend without adventuring allows them to reflect on their experiences, and possibly learn from their mistakes:

> During Yule, all Player-heroes recover all Hope. They also earn a number of bonus Skill points equal to their WITS rating, and add this amount to the total they accumulated during the last Adventuring Phase.

Then, the Loremaster should take the chance offered by a Yule Fellowship Phase to update the Company on the changes that are taking place in the world and that their Player-heroes should know about. To this end, the Loremaster may use the information contained in the setting chapter to determine what news reaches the ears of the Player-heroes, tailoring the information based on the current circumstances and whereabouts of the Company.

Keeping the Company up-to-date with important news is a way to insert background elements into the next Adventuring Phase.

CHANGE USEFUL ITEMS

In addition to the various endeavours they may achieve, during each Fellowship Phase the players are free to change the selection of their Player-heroes' Useful Items (always respecting the maximum number of items allowed by their current Standard of Living).

Fellowship Phase Undertakings

This section lists the various activities available to the Company during a Fellowship Phase. Players select a different number of undertakings, based on whether the Fellowship Phase is an ordinary one, or if it's Yule — the end of a year.

- During an ordinary Fellowship Phase, the Company as a group chooses one single undertaking.
- During a Yule Fellowship Phase, each player chooses one undertaking instead.
- Finally, during each Fellowship Phase (ordinary or Yule), the Company is entitled to choose one additional undertaking, selecting it among those that are listed as free, based on the Callings represented among the Player-heroes.

To sum things up, during an ordinary Fellowship Phase the Company will choose a maximum of two undertakings, and a number of undertakings equal to the number of Player-heroes plus one during Yule. Players must always select different undertakings, unless they are marked as Yule activities — such endeavours can be chosen by any number of Player-heroes.

GATHER RUMOURS

When they appeared they brought news from afar, and told strange forgotten tales which were eagerly listened to…

News of strange things happening in the world are multiplying with every passing year. Tidings of a gathering darkness, of distant wars, and of the flight of the Elves — vague legends and old songs are proving to be more than just children's stories. Player-heroes gathering rumours try to separate facts from fireside-tales, and to gather stories that may prove useful in their adventures.

Choose this undertaking to receive a rumour from the Loremaster.

A rumour can be a story about an individual, a place, or a coming event, pointing specifically to something that the Company can explore, prevent, or aspire to achieve. Otherwise, a rumour can be something specific that the Player-hero is inquiring about, and directly related to the current adventuring circumstances of the Company.

A Company including a Warden can choose this activity as a free Undertaking.

HEAL SCARS (YULE)

"Is it not a strange fate that we should suffer so much fear and doubt for so small a thing?"

Heroes feel the burden of the Shadow weigh heavily upon their shoulders long after their adventures are over. Their minds remain bent on dark thoughts, and visions haunt them in their dreams, if not even during their waking hours. Only the passage of time can heal such wounds.

Choose this undertaking to focus on mending your spiritual injuries — spend 5 Adventure points and remove 1 Shadow Scar (see Harden Will, page 137).

Player-heroes from different Cultures resort to different methods to get rid of their scars. Dwarves often turn to the forge to burn out their frustration, smiting the red iron on the anvil, Hobbits dedicate themselves to a beloved activity, like gardening, or painting, and Elves and Men generally create, play, or recite poems and songs.

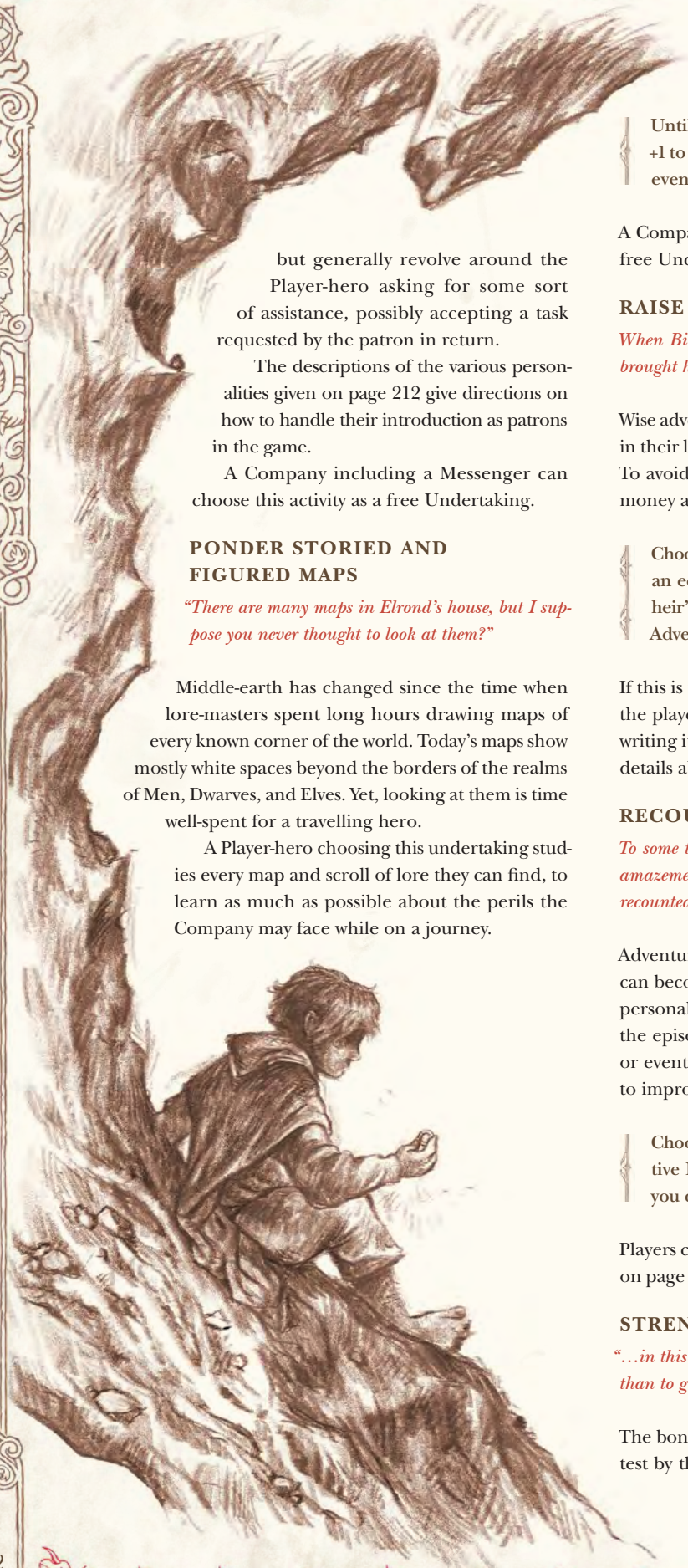
MEET PATRON

Elrond, as was his custom, sat in a great chair at the end of the long table upon the dais…

After a few years of adventuring, the Company will probably count several of the Wise and the Great among their allies. Some of these can be chosen as Patrons of the Company (see page 52).

Choose this undertaking to meet one of the Company's friends and allies when spending the Fellowship Phase in a location where that individual can be found, and if the Patron is available for a meeting.

When this is the case, the Loremaster can work with the Player-hero to set up the encounter. The reasons to see a patron vary based on the current circumstances of a campaign,



but generally revolve around the Player-hero asking for some sort of assistance, possibly accepting a task requested by the patron in return.

The descriptions of the various personalities given on page 212 give directions on how to handle their introduction as patrons in the game.

A Company including a Messenger can choose this activity as a free Undertaking.

PONDER STORIED AND FIGURED MAPS

"There are many maps in Elrond's house, but I suppose you never thought to look at them?"

Middle-earth has changed since the time when lore-masters spent long hours drawing maps of every known corner of the world. Today's maps show mostly white spaces beyond the borders of the realms of Men, Dwarves, and Elves. Yet, looking at them is time well-spent for a travelling hero.

A Player-hero choosing this undertaking studies every map and scroll of lore they can find, to learn as much as possible about the perils the Company may face while on a journey.

> Until the next Fellowship Phase, apply a modifier of +1 to all Feat die rolls made to determine the nature of events during the Event Resolution step of a Journey.

A Company including a Scholar can choose this activity as a free Undertaking.

RAISE AN HEIR (YULE)

When Bilbo was ninety-nine he adopted Frodo as his heir, and brought him to live at Bag End…

Wise adventurers sooner or later realise that all they have done in their lives can avail to nothing if they meet an untimely end. To avoid squandering their legacy, they should spend some money and time choosing and raising a worthy successor.

> Choose this undertaking to spend up to 5 Treasure and an equal number of Adventure points to add to your heir's starting Previous Experience reserve: for each Adventure point spent, raise the reserve by 1.

If this is the first time that this undertaking has been chosen, the player must also choose a name for the designated heir, writing it down on the character sheet (see page 56 for more details about raising an heir).

RECOUNT A STORY (YULE)

To some there Bilbo's tale was wholly new, and they listened with amazement while the old Hobbit, actually not at all displeased, recounted his adventure with Gollum, at full length.

Adventures have a meaning for those who live them, but they can become cautionary tales for others. Player-heroes give a personal account of an event they took part in, describing the episode to members of their own folk in a public place or event, or recording it in a book. Players are encouraged to improvise a short narration.

> Choose this undertaking to replace one of your Distinctive Features with a new trait, choosing a quality that you displayed in the narrated episode.

Players can choose a trait from the list of Distinctive Features on page 67, or even propose a new one of their own creation.

STRENGTHEN FELLOWSHIP

"…in this matter it would be well to trust rather to their friendship than to great wisdom."

The bond shared by the members of a Company is put to the test by the odds they face in the course of their adventures,

and can be reinforced when the Player-heroes are enjoying a moment of respite.

> Choose this undertaking to raise the Fellowship rating by +1 until the next Fellowship Phase.

A Company including a Captain can choose this activity as a free Undertaking.

STUDY MAGICAL ITEMS

"This is an heirloom of our house,' said Éowyn. 'It was made by the Dwarves, and came from the hoard of Scatha the Worm."

When heroes come into possession of a strange ring, an ancient jewel, or a rune-scored staff, they might not know much about their properties, especially if they are not immediately observable.

> Choose this Undertaking to learn all there is to be discovered about the qualities of all Marvellous Artefacts and Wondrous Items in the Company's possession.

A Company including a Treasure Hunter can choose this activity as a free Undertaking.

WRITE A SONG

And then one would sing amid the gloom some staves of the Lay of Nimrodel, or other songs of the Vale of Anduin out of vanished years.

All Cultures of Middle-earth play and sing songs to remember things that are fair and to celebrate life.

> Choose this Undertaking to compose a song, choosing whether it will be a Lay, a Song of Victory, or a Walking-song.

The new composition is added to a Company's list of songs — this list is used to keep track of which songs are available to the Company to sing during an Adventuring Phase (see Singing Songs, above).

The player is encouraged to come up with a song title, or its lyrics, for example taking inspiration from events that occurred to the Company, or focusing on one or more Player-heroes.

A Company including a Champion can choose this activity as a free Undertaking.

LAY (COUNCILS): A Player-hero creates a short narrative poem, particularly appropriate to narrate heroic deeds, and meant to be recited or sung at gatherings.

SINGING SONGS

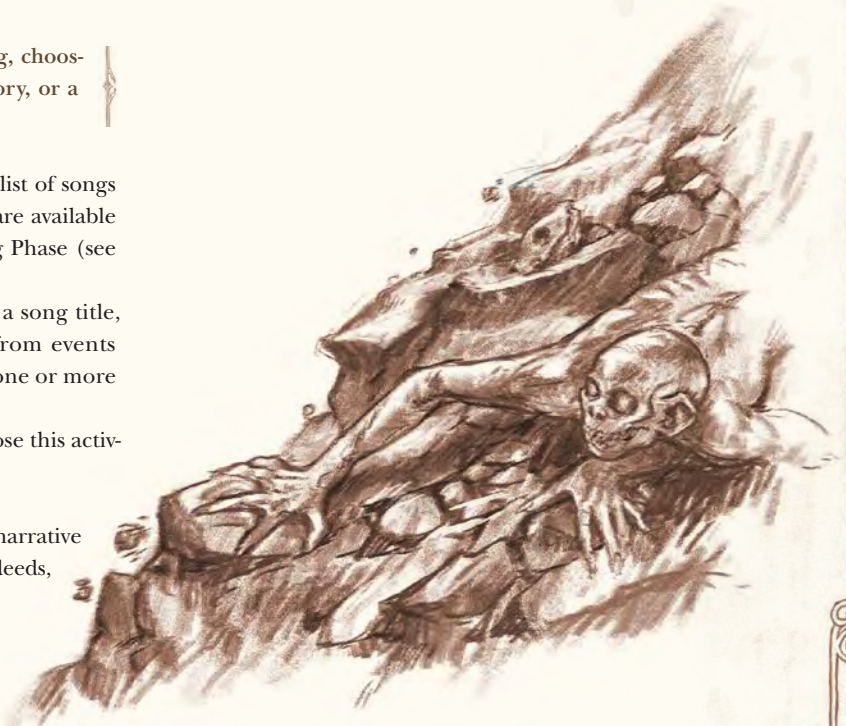
When the Company is involved in a Council, Combat or Journey, the Player-heroes may sing a song and rouse themselves to pursue their goals with renewed strength of purpose.

> To do so, first choose a song from among those on the Company's song list that is appropriate to the current venture (Combat, Journey or Council). Then, make a SONG roll. Heroes succeeding in the roll ignore the effects of being Weary for the length of the heroic venture (singing a song in combat is considered a secondary action).

Each song may be used by the Company once for each Adventuring Phase. Mark a song off the list once it has been spent. A song must be marked off whether it has been used successfully or not.

SONG OF VICTORY (COMBAT): Warriors sing stirring songs in combat, to lift their spirit and renew their lust for battle.

WALKING-SONG (JOURNEY): Travellers trudging along the final hours of a long day of travelling may find it helpful to hum a merry song, especially when they are drawing near to their destination.



CHAPTER 8

THE LOREMASTER

It appeared that Gandalf had been to a great council of white wizards, masters of lore and good magic…

In the game world, a lore-master is an individual steeped in the Old Lore of the many Cultures of Middle-earth. In *The One Ring*, the player taking the mantle of the Loremaster is the one assuming the task of managing all the elements of the game that do not fall under the authority of the players portraying the heroes.

This section of the volume is dedicated to defining the role of the Loremaster. It contains advice on how to play this fundamental role, and adds a number of rules necessary to play the game from the point of view of the Loremaster.

If you are not taking the role of the Loremaster, you do not need to read from this point onwards.

Running the Game

"…there is nothing more that I can do to help it. The board is set, and the pieces are moving."

One of the most enjoyable features of all roleplaying games is the creative collaboration between the Loremaster and the players. But while the players are exclusively in charge of their own characters, the Loremaster is responsible for such things as the description of locations, the behaviour of the people and creatures encountered, and the consequences of the actions of all characters involved in a situation.

In gaming terms, the Loremaster is tasked with structuring the gameplay, by presenting each scene of an Adventuring Phase.

Handling Scenes

As seen in *Chapter 6*, the gameplay of *The One Ring* occurs over a series of scenes.

Scenes represent meaningful episodes in the lives of the Player-heroes, situations putting their decisions and actions to the front and centre.

Anything happening in the game world that isn't directly related to the Player-heroes happens 'behind the scenes', and thus should not be the object of a scene.

Not all scenes in a session are the same — some take the best part of a gaming session, as they focus on the Player-heroes' attempts at achieving their objectives. Other scenes of lesser import are simply used to describe what happens between one main scene and another, when the Company enjoys a moment of respite or is busy planning what to do next.

The Loremaster is responsible for the framing of each main scene, while many details relating to the framing of secondary scenes can be left to the players.

From the point of view of the Loremaster, a typical session can be summarised as follows:

1. The Loremaster presents each main scene to the players, framing the situation from the point of view of the Player-heroes; the players react to the circumstances, considering their options and then describing the actions of their Player-heroes;
2. The Loremaster describes the consequences of the players' actions;
3. Finally, the Loremaster advances the gameplay, either further developing the current scene, or wrapping it up and proceeding to frame a new one.

1 FRAMING A SCENE

The Loremaster frames each scene, describing where it is taking place, setting the time of the day, and finally determining who is involved in it — this is the role of the Loremaster as Director (see page 128).

Once a scene is set, the players react to it, focusing on the goals they are pursuing and coming up with plans to achieve them.

> While the Loremaster is in charge of framing a scene, it is completely up to the players to decide how their Player-heroes intend to approach the situation that the scene described.

For example, they may choose a course of action that is risky but promises a higher reward, or may prefer to play it safe and proceed with caution.

2 DESCRIBE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE PLAYERS' ACTIONS

Once the players have made their decision and have described their course of action, the Loremaster and the players employ the rules for Action Resolution and Heroic Ventures to manage all situations and conflicts — this is the role of The Loremaster as Referee (see page 128).

The Loremaster assists the players when they choose actions for their characters to accomplish, calls for die rolls when required, and describes the consequences of those rolls.

> To advance the gameplay in a way that follows the choices of the players, the Loremaster must make sure that the consequences of all actions, whether they succeed or not, are given an appropriate narrative weight.

Additional guidelines about how to determine the consequences of the actions of the players are presented on page 130.

3 ADVANCE THE GAMEPLAY

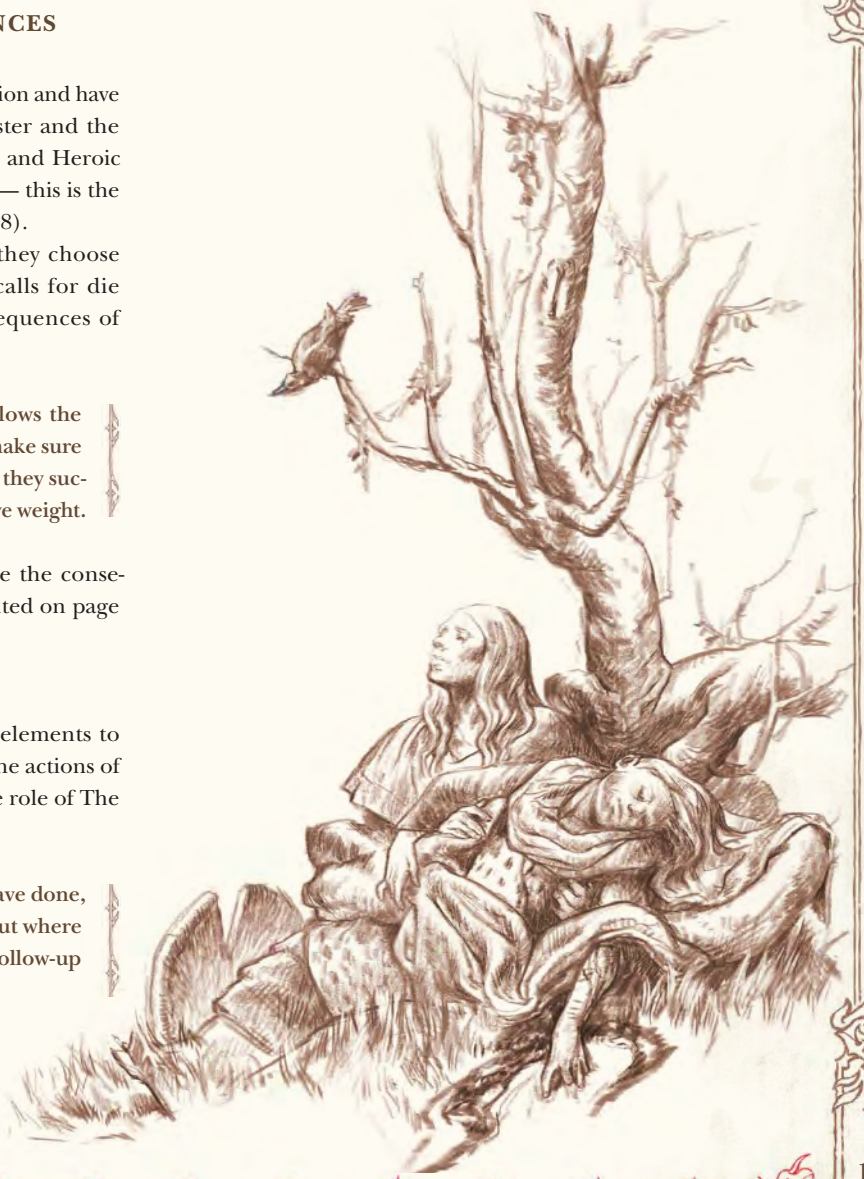
The Loremaster adds new narrative elements to the gameplay as necessary, driven by the actions of the players and their consequences — this is the role of The Loremaster as Narrator (see page 129).

> Taking into consideration what the players have done, the Loremaster develops several options about where the current situation may lead, to set up a follow-up scene in an organic way.

SCENE EDITS

Scenes do not necessarily happen one after the other. A scene following another that was just played does not have to take place immediately after the one preceding it, nor must it take place in a location that is nearby.

If a long stretch of game time passes from one scene to another, the Loremaster can describe what happens in the meantime as a cinematographic montage, while if the action moves to a location far away, the Loremaster should consider using the rules for journeys.



These options are not for the Loremaster to choose from — to give the players the opportunity to make real decisions, multiple options must always be presented as viable choices. The last thing a Loremaster should do is railroad players and make them conform to a pre-made idea of how a game should progress.

Sometimes, the Loremaster may insert new narrative elements that are not connected to what has transpired so far. These events may be part of a series of 'scripted' events, or tied to a chronology or the agenda of a Loremaster Character.

The Middle-earth Loremaster

"This Mithrandir was, I now guess, more than a lore-master: a great mover of the deeds that are done in our time."

The most important task of a Loremaster is to act as the interface between the players and Middle-earth. Evoking the right mood is essential in order to give the players the feeling that they are taking part in the unfolding events composing the Twilight of the Third Age.

It can seem a daunting prospect at first, but being the Loremaster is an immensely satisfying role for a Tolkien enthusiast, a chance to experience the world of Middle-earth as its own creator did — by orchestrating all the elements of the setting to produce new epic tales.

The Qualities of a Loremaster

The Loremaster's duties can be broken down into three roles: Director, Referee, and Narrator.

THE LOREMASTER AS DIRECTOR

When framing each scene of an Adventuring Phase, it is useful to think of the job of the Loremaster as being similar to that of a theatre or movie director — choosing and arranging the basic elements of the 'stage' that the characters will act on during the next session of play.

The Loremaster should not think of framing a scene as a complicated process — it is really simply about selecting a location, setting the time of the day, and describing who is present, including any minor or major Loremaster Characters (see page 185). Details are important, for example what the weather is like, but they should not clutter a description — everything can be expanded on later, once the players start exploring the scene, asking questions.

What is important is that the Loremaster doesn't have to worry about telling a story, but only needs to provide the players with its basic ingredients. It is up to the players to pick them up, and compose them into a full-blown narrative through their choices and actions.

To facilitate this process, when framing a scene the Loremaster should consider including some immediate prompts to action. Usually, such prompts take the form of visible or otherwise obvious hurdles obstructing their path. An obstacle can be some form of active, direct opposition (from an adversary or a Loremaster character, for example) or be the result of 'in-world', natural circumstances or threats, like bad weather conditions.

CONSISTENCY: The key to successfully 'directing' a game of *The One Ring* is being able to weave descriptions that are always consistent, taking into consideration the lore and all the disparate elements that emerge from the gameplay session after session — the goals and ambitions of the members of a Company, the places they visit, and the people they meet.

To achieve this, a good level of familiarity with the source material comes in extremely handy. *Chapter 9* presents details about the events, locations, and characters that compose the default setting for *The One Ring*.

THE LOREMASTER AS REFEREE

Roleplaying games combine game rules with a set of social and storytelling conventions. While these conventions place roleplaying games outside the constraints of

traditional board or card games (which are defined solely by their rules), the correct application of the game mechanics depends on one essential element to work to their full potential: the presence of an impartial moderator — the Loremaster.

> The Loremaster must be ready to adjudicate the rules at all times, whether testing the mettle of the Player-heroes during the Adventuring Phase, or helping players determine the outcome of their choices during the Fellowship Phase.

FAIRNESS: Acting as a referee, a Loremaster should strive to be fair and to apply the rules properly and impartially. The game mechanics are designed to provide players with a challenge, and to determine whether their Player-heroes are up to the test or not; to reward them with success if they are, or to make their lives more complicated (and interesting!) with the consequences of failure if they are not.

A biased Loremaster can easily ruin a game, as an unfair call when applying a rule brings the rules themselves to the players' attention, and their immersion in the game is disrupted.

THE LOREMASTER AS NARRATOR

As we have seen already, if playing a roleplaying game can create a story, that story arises from the interaction of the Loremaster's descriptions with the choices of the players. This means that the Loremaster should not prepare too much beforehand, to try and force a prewritten plot into the gameplay.

> It is easier, and probably wiser, for the Loremaster to set up each session as if it was a separate episode of a longer, semi-improvisational narrative, with each new one building organically upon the consequences of the previous sessions.

This does not mean that the Loremaster should solely improvise. In fact, each Adventuring Phase should feature one or more overarching 'schemes', pivotal plot elements that help the Loremaster to come up with new ideas to advance the narrative.

In a way, Schemes are the objectives of the Company's enemies, managed by the Loremaster, to establish opposition to the actions of the players (published material for *The One Ring* presents Schemes as an integral part of their premise and text).

ADAPTABILITY: A quick and rich imagination and the willingness to adapt is a precious quality in a Loremaster, as it makes it easier to integrate the actions of the players with the narrative.

The Loremaster should never forget that the Player-heroes are the protagonists of their story, and their choices must always produce tangible effects within the game world.

CANON AND THE LOREMASTER

Fans of the literary works of J.R.R. Tolkien have long debated the existence of a consistent canon — as described in *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and later publications — that firmly defines the world and history of Middle-earth. This has often been cited as one of the major hurdles to roleplaying games set in Middle-earth, claiming as it does that the Player-heroes' adventures will 'interfere' with the actions of the sagas' known protagonists and 'break' the canon's consistency.

The quick and easy answer to such concerns is that 'there is no such thing as an established Tolkien canon'; however, it is interesting to delve a little further into the subject, because a Loremaster can learn a great deal from tackling this apparently insurmountable obstacle.

AN 'UNRELIABLE NARRATOR'

One of the ways a Loremaster can deal with the dilemma of altering facts perceived to be part of the Tolkien canon is to consider the information in the stories not as the words of an infallible, all-knowing narrator, but those of witnesses to the events — individuals who are subject to errors and personal bias (for example, *The Hobbit* relates the content of Bilbo Baggins' memoirs).

This literary device served Tolkien well as he strove to create a believable 'ancient history' which included the inevitable inconsistencies that arise in a narrative composed by different chroniclers over time, and there is no reason why a Loremaster cannot do the same, especially if there is a need to change an 'established' date or the details behind a known 'fact' or 'historical' figure.

To get an idea of how much the perspective of an unreliable narrator can distort perceptions — and possibly facts — one need look no further than the books themselves. Readers of *The Lord of the Rings* often find it difficult to reconcile the image of Gimli, the redoubtable axe-wielding warrior of Erebor, with the Dwarven companions of Bilbo in *The Hobbit*, who, captured by Trolls, Goblins, Spiders, and Wood-elves, more often than not end up being saved by their Hobbit burglar.

FILLING IN THE BLANKS

Tolkien wove a rich narrative tapestry, composed of believable characters set against a vivid landscape and driven by motivations firmly grounded in myth and tradition. But even such an extensive and intricate chronicle does not thoroughly explore every nook and cranny of this imagined world and time period — far from it. As the narrative focus of the books shifts from one region to another, many locations and the events related to them remain obscure and are only briefly touched upon.

The 'filling-in-the-blanks' approach — based on the concept that the sagas are told from the subjective perspective of their protagonists, who are not familiar with every corner of Middle-earth — gives every Loremaster the freedom to create their own stories.

The setting material provided in this guide and in the various supplements for the game is an example of this. Many of the events occurring in the chosen time frame — the years covering the period from the discovery of the Ring to its destruction — are briefly mentioned in the source materials, and are therefore open for development and interpretation.

IT IS ALL ABOUT THE CHARACTERS

Another interesting view on canon comes from the author himself. While certainly very protective of his own creations in general, J.R.R. Tolkien stressed several times that what was ultimately dear to him was the integrity of his characters and their motivations, more than the preservation of his plots or other elements.

By applying this perspective to a game of *The One Ring*, it is clear that the game will remain true to its literary sources if the Loremaster pays due attention to the treatment of the canonical characters, and if the players strive to create and play plausible heroes.

LAST, BUT NOT LEAST...

Nowadays, the bulk of Tolkien's Middle-earth-related publications give the impression of an immutable and consistent corpus. But when the author was alive, he was constantly rewriting and rearranging his own material, even making substantial changes to be inserted in new, revised editions of his books. Some of these changes corrected inconsistencies, but more often than not they were introduced to accommodate later plot changes and developments.

For this reason, it is not unreasonable to assume that even Tolkien himself looked at his own work as being mutable — that even the chronologies he himself carefully created were to be considered provisional at best and not restricted to or bound by an established canon.

Taking everything into consideration, a Loremaster should not feel intimidated by the source material; rather, they should push ahead and add their own story threads to Professor Tolkien's wonderful and epic narrative tapestry.

TOOLS FOR THE LOREMASTER

"Quite simple. Too simple for a learned lore-master in these suspicious days."

The following section presents a number of rules that the Loremaster will find helpful when running the game. They add a layer of meaning to die rolls and especially to their consequences.

- The Consequences of Failure section aims to help the Loremaster in adding variety to the result of the players' bad rolls;
- Skill Endeavours details how to handle complicated actions that require more than a single roll to be completed;
- Finally, the Sources of Injury section gives substance to failures causing harm to the Player-heroes outside of combat.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE

The rules for actions seen on page 17 allow players to determine what they get when they succeed at their die rolls — failing normally indicates that something went wrong and that the Player-heroes didn't obtain what they wanted.

Often things are not so clear-cut, though. While most instances may be so tranquil that even failing a roll doesn't spell complete failure, sometimes the circumstances surrounding a Skill roll are so adverse that a failure means that something bad happened.

To give Skill rolls an additional layer of description, the Loremaster may choose a Risk level.

RISK LEVELS:

RISK LEVEL	THE FAILED ROLL RESULTS IN A...	EXAMPLES
Standard	Simple Failure, OR Success with Woe	Eluding the watch of a Bounder in the Shire, entertaining a crowd of inebriated patrons at an inn, climbing a tall tree.
Hazardous	Failure with Woe	Stealing mushrooms from a farm guarded by ferocious dogs, climbing atop a crumbling tower, or trying to swim the waters of a swift-running river.
Foolish	Disaster!	Picking the pockets of a hungry Troll, playing a riddle game with a Dragon, or bandying words with an angry Wizard.

There are three Risk levels, making an action either Standard, Hazardous, or Foolish. When setting a Risk level higher than standard, the Loremaster should always warn the players that what they are attempting is more dangerous, describing what actually makes the action particularly hazardous, so that the players can see more clearly the potential consequences of what they are about to do.

- **STANDARD ACTIONS** — Player-heroes making a Standard roll are performing under a limited level of pressure or risk, and thus exert a higher control over their circumstances.
- **HAZARDOUS ACTIONS** — Player-heroes attempting a Hazardous roll are attempting something daring, accepting the risk of suffering serious negative consequences upon a failure.
- **FOOLISH ACTIONS** — Attempting something Foolish and failing is sure to result in grievous negative consequences.

The table above and the following paragraphs illustrate in detail the consequences of failure corresponding to each Risk level.

SIMPLE FAILURE, OR SUCCESS WITH WOE

At a Standard Risk level, at the Loremaster's discretion, the acting Player-hero can simply fail, or be offered the chance to trade failure for a success marred by a negative occurrence.

> Succeeding with Woe means that the acting Player-hero succeeds, but at the cost of an unexpected inconvenience that devalues the performance, reducing its overall result, or that carries a negative side effect.

EXAMPLE:

A Player-hero jumping across a chasm makes it to the other side but drops a weapon or shield; the Dragon didn't sniff out the sneaking hero but moved in his sleep and now blocks the exit; the intricate Dwarven lock has been opened, but the magical key used to unlock it is stuck.

FAILURE WITH WOE

The acting Player-hero fails, and an additional serious negative event adds a new concern that will need attending to.

EXAMPLE:

Prey escaping a hunter wails, risking attracting the attention of more dangerous creatures; an Orc-guard spots the hiding Player-hero and now is running to sound an alarm bell; the group of ruffians the Player-hero wanted to intimidate now draw their blades.

DISASTER!

The attempt results in disaster! Not only does the roll not achieve its objective, but it causes a grievous negative event to take place. Unlike failure with woe, the negative effects of a disastrous roll cannot be prevented.

EXAMPLE:

A hero climbing a tree to spy upon an Orc encampment falls into the middle of the assembled enemies; the purse the Player-hero was trying to steal from the Troll's pocket sounds a warning and the hero is caught.

Skill Endeavours

Sometimes a simple die roll falls short in describing the dynamics behind a complex task. This happens when an action is better described as a series of smaller feats, with each successful attempt bringing the Company closer to the accomplishment of the overall task.

Examples of Skill Endeavours include undertakings like searching a wide area for clues or fortifying a steading before nightfall, following the tracks of a band of marauding Orcs

OPPOSED ACTIONS

While unlikely, it may happen that a Player-hero is trying to accomplish something in direct opposition to another Player-hero. When this happens, the action roll becomes an opposed roll.

An opposed roll is resolved with everyone rolling simultaneously, using the same ability or different ones, depending on the circumstances. Everyone rolls against their relevant Attribute TN.

For example, you are discussing a learned topic while another Player-hero challenges you with witty remarks in front of an audience (LORE vs. RIDDLE), or two heroes are arm-wrestling (ATHLETICS vs. ATHLETICS).

If more than one contestant scores a success, then the character who obtained the highest number of ᛉ icons is considered to have overcome the opposition. If all rolls fail or the results are tied, roll again or, if more appropriate, the contest ends in a draw.

before they return to their lands, or figuring out a complicated riddle, and so on.

To complete a Skill Endeavour, the participating Player-heroes must achieve a set number of successful rolls — the endeavour's Resistance rating.

SKILL ENDEAVOUR SEQUENCE

A Skill Endeavour is resolved applying the following steps:

1. Set Resistance
2. Set Time Limit
3. Execution

When the Skill Endeavour is concluded, the Loremaster assesses its outcome (see Completing a Skill Endeavour).

1. SET RESISTANCE: Similarly to what they do with councils, the players describe what they intend to achieve with the endeavour, and the Loremaster adjudicates whether the attempt is Simple (Resistance 3), Laborious (Resistance 6), or Daunting (Resistance 9), taking into consideration the current gameplay circumstances:

- In general terms, a Simple goal corresponds to a lengthy but manageable endeavour, like carrying a boat to the top of a steep slope, or putting out the fire consuming a house.
- A Laborious attempt indicates a difficult and time-consuming affair, like searching a wide area to find a lost item, or digging a deep trench in hard terrain.
- A Daunting goal is a hard and complicated endeavour, like repairing a rope bridge that spans a bottomless chasm, or researching obscure lore in a great library.

2. SET TIME LIMIT: Sometimes, the Company has a limited amount of time to achieve its goal. If the current circumstances require it, the Loremaster sets a time limit for the endeavour — that is, the total number of attempts that the Player-heroes are granted as a group to achieve their goal.

- If the Company hasn't enough time to complete the task, the time limit is set to 3;
- If the Company has only a short time, the time limit is equal to 4;
- If the Company has enough time, the time limit is set at 5;
- If there is plenty of time, the time limit is set at 6 or more.

How much time they have of course depends on the circumstances — for example, if the Player-heroes have an hour to search a room before its occupant returns, it could be considered plenty of time, while an hour is a short time if they have to search an entire castle.

Similarly, if an endeavour does not require the imposition of a time limit, then the Loremaster must evaluate how long the Company takes to complete it, again taking into consideration the nature of the task and the current circumstances.

This is generally accomplished by adjudicating how often the Player-heroes can make their rolls. For example, searching a wide area for tracks while travelling may allow the Player-heroes to roll twice a day, while scaling the side of a cliff may ask for a roll every hour or so.

3. EXECUTION: This is when the Player-heroes start making their rolls. By their very nature, Skill Endeavours may allow Player-heroes to use different Skills towards the same goal, but also to use the same Skill repeatedly, if the circumstances allow it (for example, **ATHLETICS**, to dig a ditch).

A Skill Endeavour is concluded when the Player-heroes reach the amount of successful rolls required, or they run out of time.

COMPLETING A SKILL ENDEAVOUR

A Skill Endeavour is completed successfully when the Player-heroes match or exceed the Resistance rating with successful Skill rolls. A failure happens when the Player-heroes abandon

the task, or their time runs out and the Company is interrupted by whatever caused the imposition of a time limit.

In case of success, the players achieve their objective. In case of a failure, the Loremaster must determine exactly what happens, based on the nature of the Skill Endeavour itself.

Sources of Injury

There are many ways for heroes to get hurt during an Adventuring Phase, and not all perils come from visible adversaries on the field of battle — drowning in the frigid waters of a lake or breathing noxious fumes emerging from an ancient tomb can kill an adventurer as well as a raging fire or falling from a great height.

Often, Player-heroes take damage from a source of injury as the result of failing a roll — for example, failing a roll of **ATHLETICS** while climbing, or swimming across a river. Other times, it depends on the circumstances — for example, a Player-hero is exposed to frigid winds without wearing the proper garments.

FAILING ROLLS DURING A SKILL ENDEAVOUR

A failed roll made while attempting to complete a Skill Endeavour may mean very different things, based on the specific circumstances of the effort.

Using the guidelines given on page 131 for Risk Levels, the Loremaster can adjudicate the consequences of each failed Skill roll, assessing its consequences as those due to a simple *failure*, a *failure with woe*, or a *disaster*!

- **A SIMPLE FAILURE.** Failing a roll during a Skill Endeavour which is not performed under stress normally only causes a delay. It may take longer to achieve the action, but the resolution of the action may continue.
- **FAILURE WITH WOE.** A negative consequence takes place. Examples include falling for a short distance suffering a loss of Endurance, or inhaling smoke while extinguishing a fire.
- **DISASTER!** The Skill Endeavour fails completely and cannot be resumed.

ENDURANCE LOSS LEVELS

In game terms, harm suffered by a Player-hero is generally translated as a loss of Endurance. Outside of combat, damage suffered is ranked in three levels — moderate, severe, and grievous, and is determined by comparing a Feat die roll to the Endurance Loss table below:

- If the Endurance loss is moderate, the Loremaster makes a *Favoured* Feat die roll;
- If the Endurance loss is severe, the Loremaster rolls a Feat die;
- If the Endurance loss is grievous, the Loremaster makes an *Ill-favoured* Feat die roll.

ENDURANCE LOSS:

FEAT DIE RESULT	PLAYER-HERO IS...	EFFECT
	Knocked out	The Player-hero is reduced to zero Endurance
1–10	Bruised	The Player-hero loses an amount of Endurance equal to the numerical result
ᚠ	Unscathed	The Player-hero is unharmed

Different sources of harm inflict damage differently, as shown in the table below. For example, falling damage may vary based on the height fallen or on the landing surface, while fire damage may depend on the intensity and level of exposure.

SKILL ENDEAVOURS, RISK, AND DAMAGE

The various Sources of Injury detailed here can be used to inflict harm on the Player-heroes as a consequence of their actions, based on their performance.

Following the rules for Skill rolls with Risk and those for Skill Endeavours, the Loremaster may apply the following:

- A Failure or a Success with Woe may cause a moderate loss of Endurance;
- A Failure with Woe may result in a severe loss of Endurance;
- Disaster can provoke a grievous loss of Endurance.

FATAL INJURIES: If Player-heroes suffer an incident that should in all likelihood prove fatal, they die instantly when Wounded or when they gain the Dying condition. Examples include falling from an extreme height onto rocky terrain, being trapped under the ruins of a burning structure, or drowning in freezing waters.

POISON: A poisoned Player-hero cannot rest and must roll for the corresponding Endurance loss at the end of each day — If the roll produces a ᚠ, the hero takes no damage and is not poisoned any more. A successful **HEALING** roll done at the start of a day also removes the effects of poison — the roll *loses (1d)* if the poison is Severe, and *loses (2d)* if Grievous.

SOURCES OF INJURY:

SOURCE	MODERATE	SEVERE	GRIEVOUS	NOTES
Extreme Cold	Chilling winds	Deep snow	Frigid waters	*Roll each half hour.* Hero is Dying if down to zero Endurance.
Falling	Short fall *(10 feet max, or soft landing)*	Long fall *(30 feet max, or hard landing)*	Deadly fall *(great height, or dangerous landing)*	Hero is Wounded if down to zero Endurance.
Fire	Torch flame, campfire	Brazier, burning house	Funeral pyre, Dragon fire	*Roll each round.* Hero is also Wounded if down to zero Endurance.
Suffocation	Choking fumes	Drowning	Strangulation	*Roll each round.* Hero is Dying if down to zero Endurance.
Poison	Food poisoning	Snake-bite, Orc-poison	Spider-poison	*Roll each day.* Hero is Dying if down to zero Endurance.

Loremaster Characters

'That's right! Barliman is my name. Barliman Butterbur at your service!'

Loremaster characters are the best tool a Loremaster has to create a believable setting for the players. The adventurers interact briefly with a great many of them during each scene — they compose the army of 'extras' who populate a village they enter, crowd the streets of a town, and frequent the inn the Company stops at to get some rest. Others serve a purpose that goes beyond that of acting simply as a backdrop for the deeds of the Player-heroes, and can be encountered more than once. Finally, there are famous personalities, those characters that are part of the history of Middle-earth as created in the stories — individuals that the Player-heroes will have the chance to meet in the course of their career.

Distinctive Features

Usually, what the Loremaster needs to play the part of a Loremaster character is just a name, a short description, and an idea of the purpose that the character serves in the current scene.

Sometimes this is not enough, and additional information becomes necessary, either because the interaction develops (or degenerates!) during play as a result of the Company's actions, or because the introduction of the Loremaster character served a greater purpose.

The addition of one or more well-chosen traits to the description of a Loremaster character is generally all that is needed to give depth to an individual.

To better define a character, the Loremaster chooses an occupation or a field of expertise, and then adds one or two Distinctive Features (choosing from those available to heroes, or even inventing them on the spot).

By doing so, a faceless figure in the background becomes an 'old but trusted servant', a 'grim-faced, keen-eyed guard', a 'wise woman learned in herb-lore' — a short but vivid description that helps the Loremaster and the players to picture the character more readily.

Loremaster Characters and Die Rolls

Most of the time, the interaction of a Player-hero with Loremaster characters is resolved without die rolls — natural conversation and knowledge of the setting are all that is required.

When this is not enough, the Loremaster and the players resort to the usual rules for Action Resolution, considering whether Loremaster characters are seen as obstacles by the Company, or if they give assistance (see page 136).

Should the interaction with a Loremaster character lead to outright conflict, the character must be cast as an Adversary by generating the characteristics needed for Combat (see page 142).

Loremaster Characters as Obstacles

When a Loremaster character hinders the course of action of the Company, the players can resolve the situation with a die roll.

Sneaking past someone, trying to persuade or intimidate an individual, even outrunning a pursuer, are all examples of actions that can be handled simply and quickly using the usual rules for Action Resolution.

In most cases, a simple Skill roll is enough to represent the complication, but if a Loremaster character possesses a Distinctive Feature that can be considered to aggravate the action of the acting hero, then the Loremaster can apply a penalty:

The acting hero's die roll *loses (1d)* if the Distinctive Feature is making the action particularly difficult.

Naming Loremaster Characters

A quick way to give substance to Loremaster characters is to give each of them a name. In a game set in Middle-earth, this is easier said than done, as each Culture follows specific naming conventions.

To avoid fumbling through the rules each time a player asks the name of one of your characters, it would be wise for the Loremaster to keep a list of names handy from those found in the character generation chapter (see Heroic Cultures, pages 33–43).

EXAMPLE:
The Company is trying to locate the whereabouts of a terribly Secretive wild Goblin terrorising the countryside near Archet. The Player-heroes roll **HUNTING**, *losing (1d).*

If, on the contrary, a Loremaster character displays a Distinctive Feature that can be interpreted as a flaw, it may improve the chances of the acting hero instead:

> The acting hero's die roll *gains (1d)* if the Distinctive Feature is making the action easier.

EXAMPLE:
A group of dangerous fisher-folk has detained a Hobbit who went to their village to gain free passage across their land. The guard is a Bold warrior, who doesn't think much of his halfling prisoner. The Player-hero gains (1d) on her escape attempt using **STEALTH**.

LOREMASTER CHARACTERS PROVIDING ASSISTANCE

If the presence of a Loremaster character can be considered to benefit the action of a Player-hero, then the corresponding roll can receive a positive modifier.

Only Loremaster characters possessing an appropriate Distinctive Feature can support the action of a Player-hero:

> The acting hero's die roll *gains (1d)* if the Loremaster character's Distinctive Feature is considered to be beneficial, or *gains (2d)* if the trait can be deemed to ensure a superior level of support.

EXAMPLE:
The Company has been given direction by Tom Bombadil to find their way in the Old Forest — old Tom's advice is sound, if a little confusing — all **TRAVEL** *rolls made to navigate the woods gain (1d).*

The Shadow

'And that is another reason why the Ring should be destroyed: as long as it is in the world it will be a danger even to the Wise. For nothing is evil in the beginning.'

Middle-earth has been under attack by the forces of darkness since its creation. Across each age, the world has been threatened by the designs of a Dark Lord, a powerful Enemy relentless in the desire to dominate all. Sauron the Great, an evil spirit of immense power, might already be far closer to victory than any dare dread. The presence of the Enemy weighs upon the hearts of most inhabitants of Middle-earth, with the exception of a fortunate few living in the havens of the northwest. Multitudes living to the east and south worship him already as the only god they have ever known.

The Free Peoples are among those few who have cherished a glimmer of hope: the knowledge that, as powerful as he appears to be, Sauron can be resisted and even defeated by steadfast opposition. Countless battles have been won or lost by alliances of the folk of Middle-earth. Though the Shadow has never failed to return in a new shape, even after the most resounding defeats, neither has hope ever fully deserted the hearts of those who fight against it.

But the Shadow does not rely solely upon instruments of war and the devious deeds of its servants to breed fear and doubt. The temptations that dwell even in the hearts of the brave have ever been its ally — Valiant warriors, adventurers, and kings can all stray from their path willingly, given the right circumstances. No matter how pure they believe their motives to be, or how just the ends, giving in to their darkest desires will eventually lead them to exert their power for personal gain or the domination of others.

Shadow Points

Challenging an almost all-powerful Enemy and facing its terrible minions is bound to instil a sense of fear and doubt in the Player-heroes, a sentiment that in time comes to weigh heavily on their hearts and minds.

In the game, this burden is represented by the accumulation of Shadow points, and by the sources that force their gain.

In the course of play, the Player-heroes see their Shadow score ebb and flow, as they gain points during the Adventuring Phase as a consequence of their actions, and then they possibly lose them by making a Shadow Test, by strengthening their resolve (see Harden Will), or by mending their spiritual hurt during a Fellowship Phase (see Spiritual Recovery, page 119).

Shadow points are kept track of by marking them in the appropriate box on the character sheet, next to a hero's Hope rating. Heroes cannot accumulate Shadow in excess of their maximum Hope score (any additional points gained do not raise a hero's Shadow score).

SHADOW TESTS

A number of sources of Shadow allow players to make a roll to cancel, or at least reduce, the amount of points gained. Called Shadow Tests, these rolls are based using either **VALOUR** or **WISDOM**, depending on the specific source of Shadow.

Shadow Tests are resolved as any other roll, by using a Feat die, plus a number of Success dice equal to the character's appropriate rating.

When a Shadow Test is passed, the hero reduces the number of Shadow points gained by 1 point on a success, plus 1 for each Success icon (ᘐ) rolled.

The sources of Shadow that can be resisted with a test (Dread, Greed, and Sorcery) are described later in this chapter.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF SHADOW

A creeping threat, Shadow becomes truly dangerous when the number of points accumulated by a Player-hero matches or overcomes their current Hope score:

When this happens, Player-heroes become Miserable, and see all their rolls hampered by the fact that rolling an icon on the Feat die results in failure, regardless of the TN and the actual result obtained by the roll.

But Player-heroes suffer even more serious consequences if their Shadow gain is left unchecked:

Player-heroes whose Shadow score reaches their maximum Hope rating are so overburdened by their fears that they become *Ill-favoured* on all rolls.

There is only one way to recover from such depths of desperation — the Player-hero must experience a bout of madness. A bout of madness is a violent outburst, a dangerous crisis that frees a Player-hero from the burden of the Shadow, but that may have serious, long-term consequences (see Madness, on page 139).

HARDEN WILL

Adventurers who are struggling under the burden of the Shadow may tap into their innermost reserves of spiritual energy to harden their determination, before it's too late. For some, this effort takes the form of a demonstration of desperate strength; others enjoy a moment of clarity in their darkest moment, when all seems lost, and suddenly all doubts are cast away:

In game terms, Player-heroes whose accumulated Shadow does not yet match their maximum Hope score may choose to remove all their current Shadow, replacing it with a single Shadow Scar.

A Shadow Scar is a 'permanent' Shadow point that can be removed only during a Yule Fellowship Phase, by choosing the Heal Scars undertaking (see page 121), but is otherwise considered as a normal Shadow point for all purposes.

Sam's plain hobbit-face grew stern, almost grim, as the will hardened in him, and he felt through all his limbs a thrill, as if he was turning into some creature of stone and steel that neither despair nor weariness nor endless barren miles could subdue.

SOURCES OF SHADOW

Adventurers gain Shadow in many ways. When their determination is shaken by witnessing distressing events or facing terrible foes, then the source of Shadow points is Dread; if they are committing despicable actions, they are tainting their conscience with Misdeeds; if they take possession of precious or powerful objects, they may be tempted by Greed; finally, if they fall victim of dark magics they have to resist the effects of Sorcery.

DREAD

Terror is a spear in the hand of the Enemy. Adventurers gain Shadow points whenever they witness something capable of striking fear or sowing doubts into their hearts, be it facing a horrible creature out of the darkest pits of Mordor, entering a place where shadows are made thicker by an ancient curse, or experiencing directly the terrible power of the Enemy.

The extent of the Shadow gain depends on the source of Dread — the table above provides a number of examples

SOURCES OF DREAD:

SOURCE	EXAMPLE	SHADOW POINTS GAINED
Natural but unexpected tragic event, or very grievous occurrence.	Serious or mortal accident, death in the family, natural catastrophe	1
Gruesome killing, dreadful experience, Orc-work.	Discovering villagers savagely mutilated, experiencing slavery	2
Harrowing experience, physical and spiritual torment.	Experiencing torture, being haunted by a Wight	3
Experiencing directly the power of the Enemy.	Seeing the mustering of a Shadow army, seeing the Eye in a Palantír	4

to help the Loremaster adjudicate (other sources, like the terror caused by a creature or a dark spell, are discussed in detail in the Adversaries, page 142).

Adventurers may reduce or cancel the effects of Dread with a Shadow Test (VALOUR).

But the king sat upon Snowmane, motionless, gazing upon the agony of Minas Tirith, as if stricken suddenly by anguish, or by dread. He seemed to shrink down, cowed by age. Merry himself felt as if a great weight of horror and doubt had settled on him.

GREED

Hoards of gold and great stores of enchanted weapons and armour lie in forgotten caves. Heroes risk being corrupted by their own desire whenever they put their hands on gold and precious objects that were tainted by laying in the dark for a long time.

When the Player-heroes find a hoard of treasure, they may gain a number of Shadow points if the hoard was tainted (see Treasure, on page 158).

Adventurers may reduce or cancel the effects of Greed with a Shadow Test (WISDOM).

"It is mine, I tell you. My own. My Precious. Yes, my Precious."

MISDEEDS

Companions often confront challenges that are so demanding that they might be tempted to adopt extreme measures, especially if they aim to achieve a noble goal. When this happens, the Loremaster must consider if a course of action can be considered a Misdeed.

Player-heroes gain Shadow points whenever they commit an act that is essentially wrong or even nefarious in nature, regardless of the objective they are trying to achieve. The Misdeeds table can be used as the basis of the Loremaster's decision.

A Misdeed is a special instance of Shadow gain, as it cannot be reduced or cancelled by a Shadow Test of any kind.

The Loremaster should usually warn the players when they are about to carry out a Misdeed.

"You can say that I was too strong and took it by force. For I am too strong for you, halfling," he cried; and suddenly he sprang over the stone and leaped at Frodo.

INTENTION

It is important to note that merely attempting to do something despicable is a Misdeed, regardless of whether the action succeeds or not. Moreover, it is possible to commit a Misdeed unknowingly, for example, attacking someone considered to be guilty of a heinous crime, but who later turns out to be innocent. In this case, the Player-heroes should not gain Shadow automatically, but only if they don't attempt to make reparations when their mistake comes to light. If their reaction is one of contrition and they show an earnest attempt to put the situation right, then they can be allowed to make a Shadow Test (WISDOM) to reduce or cancel the Shadow gain.

MISDEEDS:

ACTION	SHADOW POINTS GAINED
Violent threats and malicious lies; heedless cruelty	1
Manipulating others; abusing your authority; deliberate cruelty	2
Theft or plunder; oathbreaking or cowardice; treachery	3
Torment or torture; killing or crippling a surrendered foe or harmless folk	4
Murder; willingly taking actions in the service of the Enemy	4 plus 1 Shadow Scar

SORCERY

It is said that those who are in the favour of the Dark Lord are often rewarded with evil knowledge. Some are able to wield such knowledge to terrible effect, twisting it into a form of dark magic. Adventurers gain Shadow when they fall victim of the dreadful spells of the Enemy and his minions.

The number of Shadow points gained by the Player-heroes depends on the power of the sorcerous spell. Often, gaining Shadow points as the consequence of Sorcery has additional negative consequences.

Adventurers may reduce or cancel the effects of Sorcery with a Shadow Test (**WISDOM**).

Then the leader, who was now half across the Ford, stood up menacing in his stirrups, and raised up his hand. Frodo was stricken dumb.

Madness

As seen on page 137, Player-heroes whose Shadow score reaches their maximum Hope rating become *Ill-favoured* on all rolls. Once they reach this point, they can get rid of Shadow only in one way — by playing out a bout of madness, a violent reaction marking a significant step in their downward course towards degeneration.

To play out a bout of madness, players must describe how their characters lose control for a short period of time, doing something they will later regret.

To describe their loss of control, players should take into consideration the source of the last Shadow gain that pushed their heroes beyond their limit, a character's Shadow Path, or one of their Flaws (see Shadow Paths overleaf).

Here are some examples of the consequences of a bout of madness:

- **BETRAYAL:** The Player-hero fails to keep their word or to perform an assigned duty, and the Company suffers the consequences. For example, the hero fails to watch over a prisoner properly and the prisoner escapes.
- **FEAR:** The heroes fall prey to their fears, and flee from any source of danger, thinking only about preserving themselves from any threat.
- **LUST:** Lusting characters feel an irresistible desire for an object not belonging to them, and try to take it, secretly or overtly.
- **RAGE:** Raging characters brood over real or imaginary wrongs until they react aggressively to a perceived threat or source of opposition.

If nothing seems to fit the circumstances, a standard bout of madness can take the form of an aggression of any type, verbal or physical, upon the most likely and available target (a character's Fellowship Focus often qualifies as such).

Player-heroes quickly regain control of themselves once their bout of madness passes. They see their mind finally cleared of the tangle of fear and doubt they fell into before facing the crisis.

They are no longer *Ill-favoured* and remove all their current Shadow points, but they advance one step along their Shadow Path (page 140).

A bout of madness must take place during the current Adventuring Phase (player-heroes ending the Adventuring Phase with a Shadow score matching their maximum Hope can be considered to have left the Company and are retired from the game).

"What have I done? Frodo, Frodo!" he called. "Come back! A madness took me, but it has passed. Come back!"

SHADOW PATHS:

BOUT OF MADNESS	CURSE OF VENGEANCE	DRAGON-SICKNESS	LURE OF POWER	LURE OF SECRETS	PATH OF DESPAIR	WANDERING-MADNESS
# 1	Spiteful	Grasping	Resentful	Haughty	Troubled	Idle
# 2	Brutal	Mistrustful	Arrogant	Scornful	Wavering	Forgetful
# 3	Cruel	Deceitful	Overconfident	Scheming	Guilt-ridden	Uncaring
# 4	Murderous	Thieving	Tyrannical	Traitorous	Fearful	Cowardly

SHADOW PATHS

In addition to resetting their Shadow score, every time a hero suffers a bout of madness they advance along the Shadow Path corresponding to their chosen Calling. All paths are articulated along a number of steps towards degeneration, with each step marked by the acquisition of a different Flaw — a Distinctive Feature with a negative connotation.

A Player-hero's Calling determines which Flaws are acquired, based on the character's Shadow Path (see table above).

SUCCUMBING TO THE SHADOW

Heroes who develop the full complement of four Flaws risk succumbing totally to the Shadow:

> The next time that their Shadow score reaches their maximum Hope rating they do not become *Ill-favoured* but are taken out of play instead.

A Player-hero who succumbs to the Shadow is going to disappear from the game soon, probably as a consequence of one of the following events:

- **LOST TO MADNESS:** When Men, Hobbits, or Dwarves fall under the Shadow, they succumb to madness. More often than not, this results sooner or later in their death, as they threaten others to the extent that they end up being killed, or starve to death in some solitary place, forsaken by folk and beasts.
- **RETURN TO VALINOR:** When the burden of the Shadow overpowers Elves, they seek to leave Middle-earth as soon as possible, to sail for the Uttermost West and be healed of the sadness and misery of this world.

The details about the fate of a Player-hero who descends a Shadow Path to its bottom are up to the Loremaster and the player controlling the fallen character. They should work together to find a way to incorporate the hero's destiny into the ongoing game.

FLAWED HEROES

Flawed adventurers haven't lost the possibility of being heroes. Many of the characters described in the books display the influence of the Shadow to some measure - certainly Boromir, or Frodo, but also Aragorn and even Gandalf. In most cases, they were able to keep their weaknesses in check, avoiding corruption's most dire consequences.

USING FLAWS

Every time heroes develop a Flaw they are renouncing their higher ambitions and embracing simpler, more primitive emotions. They are trading respect for arrogance, love for lust, trust for suspicion.

The Loremaster should take into account the effects of a Flaw whenever the performance of a Player-hero can be made worse by it.

> If a Player-hero is using a Skill that can plausibly be affected by a Flaw, the roll is made *Ill-favoured*.

EXAMPLE:

An Arrogant hero is making a **COURTESY** *roll. The Loremaster considers that her pompous conduct may worsen her chances to succeed, so the roll is made Ill-favoured.*

The following sections describe the various Flaws that Player-heroes may develop as a result of their degeneration, grouped by Shadow Path. The Loremaster can use the definitions listed here to determine the effects of a bout of madness, and the players may use them to keep in mind how a Flaw should affect the behaviour of a Player-hero.

CURSE OF VENGEANCE

"I wish I had Gandalf here! Curse him for his choice of you! … As for you, I will throw you to the rocks!" he cried and lifted Bilbo in his arms.

SPITEFUL: You often repay real or imagined wrongs with vicious rudeness. Depending on the provocation, you may simply be very impolite, or downright insulting.

BRUTAL: You react violently to provocations and show little restraint under most circumstances.

CRUEL: You don't care if your actions cause pain and suffering to others, and are needlessly savage with your enemies.

MURDEROUS: You become Murderous when you start to consider killing as a perfectly natural way to achieve a goal or simply to make things go your way.

DRAGON-SICKNESS

…he fell under the Dragon-sickness, and took most of the gold and fled with it, and died of starvation in the Waste, deserted by his companions.

GRASPING: If you become Grasping, you seek to accumulate gold and precious items above all else, just for the sake of possessing them.

MISTRUSTFUL: When your prized possessions start to weigh you down and become a treasure to be guarded, even the good advice of friends appears to mask dubious intentions.

DECEITFUL: You feel no shame in misleading others with lies and stratagems, as long as your machinations further your ends and corrupted needs.

THIEVING: You have discovered that anything you desire can be yours — you just have to take it. You have earned the right to take all you want when you sacrificed the love of your peers and your own self-respect.

LURE OF POWER

"It is by our own folly that the Enemy will defeat us," cried Boromir. "How it angers me! Fool! Obstinate fool! Running wilfully to death and ruining our cause."

RESENTFUL: You risk becoming bitter and angry with the people you ought to lead. You often feel that you risk your life for individuals that fail to see the wisdom of your words.

ARROGANT: You don't miss an opportunity to underline your own importance, often belittling your peers and companions.

OVERCONFIDENT: Overconfidence denotes overweening pride, a sentiment that blinds you to your own limits and weaknesses. You endeavour to do anything you set your mind upon, regardless of the consequences that might befall others.

TYRANNICAL: You escalate your actions and desires to the level of a just cause. Your disregard for the lives of others is

so profound that you go to any lengths to achieve your ends, regardless of the cost or methods employed to accomplish them. Any dissenting opinion is considered as utter betrayal.

LURE OF SECRETS

"The roots of those mountains must be roots indeed; there must be great secrets buried there which have not been discovered since the beginning."

HAUGHTY: You don't recognise easily the wisdom found in the words and actions of others, and tend to turn aside all advice and offers of help.

SCORNFUL: You treat the propositions of others with disdain, making use of every opportunity to mock them for their presumed inadequacy.

SCHEMING: You keep your thoughts and intentions to yourself at all times, never giving advice and heeding only your own judgement. You might sometimes agree with the propositions of others, but only to be free to follow your own choices later.

TRAITOROUS: When you become Traitorous you cannot be trusted to keep your word. You are ready to betray your own friends and allies, if it would turn to your advantage.

PATH OF DESPAIR

"Now the Company is all in ruin. It is I that have failed. Vain was Gandalf's trust in me. What shall I do now?"

TROUBLED: You feel a sense of disquiet that makes it hard for you to read a situation clearly and offer counsel to others.

WAVERING: Caution can be the enemy of action, and when you become Wavering you cannot set your mind upon a choice quickly and effectively. You vacillate between the various options you see before you.

GUILT-RIDDEN: The curse of those who defend others is to feel remorse when their actions go amiss, pushing you to refuse any daring course of action.

FEARFUL: When you become Fearful you are so beset by worries and concerns that you cannot force yourself to risk doing anything that will potentially endanger yourself and those you care for.

WANDERING-MADNESS

"I feel I need a holiday, a very long holiday, as I have told you before. Probably a permanent holiday: I don't expect I shall return."

IDLE: It takes a lot to stir Idle adventurers into action. You are easily distracted, and must be cajoled to fully participate in endeavours.

FORGETFUL: Being Forgetful indicates that you are often daydreaming and absent-minded, and find it difficult to remember even important things.

UNCARING: When you become Uncaring you lose touch with the world outside of yourself. You can't bring yourself to feel compassion, and quickly lose interest in matters that do not concern you directly.

COWARDLY: You care only for your own safety under any circumstances, and will go to any lengths to save yourself when a threat arises.

adversaries

For the folk of Arnor dwindled, and their foes devoured them…

Not all the servants of the Enemy are Orcs, Trolls or Wraiths. Among the foes of those who choose to oppose the Shadow are many who cannot be distinguished easily from their friends, if at all. And in times of doubt, a deadly threat may come from otherwise steadfast allies, turned into ruthless adversaries by simple misunderstanding, or, worse, by treachery or betrayal.

This chapter presents a selection of adversaries, from the various cunning and evil creatures of Middle-earth, to misguided individuals that end up opposing the deeds of the Player-heroes.

Format of Presentation

To make the life of a Loremaster easier, all game information regarding adversaries is presented using a standardised format. The capabilities of a foe are described using a set of terms and characteristics that are similar to those used to define heroes, but that make use of simplified rules meant to speed up the gameplay.

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL

This single value replaces the three Attributes used to describe Player-heroes and can be used to gauge the threat level posed by a single adversary of a type.

> In combat, this numerical rating is applied as a modifier to several mechanics, like for example a number of Special Damage opportunities and Fell Abilities.

MIGHT AND ENDURANCE

All Adversaries possess a number of Endurance points, and a Might rating. Endurance measures the resistance of the adversary to the exhaustion of combat and harm; Might indicates the number of Wounds required to slay a foe outright, and the number of attacks it can take during a round of combat.

- All adversaries are taken out of combat if their Endurance is reduced to zero.
- Adversaries can make a number of attacks up to their Might score, targeting multiple foes in the same round, or the same opponent multiple times.

Adversaries can never opt to be knocked back to reduce the severity of a loss of Endurance.

HATE OR RESOLVE

Each Adversary description includes a numerical rating measuring their fighting drive and fuelling their special abilities — in game terms, Hate and Resolve serve a function that is similar to that of Hope for the Player-heroes.

More specifically:

- The Loremaster can reduce an adversary's Hate or Resolve score to make them *gain (1d)* on a die roll during combat (generally, attack or Protection rolls).
- Often, an expenditure of Hate or Resolve is required by several Fell Abilities (see next page).
- A creature without Hate or Resolve is considered Weary.
- Each combat round, an adversary can spend a maximum of Hate/Resolve equal to their Might.

HATE: Adversaries with a Hate point rating are to be considered minions or servants of the Enemy. Their actions are not easily misinterpreted, as they always aim at hurting or otherwise damaging the Player-heroes in one way or another, desiring only to satisfy their Master's will. They may opt to flee if in a disadvantageous position, but will never yield or surrender, nor give quarter unless forced by circumstances or direct orders.

> All minions of Sauron and all monstrous creatures have a Hate rating.

RESOLVE: Adversaries that are given a Resolve score are not sworn enemies of the Free Folk, but may take up arms to oppose a Company of heroes as a consequence of their choice of allegiance, or due to unfortunate circumstances. Foes with a Resolve score lack the relentless motivation that drives the minions of the Dark Lord, and may surrender when outnumbered, or when casualties become excessive.

> Evil Men and other non-monstrous adversaries often have a Resolve rating.

HATE VS RESOLVE: There is another important difference between foes with a Hate rating and ones with a Resolve score: while fighting minions of the Enemy can hardly call the integrity of the Player-heroes into question, the act of attacking or killing an adversary with a Resolve rating should always be evaluated by the Loremaster as a possible Misdeed (see page 138).

> To ascertain this, Loremasters can ask themselves some simple questions: was the fight provoked by the Player-heroes or were they attacked? Was there another option to combat? Was killing necessary, or were the adversaries prone to surrender?

OUT OF COMBAT

Once a victorious battle is over, the Player-heroes often must deal with the dead and dying. If the information is relevant, the Loremaster can consider that adversaries that were taken out of combat reducing them to zero Endurance could be still barely alive when a fight has ended, and might even survive if rescued.

FEAT DIE RESULTS FOR ADVERSARIES

When the Loremaster is making a die roll to resolve an action attempted by a servant of the Shadow, it can be considered more appropriate to the theme to switch the meaning of the two special icons on the Feat Die: the eye icon becomes the highest result possible and yields an automatic success, while the ᚠ rune becomes the lowest result possible and is read as 0.

> So for example, most adversaries score a Piercing Blow on a roll of 10 or eye result on their Feat Die.

PARRY

An adversary's Parry rating is a numerical modifier that is added to the **STRENGTH** TN of any Player-hero trying to hit the adversary in combat.

ARMOUR

An adversary's Armour rating works in the same way as a hero's —it is used by the Loremaster to make a Protection test when the adversary is hit by a Piercing Blow.

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES

Each adversary features a primary and a secondary Combat Proficiency, representing its main means of attack.

Each listed attack form is followed first by its rating, then by its stats as Damage/Injury, and finally by the Special Damage opportunities (if any) that are available to that Adversary type (see the list of options below).

SPECIAL DAMAGE OPTIONS

Similarly to what happens with the Player-heroes, if a successful attack roll made by an adversary produces one or more Success icons (ᛉ), the Loremaster can spend them to trigger special results.

- All special results listed here require 1 Success icon to be triggered. Multiple ᛉ results can be used to trigger different results, or the same one multiple times.
- All adversaries can always choose to trigger a Heavy Blow special damage result.

Other options are listed on each individual creature's stat block, and may depend on the attack type employed, or be always available and as such listed separately, under the creature's Combat Proficiencies.

Here follow the descriptions of the special damage options available to adversaries:

BREAK SHIELD: The attack strikes repeatedly at the shield of the targeted Player-hero, smashing it to pieces. The target loses their shield's bonus to Parry (a shield enhanced by Rewards or magical qualities cannot be smashed and thus is not affected).

HEAVY BLOW: The attack inflicts an additional loss of Endurance equal to the Attribute Level of the attacker.

PIERCE: The attacker scores a well-aimed strike, modifying the Feat die result of the attack roll by +2.

SEIZE: The attacker holds on to the target — the victim can only fight in a Forward stance making Brawling attacks. Seized heroes may free themselves spending a ᛉ icon from a successful attack roll.

FELL ABILITIES

Most adversaries display an array of special talents, representing their innate powers and behavioural oddities.

All adversaries' Fell Abilities are listed in their individual stat boxes. The Loremaster is entitled to make use of a Fell Ability even when it requires the expenditure of the last Hate or Resolve point possessed by the adversary. Unless otherwise noted, an adversary may use a Fell Ability in addition to attacking, so long as they have the necessary points to spend.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

The Loremaster may give an additional level of depth to the description of adversaries by giving them one or two Distinctive Features, to be used following the rules for Loremaster Characters as Obstacles (see page 135). Each adversary's stat box listed in this chapter includes some suggestions.

EVIL MEN

Cruel individuals like brigands, marauders and slavers prowling the Lone-lands of Middle-earth fall within this category. Their malicious will notwithstanding, Evil Men are not servitors of Sauron, and they can end up opposing the Player-heroes for reasons not depending on an allegiance with the Dark Lord.

HOSTILE SOUTHERNERS

The people of Bree call 'Southerner' every foreigner coming up the Greenway. The vast majority are simply moving away from some trouble, looking for lands where they can find some peace. Others are not so well-meaning…

"If room isn't found for them, they'll find it for themselves. They've a right to live, same as other folk…"

Southerner Raider

When a particularly harsh winter has passed, Men from the South may assemble war parties and look for some isolated homestead to plunder, before retreating just as quickly back into the mists where they came from.

SOUTHERNER RAIDER
Canny, Hardened

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL: 4

ENDURANCE	MIGHT	RESOLVE	PARRY	ARMOUR
16	1	4	+1	2

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Axe 3 (5/18), Short Spear 2 (3/14, Pierce)

FELL ABILITIES: *Fierce.* Spend 1 Resolve point to *gain (1d)* and make the attack roll *Favoured*.

Southerner Champion

A Southerner Champion may be a chieftain from Dunland, a bandit lord capable of uniting a number of fractious warriors into a small army, or just a particularly vicious brigand.

SOUTHERNER CHAMPION
Cruel, Tough

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL: 5

ENDURANCE	MIGHT	RESOLVE	PARRY	ARMOUR
20	1	5	+2	3

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Spear 3 (4/14, Pierce), Long-hafted Axe 3 (6/18, Break Shield)

FELL ABILITIES: *Fierce.* Spend 1 Resolve point to *gain (1d)* on an attack and to make the roll *Favoured*.

Ruffians

Local robbers, cut-throats, brigands and other assorted criminals fall within this category of potential adversaries. Such foes can be encountered on the lonely roads of Eriador, but they are as likely to be met in a dark alley in Bree.

"Where d'you think you're going?" said one, the largest and most evil-looking of the crew.

Footpad

A cowardly bandit, ready to rob a defenceless victim, but capable of ambushing a lonely companion with the help of others.

FOOTPAD
Nimble, Wary

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL: 2

ENDURANCE	MIGHT	RESOLVE	PARRY	ARMOUR
8	1	2	–	1

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Cudgel 2 (3/12), Bow 2 (3/14, Pierce)

FELL ABILITIES: *Craven.* When affected by the Intimidate Foe combat task, the creature also loses 1 Resolve.

Ruffian Chief

Tougher or simply fiercer, a chief is a ruffian who has reached the top with the help of a sharper mind, or blade.

RUFFIAN CHIEF
Ruthless, Secretive

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL: 3

ENDURANCE	MIGHT	RESOLVE	PARRY	ARMOUR
12	1	3	+1	2

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Short Sword 3 (3/16), Bow 2 (3/14, Pierce)

FELL ABILITIES: *Yell of Triumph.* Spend 1 Resolve to restore 1 Resolve to all other Ruffians in the fight.

Highway Robber

More dangerous than a common brigand, a highway robber is used to a life in the Wild, and has learned how to deal with armed victims.

HIGHWAY ROBBER
Swift, Vengeful

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL: 4

ENDURANCE	MIGHT	RESOLVE	PARRY	ARMOUR
16	1	4	–	2

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Spear 3 (4/14, Pierce), Bow 2 (3/14, Pierce)

FELL ABILITIES: *Snake-like Speed.* When targeted by an attack, spend 1 Resolve to make the attack roll *Ill-favoured*.

ORCS

Bred by the first Dark Power in the early years of the world to serve him in many wars, Orcs are once again multiplying. They are strong and agile creatures, quick and robust, and ready to learn or devise new methods or instruments of torment. Their appearance and size differs from tribe to tribe, but many prominent features are common to all Orcs, such as short legs, broad, squinting eyes, wide mouths and long fangs.

Their malicious spirit is full of hatred for all living things, including their own kind, and when left to their own devices, Orcs often end up quarrelling fiercely over futile questions. But when they face their enemies they are quick to set their disagreements aside.

Some Orcs direct their spite towards some specific folk. To reflect this, the Loremaster may add to an Orc adversary the Hatred Fell Ability.

- **HATRED (SUBJECT).** When targeting the object of their hate, all attacks are *Favoured*.

For example, the Orcs and Goblins of Goblin-town hate Dwarves, and will attack a Company that includes Dwarves with blind fury. The Orcs of Mount Gram fiercely hate all Hobbits instead, and will relentlessly attack a Company including any.

Moreover, all Orcs suffer badly from the direct light of the sun. To reflect this, they all have the Hate Sunlight Fell Ability.

- **HATE SUNLIGHT.** The creature loses 1 Hate for each round it is exposed to the full light of the sun.

GREAT ORCS

A powerful breed of Orc, Great Orcs are said to descend from servant spirits that once took an Orcish shape to serve the Dark Power's purposes. King Golfimbul, the Great Goblin, Azog and his son Bolg were Great Orcs.

…he was a great Orc with a huge iron-clad head, and yet agile and strong.

Great Orc Chief

Great Orcs are often encountered as leaders and chieftains of their weaker-blooded relatives.

GREAT ORC CHIEF
Bold, Cunning

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL 7

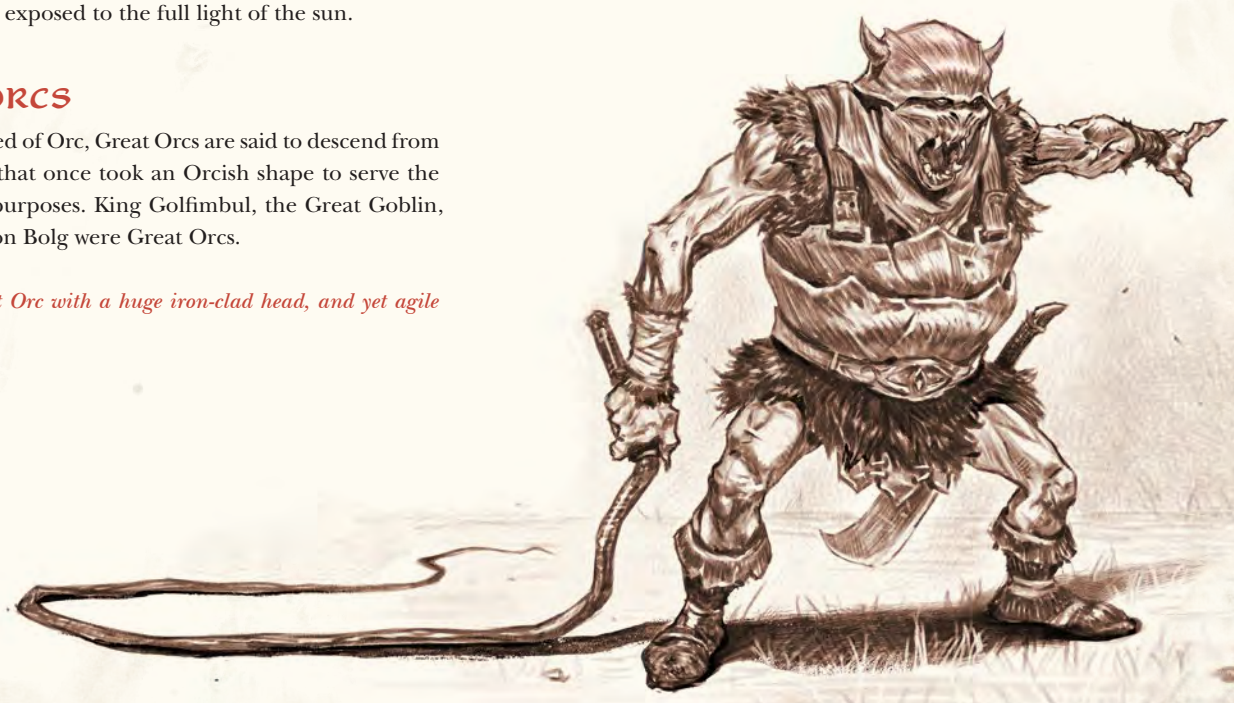
ENDURANCE	MIGHT	HATE	PARRY	ARMOUR
48	2	7	+3	4

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Heavy Scimitar 3 (5/18, Break Shield), Broad-headed Spear 3 (5/16, Pierce)

FELL ABILITIES: *Horrible Strength*. If the creature scored a Piercing Blow with a close combat attack, spend 1 Hate to make the target's Protection roll *Ill-favoured*.

Snake-like Speed. When targeted by an attack, spend 1 Hate to make the attack roll *Ill-favoured*.

Yell of Triumph. Spend 1 Hate to restore 1 Hate to all other Orcs in the fight.



Great Orc Bodyguard

Less cunning than those who lead them, these fell creatures protect their captains at the cost of their lives.

GREAT ORC BODYGUARD — **ATTRIBUTE LEVEL** 6

Fierce, Wary

ENDURANCE	MIGHT	HATE	PARRY	ARMOUR
24	2	6	+2	3

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Orc-axe 3 (5/18, Break Shield), Broad-headed Spear 3 (5/16, Pierce)

FELL ABILITIES: *Hideous Toughness.* The creature is unaffected by unarmed attacks. Additionally, when an attack inflicts damage to the creature that would cause it to go to zero Endurance, it causes a Piercing Blow instead. Then, if the creature is still alive its Endurance score is set back at half its maximum rating.

Orcs of the North

Among the most numerous of the malicious creatures serving the Shadow, the Orcs of the Mountains are used to living and making war in the deep places beneath the earth, where their sight is keener than any other Orc. When they are encountered in their mines, they are savage fighters and reckless in assault, but they leave the dark under the mountains only when marching to war or to avenge their fallen kind, as they suffer badly the light of the sun.

The Orcs of the North are a wild and independent lot, bent on their own purposes and aims when the Shadow's influence is weak, but ready to obey the will of their Master when directly subject to it. The smallest among them are often referred to as Goblins.

"We have come all the way from the Mines to kill, and avenge our folk."

Goblin Archer

A Goblin Archer is an Orc chosen for his keen eyes. His ability to see in the dark, coupled with a steady hand, lets him shoot arrows with precision by night or day.

GOBLIN ARCHER
Cunning, Keen-eyed

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL: 2

ENDURANCE	MIGHT	HATE	PARRY	ARMOUR
8	1	2	–	1

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Bow of Horn 3 (3/14, Pierce), Jagged Knife 2 (2/14)

FELL ABILITIES: *Craven.* When affected by the Intimidate Foe combat task, the creature also loses 1 Hate.

Orc-poison. If an attack results in a Wound, the target is also poisoned (see page 134 for the effects of poison).

Orc-chieftain

Only the most wicked and cruel Orcs live long enough to become chieftains and lead their tribe or warband to battle. An Orc-chieftain is easy to recognise, as it is usually the largest in a group, wielding the meanest weapons and donning superior armour. Often, tell-tale scars or mutilations mark a chieftain's long service under the Shadow.

ORC-CHIEFTAIN
Cruel, Hardened

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL: 5

ENDURANCE	MIGHT	HATE	PARRY	ARMOUR
20	1	5	+3	3

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Scimitar 3 (3/16), Spear 3 (3/14, Pierce)

FELL ABILITIES: *Great Leap*. Spend 1 Hate to attack any Player-hero, in any combat stance, including Rearward.

Snake-like Speed. When targeted by an attack, spend 1 Hate to make the attack roll *Ill-favoured*.

Yell of Triumph. Spend 1 Hate to restore 1 Hate to all other Orcs in the fight.

Orc Guard

The strongest and boldest Orcs are equipped with the toughest armour they can find or put together, and are placed to keep watch on an area wielding a sword and sturdy shield.

ORC GUARD
Strong, Vigilant

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL: 4

ENDURANCE	MIGHT	HATE	PARRY	ARMOUR
16	1	4	+2	3

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Scimitar 3 (3/16), Spear 3 (3/14, Pierce)

FELL ABILITIES: –

Orc Soldier

Often armed with characteristic bent swords, Orc Soldiers are a loud, undisciplined lot. Only a forceful chieftain with a cruel whip and a sharp blade can keep them in line.

ORC SOLDIER
Rebellious, Vengeful

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL: 3

ENDURANCE	MIGHT	HATE	PARRY	ARMOUR
12	1	3	+1	2

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Scimitar 3 (3/16), Spear 2 (3/14, Pierce)

FELL ABILITIES: *Craven*. When affected by the Intimidate Foe combat task, the creature also loses 1 Hate.

TROLLS

Trolls were created by the Great Enemy in the Elder Days — to fight in many bitter wars. They were made strong and powerful, and appear monstrous and misshapen, as if left unfinished by their cruel maker. It is not known whether Trolls were generated in many forms, or if they evolved since their first appearance, but by the end of the Third Age several breeds of Trolls can be encountered.

Among the things that all Trolls have in common is that they are incredibly resistant to damage — they all possess the Hideous Toughness Fell Ability.

- **HIDEOUS TOUGHNESS.** The creature is unaffected by unarmed attacks. Additionally, when an attack inflicts damage to the creature that would cause it to go to zero Endurance, it causes a Piercing Blow instead. Then, if the creature is still alive its Endurance score is set back at half its maximum rating.

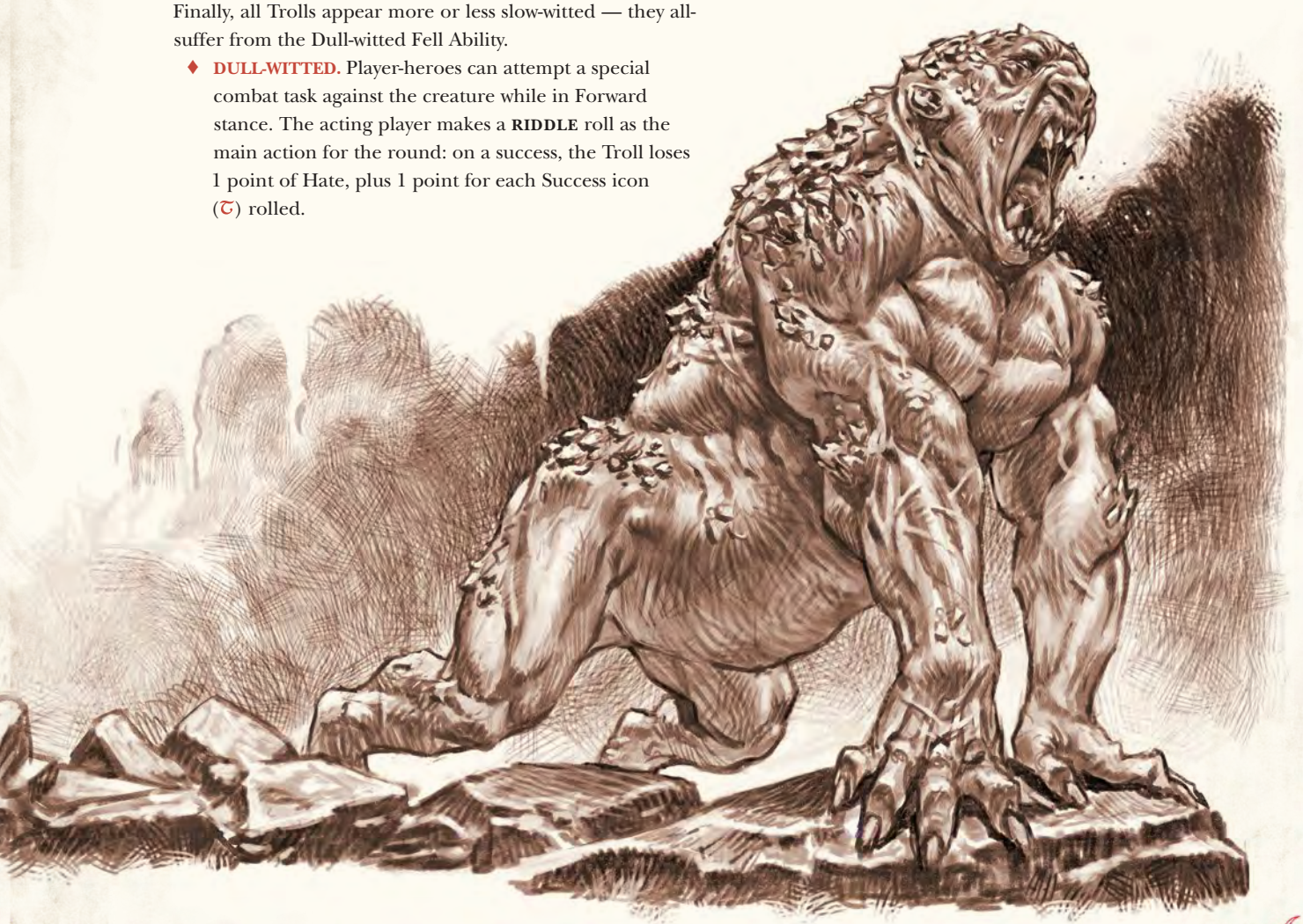
Finally, all Trolls appear more or less slow-witted — they all-suffer from the Dull-witted Fell Ability.

- **DULL-WITTED.** Player-heroes can attempt a special combat task against the creature while in Forward stance. The acting player makes a **RIDDLE** roll as the main action for the round: on a success, the Troll loses 1 point of Hate, plus 1 point for each Success icon (ᘔ) rolled.

CAVE-TROLLS

Cave-trolls were created to fight and hunt deep under the earth. They have a dark skin with a greenish hue, covered with tight, robust scales, and appear shorter than other Trolls, as they are extremely hunched and often advance on all fours walking on their knuckles. Nobody knows if Cave-trolls can endure sunlight as they never leave their hunting grounds under mountains, hills and fells.

A huge arm and shoulder, with a dark skin of greenish scales, was thrust through the widening gap.



Great Cave-troll

Feared by its own handlers, a Great Cave-troll is sent by Orcs to smash the defences and the morale of the foes they fear the most.

GREAT CAVE-TROLL
Brutish, Wicked

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL: 10

ENDURANCE	MIGHT	HATE	PARRY	ARMOUR
80	2	10	–	3

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Crush 3 (6/12, Seize), Bite 2 (6/14, Pierce)

FELL ABILITIES: *Strike Fear*. Spend 1 Hate to make all Player-heroes in sight gain 2 Shadow points (Dread). Those who fail their Shadow test are daunted and cannot spend Hope for the rest of the fight.

Thick Hide. Spend 1 Hate point to *gain (2d)* on a Protection roll.

Cave-troll Slinker

This breed of Cave-troll is smaller than many of its kin, but still larger than most Orc-kind. Used to living in the depths of the earth, a Cave-troll Slinker often hunts alone and in the dark, relying on its acute sense of smell.

CAVE-TROLL SLINKER
Stealthy, Wary

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL: 6

ENDURANCE	MIGHT	HATE	PARRY	ARMOUR
50	2	6	–	3

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Club 3 (6/16, Break Shield), Bite 2 (6/14, Pierce)

FELL ABILITIES: *Denizen of the Dark*. All attack rolls are *Favoured* while in darkness.

Fear of Fire. The creature loses 1 Hate at the start of each round it is engaged in close combat with an adversary wielding a torch or other burning item.

Thick Hide. Spend 1 Hate point to *gain (2d)* on a Protection roll.

STONE-TROLLS

Stone-trolls are predators, living in small groups in filthy caves strewn with the remains of unwary travellers. They seem to be somewhat more intelligent than other Troll types, maybe thanks to their habit of prowling in the proximity of populated areas.

A very ancient breed, Stone-trolls owe their name to the fact that they turn to stone if exposed to the light of the Sun.

…there were three fair-sized trolls at hand in a nasty mood, quite likely to try toasted dwarf, or even pony, for a change…

Stone-troll Robber

A Stone-troll Robber's appearance, while always frightful, is made less monstrous by their tendency to wear simple clothes, cook their food and use tools like drinking jugs and barrels.

STONE-TROLL ROBBER
Hungry, Irritable

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL: 8

ENDURANCE	MIGHT	HATE	PARRY	ARMOUR
60	2	8	–	3

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Club 3 (6/16, Break Shield), Crush 2 (6/12, Seize)

FELL ABILITIES: *Hatred (Dwarves)*. When fighting Dwarves, all the creature's rolls are *Favoured*.

Horrible Strength. If the creature scores a Piercing Blow, spend 1 Hate to make the target's Protection roll *Ill-favoured*.

Stone-troll Chief

Small groups of Stone-trolls may band together around a stronger member of their breed, to attack caravans of merchants or isolated farmhouses.

STONE-TROLL CHIEF
Cruel, Suspicious

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL 9

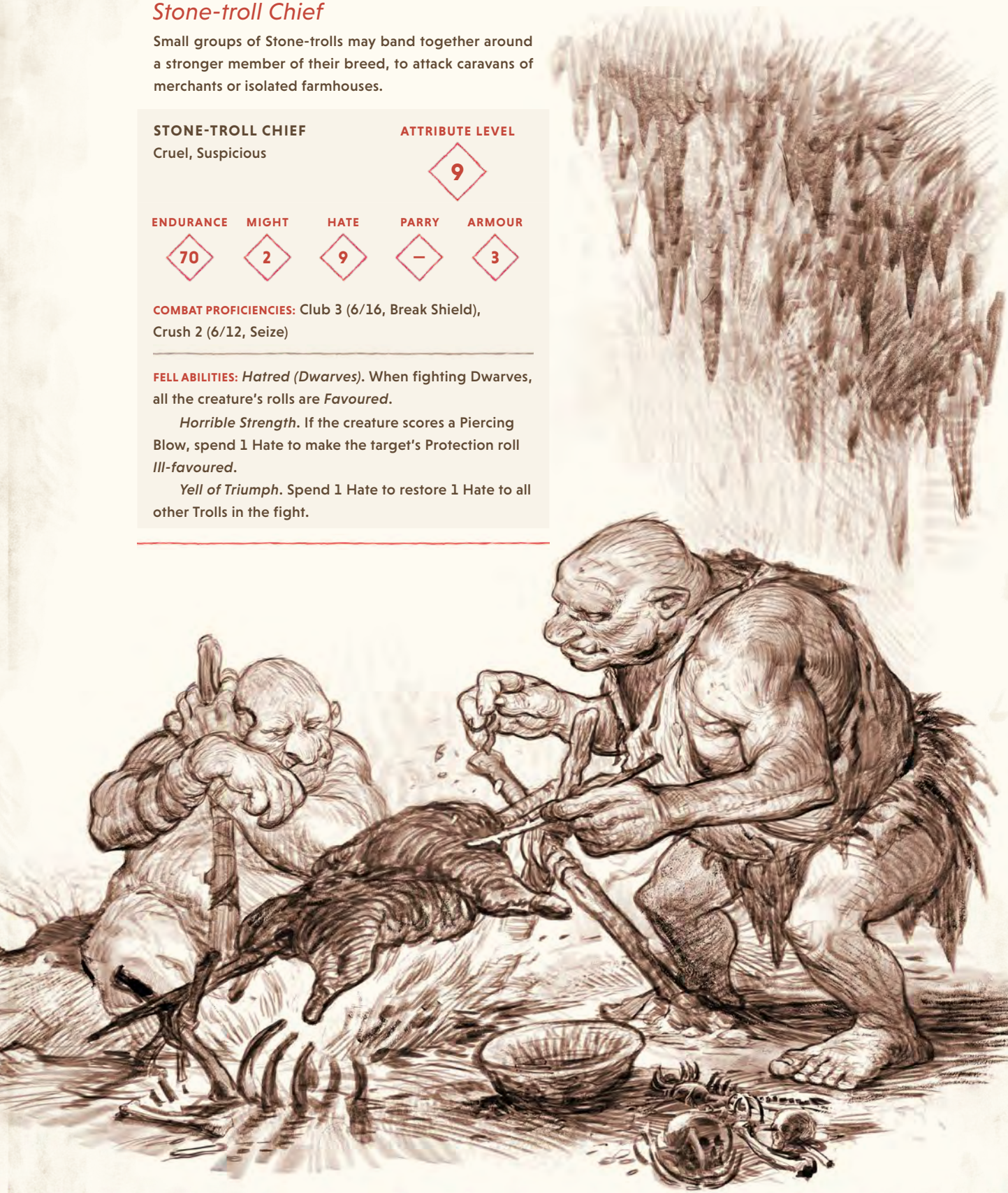
ENDURANCE	MIGHT	HATE	PARRY	ARMOUR
70	2	9	–	3

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Club 3 (6/16, Break Shield), Crush 2 (6/12, Seize)

FELL ABILITIES: *Hatred (Dwarves)*. When fighting Dwarves, all the creature's rolls are *Favoured*.

Horrible Strength. If the creature scores a Piercing Blow, spend 1 Hate to make the target's Protection roll *Ill-favoured*.

Yell of Triumph. Spend 1 Hate to restore 1 Hate to all other Trolls in the fight.



Undead

Many horrors haunt the lonely lands of old Arnor, in the shadow of the darker woods and under the still waters of rotting marshes. Some say those shades are what remains of the ill-will of evil Men and proud Elves, others that they are spirits out of Angmar, sent to infest barren hills and lonely barrows; others blame dark sorcery and evil curses.

Whatever is their true nature, all Undead creatures are hard to defeat and provoke a sentiment of horror in those who encounter them — they all possess the following Fell Abilities.

- **DEATHLESS.** Spend 1 Hate to cancel a Wound. When an attack inflicts damage to the creature that would cause it to go to zero Endurance, spend 1 Hate to bring the creatures back to full Endurance instead. This ability is ineffective against Player-heroes wielding a magical weapon enchanted with spells for the Bane of the Undead.
- **HEARTLESS:** The creature is not affected by the Intimidate Foe combat task, unless a Magical success is obtained.
- **THING OF TERROR:** At the start of the first round of the battle all Player-heroes in sight of one or more creatures with this ability gain 3 Shadow points (Dread). Those who fail their Shadow test are daunted and cannot spend Hope for the rest of the fight.

Wights

Wights are malevolent creatures inhabiting the cold flesh of the dead. They hunger for the life and warmth of those who are so unlucky to stumble into a region troubled by their presence. They strike from the cover of thick mists, or under the cloak of night, seeking to subdue their prey with their spells. They are hard to kill, and even if their body is destroyed, the spirit that animates them is unharmed, and flees to find some other barren place to haunt.

Barrow-wights walked in the hollow places with a clink of rings on cold fingers, and gold chains in the wind.

Barrow-wight

Sent to the hills of Tyrn Gorthad by the Witch-king of Angmar to plague his enemies in the wars against Arnor, a Barrow-wight appears as a tall, dark figure, with cold eyes lit by a pale light. It wears rings on its skeletal fingers, and gold chains around its neck. In its grip an ancient, pitted blade.

BARROW-WIGHT
Cunning, Vengeful

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL 6

ENDURANCE	MIGHT	HATE	PARRY	ARMOUR
24	1	6	–	3

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Ancient Sword 3 (5/16, Pierce), Chilling Touch 2 (6/12, Seize)

FELL ABILITIES: *Denizen of the Dark*. All attack rolls are *Favoured* while in darkness.

Dreadful Spells. Spend 1 Hate to make one Player-hero gain 3 Shadow points (Sorcery). Targets who fail their Shadow test or who are Miserable fall unconscious and may be roused only with a SONG roll. Otherwise, they wake up after one hour.

Hate Sunlight. The creature loses 1 Hate at the start of each round it is exposed to the full light of the sun.

Wraiths

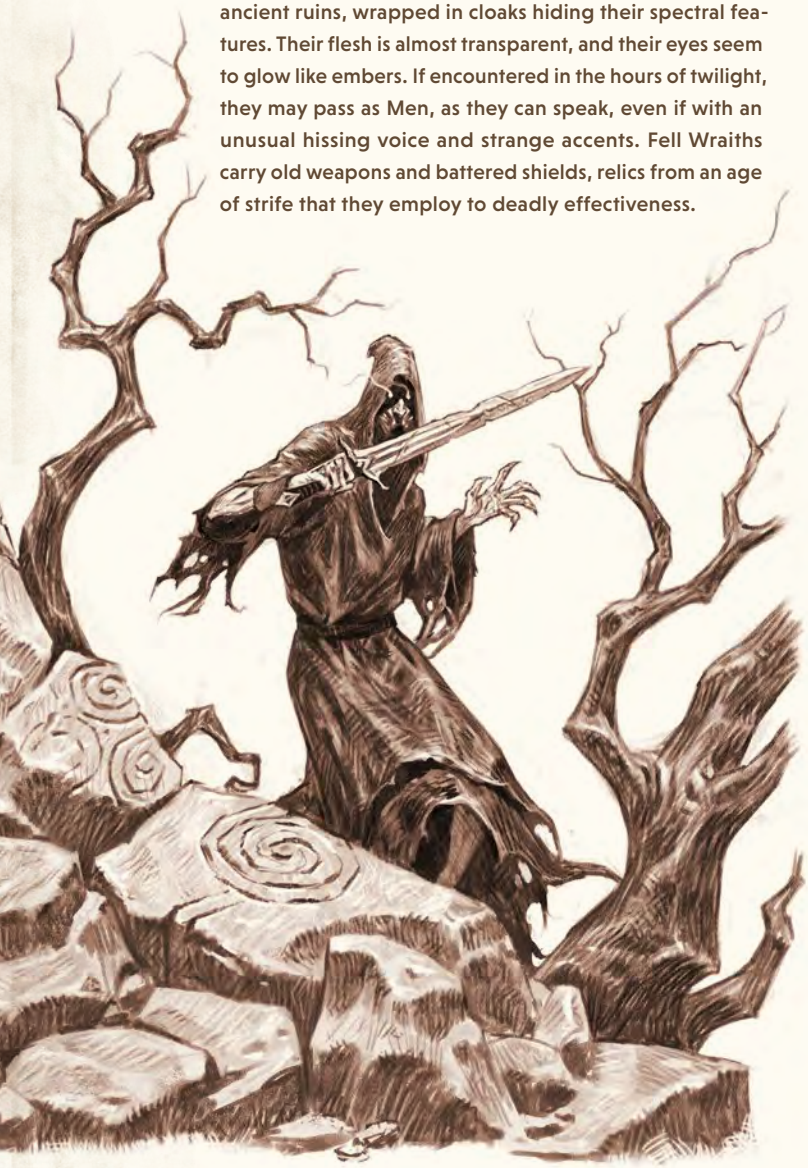
It is said that many who fought in the wars against Angmar fell victim to the Black Shadow, a terrible illness spread by the Nazgûl. Many did not perish, and were slowly consumed by it instead.

Wraiths are creatures that once were living beings but whose lives were consumed by sorcery or by another evil power. They are now undead, and live in both the living world and the wraith-world. Wraiths maintain a physical shape, albeit partially faded and thus resistant to harm.

"Begone, if you be not deathless! For living or dark undead, I will smite you, if you touch him."

Fell Wraith

Fell Wraiths appear as crooked wanderers, roaming among ancient ruins, wrapped in cloaks hiding their spectral features. Their flesh is almost transparent, and their eyes seem to glow like embers. If encountered in the hours of twilight, they may pass as Men, as they can speak, even if with an unusual hissing voice and strange accents. Fell Wraiths carry old weapons and battered shields, relics from an age of strife that they employ to deadly effectiveness.



FELL WRAITH
Swift, Wary

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL 4

ENDURANCE	MIGHT	HATE	PARRY	ARMOUR
16	1	4	+1	2

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Pitted Blade 3 (4/16), Cruel Spear 2 (4/14, Pierce)

FELL ABILITIES: *Denizen of the Dark*. All attack rolls are *Favoured* while in darkness.

Fear of Fire. The creature loses 1 Hate at the start of each round it is engaged in close combat with an adversary wielding a torch or other sort of burning item.

Marsh-dwellers

The Marsh-dwellers are shambling humanoid creatures with a clammy pale flesh, like that of a corpse left to rot in the water. A fell light in their small eyes suggests a wicked vitality and intent. They dwell among ruins, where Men used to live once, often by dark pools of stagnant water. They hide underground in small groups, ready to ambush unwary travellers and drag them in the cellars where they hoard their stolen gold.

MARSH DWELLERS
Fierce, Stealthy

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL 3

ENDURANCE	MIGHT	HATE	PARRY	ARMOUR
12	1	3	–	1

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Bite 3 (3/14, Pierce), Claws 2 (3/14, Seize)

FELL ABILITIES: *Fear of Fire*. The creature loses 1 Hate at the start of each round it is engaged in close combat with an adversary wielding a torch or other sort of burning item.

Hate Sunlight. The creature loses 1 Hate at the start of each round it is exposed to the full light of the sun.

Wolves of the Wild

By the time of Bilbo's adventures, Wargs and Werewolves could be encountered at night in the eastern vales close to the Misty Mountains, where they prowl in search of prey. Years later, packs of Wolves have crossed the Hithaeglir, and can be found across Eriador.

All Wolves share a prodigious agility that prevents their enemies from keeping a distance in combat — all Wolves of the Wild share the Great Leap Fell Ability.

♦ **GREAT LEAP.** Spend 1 Hate to attack any Player-hero, in any combat stance, including Rearward.

Wargs

Wargs are a particularly evil breed of Wolves, possessing wicked cunning and displaying malicious intent. They communicate using a dreadful language, foul to the ears of listeners not sharing their love for cruel and hateful deeds. Wargs generally look like lean and powerfully-built grey wolves, with eyes shining in the dark, but their size and appearance vary according to age and experience.

"How the wind howls!" he cried. "It is howling with wolf-voices. The Wargs have come west of the Mountains!"

Wild Wolf

The average Warg, a Wild Wolf, is slightly larger than an ordinary Wolf, and much more vicious. It can be encountered in a pack, but also as a solitary hunter or scout, ready to howl and alert other Wargs and evil creatures for miles around. Orcs learn how to ride upon Wild Wolves like men do on horses.

WILD WOLF
Keen-eyed, Grim

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL 3

ENDURANCE	MIGHT	HATE	PARRY	ARMOUR
12	1	3	–	1

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Fangs 3 (3/14, Pierce)

FELL ABILITIES: *Fear of Fire.* The creature loses 1 Hate at the start of each round it is engaged in close combat with an adversary wielding a torch or other sort of burning item.

Snake-like Speed. When targeted by an attack, spend 1 Hate to make the attack roll *Ill-favoured*.

Wolf-chieftain

Greater in stature, cruelty and cunning than ordinary Wargs, a Wolf-chieftain is called upon by its lesser kin to deal with serious threats, like bands of travelling adventurers trespassing into Warg territory. A Wolf-chieftain is never encountered alone, but always surrounded by a pack of Wild Wolves.

WOLF-CHIEFTAIN
Swift, Vicious

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL 4

ENDURANCE	MIGHT	HATE	PARRY	ARMOUR
16	1	4	–	1

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Fangs 3 (4/14, Pierce), Claws 2 (4/14, Seize)

FELL ABILITIES: *Fear of Fire*. The creature loses 1 Hate at the start of each round it is engaged in close combat with an adversary wielding a torch or other sort of burning item.

Snake-like Speed. When targeted by an attack, spend 1 Hate to make the attack roll *Ill-favoured*.

Howl of Triumph. Spend 1 Hate to restore 1 Hate to all other Wargs in the fight.

Werewolves

It is suspected by the most learned among the Wise that the cruelest packs of Wargs might be led by the foulest of creatures: trusted servants of the Dark Lord returned from the Ancient World to serve him once again. Devouring spirits trapped in wolf-form, they hate the very soil they walk upon, and desire only to defile and ruin in an attempt to quench the dreadful hunger that consumes their mortal bodies.

"Listen, Hound of Sauron!" he cried. "Gandalf is here. Fly, if you value your foul skin! I will shrivel you from tail to snout, if you come within this ring."

Hound of Sauron

Chosen for its ferocity and malicious intelligence, a Hound of Sauron is a minion of the Dark Lord, a servant sent on a precise errand, be it the gathering of forces for a coming war, the hunt for a specific individual, or spying on an area. Hidden behind the shape of an ordinary Warg, a Hound of Sauron conceals much greater powers.

HOUND OF SAURON
Cunning, Fierce

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL 5

ENDURANCE	MIGHT	HATE	PARRY	ARMOUR
20	2	5	+1	2

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Fangs 3 (5/14, Pierce), Claws 3 (5/14, Seize)

FELL ABILITIES: *Deadly Wound.* Wounded targets make an *Ill-favoured* Feat die roll to determine the severity of their injury.

Hideous Toughness. The creature is unaffected by unarmed attacks. Additionally, when an attack inflicts damage to the creature that would cause it to go to zero Endurance, it causes a Piercing Blow instead. Then, if the creature is still alive its Endurance score is set back at half its maximum rating.

Strike Fear. Spend 1 Hate to make all Player-heroes in sight gain 2 Shadow points (Dread). Those who fail their Shadow test are daunted and cannot spend Hope for the rest of the fight.

TREASURE

… about him on all sides, stretching away across the unseen floors, lay countless piles of precious things, gold wrought and unwrought, gems and jewels, and silver red-stained in the ruddy light.'

Travelling across a land that has seen three Ages of the world, the adventurers are sooner or later bound to discover some form of treasure, and possibly claim it for themselves. Whether it is the forgotten hoard of a dead Dragon, a pile of gold and gems closely guarded by a Troll, or the loot accumulated by generations of raiding Goblins, treasure provides the Company with a focus for their adventuring, a means for the Player-heroes to raise their personal prosperity, and another way to bring to light obscure tales from previous ages of Middle-earth.

But there is more than just gold and precious stones to be found in deserted caverns and dark dungeons under the earth — in past ages of the world, Men, Elves, and Dwarves long laboured to craft marvellous things from metal and stone, and put into their work all their lore, power, and subtle skill. These wondrous jewels, famous blades, and suits of armour were given to sons and daughters as gifts, hoarded as treasures by greedy kings, and lusted after and even stolen by thieves and burglars. Finally, they were lost, and passed out of the memory of the living.

Such remarkable things are not meant to remain lost forever. Their original purpose may have been forgotten with the passing of centuries, together with the name of their makers, but a day will come when a worthy blade will be found in a barrow among swords of lesser lineage, ready to serve a new fate in the hands of a hero; or, if the treasure had been left to rot in the shadow for too long, to work a curse upon them and draw them to a miserable end!

Hoards

Any source of Treasure points encountered by the Company when exploring caverns, lairs, and old ruins qualifies as a Hoard. Not all Hoards that Player-heroes can discover are equal though — as shown in the table below, they are ranked in three levels of increasing rarity: lesser, greater, and marvellous, based on how rich, old, or unspoilt they are.

On average, the Company should find a maximum of two Hoards during the same Adventuring Phase — a lesser Hoard and a greater one; or, a single marvellous Hoard.

When the Player-heroes stumble upon a Hoard, the first thing that the Loremaster must do is to make a roll to determine its worth in Treasure points.

As shown in the Hoard table below, the value of a Hoard in Treasure points is determined by rolling from 1 to 3 Success dice, based on its type, and by multiplying the result by the number of Player-heroes in the Company.

It is up to the members of the Company to divide the resulting value among themselves, splitting the Treasure rating as they see fit, and recording their share on their character sheets.

Generally, a Hoard's value in Treasure points represents an unspecified amount of silver, gold and gems — if the Loremaster wishes to be more specific, the rules for Precious Objects on the following page can be used to craft one or more unusual finds.

HOARD TABLE:

HOARD RATING	EXAMPLES	TREASURE VALUE PER PLAYER-HERO	MAGICAL TREASURE ROLLS
Lesser	Solitary Troll's loot, Goblin plunder, bandits' hoard	Roll 1 Success die	Roll the Feat die twice
Greater	Old hoard, Dwarf-hoard	Roll 2 Success dice	Roll the Feat die four times
Marvellous	Ancient hoard, Dwarven city's treasure trove, or Dragon-hoard	Roll 3 Success dice	Roll the Feat die six times

MAGICAL TREASURE TABLE:

SUCCESS DIE RESULT	NATURE OF THE FIND	DESCRIPTION	IF FOUND ON AN ᚢ RESULT
1–3	Marvellous Artefact	An enchanted object graced by a Blessing	Gain 1 Shadow (Greed)
4–5	Wondrous Item	An enchanted object possessing two Blessings	Gain 2 Shadow (Greed)
6	Famous Weapon or Armour	A weapon or suit of armour of superior make	Gain 3 Shadow (Greed)

MAGICAL TREASURE ROLLS

Once everyone in the Company has received their share of the treasure, it must be determined if anything possessing exceptional qualities lies buried among the silver and gold.

To do this, the players or the Loremaster roll a Feat die a number of times (or many Feat dice together, if available), again based on the type of Hoard discovered:

Each ᚠ and ᚢ result corresponds to the discovery of a magical piece of treasure. To find out exactly what each piece is, the players must roll on the Magical Treasure table above, once.

EXTRAORDINARY PRECIOUS OBJECTS FROM THE STORIES

The following Precious Objects are examples of valuable items whose worth greatly surpasses their simple rating in Treasure points:

- The Ring of Barahir — A ring made by the Noldor ages ago, it is an heirloom of the house of the Chieftains of the Rangers of the North.
- The Necklace of Girion — A necklace crafted for the Lord of Dale, made of five hundred emeralds "green as grass".
- The Arkenstone — A wonderful, multi-faceted great white gem, called the Heart of the Mountain, a heirloom of the Kings of the House of Durin.

"This is a thing of worth beyond your reckoning. For its anciently alone. It has no power, save the esteem in which those hold it who love my house."

Once the number and nature of any Magical Treasure discovered has been determined, the Player-heroes must agree on who is going to keep each piece as their possession.

CARRYING TREASURE

Player-heroes stuff their pockets with coins and other valuables, or, more wisely, they can burden their pack animals with chests filled with their newfound riches.

In terms of encumbrance, every single point of Treasure, individual Marvellous Artefact or Wondrous Item corresponds to one point of Load (famous Weapons and Armour have their individual Load ratings, based on the corresponding pieces of War Gear).

If the Player-heroes are not willing to carry the amount of gold, silver, gems, or other valuables they have found while adventuring, the Player-heroes may opt to hide it close to where they found it, with the intention of returning to recover it later.

CREATING PRECIOUS OBJECTS

Precious Objects are gemstones, jewels, and other valuable ornaments whose main quality could be a particular significance as a family heirloom or antique, or an extraordinary and enchanting beauty, possibly due to a prodigious level of craftsmanship or a subtle virtue.

The value of a Precious Object in Treasure points is the amount that the Loremaster assigns to it, out of the rating generated for the Hoard discovered by the Company, but its inclusion in the game might serve a different purpose.

For example, a golden crown found among the ruins of an ancient castle on the hills of Rhudaur may have more than

a simple monetary value if it is brought to someone able to recognise it as a relic from a familiar past — should a Player-hero make a gift or otherwise offer such an item to members of a folk whose tradition hearkens back to the time when the item was crafted, they would receive a bonus amount for sentimental value in return.

The tables presented below can be used to create an item at the moment it is uncovered, or to design it carefully beforehand. The Loremaster is encouraged to enrich the description of all Precious Objects or spend some time imagining wonderful things with rich backstories. It is not necessary to track down the full lineage of every crystal hanging from a fillet of Mithril; a few hints to a tragic or heroic heritage is more than enough to evoke the right mood.

This sort of information may be revealed to a player who chooses the Meet Patron undertaking during a Fellowship phase (see page 121).

PRECIOUS OBJECTS TABLES

Roll a Success die for each table and check the result.

1: FORM

1	Jewel (single gem)
2	Brooch
3	Necklace
4	Circlet or crown
5	Belt, chain, or armband
6	Ring

2: MAIN MATERIAL

1	Pearl
2	Sapphire
3	Ruby
4	Amethyst (pink to purple)
5	Roll again: 1–2: Adamant (diamond); 3–4: 'white gem'; 5–6: clear crystal
6	Roll again: 1–2: Emerald; 3–4: 'green gem'; 5–6: green crystal

3: CRAFTSMANSHIP

1	Mannish, Westernesse
2	Elven, Eregion
3	Dwarven, Khazad-dûm
4	Dwarven, Erebor
5	Dwarven, Beleriand (Nogrod or Belegost)
6	Elven, Beleriand

GEMS, JEWELS, AND CRYSTALS

Many beautiful gems freed from the roots of mountains and hills were cut and set in necklaces, crowns, circlets, and bracelets of precious metals by Dwarven smiths of great renown, in cities like Nogrod and Belegost, before Beleriand was broken. Many crystals and white or green gems of surpassing beauty were not dug from the earth, but created by the hands of Elven craftspeople and gem-smiths, and filled cunningly with flaming light.

The Treasure Index

Finding a magic ring or a famous sword in *The One Ring* is not simply a matter of stumbling upon an exotic object. There is more to chance than coincidence in Middle-earth, as there are other powers at work far stronger.

A Loremaster wanting to add spell-bound gems and Elven blades to a game must first take some time to create a Treasure Index:

> A Treasure Index is a list detailing all the magical items that can become part of the campaign. When something is uncovered with a Magical Treasure roll, the Loremaster refers to the Treasure Index to check exactly what has been brought to light.

Using the index allows the Loremaster to keep a tight control over the desired level of magic to introduce into the game, avoiding the problem of having too many heroes wandering around Middle-earth wielding Beleriand-forged blades or wearing Mithril armour.

Additionally, the index lets the Loremaster 'time' the appearance of certain magical items in the campaign — for example, to follow a wide-arcing plot involving the discovery

of a particular object. Certain events might be triggered by the fortuitous finding of a lost artefact, or the Player-heroes could be left wondering how to confront a seemingly invincible threat, until they finally 'stumble' upon a weapon capable of giving them an edge.

Finally, the index helps in keeping magical objects unique and wondrous. Finding a magical item should represent a major turning point in a campaign, with definite consequences on the future of a hero. A magical object isn't just a new special ability, but a new feature in the game world.

COMPILING A TREASURE INDEX

Magical items in *The One Ring* are categorised as Marvellous Artefacts, Wondrous Items, and Famous Weapons and Armour. Treasure Index sheets can be downloaded from *freeleaguepublishing.com* — one to keep track of Marvellous Artefacts and Wondrous Items, and another for Famous Weapons and Armour.

> When compiling a Magical Treasure Index, the Loremaster includes as many Marvellous Artefacts as desired, while a specific list must be made to indicate precisely the number and nature of any Wondrous Items and Famous Weapons and Armour that the Player-heroes will have a chance to find (ideally, 1 to 3 Wondrous Items and 1 to 3 pieces of war gear for each Player-hero in the Company).

SAMPLE INDEXES: Available for download from *freeleaguepublishing.com* are a number of sample indexes, created with different goals in mind. The title of each index and its description detail its goal and application. Loremasters are encouraged to create their own indexes though, based around the composition of the Company playing in their campaigns.

FATE AND PREDESTINATION

The creation of custom special items to be found among Treasure is meant to represent predestination, the potential of a hero to become the instrument of a higher purpose and to play a role in the long-term development of a campaign. To further reinforce this, Magical Treasure is meant to be strictly individual: heroes should never pass the object found over to a different companion, especially when Famous Weapons and Armour are concerned. After all, it was Bilbo who was meant to find the Ring, not Balin, Gandalf, or Thorin.

A FATEFUL DISCOVERY

Marvellous Artefacts and Wondrous Items can become a meaningful addition to a campaign especially if their discovery is tied to some significant event, or if their introduction is meant to serve a particular purpose.

When the Loremaster is compiling the Treasure Index, some time should be dedicated to considering the objective of an item, in the context of the campaign being played. Or, its goal might be left undefined, to be then filled in when the players provide the Loremaster with the right suggestions through their own actions.

MARVELLOUS ARTEFACTS AND WONDROUS ITEMS

Objects included in this category possess characteristics that mortals wouldn't hesitate to call magical: cloaks that hide their wearers from observing eyes, war-horns capable of setting fear in the hearts of enemies and joy in the hearts of friends, staves blessed with virtues of finding and returning.

Such objects are wound about with powerful enchantments called Blessings. An object possessing one Blessing is called a Marvellous Artefact, while one possessing two Blessings is a Wondrous Item.

A single Blessing bestowed upon an object lets its bearer affect the result of all rolls made using a specific Skill. An object possessing two Blessings will then modify the outcome of two different Skills.

> The bearer of a Marvellous Artefact or Wondrous Item *gains (2d)* when making rolls using the Skill corresponding to its Blessing, and allows the Player-hero to achieve a magical success (see page 21).

When a blessed item is found, the Loremaster either chooses an object included in the Treasure Index, or uses the Blessings tables overleaf to create one.

Marvellous Artefacts and Wondrous Items should be rare and unique, lest their worth be diminished in the eyes of the players. The Loremaster should use the directions contained in this chapter and their knowledge of the source material to create a limited number of such objects for inclusion in a Treasure Index — two or three per Player-hero at most. Should that

list run out, the Loremaster may create additional ones, either taking the time to design them or rolling them up on the spot.

The capabilities of an object may not be readily apparent upon discovery. While it is possible that a hero finds out while adventuring, a Player-hero may learn about an item's Blessings by choosing the Meet Patron Fellowship phase undertaking (see page 121).

BLESSINGS TABLES

To determine which skill is affected by a Blessing the Loremaster rolls a Success die twice: the first roll selects the Skill 'group', the second roll identifies the affected Skill. The procedure must be repeated if the object is a Wondrous Item bestowed with two Blessings.

In brackets are listed options to help the Loremaster in choosing the type of object discovered, whether it is a ring, a cloak, a belt, or something else. If the same item possesses two Blessings, choose the type of object that seems more appropriate. To determine the craftsmanship of the find you may also use the tables on page 160.

1: PERSONALITY

1–2	AWE (ring, cloak, circlet, collar, belt, weapon sheath, staff, war-horn)
3–4	ENHEARTEN (ring, cloak, weapon sheath, staff, war-horn)
5–6	PERSUADE (ring, cloak, circlet, collar)

2: MOVEMENT

1–2	ATHLETICS (rope, boots, shoes)
3–4	TRAVEL (staff, belt, boots)
5–6	STEALTH (ring, cloak, shoes)

3: PERCEPTION

1–2	AWARENESS (ring, circlet, collar)
3–4	INSIGHT (ring, circlet, collar)
5–6	SCAN (ring, circlet, staff)

4: SURVIVAL

1–2	HUNTING (belt, hunting horn, staff)
3–4	HEALING (unusual, as potions and salves quickly lose their virtue)
5–6	EXPLORE (boots, staff, coil of rope)

5: CUSTOM

1–2	COURTESY (ring, circlet, pair of studs)
3–4	SONG (ring, musical instrument)
5–6	RIDDLE (ring)

6: VOCATION

1–2	CRAFT (ring, crafting tool)
3–4	BATTLE (crown, ring, staff, war-horn - rare, as it usually pertains to weapons)
5–6	LORE (mirror, book, seeing-stone)

Famous Weapons and Armour

Weapons of extraordinary craftsmanship are already dealt with in the game using the rules for Rewards. While those items could arguably be considered magical, their lineage can hardly be compared with that of swords forged in Gondolin for the Goblin-wars.

When a Player-hero gains possession of such an extraordinary weapon, the Loremaster must consult the campaign's Treasure Index — If the circumstances are appropriate, the Loremaster may select an item from those added to the Index specifically for the Player-hero.

DESIGNING FAMOUS WEAPONS AND ARMOUR

To design a magical sword or a wondrous coat of armour for insertion into the Treasure Index, the Loremaster must follow a 5-step process, making a number of choices based on the current campaign and the composition of the Company:

1. Choose Item Type
2. Determine Craftsmanship
3. Select Banes (Elven or Númenórean weapons only)
4. Attribute Qualities
5. Name the item

1. CHOOSE ITEM TYPE: The first thing to choose is the most important one: what piece of war gear is the object of the design? Is it a weapon, or a piece of defensive gear, like a mail shirt, or a helm or shield?

A Treasure Index must only include items that are designed explicitly for specific members of the Company; there is no place for a wondrous shield that none of the players will be interested in using.

For example, the Loremaster is designing a famous weapon meant for the Barding warden of the Company. The warrior uses a sword as his primary weapon. The Loremaster selects a sword as the item type.

2. DETERMINE CRAFTSMANSHIP: Weapons and armour can be of Elven, Dwarven, or Númenórean craftsmanship. The following paragraphs give some insight about which item types are most suited to a particular origin. Apart from defining in broad terms the history of an item, the choice of craftsmanship also determines whether a weapon should feature Banes or not, and affects the choice of Qualities (see Steps 3 and 4).

Elven Craftsmanship: The best enchanted weapons that may be found in forgotten hoards were made by Elvenwrights in Beleriand in the Elder Days, or in Eregion, for the wars against Sauron.

Glamdring and Orcrist are good examples, not to mention Bilbo's (and later Frodo's) sword Sting.

> The Elves forged many famous long swords, daggers, and enchanted spears. Other weapons or pieces of defensive war gear are not unknown, but more difficult to find.

Dwarven Craftsmanship: Many extraordinary swords, helms, and suits of armour were wrought by Dwarves in their cities of Nogrod and Belegost, either for use by their most renowned chieftains and champions, or as gifts to the greatest lords amongst Elves and Men.

The works of Telchar, the smith of Nogrod, are particularly renowned: the sword Narsil and the Helm of Hador were among his chief creations.

> The smiths of Nogrod and Belegost crafted especially swords and axes, shields, helms, and suits of armour.

Númenórean Craftsmanship: The weaponsmiths among the Men of Westernesse were taught by the Noldor in the making of swords, axe-blades, spearheads, and knives. They acquired great skill, and put it to good use in forging many weapons using strange metals.

The barrow-blades Tom Bombadil gave to the Hobbits were weapons of this sort; swords forged by the Númenóreans for their bitter wars against Carn Dûm in the Land of Angmar.

> The Men of Westernesse excelled in the making of many weapons, but rarely devoted themselves to the creation of suits of armour, recognising the greater ability of Dwarf-smiths.

3. SELECT BANES: Bane weapons describe instruments of war that have been wrought to defeat a specific enemy. If the magical item is of Elven or Númenórean craftsmanship, then it may be attributed with one or more Banes, as several of the special virtues that may be attributed to it are effective only against Bane creatures (see Enchanted Qualities, on page 165). A Bane weapon provides special benefits against one or more creature types.

Blades, spears, and arrow-heads forged in Númenor may have been wound about with spells for the bane of two creature types.

> Choose two types from the following: Orcs, Trolls, Wolves, Evil Men, Undead.

Items crafted by the Elven-smiths of Beleriand or Eregion were generally created with only one type of enemy in mind.

> Choose one type from: Orcs, Wolves, or Spiders.

Particularly ancient and rare, some blades may have been wrought for the bane of the Enemy itself, and as such may be particularly dangerous to all his servants and minions.

4. ATTRIBUTE QUALITIES: Player-heroes may improve their war gear by upgrading their weapons of choice using Rewards. Similarly, Famous Weapons and Armour owe their qualities to Rewards and Enchanted Rewards.

Upon creation, a number of qualities must be attributed to the magical item, choosing among the Rewards listed on page 79, and the Enchanted Rewards described in this chapter, starting overleaf. The mix and number of qualities attributed to an object determine how powerful it will be.

- Generally, a famous weapon or piece of defensive gear should feature a maximum of 3 qualities, and must include a minimum of one Enchanted Reward.
- All qualities of an item can be recorded on the Magical Treasure Index in any order desired, keeping in mind that the qualities that are listed first are the ones that the owner will discover soonest (see overleaf).

5. NAME THE ITEM: Precious Objects and Wondrous Artefacts rarely possess proper names — They are usually named after their maker, or after their most famous owner ('The Necklace of Girion', 'The Arkenstone of Thrain', 'The Phial of Galadriel'). On the contrary, Famous Weapons and Armour often have a name, or even more than one, if the item is known by different folks.

All pieces of war gear included in a Treasure Index should be given an appropriate name, along with a set of historical

BANE WEAPONS

In addition to being possibly more effective against the types of creatures they were crafted to defeat, Bane weapons are destructive to elements connected to the creatures that are the object of the Bane, and would immediately be recognised as such by them.

For example, Orcs would not dare touch a blade forged for the bane of their kind, and a sword created for the destruction of giant Spiders would easily cut through the thickest of their webs.

notes. The name of an item can be revealed to its bearer who researches it or asks a lore-master about it (see the Meet Patron Fellowship Phase undertaking, on page 121).

A player is, of course, free to name an item themselves much as Bilbo did with Sting — either because the object does not have a known name or the companion isn't interested in discovering it. The notes about Named Weapons on page 80 can provide useful suggestions.

HOW FAMOUS WEAPONS AND ARMOUR WORK

When a companion first uses a Famous Weapon or Armour, the item displays only the characteristics of the first quality listed in its entry in the Loremaster's Treasure index.

The remaining features are secret and considered to be 'dormant'. They may be unlocked in the order that they have been listed on the Treasure Index in one of two ways — by gaining a new **VALOUR** rank, and by visiting the Treasury of their folk as a Fellowship Phase Undertaking.

GAINING A NEW VALOUR RANK: It is said that valour first needs strength, and then a weapon: the more the Player-heroes grow in heroic stature, the more powerful their magical items become.

> Each time that the Player-heroes are entitled to gain a new Reward as the consequence of gaining a new rank in **VALOUR**, they may choose instead to activate one quality of a Famous Weapon or Armour that belongs to them.

EXAMPLE:

An Elven adventurer recently found the Raven Axe of Arnor in a Troll's hoard while exploring the Ettenmoors. It displayed its first quality — Foe-slaying — as soon as she found it. In a subsequent Fellowship phase she increases her **VALOUR**. *Instead of choosing a new Reward, she chooses to activate the Raven Axe's next quality: Fell.*

VISITING THE TREASURY: The treasuries of most folks have been created with the loot of many wars, but also by the findings of generations of adventurers.

> When Player-heroes gain possession of a Famous Weapon or Armour, they can return home as a Fellowship Phase undertaking (see page 121), to leave a piece of war gear enhanced by one or more Rewards as a gift to their folk.

These gift-giving acts alter the identity of the Player-heroes in the eyes of their folk: they become the bearers of their newly-found enchanted items, and the objects left behind become 'cultural treasures'.

> In game terms, upon their visit to the treasury of their folk, Player-heroes trade the number of Rewards possessed by the piece of war gear given as a gift with the activation of an equal number of qualities on a Famous Weapon or Armour.

EXAMPLE:

While clearing an abandoned Dwarven keep of Goblins, a Barding hero found the Rune-shield of Ossiriand, which displayed its first quality, Ancient Cunning Make. The adventurer previously carried a Reinforced shield, gifted to him by the elders of his city. The following Fellowship Phase he undertakes to visit the treasury of Dale, returning the shield so that it may faithfully serve another. As he is trading in one previous Reward, he can activate another quality possessed by the Rune-shield.

SEEKING A LORE-MASTER

A companion who wishes to know more about a Famous Weapon or Armour may visit an appropriate location and choose the Meet Patron undertaking during a Yule Fellowship Phase (see page 121).

ENCHANTED REWARDS

All the qualities described here set the craftsmanship of an item apart from any other. The extraordinary characteristics of the object may be the result of ancient spells or graven runes, or they may be due to the innate qualities of the materials used for its crafting, or a combination of all such elements.

Often, the magical power of the object makes the item gleam with an unnatural light or appear as if burning with an enchanted flame, but in other cases the magical quality is more discreet, if noticeable at all. The Loremaster is encouraged to embellish the description of each Famous Weapon or Armour with appropriately epic details (or leave them to the owner of the object to devise).

Each Enchanted Reward's description includes any requirement that the enhanced object must satisfy for the quality to be applied to it. Qualities indicating a specific craftsmanship (Elven, Dwarven, or Númenórean) exemplify the features of war gear created by weaponsmiths and armourers belonging to that culture.

> Loremasters must keep in mind that they may apply a maximum of 3 Rewards (Enchanted or ordinary) to a Famous Weapon or Armour, always including a minimum of 1 Enchanted Reward. All Enchanted Rewards are unique, meaning that they can only be applied once to the same item.

The Loremaster should note that the first six Enchanted Rewards are enhanced versions of those described on page 79 — qualities sharing a common descriptor cannot be attributed to the same item. (For example, a Grievous sword cannot be given the Superior Grievous Enchanted Quality.) Moreover, when designing an Elven or Númenórean weapon, the Loremaster should be sure to bestow upon it at least one Enchanted Reward that possesses the Bane requirement.

ANCIENT CLOSE FITTING

- **CRAFTSMANSHIP:** Elven, Dwarven
- **ITEM:** Armour, Helm

When you make a **PROTECTION** roll while wearing a piece of armour or helm with this quality you add 3 to the result, or a bonus equal to your **VALOUR** rating, whichever is higher.

ANCIENT CUNNING MAKE

- **CRAFTSMANSHIP:** Elven, Dwarven
- **ITEM:** Armour, Helm, or Shield

This quality lowers the Load rating of an item by 3 points, or by your **VALOUR** rating, whichever is higher (to a minimum of 0 Load).

SUPERIOR FELL

- **CRAFTSMANSHIP:** Elven, Númenórean
- **ITEM:** Any weapon
- **SPECIAL:** Bane (if Númenórean)

If the weapon is of Elven Craftsmanship, add 4 to its Injury rating. If the weapon is of Númenórean craftsmanship, add 2 to its Injury rating, or a bonus equal to the bearer's **VALOUR** (whichever is higher) if used against a Bane creature.

SUPERIOR GRIEVOUS

- **CRAFTSMANSHIP:** Dwarven, Númenórean
- **ITEM:** Any weapon
- **SPECIAL:** Bane (if Númenórean)

If the weapon is of Dwarven craftsmanship, add 2 to its Damage rating. If the weapon is of Númenórean craftsmanship, add 1 to its Damage rating, or a bonus equal to the bearer's **VALOUR** if used against a Bane creature.

SUPERIOR KEEN

- **CRAFTSMANSHIP:** Dwarven, Elven
- **ITEM:** Any weapon
- **SPECIAL:** Bane (if Elven)

If the weapon is of Dwarven craftsmanship, it scores a Piercing Blow on a result of 8+. If the weapon is of Elven craftsmanship, it scores a Piercing Blow on a result of 9+, or on a result of 10 minus a value equal to the bearer's **VALOUR** if used against a Bane creature.

SUPERIOR REINFORCED

- **CRAFTSMANSHIP:** Any
- **ITEM:** Shield
- **SPECIAL:** Bane (if Elven or Númenórean)

This quality adds 2 to a shield's Parry bonus. If the shield is of Númenórean or Elven craftsmanship, add 1 to its Parry bonus, or a bonus equal to the bearer's **VALOUR** when fighting against a Bane creature.

BITING DART

- **CRAFTSMANSHIP:** Elven
- **ITEM:** Ranged weapon
- **SPECIAL:** Bane

When you hit your target using a weapon with this quality you also inflict a loss of 1 point of Hate or Resolve, or 3 points if it's a Bane creature.

CLEAVING

- **CRAFTSMANSHIP:** any
- **ITEM:** Close combat weapon

When you kill a foe with a weapon blessed by this quality, you can immediately attack a second adversary engaged with you.

FLAME OF HOPE

- **CRAFTSMANSHIP:** Dwarven
- **ITEM:** Close combat weapon

When you hit your target with a weapon blessed by this quality, all members of the Company (you included) recover 1 point of Endurance, plus 1 for each ᘔ rolled.

FOE-SLAYING

- **CRAFTSMANSHIP:** Elven, Númenórean
- **ITEM:** Any weapon
- **SPECIAL:** Bane

When you score a Piercing Blow on a Bane creature, the **PROTECTION** roll of the target is *Ill-favoured*. If the roll was already *Ill-favoured* for any reason, then the Piercing Blow scores an automatic Wound instead.

GLEAM OF TERROR

- **CRAFTSMANSHIP:** Dwarven
- **ITEM:** Close combat weapon

When you hit your target using a weapon with this quality you also inflict a loss of 2 points of Hate or Resolve.

HAMMERING

- **CRAFTSMANSHIP:** any
- **ITEM:** Close combat weapon

A creature hit by this weapon and suffering an Endurance loss equal or superior to twice its Attribute level is additionally knocked back and must spend its next main action to stand up.

HOLLOW STEEL

- **CRAFTSMANSHIP:** Númenórean
- **ITEM:** Bows
- **SPECIAL:** no Bane required

You are always allowed to make one additional opening volley, even when no opening volleys are allowed (unless you are surprised).

LUMINESCENCE

- **CRAFTSMANSHIP:** Elven
- **ITEM:** Close combat weapon
- **SPECIAL:** Bane

This quality makes the weapon's blade shine with a pale, cold light when a Bane creature is nearby. You and all members of the Company succeed automatically on all rolls made to avoid being ambushed by such creatures.

MITHRIL ARMOUR

- **CRAFTSMANSHIP:** Dwarven
- **ITEM:** Mail Armour

A mail shirt and a coat of mail made of Mithril have a Load rating of 3 and 6, respectively.

RUNE-SCORED ARMOUR

- **CRAFTSMANSHIP:** Dwarven
- **ITEM:** Armour

When you make a **PROTECTION** test while wearing a Rune-scored Armour, you ignore the effects of being Miserable or Weary.

RUNE-SCORED HELM

- **CRAFTSMANSHIP:** Dwarven
- **ITEM:** Helm

When you make a Skill roll attempting any Combat Task while wearing a Rune-scored Helm, you ignore the effects of being Miserable or Weary.

RUNE-SCORED SHIELD

- **CRAFTSMANSHIP:** Dwarven
- **ITEM:** Shield

When you are fighting with a Rune-scored Shield, attack rolls targeting you are made as if the adversary was Weary.

RUNE-SCORED WEAPON

- **CRAFTSMANSHIP:** Dwarven, Elven
- **ITEM:** Any weapon

When you make an attack roll using a weapon possessing this quality, you ignore the effects of being Miserable or Weary.

STRAIGHT FLIGHT

- **CRAFTSMANSHIP:** Any
- **ITEM:** Ranged weapon

The bearer of such a weapon always enjoys a clean shot, even when they are shooting against a strong wind, or their target is protected by darkness, or other elements that would modify their Attack roll negatively (the attacker ignores any modifiers due to complications).

CURSED ITEMS

Items that have been buried in darkness for centuries represent a potential threat to adventurers and their lust for power. Sometimes, a treasure has been left to rot long enough for the Shadow to have wound about it an even darker fate.

> If a Player-hero uncovered a piece of Magical Treasure, be it a Marvellous Artefact, a Wondrous Item, or a Famous Weapon and Armour, the Loremaster may additionally take the chance to introduce a Curse.

A cursed item does not differ from an unmarred one in its virtues. The Loremaster simply proceeds to design the Curse that is laid upon it, either by choosing a Curse designed previously for the campaign, or by creating one on the spot using the rules below.

HOW TO DESIGN A CURSE

A Curse bestows an item with an additional feature, similar to a Blessing or a Reward, except that it has a detrimental effect rather than a positive one. The Loremaster may consult the list of sample Curses found overleaf to select the most appropriate one, or to use them as inspiration to design new ones.

A Curse may not be initially apparent, but instead be activated by a specific circumstance. Examples of circumstances that might trigger a Curse include: leaving the area where the cursed

CURSED PRECIOUS OBJECTS

Generally, only Magical Treasure can be cursed, but if the Loremaster wishes, it is of course possible to lay a curse upon a heap of gold or a chest of precious gems, but usually that type of treasure just has an ill feeling about it and a character may struggle to sell it. To make things slightly darker, a cursed Precious Object might be denied any sentimental value (see page 160).

item was found; exposing the object to the light of the moon; at the first shedding of blood; in the presence of a specific type of creature; upon entering a dark land.

When creating a cursed item, the Loremaster must also secretly decide how its Curse can be lifted. This should be no small task and should definitely form the focus of an Adventuring phase in its own right. For example, a Curse might only be lifted at the place of the item's forging, or by the light of the same moon by which it was made. It might require the casting of an ancient spell lost to the ages or by the slaying of a particularly dangerous creature.

Note that a cursed item is not an evil artefact, or a device created by the Enemy or meant to condemn a companion to a life of misery. It is a wonderful object bearing a lasting trace of darkness. While it may make a hero's life more dangerous for a while, the introduction of a cursed item is primarily meant to make the game more exciting!

Once a Curse has been removed, the item reverts to being a regular magical item.

Here follow a number of examples.

CURSE OF WEAKNESS: The Cursed Player-hero displays the worst Flaw connected to their own Shadow Path.

- Cowardly (Wandering-madness). When the curse takes hold of the bearer, all they can think of is turning tail and fleeing into the night.
- Fearful (Path of Despair). The curse undermines the spirit of the bearer, casting a shadow of fear and doubt over every action and decision.
- Murderous (Curse of Vengeance). A terrible thirst for blood and malevolence lies within the item, provoking the bearer to dark thoughts of violence and murder.
- Thieving (Dragon-sickness). The item glitters with a sickly light that causes the bearer to desire more and more.
- Tyrannical (Lure of Power). The item foments a sense of overconfidence and arrogance within the bearer, causing them to belittle and undermine their companions.
- Traitorous (Lure of Secrets). The item fosters thoughts of paranoia and discord within the mind of its bearer, causing them to mistake their friends for foes.

Note that this Flaw is considered temporary, and does not count for the purposes of Succumbing to the Shadow.

DARKEN: When the item is revealed (a sword is unsheathed, a glove is removed to reveal a ring and so on) all shadows in the area seem to deepen, and all sources of light seem to grow weak. The phenomenon is particularly serious for the bearer of the item, who finds their sight seriously impaired. Since no source of light is able to dispel this darkness, bystanders are confused and disoriented. This causes all appropriate rolls made by the bearer to *lose (1d)*.

HUNTED: The presence of the item does not go unnoticed, and one type of enemy (Orcs, Evil Men, the Enemy) perceive it when they come near it. In addition, journey events experienced by a travelling Company may be made to revolve around this hunt.

ILL-LUCK: Bad luck dogs the bearer at every turn, their victories turned to defeats by simple — but persistent — misfortune. A roll of an on the Feat die obtained on any roll means an automatic failure for the bearer (as if the Player-hero was Miserable).

ILL-OMEN: The bearer's arrival is preceded by dark warnings and fell omens, filling the hearts of former allies with dread and fear. This causes all rolls made by the bearer during a Council to *lose (1d)*.

DISCOVERING THE ONE RING

Bilbo's discovery of the One Ring in Gollum's cave is a shining example of predestination, as discussed on page 161. Bilbo was meant to find the Ring, and then to pass it over to Frodo. Perhaps the Loremaster of Bilbo's campaign was planning very far ahead indeed — or maybe they didn't even realise at the time quite what they had created — the goal might have been merely to give the Burglar a Marvellous Artefact bestowed with a Blessing of STEALTH.

But how can the Ruling Ring of Sauron be created under the Magical Treasure rules? The short answer is that it can't: it is the greatest magical artefact ever created in the history of Middle-earth after all. But let's indulge a little bit more... The Ring would probably have a Blessing of Stealth for its capability to make its wearer invisible, but eventually reveal later to bestow another Blessing on the skill that better defines its wearer's ambitions and desires: AWE for a mighty warrior, BATTLE for a leader of Men, CRAFT for someone who would desire to create things, INSIGHT for those who seek to know the hearts of others... But what about its Curses? Well, let's not even get started...

MALICE: The object does not love its bearer, and will try to cause them harm, or otherwise trouble them. If a roll concerns the item (as in the case of a Skill roll augmented by a Blessing, an attack roll for a weapon, a **PROTECTION** roll for armour), the companion is prevented from spending Hope to gain bonus dice.

OWNED: The item is owned or was created by another creature, much as the Ring was owned by Sauron. The item may have found its way into the hands of the Player-hero so it might eventually return to its master. The Loremaster should decide upon a specific enemy to be the owner of the item, possibly choosing a recurring villain in the campaign. When in the presence of its owner, the item becomes useless: its special features turn out to be completely ineffective.

SHADOW TAINT: The item bears a greater shadow-stain upon it than most cursed items. As long as the hero carries the item, their Shadow score is augmented: by 1 point for an artefact with one Blessing, 2 for one with 2 Blessings; in the case of a Famous Weapon or Armour, the Shadow increase is equal to twice the number of Enchanted Rewards on the item. This Shadow increase cannot be removed or healed, and will raise the hero's Shadow score until the Curse is lifted.

WEAKENING: The item's Curse worms away at its bearer, bringing with it a terrible weakness. The Loremaster chooses either **STRENGTH**, **HEART**, or **WITS**. The bearer sees the associated Attribute TN raised by 2 points.

The Eye of Mordor

"The number must be few, since your hope is in speed and secrecy. Had I a host of Elves in armour of the Elder Days, it would avail little, save to arouse the power of Mordor."

As the Twilight of the Third Age darkens and the War of the Ring approaches, the will of the Dark Lord pushes all wicked things to evil ends. Since its revelation in the year 2951, Sauron is awake and his spies and servants are abroad once again.

Many unfriendly things having little love for Elves, Dwarves, and Men are stirred into action, and those who dare to leave their homes find themselves often plagued by an ill-fortune. Distant folks grow suspicious and estranged once again. The arm of the Enemy grows longer every day.

The possibility that a Company catches the Eye of the Enemy is expressed in gaming terms through the rules for Eye Awareness and its major and most terrible consequence — the Hunt.

- Eye Awareness is a rating measuring the level of attention that the Enemy reserves for the Company of Player-heroes. Its rating ebbs and flows based on their actions and wandering, and is kept track of from session to session.
- When the Eye Awareness of a Company reaches a certain limit, it triggers the Hunt, representing the way that the Enemy is able to focus the hostility of the world itself towards the group of Player-heroes.

Eye Awareness

In general terms, the Eye Awareness rating of a Company is based on the composition of the group, which Heroic Cultures are represented in it, and the intensity of their adventuring activity. A larger and more active group of Player-heroes, including Heroic Cultures recognised as enemies of Sauron such as Rangers or Elves, has more chances to raise suspicions and stir the minions of the Shadow into action than a smaller group composed solely of Hobbits.

OPTIONAL RULES?

The rules concerning the Eye of Mordor are particularly suitable to be introduced later in the game, when the Company has already been playing for a few years of game time. This is because they add a layer of complexity that not every group may find to their liking, and also because they are meant to represent how the Enemy reacts to the deeds of a successful group of adventurers.

To keep track of Eye Awareness it is best to use a number of counters or tokens (glass beads work fine) that should be placed on the gaming table, within reach of all players (about 20 tokens should suffice).

STARTING EYE AWARENESS SCORE

The starting Eye Awareness of a Company is calculated at the beginning of each Adventuring Phase. This value is determined by the composition of the group, as the Enemy keeps a closer watch on those individuals he hates, or fears, the most.

Check the table below to find out the individual score corresponding to each hero in the Company (Loremaster characters journeying with the Company are not normally considered part of it for the purposes of calculating Eye Awareness).

- To find the starting Eye Awareness of the Company, find its basic score using the table below (apply only the highest applicable entry), then add 1 for each Player-hero with a rating of **VALOUR** at 4 or more.
- Additionally, the spies of the Enemy can be attracted by adventurers carrying powerful weapons: add 1 for each Famous Weapon and Armour carried by members of the Company.

THE COMPANY INCLUDES:

PLAYER-HEROES	EYE AWARENESS
Only Hobbits or Men	0
One or more Dwarves	1
One or more Dúnedain or Elves	2
One or more High Elves	3

INCREASING EYE AWARENESS

A Company's Eye Awareness score increases in the course of an Adventuring phase as a consequence of a number of circumstances, as detailed in the following paragraphs.

The Loremaster must keep track of these instances, and update the Eye Awareness score of the company accordingly.

Note that most of the circumstances described here pertain to conditions happening outside of combat.

ROLLING EYES: When under the Shadow, even the most successful exploits can be tainted by fear and self-doubt.

Raise the Eye Awareness of the Company by 1 point whenever a die roll made by a player outside of combat produces an eye icon, regardless of whether the roll resulted in a success or a failure.

If the Loremaster considers it appropriate, rolling an eye under particularly dramatic or otherwise grave circumstances may increase the Eye Awareness by 2 points or more instead of 1. Conversely, if the company is currently in a place deemed by the Loremaster to be safe, an eye might not provoke an increase at all.

SHADOW GAIN: A Player-hero tormented by grief and beset by the threat of corruption carries a burden that the Shadow is quick to recognise and exploit.

Whenever a Player-hero gains 1 or more Shadow points outside of combat, increase the Eye Awareness level by an equal amount.

USING MAGIC: Blatant displays of magical power further augment a Company's Eye Awareness score, in a measure that is proportional to the magical effect.

Spells cast by a Wizard or another Loremaster character capable of such feats provoke the increase of the Eye Awareness score by 1 point in case of a lesser effect, 2 points for a major spell, and 3 points for a really powerful spell.

Note that this does not apply to every use of magic — for example, tracing signs on a surface that will be visible only to friendly eyes, or embellishing pipe-smoke or fireworks with shapes and colours does not provoke the increase of Eye Awareness — unless they are done in the wrong place, or at the wrong time, of course!

Examples of display of magical power include:

- **LESSER EFFECTS (+1 POINT):** Illuminate a dark passage with a short blaze of magical light, open a locked door, play tricks with voices or sounds.
- **MAJOR SPELLS (+2 POINTS):** Light a fire in a storm, block a door against a powerful adversary, make a tree burst into flames.
- **POWERFUL SPELLS (+3 POINTS):** Rain lightning down upon an advancing enemy, lend speed to a travelling company, make the waters of a river swell with rage.

RESETTING EYE AWARENESS

When an Adventuring phase ends, the tally for Eye Awareness is suspended for the length of the Fellowship phase. The Eye Awareness score of the Company is set again at its starting score at the beginning of the following Adventuring phase.

The Hunt

Using the rules explained above, the Eye Awareness level of a Company grows session after session during the Adventuring phase as a consequence of the actions of the Player-heroes. To determine whether this puts the Company at the risk of being noticed by the Enemy, the Loremaster must compare the Eye Awareness rating to another value, called the Company's Hunt threshold.

HUNT THRESHOLD

At any given time, the Hunt threshold of the Company is determined by the region where the heroes are located, based on the Region table below. If the Player-heroes travel from one region to another, the Hunt threshold will change accordingly.

A number of modifiers can alter the value set by the region, as the Company takes precautions or is travelling under the protection of a powerful individual (see the Hunt Modifiers table below).

REGION TABLE:

THE REGION TRAVERSED IS A...	HUNT THRESHOLD
Border Land	18
Wild Land	16
Dark Land	14

HUNT MODIFIERS TABLE:

HUNT MODIFIER	DESCRIPTION
+4	The Company is protected by the blessing of a Wizard, or another powerful Loremaster character
+2	The Company is travelling under false names, treading paths that are seldom trodden, or otherwise taking actions to be discreet and unobtrusive
–2	The Player-heroes have gained great renown in the area thanks to some exceptional deed
–4	The Enemy is actively looking for the Player-heroes, or their mission or goal is known to them

The status of the Company as far as the perception of the Enemy is concerned is evaluated comparing the Hunt Threshold to the Eye Awareness rating:

> As long as the Eye Awareness rating of the Company is inferior to the Hunt threshold, the Player-heroes are considered to be hidden.

In the eyes of the Enemy the adventurers are just a group of stray wanderers, and their actions are of small concern.

> Should the Eye Awareness match or exceed the Hunt threshold, the group would be revealed to the Eye, and something bad will happen as a consequence.

REVEALING THE COMPANY

A Company is revealed to the Enemy when the Eye Awareness score of the company matches or exceeds the current Hunt threshold. When this happens, the Loremaster will introduce a Revelation episode, a dangerous event reflecting the increased hostility of the game world towards the members of the Company.

The source of this hostility may differ wildly from one Revelation episode to another: it may be the result of the direct actions of servants of the Enemy aimed to thwart the Company's plans, an accident caused by the ill-will of another unfriendly power, or simply an unusual and sinister stroke of bad luck. There are many strange and dark powers in Middle-earth, and not all of them are necessarily in league with the Dark Lord…

> As soon as the Loremaster has played out a Revelation episode, the Company is considered to be hidden again, and the Eye Awareness level of the company is set back at its starting level.

From that moment on, the tally for Eye Awareness is resumed normally; and thus may lead to another Revelation episode should the score reach the Hunt threshold once again, and so on, until the end of the Adventuring phase.

REVELATION EPISODES

To determine the precise nature and consequences of a Revelation episode, the Loremaster should weigh the current circumstances of the Company and choose a course of events that will change the heroes' predicament for the worst. If the Player-heroes were already heading towards a difficult situation, now they will face one of their worst moments instead.

Regardless of the details, whatever happens to the Company must spring naturally out of the ongoing flow of events experienced during a session; no Orcs appearing out of nowhere to attack while the Player-heroes are sleeping at Bag End!

Additionally, the nature of a Revelation episode should always suggest that there are strange forces at work; a distinctive aura that smells of something dark and foul; a malicious misfortune, the unusual behaviour of Men or beasts, the faint trace of sorcery.

Generally, the current situation should provide the Loremaster with enough suggestions upon which to improvise. If this is not the case, then the resolution of a Revelation episode should be held off, until an appropriate situation appears (possibly even waiting for the following session of play).

A typical Revelation episode may include a hero losing the other companions during a journey or while fleeing, the group running out of food as provisions are found to be unexpectedly spoilt, a decision taken by heroes proving to be the worst possible choice, an individual the Company was waiting for failing to show up at a crucial moment, and so on.

EXAMPLES OF REVELATION EPISODES

"Is it the will of the Dark Tower that steers us? All my choices have proved ill."

Here follow several examples of how the Loremaster may worsen the situation of a revealed Company. A level of customisation is required, to adapt all suggestions to the actual situation of play.

1. *Out of the Frying Pan...* All actions concerning the resolution of a chosen situation inexplicably prove harder – all Skill rolls *lose (1d)*. For example, all rolls made for the length of a journey's leg, or for the entire next encounter.
2. *Láthspell*. The arrival of the Company at a location is interpreted as ill-news, and the heroes are given a colder welcome than expected: the goal of a Council as chosen by the Company is made more difficult – a reasonable request becomes bold, and a bold one becomes outrageous, as suspicions are roused and old prejudices flare up.
3. *Do not tempt me!* A Player-hero gains 3 points of Shadow (Greed). The nature of the challenge may be overt or subtle, and should be based on the character's Shadow Path.
4. *Lies and Threats*. An ally becomes an enemy, through coercion, betrayal, or even sorcery. The individual is now bent on doing harm to the Player-heroes, and either acts directly or schemes in the dark.
5. *A Weariness of the Heart*. An unnatural sense of tiredness has gotten hold of the Company. Whether it is due to some subtle sorcery or else it is not clear, but all Player-heroes are considered Weary until the Loremaster deems it appropriate to the circumstances.
6. *A Will That Lends Speed*. An enemy that the Company was chasing or holding prisoner escapes, as if helped or hidden by an unseen hand, or pursuers that were hunting the Company catch up with them unexpectedly.
7. *Guided by Sinister Purpose*. A potential threat the Company had a chance to avoid is now waiting for them. An Orc patrol they could try to ambush now automatically spots them; a Troll they could sneak past sniffs them out at the worst possible moment; an unnamed terror that was sleeping in the deep places of the world is now aware of their passage.
8. *Reckless Hate*. One enemy type that will be faced in combat next gains the special ability Hatred (subject), focused on one Heroic Culture represented in the Company.
9. *Deadly Strife*. An enemy that will be faced in combat next starts the fight with an additional pool of Hate or Resolve points equal to the roll of a Success die. The Loremaster spends one point from the pool when a creature would normally reduce its Hate or Resolve score.
10. *We Come to Kill*. One enemy type that will be faced in combat next gains:

FELL ABILITY: *Deadly Wound*. Wounded targets make an *Ill-favoured* Feat die roll to determine the severity of their injury.

CHAPTER 9

The World

… he kept in a drawer at Bag End the old cloak and hood that he had worn on his travels; and the ring, secured by a fine chain, remained in his pocket.

This chapter contains background material describing the default setting for *The One Ring* Roleplaying Game — the region of Eriador as it was towards the end of the Third Age. It introduces key locations, personalities and events, to be used mainly by the Loremaster to set up a great number of gaming sessions that will be both entertaining and faithful to the source material.

The best way to use the information presented here is to adopt a starting location (for example, the town of Bree, or the Shire), and have the heroes explore Eriador from there.

As anticipated in the Introduction to this volume, the game is set 'officially' in the year 2965 of the Third Age — Bilbo Baggins' great adventure was accomplished less than 25 years before, and war is brewing in distant lands. There is again a Dark Lord in Mordor, and his chief lieutenants, the Ringwraiths, have reclaimed his fortress in the depths of Mirkwood, to the east.

In the quiet west, in Eriador, not much is heard of this turmoil. Dwarves are encountered travelling on the great East Road to and from the Mountains in greater numbers, carrying strange and rich wares, a testimony of their newfound wealth and that of the Men of Dale; Elves wandering out of their own lands beyond the Tower Hills can sometimes be met wandering the woods in spring and autumn.

But the long peace that seems to reign in the pleasant land of the Hobbits can be deceitful — there are dark things moving again in the world outside, and they are guided by an evil will.

Eriador

In the westlands of Eriador … the Hobbits found both Men and Elves. Indeed, a remnant still dwelt there of the Dúnedain, the kings of Men that came over the Sea out of Westernesse…

Some say that 'Eriador' means "the lonely land" in the tongue of the Grey-elves, and a more apt name is unlikely to be found. Though it was once the domain of ancient kings, as the ages passed and the world darkened, it became a mere shadow of its former self. Only ruins of crumbling white stone, forgotten by Men, are left, the domain of terrible creatures who serve dark masters.

Small pockets of civilization endure, settlements inhabited by people more concerned with their own affairs than with any glories of the past, and who feel that what lies more than a few miles beyond their own front door is none of their business. But this lack of interest, or even awareness, makes what stalks the ruined realms of Eriador even more dangerous. If they only knew what lurks beyond their isolated settlements, they would keep their doors locked at night and would not dare to stray too far beyond the borders of their towns and hamlets.

For all its danger, there is a melancholy and a beauty to even the most desolate and blasted parts of Eriador. Old songs are remembered, even if most ignore the origin of these lays, nor know their meanings. Perhaps those who wander the Lone-lands will live to see a day when hope and prosperity will take root in this region once again.

The Shire

The Shire, the land of the Hobbits, is found at the heart of Eriador, bordered by the Brandywine River and the Old Forest to the east, and by the hilly range of the Far Downs to the west. It is a peculiar land, sheltered from the wild regions surrounding it by watchful guardians, and inhabited by a folk that is almost never encountered anywhere else. For very few Hobbits ever leave their land to travel far. They prefer to keep to themselves, enjoying their green land and comfortable

NORTH-WESTERN MIDDLE-EARTH

The region where the Free Peoples and their foes dwell at the end of the Third Age is dominated by the great range of the Misty Mountains. To the west of its snow-capped peaks lies Eriador, where once the North-kingdom of the Men of the West rose. To the east lies wild Rhovanion, where the dark forest of Mirkwood lies. Beyond the forest to the northeast is the Long Lake and the Lonely Mountain, where a great Dragon used to rule. To the far south open the green plains of Rohan, bordered by the White Mountains. Further east is the South-kingdom of Gondor, the Realm of Stone, whose Tower of Guard faces the land of Mordor, where the shadows lie.

traditions. Dwarven traders often pass through the Shire, but never stop for more than what is required to cross it.

The existence of Hobbits has been hitherto overlooked by most folks outside Eriador, and their involvement in the great events of the age has been so far of little or no consequence — but there is still time for them to play a part that neither the Enemy nor the Wise have foreseen.

More detailed information on the Shire can be found in *The One Ring* Starter Set.

Lake Evendim

Nestled against the base of the Hills of Evendim is the great lake for which those rolling lands are named. Its white, sandy shores have seen many generations of Men and Dúnedain live and prosper, thanks to the trade that once sailed along the waters of the Brandywine river, from here to the distant sea. But that age has passed, and the buildings that once rose along the banks of the lake have been abandoned so long ago that often not even a memory remains. Today, countless broken stones have become little more than a refuge for wild beasts. Sometimes, they serve as lairs for even worse things, creatures that come down from the Lone-lands to the north in search of prey.

THE BRANDYWINE RIVER

The Baranduin river flows south out of Lake Evendim and across the North Moors before it descends south dividing the Eastfarthing of the Shire from Buckland and the Old Forest. Then, it flows in a southwesterly course, serving as the northern border of the wide region known as Minhiriath, south of the Shire. Finally, it empties into the sea near the woodland cape of Eryn Vorn. The Brandywine has two known crossings: The Brandywine Bridge, where the East Road leaves the Shire, and Sarn Ford, far to the south, which is seldom used.

The waters of the lake are uncommonly still in summer, in spite of the wind sweeping down from the hills, as if those draughts were unwilling to disturb their peace. In winter, the surface often freezes solid for months, blanketing the entire lake in a white canopy. Fog rolls in from the east, settling across the waters and onto the shores in both late summer and winter, absorbing all sound. This mist rapidly burns off under the summer sun, but lingers to envelop everything it touches once the darker, colder seasons have taken hold.

Rumours persist that small islands lay unexplored in the middle of Lake Evendim, perhaps hiding forgotten treasures, heirlooms left behind when the great city of Annúminas was abandoned, more than two thousand years ago. Stories tell that the fog of the lake is summoned by some ancient magic, cast by the last High Men to keep these artefacts from falling into the hands of the Enemy.

ANNÚMINAS

The great city of Annúminas has lain in ruins for more than two thousand years. Once the capital of the North Kingdom of the Men of the West, it was abandoned when the Dúnedain moved their capital to the east, to Fornost Erain. The broken stonework of the ruined city cast its long shadows on the shores of Lake Evendim for many centuries, like the bones of an immense dead beast. About fifty years ago, the waters of Lake Evendim rose dramatically, as a consequence of the terrible floods following the Fell Winter, changing the shoreline and submerging much of what remained of the once glorious city. Now, not even brigands and tomb-robbers visit Annúminas, for little of its ancient greatness is left to be remembered.

The Rangers of the North sometimes come here, and they speak of the city of Annúminas in a voice that mingles both sorrow and hope. According to their songs and rhymes, here were once housed great works of art and magnificent artefacts that came from the lands beyond the sea. Though the greatest of these were lost to the tides of time or are now held in secret by the lords of the Free People, many believe that a great number of treasures remain hidden, waiting to be discovered by explorers doughty enough to brave the waters that now claim the ruins.

THE WESTERN TOWER: The rising of the waters of Lake Evendim have claimed much of what was left of Annúminas. Today, only the tallest and unbroken towers and walls emerge from the surface, and only about once a year, when the depth of the lake diminishes for a while in winter. But there's one tower that is tall enough to rise above the surface all-year round. Called the Western Tower by the Rangers of the North, it stood at the end of a pier, extending above the surface of the lake, looking west. Today, the pier is broken and submerged, and the tower can only be reached by boat, or by walking on the surface of the lake when it freezes solid, in the coldest winters.

Some say that if one climbs the tower to look upon the shores of Lake Evendim on starry, moonless nights, they can hear a song drifting over its still waters, a dirge both mournful and beautiful. Then, strange, ghostly ships with high sails appear at the edge of vision, drawing ever closer to the tower, but never reaching it. Then, they fade and vanish on the mist-swept surface of Lake Evendim.

THE HILLS OF EVENDIM

The Hills of Evendim give the nearby lake its Sindarin name — Nenuial, "the Lake of Twilight". This is maybe because the shadows of the hills lengthen over its waters, making them look dull and flat, except on starry nights, when the surface reflects the beautiful sky above. Once, the hills were the home of a folk that built upon their slopes even before the Men of the West settled there, and many stones still bear their markings. These days, they have become a wild and dangerous place, threatened by wandering Trolls and other monsters. They come down from their lairs in the northern Lone-lands, to prowl along the shores of the lake in hopes of catching a wayward traveller or foolish treasure hunter. They make sport of anyone unlucky enough to fall under their gaze, and there are even rumours that a few of their strange kind sometimes slip into the south along the Shire's North Moors.

THE FORGOTTEN HAMLET

Eskerdale is an isolated village of Men, hidden in a deep valley on the northeastern slopes of the Hills of Evendim. Wanting little to do with other denizens of Eriador or the Shire to the south, its inhabitants make their homes in small stone houses by a swift running stream, and survive by hunting among the hills and fishing from the waters of the Lake. They are not accounted among the Rangers of the North, but they sometimes have dealings with them. More than twenty years ago, a chieftain by the name of Oswin rose to prominence in Eskerdale. A young and energetic man at the time, he resented the interference of the Rangers in the life of his community. As a result, the village grew more and more withdrawn, and its already small population began to dwindle.

In recent times, the few Rangers that are still welcome in Eskerdale have noticed a sullen look on the faces of the locals, and it is feared that they may have fallen prey to some curse, or that their isolation has finally broken their spirit.

Finding Eskerdale is not easy, even for those who are told of its existence or receive hints of its location. Finding it is a Skill Endeavour with a Resistance of 6, using the EXPLORE, HUNTING, RIDDLE, and SCAN skills. Those who find the hidden community need to demonstrate that they are not a threat, for example with a COURTESY roll, though Rangers *lose (1d)* on this roll. Consulting with the people of Eskerdale allows a hero to *gain (1d)* on the next EXPLORE, HUNTING, or LORE roll associated with the region of Evendim.

THE TWILIGHT SHIPS

Player-heroes who partake in the vision of the ghost ships sailing on Lake Evendim may react differently:

Player-heroes who are Miserable must exchange a point of Shadow for a Shadow Scar. Those who are not Miserable regain 1 point of Hope instead.

Beinion and Arin of Evendim

Unlike most Rangers of the North, Arin and Beinion do not often wander across Eriador. Instead, they remain close to Lake Evendim and its surroundings, where they maintain a close watch. A wife and her husband, their self-appointed tasks include warding off all evil creatures threatening to defile the ruins of Annúminas, and guiding wayward travellers back to safer lands. Beinion is a grim and short-spoken man, and Arin is equally silent, unless she's singing — when she does, her voice is clear and can be mistaken for that of a fair Elf-maiden. The two see themselves as the appointed keepers of these lands, and they feel honour-bound by this duty.

Arin and Beinion live together in a small stone house that was once little more than a hovel on the edge of Annúminas. Over time, they have made this ruin into a warm and cozy home, in spite of all the desolation around them. Recently, Beinion has grown concerned with his wife's well-being, as she is now with child, making her life as a Ranger an even more dangerous business. Beinion secretly wishes Arin would agree to abandon their obligation as guardians, and retire to live the simple life of the Bree-folk. For the moment, she refuses to be left home. Maybe, they might agree to leave their post if someone took their place.

NAME: Beinion and Arin of Evendim

OCCUPATION: Rangers

TRAITS: Bold, Faithful, Fair-spoken (Arin), True-hearted (Beinion)

The Bree-land

If any credit is to be given to the tales recounted in Bree, there has always been a settlement here, on the Road, since the Elder Days. What is sure is that the simple Bree-folk — a colourful community of Men and Hobbits, have endured the fall of kingdoms, fell winters, and terrible invasions from Orcs and Evil Men from the north.

Today, the Bree-folk, Big and Little, look out from behind their hedge wall and its great encircling ditch to see a landscape of rolling fields and stone-capped hills that are riddled with traces of a past time of glory. But they are not deceived — they know that there are ancient riddles that are best left to others to answer, and instead, they focus their efforts on the responsibilities of daily life.

BREE

Bree is the chief village of the Bree-land. Some call it a town, especially when comparing it to its lesser cousins, the hamlets of Archet, Staddle, and Combe. Travellers who approach Bree journeying upon the great East Road see plumes of chimney-smoke first, and then a thick green hedge, flanked by a deep dike. The road coming from the west crosses over the dike on a causeway, leading to a break in that thorny row of lush greenery, where a heavy gate of wood and iron stands. Another, similar gate pierces the hedge to the south, where the road leaves the village on its way east.

The gates of Bree are a welcome sight to most travellers, and sit open every day from dawn until dusk, regardless of the season or the weather. Each gate is guarded by a gatekeeper at all times, less of a watchman and more of an observer of the comings and goings of those who enter the town upon the hill. Most visitors are given a courteous welcome, unless the hour is late — after nightfall, it is the duty of the gatekeepers to ask questions of those who wish to pass the gates when they are closed.

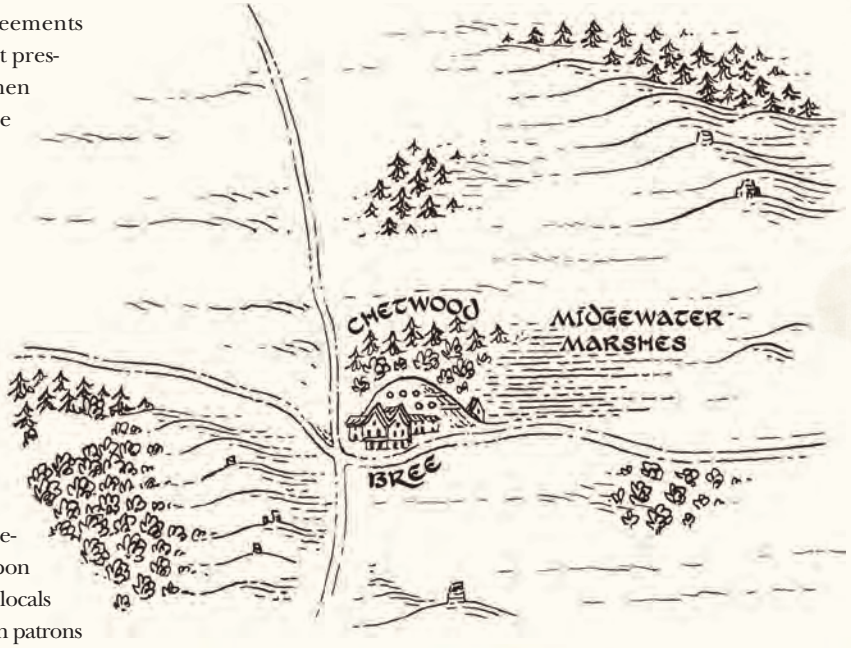
A smaller gate can be found opening near the end of the northern arm of the great hedge, where it turns eastward towards the hill once again. It is seldom used, if ever, as it is crossed by a path leading to the Greenway, the North Road used only by Rangers and other wanderers of ill-repute.

Most Bree-folk, whether Big or Little, work as crafters or laborers, and build their simple homes using wood harvested from the Chetwood and stone mined from the quarry. The Bree-folk also collect stones from old ruins, at least enough to keep the town in repair.

The Big Folk live mainly in stone houses built on the lower hillside, mostly above the road, their windows looking west. The Little Folk dwell in the higher slopes of the hill instead, the part of Bree the Big Folk still refer to as the 'new town', despite it being probably more than a thousand years old. But these differences aside, the people of Bree get along in a remarkably peaceable way, and are surprisingly welcoming to visitors, being ever curious about tales from beyond the gates of their town.

A Reeve holds a nominal position of leadership over the community, but they are rarely called upon to settle disputes,

as most folk are able to keep any disagreements civil and private. Equally underutilised, but present, are the Bree-wardens, men and women ostensibly tasked with keeping the peace and maintaining law and order. In practice, their duties consist primarily of idly wandering the streets to engage in pleasantries or gossip along with the occasional request to manage the large crowds that gather upon the Green on market day.



THE PRANCING PONY: The great East Road cuts through the heart of Bree, and at the centre of the town stands the inn of The Prancing Pony. Known locally just as The Pony, it has stood for as long as anyone in Bree can recall. Rising above the cobblestones of the East Road and looking out upon the Green, it is always a welcome sight to both locals and weary travellers. Though its most common patrons are Bree locals, it sees its fair share of Dwarven travellers moving between Dale, the Lonely Mountain and the Iron Hills in the east and the Blue Mountains in the west, or the occasional Hobbit of the Shire. The proprietor even claims his grandfather once hosted an Elf that was travelling west to the Great Sea.

On any given night, The Prancing Pony is filled with the sound of raucous laughter and the scent of fine food and fresh beer — all of it under a cloud of aromatic pipe smoke. Even during the day, a few patrons can be found either enjoying a brief reprieve from their daily work or exchanging idle gossip. Day or night, regardless of the season, a crackling fire is set in the hearth and a soothing golden glow can be seen in its frosted windows. All who step under the lamp and signboard (showing a fat, white pony rearing up and 'The Prancing Pony' in white letters) and enter The Pony are welcome, by order of the innkeeper, Barnabas Butterbur. Even the ill-favored Rangers are given a table when they patronise his establishment, though always one in the back and away from the regular customers.

Those looking for lodging will find simple, comfortable rooms with warm feather beds. Barnabas even makes sure to keep a few smaller rooms on the ground floor of the inn to ensure the comfort of his Hobbit patrons. Though not as grand as an Elf hall or as cozy as a Hobbit smial, travellers will be hard pressed to find better accommodations west of the Last Bridge. Guests can even pay a few extra silver pennies for a hot bath to wash away the dirt of the road, and are assured the comfort of their loyal mounts, who are well-stabled in The Pony's sheltered courtyard. Simple but hearty food fills the belly of all who visit, and partners perfectly with Barnabas's Best, an ale brewed on site and served fresh.

THE BIG AND THE LITTLE

There are many families of Hobbits spread among the villages of the Bree-land, especially in Staddle. These Bree-hobbits are of course closely related to their neighbours in the Shire – indeed, to most Big Folk, it is impossible to tell the difference (unless one makes the mistake of asking one of the Hobbits, in which case get comfortable – you are in for a long talk about family trees, obscure legal issues, and exceedingly minute cultural differences).

If you desire to create a Bree-hobbit, use all the rules concerning the Men of Bree found on page 40, with the following exceptions:

Bree-hobbits calculate their Endurance, Hope and Parry ratings using the Hobbits' tables (on page 38);

They are limited to use of the same weapons as Hobbits (see Halflings, page 38);

They must pick their Cultural Virtues from the following list: Bree-pony, Desperate Courage, Small Folk, Strange as News from Bree, The Art of Smoking, Tough as Old Tree Roots.

Bree-hobbits share many family names with the local Big Folk (Mugworts, for example), but most have Shire-sounding names, such as Banks, Brockhouse, Longhole, Sandheaver, Tunnelly, and Underhill.

AN EVENING AT THE PRANCING PONY

Rarely is there a quiet night at The Pony. When the Player-heroes spend an evening at the inn, the Loremaster can roll on the following table to determine who or what they encounter while sampling a bit of ale and taking a break from the troubles of the road.

FEAT DIE ROLL	RESULT	DESCRIPTION
ᚠ	The Grey Pilgrim	Gandalf himself is visiting The Pony this evening and his presence alone has the whole house astir! Perhaps he is on a secret errand of his own, or searching for the Player-heroes to gain their aid against some hidden threat.
1	Ill-favoured Ranger	One of the Rangers of the North is quietly minding their own business in a corner of the inn's common room. Several locals are leering or making cross remarks, but no one knows why they are here.
2	Visitors from Buckland	A small company of Hobbits from Buckland is spending an evening at The Pony, meeting with distant cousins, and hoping to trade for some of the local crop of pipe-weed.
3	Dwarf Travellers	Dwarves, travelling to the land of their kin along the great East-West Road are sampling some of Barnabas's Best, and have raised a raucous song this evening.
4	Greenway Refugees	A small family of homesteaders who once lived along the Greenway have come to The Pony in search of refuge. They are cautious, but anyone who asks politely can learn from them that their farm was burnt and sacked last night.
5	Fitch Talltree	The Forester of Archet has come to The Pony this evening looking for stout warriors to join him in a hunt for a new threat prowling the Chetwood. He is having little luck in his efforts.
6	Impending Brawl	John Ferny is having a pint in the common room and several other patrons are cross with him. They are engaged in a loud argument and it seems like things are about to come to blows.
7	Rousing Ballad	The common room is filled with patrons roaring out bolstering ballads of heroes and hearthfires! Characters who join in and make a successful SONG roll recover 1 Hope.
8	Showing Some Coin	A wealthy merchant is passing through Bree and has bought a round of drinks for everyone in attendance this evening. Unfortunately, some less than savoury drinkers seem to have a keen eye on his money purse.
9	Ponies Loose at The Pony!	The Pony's ostler comes running into the common room, yelling that the horses have gotten loose from the inn's stables! Was this an accident or an attempted theft?
10	Bragging Treasure Hunters	A group of glorified tomb robbers have come to spend ill-gotten riches they claim to have retrieved from a tomb in the Barrow-downs. The coins are ancient and marked in a strange script.
	Skulking Southerner	A sallow-faced southerner is lingering about the shadows of the common room, asking rude questions and bullying locals for the latest news in Bree-land.

Barnabas Butterbur

For the proprietor of The Prancing Pony, running a clean and welcome house is a matter of family pride. Barnabas dedicates himself to keeping his establishment in order, taking only the briefest of reprieves in his quarters on The Pony's top floor. While some locals see him as absent minded or even befuddled, the truth is that Barnabas is both keen and perceptive. He also possesses the uncommon wisdom of knowing when to remain silent as well as being a sharp judge of character. To most of the people who visit The Pony regularly he is known as an affable host and a fine brewer of ales.

NAME: Barnabas Butterbur

OCCUPATION: Innkeeper

TRAITS: Patient, Rustic

EAST ROW: The last side street branching out of the main road going towards the south gate is called the East Row. Its houses make up what is probably the youngest district in the town of Bree, even if it may seem to outsiders to be the most ancient. Until recent decades, it was little more than grazing lands for caravan horses, but when refugees came north out of Tharbad, they settled the open fields as their own land with the blessing of the Reeve of Bree. Bringing with them the grim determination of those who grew up in the farthest corners of Eriador, these refugees taught their children to survive and endure with little aid from others. This has led to East Row being a bit more insular and less welcoming than the neighbourhoods of other Bree-folk, who have called the town home for hundreds of years. As a further reflection of their unwillingness to abandon their roots, the people of East Row brought with them some of the very stones of their abandoned city to serve as the foundation of their new domain. Statues of ancient kings, though worn and cracked, stand next to traditional Bree homesteads, and icons of seafaring people mingle with the more rustic local imagery.

John Ferny

One of the less hospitable-looking houses in East Row belongs to the sallow-faced and cross-tempered horse trader and ostler, John Ferny. In previous generations, the Ferny family name was associated with the trade of some of the finest horses in Eriador — today, it has become synonymous with deception. The quality steeds and workhorses traded by his father and grandfather have given way to wretched and ill-treated nags that he sells at inflated prices. The good will of his family name has withered to worthlessness, and to maintain profits, John has even taken to trading with foreign folk. More than once, locals have seen him taking silver pennies from foreigners and southerners, and John has little more than snide remarks for any who question his business practices. The only matter upon which the townsfolk seem to agree with the foul ostler is his constant suspicion of the Rangers whenever they make their way into Bree.

NAME: John Ferny

OCCUPATION: Horse-trader, Ostler

TRAITS: Canny, Secretive

THE GREEN: The heart of Bree, the Green is a wide grassy field at the centre of the town on the western side of the East Road, across from The Prancing Pony. This lush lawn is framed on one side by the administrative buildings of Bree: The Counting-house, the Armoury, and the Reeve's Hall. Except for on market days, the Green acts as little more than a playing field for local children. Here, they can often be found playing blind man's buff, wrestling, or play-acting at being knights of old.

During festivals and on market days, the Green is filled with tents, stalls, and carts, as Bree-land traders sell their goods alongside rare visitors from the tiny communities of southern Eriador, and even the occasional Dwarf from the Blue Mountains. As much a social gathering as an event for commerce, it is not uncommon to see barrels of Barnabas's Best setup beside long wooden tables, to help keep the thirst of the day at bay. Bree-wardens serve to keep the peace during these gatherings, though they rarely have to do more than settle a contentious negotiation or prevent a drunken brawl started by a reveler who's had one too many.

The day-to-day administration of Bree is carried out from the Reeve's House, which serves as both the town court-house and home to its senior official. The current Reeve is Cole Pickthorn, who, prior to his election, served for over a decade under the previous Reeve and has adopted many of his principles and policies. The Wardens' Armoury, more commonly known as simply the Armoury, is a squat stone building that is officially the headquarters of the Bree-wardens, but is little more than a storehouse for rarely used spears, shields, and helms, kept ready should the town ever face a threat from the wilds outside.

Larger than either of these buildings is the Counting-house. In ancient days, it was manned by a representative of the King, who collected taxes in his name and saw to the proper allocation of funds to the town. Sitting upon stone pillars and rising as tall as even The Prancing Pony, its size hints at its noble past. Now it serves as little more than a drafty hall for brief and inconsequential meetings of members of the town council, who are concerned with little more than small town politics and ensuring their own re-election.

LOWER HILLSIDE: The lower slopes of Bree-hill are dotted with stone houses, the living quarters of many of Bree's craftsmen. Blacksmiths, tailors, leatherworkers, and many other skilled tradesmen practice their crafts on the ground floor of their homes, while living on the first or even second storey. It is a tradition among many of the local residents to work in

tandem alongside families of Hobbits that typically live and work in the basements of the Big Folk's stone homes. For example, one farmer by the name of John Andrews keeps a crop of Southern Star growing on his hillside land, but rents out space below his home to a small Hobbit family who aids in the curing and preparing of the leaf for sale. Hobbits living under this arrangement are sometimes known as Cellar-hobbits.

As proud as they are skilled, the craftsmen of the lower hillside come from long family lines that set down roots during the days of the king. Because of this, they often regard outsiders or even other Bree-folk as less cultured or somehow beneath their concern. It is indeed a fact that their homes are among the first ones to have ever been built in Bree. This noble lineage authorises the local residents to call it the 'old town', in contrast to the houses built on the upper hillside — the area they call the 'new town' with a good hint of superciliousness.

At the southern end of this 'old town' is the ancient quarry of Bree, clearly visible as a deep cut into the hillside, the result of centuries of excavations. But the most important landmark in the lower hillside is the Old Town Well. A source of pride to all the Bree-folk, the Well is said to grant luck to any traveller who takes a drink from it before heading off on a journey down the East Road. Given that it's the source for the water used to brew Barnabas's Best, perhaps it's true that there's always a taste of home on the lips of those travellers who partake of this tradition. Many Bree-folk looking for a bit of adventure often gather around the Old Town Well after Market Day is over, hoping to sign on with a caravan of Dwarven merchants either travelling west to the Blue Mountains or, in rare cases, far east to Dale and the Halls of the Lonely Mountain.

So welcome are the Dwarves that bring their trade to Bree, that the lower hillside is home to another remarkable establishment: The Dwarf-House. Overlooking the Well and purchased long ago by a Dwarf from the Blue Mountains, it is now a temporary home for any Dwarf merchants during their visits to Bree. The only permanent resident is Luki, the grey-bearded steward, whose bawdy songs can be heard ringing through the area whenever he hosts young visitors and distant kinsmen.

UPPER HILLSIDE: Compared to the lower hillside, this part of Bree is generally less affluent, and its homes more humble. It is an area inhabited mostly by Bree-hobbits, who favour low, one-story houses, fronted by colourful, fenced gardens. The exception to this rule is a large wooden building, the Schoolhouse. A recent establishment, it is open to all residents of Bree, whether Big or Little, and regardless of income. Its costs are covered by taxes taken from locals and tariffs levied on traders — though neither of these is extreme. Because of the existence of the school, nearly all of the Bree-folk are capable of doing simple sums and know their letters. Little beyond these basics is provided, and scholarly pursuits are not common nor particularly encouraged. Even so, it is not uncommon for families from Combe, Staddle, and even Archet to pay an upper hillside family to house their child for a time so that they can receive a "proper education."

The upper hillside is also home to the town's largest smithy, which is a squat stone building high on the Hill. Few weapons are crafted here. Instead, the local smith is kept busy with crafting horseshoes, nails, and other day-to-day implements.

TOSS A COIN IN THE WELL

Whether because of tradition, superstition, or some ancient enchantment, there is a strange luck associated with the Old Town Well. Player-heroes tossing a coin into the well on the same day that they depart for a journey from Bree *gain (1d)* on their first roll for Event Resolution made during that journey.

COMBE

Tucked between the valley of Bree-hill to the south and the eaves of the Chetwood to the north, the village of Combe seems to sit in the shadow of both the land and its larger, livelier and more famous neighbour. Combe is only second in size among the area's settlements, and is populated primarily by Men, with a handful of Hobbit families. Its inhabitants are dour and gloomy farmers, happy to have to deal with visitors only rarely. The few who come to Combe find themselves greeted by the sounds of bleating sheep or barking hounds, before receiving suspicious stares and half-hearted welcomes from the locals.

This sullenness is not without cause. Living between Bree-hill and the Chetwood means that heavy spring rains or melting snows can lead to sudden floods which destroy homes and crops at least once a decade, though none was so devastating as the great flood that came in the spring following the Fell Winter. As if that were not trouble enough, unlike the vigilant and well-armed people of Archet, Combe locals have little protection should a Troll choose to come

down from the Weather Hills, cross the Chetwood, and make mutton of their grazing sheep — something which has happened in past generations and remains a source of constant concern.

Oswald Breeker

The most well-known resident of Combe is one Oswald Breeker, a wizened old man who lives alone in his ancient family estate on the edge of the village. He is the master of much of the farm and grazing lands of Combe, and extracts a heavy tax from those who tend these fields and hills. A widower who lost his only child over twenty years ago, he offers the people of Combe little more than cross words and demands for prompt payment. Rumours say that his wife, in despair at the cold heart of her husband, disappeared in the ruins of an ancient mansion that is visible at the end of the valley of Combe. No locals dare to visit these ancient and broken stones, as many have said to have seen a spectre haunting the grounds when the moon is new and the sky is black.

In truth, while quite cantankerous, Oswald Breeker is no villain. He is a hard man and pushes the people under his charge to be equally hard, so they might endure the dangers that lurk so close to the edges of Combe. He is well-versed in old lore, maintaining a vast library of ancient books and tomes in his estate. In secret, he meets with Rangers of the North, who patrol the land around the ruined High House of Combe, trading news and providing aid where he can.

Should the Player-heroes prove themselves to be both allies of the Free Folk and capable of keeping his secrets, they might find a benefactor in Oswald, who may permit regular use of his library for research.

Any Ranger of the North or other character able to win over Oswald is able to make use of his collection of ancient texts, and *gains (1d)* to Lore rolls relating to the history of Bree-land and Arnor.

NAME: Oswald Breeker

OCCUPATION: Wealthy landowner

TRAITS: Grim, Inquisitive, Secretive

STADDLE

The village of Staddle is barely a stone's throw from Bree proper, just on the other side of the Hill. In fact, many Bree-folk consider it more a suburb of Bree — much to the consternation of the many Hobbits of the Tunnelly family that call Staddle their home. As populated by Hobbits as it is by Men, nearly two dozen stone homes serve as the residences of the Big Folk who dwell there.

The majority of the Hobbits in Staddle are not only related to the Tunnelly family line, but also make their home in smials dug into the eastern side of Bree-hill. These underground homes are all interconnected by a series of tunnels that go deep into the ground, allowing kinfolk and cousins to visit one another without ever going above ground. This great network of smials is known locally simply as "the Smial".

Most folk in Staddle, whether Big or Little, are quite welcoming to visitors coming from Bree, or who slip off the great East Road to quench their thirst at the Lamplighter Inn. The Lamplighter itself is cozy and warm, built more to suit the Hobbit residents of Staddle than local Men or far off visitors. It serves the finest fare outside of The Prancing Pony, personally prepared by the proprietor, Karla Tunnelly. Visiting guests looking for a room for the evening will find warm, if a bit small, beds, and a good night's rest that ends with a

GOBLIN RAIDS

Word of a Troll raiding the livestock of Combe has begun to circulate, after years of peace. This time, it is not simply the disappearance of a wayward ewe or sow. No livestock has been stolen. Instead, they are found savagely butchered, with hunks of their bodies carted away while the remnants are left on the side of Bree-hill to rot. The people of Combe haven't asked for assistance, but rumours of this have reached as far as Bree.

An official intervention on part of the Bree-wardens has been dismissed, and the people of Combe have demonstrated to be unwilling to cooperate, regardless of the obvious danger. Maybe the Player-heroes can convince the locals to let them inquire on the matter?

After scouting the grazing fields on the first night of their visit, the Player-heroes discover signs of an unsuspected culprit: a band of Goblins! Tracking them to an abandoned Troll-hole hidden in the side of one of the hills to the north, the Player-heroes must drive them out before news of their success draws more Goblins down from the Weather Hills to raid the village itself.

robust morning breakfast of fresh eggs from local chickens and rashers of crispy bacon.

Anyone who does make trouble in Staddle is likely to face the wrath of the town matriarch, Grandmother Tunnelly. She seems to know every whisper and rumour that passes through Staddle, and according to legend, she even stared down a company of brigands caught attempting to raid the village one night several winters ago, fending them off with nothing more than her umbrella. Her duties are nominal at best, with her only regular obligation being presiding over the Summer Smoke Ring Festival. Instead, it is her reputation and the general respect of the townsfolk, both Men and Hobbits, that keeps the peace in Staddle.

Adelard Took

A young, vigorous Hobbit, Adelard loves blowing smoke rings above everything else. He was inspired by Balin, son of Fundin, who Adelard met several times at Bag End. Balin taught him a smoking trick or two (Dwarves are in general less experienced smokers than Hobbits, but show some great ingenuity when it comes to blowing smoke rings). His prize-winning trick is a large mushroom-shaped cloud he dubbed 'the umbrella'.

NAME: Adelard Took

OCCUPATION: Champion Smoker

TRAITS: Bold, Honourable

THE SUMMER SMOKE RING FESTIVAL

Every year on Midsummer's Eve, Men and Hobbits from the many villages around Bree-hill gather for the annual Summer Smoke Ring Festival. This celebration of the Hobbit art of pipe smoking finds competitors trying to blow ever-greater and more elaborate smoke rings, rings-within-rings, and even silhouettes of birds and beasts in wispy blue clouds. For the past several years, the winner of the Summer Smoke Ring Festival has been Adelard Took, a Hobbit whose skill in the art of his people is said to rival even that of Gandalf the Grey.

Player-heroes can participate in the Festival if they so choose. The contest is a Skill Endeavour using either CRAFT, COURTESY, or RIDDLE, with a Resistance of 3. Participants are given enough time, so each player has 4 attempts.

Failing one roll represents a lack of imagination or skill and allows the player to continue. A second failure with the 👁 is a coughing fit, knocking the hero out of the competition. If a Player-hero succeeds at the endeavour, Adelard surrenders an elegantly crafted pipe inlaid with silver accents and a pearl stem to the hero. The pipe is worth 1 point of Treasure.

ARCHET

Hidden under the southern boughs of the Chetwood, Archet lies all but invisible beneath the eaves of the forest. Fewer than twenty cabins make up what can barely be called a proper village, and the locals greet outsiders with grim glances and sharp words. In an effort to keep outsiders from surprising them in their concealed hollow, and to keep a wary eye on lingering dangers that might come out of the Chetwood, a number of locals have taken to living in tiny huts among the tree-tops. Even the scant few Hobbits that make their home in Archet have adapted the ways of their people to the local woodcraft traditions, and they dig strange Hobbit-holes under the roots of particularly large and ancient trees.

When occasional visitors come to Archet, they spend their brief stay at the Green Fletcher Inn, enjoying its warm, rustic charm and fine stout. Foreigners come here almost exclusively to trade goods or services for one of Archet's finely crafted hunting bows. It is said in Bree-land that the skill of the bowyers of Archet rivals that of the Elves — a claim that is, of course, absurd, but certainly there is something extraordinary about them. But Archet locals are loath to trade their wares, even to other Bree-folk, and demand a high price for even the least of their creations.

Archet has no mayor, and is instead led by a Forester, who serves more as a chieftain and protector of the village than as an administrator. The current Forester is Fitch Talltree, who took up the mantle after his father was slain by a Troll while the two were on a hunting expedition between the Chetwood and the Weather Hills. Like his father before him, Fitch is grim and proud. He leads his people with a firm but fair hand.

Unknown to all but the locals, there is a small stone fort atop a hillock between the East Road and the eaves of the Chetwood, where the villagers can watch in secret the comings and goings of travellers on the road. To the casual observer, this fort appears to be nothing more than a ruin from ancient

days, but the Forester of Archet requires that at least one watchman be kept there at all times. Through some secret path known only to the locals, that sentry is able to alert the people of Archet long before outsiders arrive.

Fitch Talltree, the Forester of Archet

Fitch is not quite thirty, though his wild beard and fierce eyes make him appear older. Like his father before him, he holds the protection of Archet and its people as a sacred duty, and would gladly lay down his life to protect anyone in the tiny community. He blames himself for the untimely death of his father nearly ten years ago, when the two were hunting a brutal Troll from the Weather Hills that his father had nearly bested in combat previously. Not only was Fitch unable to aid his father in defeating the Troll, but the elder Talltree died saving his son from a particularly grievous blow from the Troll's massive stone club. To this day, Fitch seeks to alleviate his guilt over the death of his father, but fears facing the Troll alone. He is torn between this personal quest to avenge his father, and carrying out his promise to protect the people of Archet.

Player-heroes who have proven themselves through previous adventures or have come requesting an Archet Bow, are asked by Forester Talltree to join him in his hunt for the Troll that slew his father.

They must brave the natural hazards of the Chetwood as they move north into the Weather Hills. The Troll, knowing that Fitch has been seeking vengeance, has laid a trap and ambushes the party as they wander the region. Eventually the party tracks the Troll to a dark and crumbled ruin in the Weather Hills, where the creature is able to hide from the sunlight – but Fitch is consumed by his lust for revenge and the Player-heroes must find a way to defeat the brute as the Forester charges headlong into battle – and likely his death.

NAME: Fitch Talltree

OCCUPATION: Forester

TRAITS: Keen-eyed, Rustic, Tall

THE CHETWOOD

The residents of Bree and the surrounding villages regard the Chetwood as a delightful forest to look upon from atop the hill, or even stroll under its eaves during long summer sunsets. But this wide patch of woodland stretches much farther to the north from the slopes of Bree-hill, and is a wild place. Expanding to meet the Midgewater Marshes on its eastern edge and the Weather Hills in the north eastern corner, at its heart it is far more diverse and mysterious than most sensible folk are willing to discuss. Only the people of Archet know that the Chetwood can be a truly dangerous place.

Wisely, few venture into the heart of the forest, where the trees seem as old as time. Large and gnarled, with twisting roots and clawing branches, they can turn any pleasant walk into a perilous journey, especially after sunset. Even during the day, its thick green canopy can block out the summer sun, forcing a lost wanderer to find their way by thin beams of light broken by long shadows. Here, only birds and beasts are welcome.

ARCHET HUNTING BOWS

Purchasing a famed Archet Bow is not a matter of simply paying the right price. Player-heroes wishing to acquire a bow will need to both prove themselves worthy and perform some great deed of service to the people of Archet. For example, a Player-hero may address some danger in the Chetwood or the Weather Hills, protecting a group of woodsmen who have encountered some trouble while felling trees in the forest, or anything else the Loremaster deems appropriate to their campaign.

Once a Player-hero has proven worthy, they must then demonstrate that they are a skilled archer by spending three days on a solitary hunt in the Chetwood, and returning with a buck of no less than ten points (a Skill Endeavour (HUNTING) with a Resistance of 6; the player hero can make two rolls each day, and has three days to complete the task).

After completing this, the hero may spend any Fellowship Phase at Archet to gain an Archet Hunting Bow as their next Reward, or to replace one of their Rewards with an Archet Hunting Bow.

When making a ranged attack or a HUNTING roll using an Archet Hunting Bow, the wielder adds either a +3 bonus to their roll, or their VALOUR rating – whichever is higher.

TRAVELLING IN THE CHETWOOD

The Loremaster can use the following table if Player-heroes decide to venture into the deep parts of the Chetwood or its more dangerous regions near the Midgewater Marshes or the Weather Hills. Simply roll a Feat Die and consult the table below.

FEAT DIE ROLL	RESULT	DESCRIPTION
ᚠ	Fitch Talltree	The Player-heroes encounter the Forester of Archet himself. Depending on the nature of their errand, he may aid them or offer them insight into the goings-on of the Chetwood. He can also easily guide them back to Archet.
1–2	Mistaken for Orcs	A Chetwood hunter fires an arrow at the Player-heroes from a concealed position some distance off. They have mistaken them for a party of Orcs in the shadowy light of the forest.
3–4	Abandoned Homestead	The Player-heroes come across an abandoned cabin that appears to have been ransacked by Goblins, with signs of a bloody struggle.
5–6	Hunted by Wolves	The Player-heroes notice they are being tracked by a small pack of wolves. If they don't make a successful HUNTING roll to throw them off, they'll likely attack in the coming hours.
7–8	Sinkhole	Caught in a morass of mud concealed by a layer of leaves and lichen, the characters sink and find themselves trapped. They will need to make a successful ATHLETICS roll to free themselves, and the struggle to get free will cause them to gain 3 Fatigue and lose a day of travel.
9–10	Goblin Scouts	Goblins have come down from the Weather Hills to scout the Chetwood. They have spotted the Player-heroes and will try to ambush them.
	Troll of the Weather Hills	A Troll is tearing through the Chetwood, making no effort at subtlety or stealth. It spots the Player-heroes and immediately moves to attack, in search of a fresh meal.

In recent years, news of Orcs, wolves, and worse coming down from the Weather Hills and entering the Chetwood have reached even the Bree-wardens with such frequency that they can no longer be dismissed as simple rumours or idle gossip. Fitch Talltree has forbidden the people of Archet from venturing far too deeply into the forest alone, and more than one of the woodsmen that dare to dwell in this area have abandoned their cabins, or worse, these homesteads have been discovered abandoned and burnt.

THE MIDGEWATER MARSHES

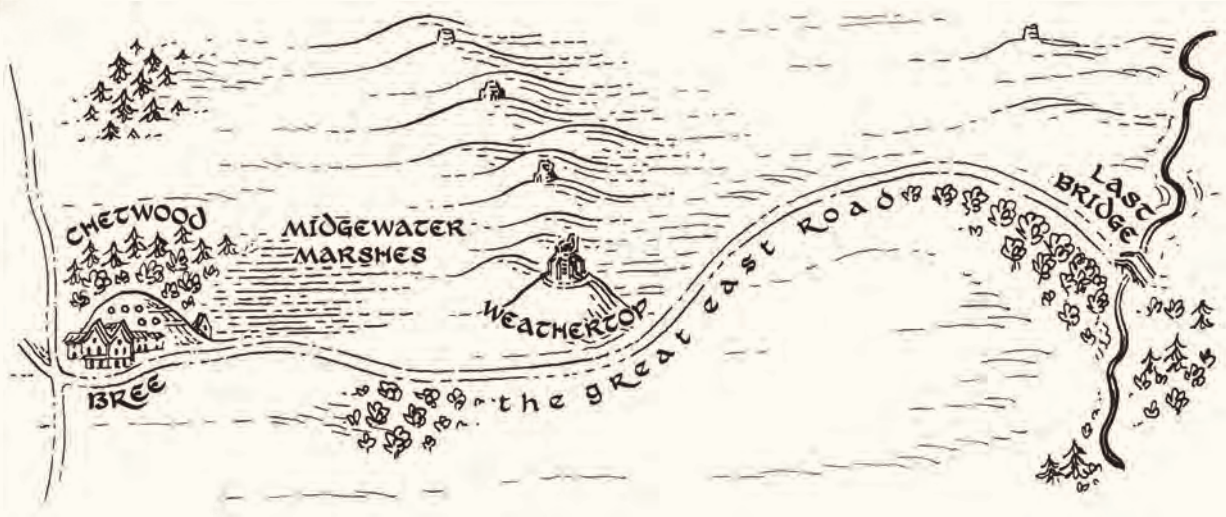
East of the Chetwood, the ground falls steadily, and soon becomes damp and boggy. This flat expanse of country becomes dotted by pools of water, lined by patches of reeds and rushes. Keeping a proper course becomes difficult, even for experienced travellers, as no tracks can be made out among the shifting quagmires. After a few miles, one enters the proper Midgewater Marshes, a treacherous wetland owing its name to clouds of tiny midges.

No one goes into this marshland, unless they must flee from mortal danger. Camping is cold and uncomfortable, and the insects make sleeping a misery — because if the midges were not enough, the bog is also infested by a noisy relative of the cricket that never ceases to squeak, all night long.

The Great East Road

No Man, Dwarf, or Hobbit in Eriador can recall a time before the East Road — it is likely that its history reaches into the misty past of previous ages of the world. The Dwarves claim it began in the Iron Hills, far to the east beyond the Misty Mountains, beyond even Erebor. From those distant peaks it runs all the way to the Grey Havens on the Gulf of Lhûn.

Originally built to facilitate swift travel between the many Dwarven kingdoms of the Elder Days that have since fallen, the East Road is still widely used today by all manner of travellers in Eriador — though it is by no means safe or kept in good repair, save in the Shire where those peaceable people



maintain their ancient duty, all the while hoping that no outsider would bother coming through their land at all.

The quality of the East Road is inconsistent at best, with some stretches running for miles as paved stones and well-packed earth, while at other times it seems little more than a wide muddy scar across an abandoned landscape. Merchants and wanderers who make use of the East Road are likely to see broken towers and ruined castles that have been reclaimed by time or fallen to neglect.

As far as the Bree-land is concerned, the East Road is its lifeblood. Merchants from the Blue Mountains pass on through it and continue further east as in olden days, to trade with their kinfolk on the other side of the Misty Mountains or the Men of Dale. These adventurous merchants arm themselves well for such a journey, for the road is long and hard and fraught with peril. Between the trees that loom over the road, one can see distant hills occupied by broken castles. Travellers describe them as having an evil look, as if they had been built by wicked people. Strange lights can be seen lingering inside them on cold, moonless nights.

OVER THE EDGE OF THE WILD

For those who travel east along the road, there are still many miles from the Forsaken Inn to the Last Bridge and then from there to the High Pass over the Misty Mountains. The wide land on the other side of the mountains is known as Rhovanion, the Wilderland. There are many good reasons for such an ominous name. Not only did the region once host a Dragon's lair, but its greater part is occupied by the forest of Mirkwood, home to Giant Spiders, Orcs, and other dangerous creatures.

But of late the Wilderland has become a little less wild. Smaug, the Dragon who once occupied the Lonely Mountain, was slain by King Bard and the kingdoms of Dale and Erebor were restored. The Necromancer was driven from his fortress of Dol Guldur in southern Mirkwood, and the inhabitants of Rhovanion have new hope for the future. Merchants and adventurers set off to explore Wilderland or distant Eriador, and the East Road has never seen such traffic in the living memories of all but the Elves.

THE FORSAKEN INN

On the eastern edge of the Bree-land there is a ramshackle wooden hovel that is easily mistaken by the casual observer for a forgotten and abandoned cabin, rotting by the road. It is only the steady stream of unsavory characters trickling in and out of the crooked front door that reveals it to be an inn — if only in the most broad sense of the word.

Aptly called the Forsaken Inn, this establishment attracts patrons fitting its appearance and name. Criminals, desperate wanderers, and those who are best avoided seek refuge here, drinking the worst kind of swill, and sleeping on flea-infested mattresses set out beneath the leaky roof of the common room. Those who complain of a draft in the evening are given a lice-ridden blanket and charged an extra silver penny for the privilege.

ENCOUNTERS ON THE EAST ROAD

The East Road is full of dangerous people and strange locales. Loremasters can roll a Feat Die and consult the table below if they wish to add a bit of flavour to the Player-heroes' journey on its long path.

FEAT DIE ROLL	RESULT	DESCRIPTION
ᚠ	Rangers	The company is being followed, but their pursuers reveal themselves to be Rangers of the North, and offer to guide the characters for a brief time on their journey. *Gain (1d)* on the next Travel roll made while on the East Road.
1	Mournful Stones	While travelling, a strange howling wind blows through the broken stones of a nearby ruin. It is unnaturally cold, and its melancholy takes hold in the characters' bones.
2	Fallen King	Walking past what seems a dense thicket of brambles, the Player-heroes spot the fallen statue of some ancient King of Men. It is shaped like a grim and resolute warrior, now covered in dirt and worn by time. But at its feet, a wreath of flowers grows, and anyone who examines it and makes a HUNTING roll can identify the plant as Kingsfoil. A sprig of it can be harvested, allowing a hero to *gain (1d)* when making a HEALING roll. It is consumed in the process.
3	Carrion Eyes	A flock of ill-tempered crows watches the characters, flitting from tree to tree, stone to stone, for a mile or so before suddenly taking flight and heading to the mountain ranges to the north. Are they spies for the Goblins of Mount Gram? Or worse, for Angmar itself?
4	Predators in the Firelight	A small pack of Wild Wolves stalks around the Player-heroes as they camp or walk upon the East Road at night. If not driven off with an AWE roll, they will attack. Fearsome, but ultimately cowardly, they will flee if they discover that the Player-heroes are no easy prey.
5	Sun Upon the Stone	While passing close to a half crumbled stone tower, the sunlight reflects off an unblemished wall of the ancient structure, and for an instant, a hint of its original greatness is revealed.
6	Lost Merchant	A Dwarf merchant returning to the Blue Mountains is injured and weary from his travels, and asks the Player-heroes to guide him to the nearest farmstead. If they aid the Dwarf, the merchant will reward the heroes with 1 Treasure worth of silver pennies.
7	Highway Robbers	Masquerading as an innocent traveller who has been separated from their companions, a Highway Robber will attempt to lead the Player-heroes a short distance off the road and into an ambush where several of their allies wait.
8	Strange Stars in High Towers	As the sun fades, the Player-heroes see a cold light twinkling in the window of a broken tower near the horizon. The light seems to linger and follow them, dogging their steps from a distance before vanishing into the night.
9	Goblin Scouts	A Goblin Archer starts to track the Player-heroes. If they do not notice or detect him with a successful AWARENESS or HUNTING roll, that night they will be ambushed by his allies.
10	Song of Kings	Upon the banks of the Hoarwell or other body of water, the Player-heroes see a beautiful maiden singing a sad song of the Elder Days in Sindarin. She looks at them, offers a melancholy smile, and fades from existence... though the song lingers on for a few moments.
ᛟ	Troll-hole	The Player-heroes stumble too close to a Troll's lair and awaken a Cave-troll! He lumbers out and attempts to slaughter them for a fine meal!

Even the ill-favoured Rangers of the North do not often go here. The proprietor, who refuses to give his name even to paying customers and is then called simply 'Jack the Forsaken' by most, has no concerns about who enters his establishment, as long as they have silver to spend. Unfortunately, those with coins to pay had best sit with their backs to the wall, lest a patron make quick use of a dagger and relieve them of their wealth.

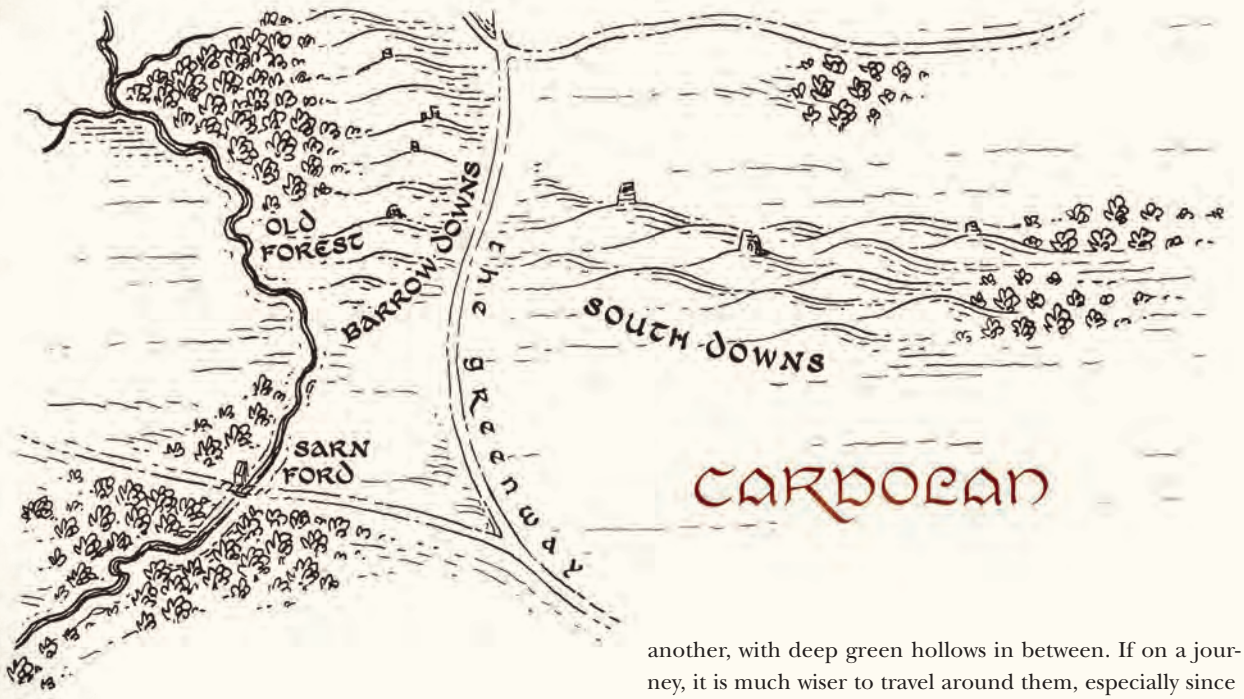
The Greenway

The Greenway crosses the East Road at the ancient meeting of ways to the west of Bree. Once known as the North Road, it fell into disrepair long ago, and in the vicinity of Bree it became so grass-grown to earn its current nickname. Long ago, its north-south course joined the kingdom of Arnor to its southern counterpart, the realm of Gondor, running for thousands of miles. On its way, it passed the great bridge at

RUINS ALONG THE GREENWAY

The Greenway is lined with many ancient ruins. If the Player-heroes decide to investigate such a site during their travels between Fornost Erain and Tharbad, the Loremaster can roll a Feat Die and use the following table.

FEAT DIE ROLL	RESULT	DESCRIPTION
ᚠ	Ancient Hospitality	The Player-heroes come upon a small keep some distance off the Greenway, tended by a lordly old man who offers them hospitality. If they accept and treat him well by making a successful COURTESY roll, that night they will dream of the glory of the towers of Annúminas and the shining shores of Lake Evendim. By dawn, they reduce their Shadow by 1, though in the morning the kindly old lord is gone, and there is no sign of the keep having ever been inhabited.
1	Abandoned Stable	Stumbling upon the ruins of an abandoned roadside stable, the Player-heroes see a wild steed grazing in the grass. The majestic beast can be calmed with a successful HUNTING or ENHEARTEN roll. Each ᛉ rolled represents a training opportunity and if a hero makes three tests with at least one ᛉ showing each time within a week's time then the horse can be ridden.
2	The Watch Ends	A battered tower stands a little distance from the road. A crescent moon is carved in stone upon its arched entryway. If the Player-heroes climb to its top on a night with a crescent moon, they find a single soldier standing watch. The guard politely asks if they are there to relieve him and if they say yes, the soldier bows and then heads downstairs — if any follow, they lose sight of the guard.
3	Ring of Petals and Stone	A small ring of white stones, overgrown with beautiful wildflowers lies not far off the road. No dangerous natural predators will cross the circle.
4	Elven Minstrel	One afternoon, the Player-heroes meet an Elf who asks to walk with them for a time. She tells them that she is composing songs to honour Menelmacar who will arrive soon. If the heroes have patience with the minstrel then they are in for a night of song and celebration. Each hero recovers 1 Hope. If they are rude or impatient with the Elf, she excuses herself before nightfall and they gain no benefits.
5	Southerner Ambush	A Southerner Raider is hobbling up the Greenway, masquerading as an injured farmer. She asks the characters to walk with her to her nearby homestead, but when they arrive they find it to be a ramshackle barn where several of the Raider's allies ambush the Player-heroes.
6	Orc Stragglers	A long stone wall follows the Greenway for a time here, and a handful of Orcs crouch beneath the wall, waiting for the Player-heroes to pass. An AWARENESS roll detects their presence. If they're not spotted, then if the party outnumbers them they will remain hidden. If the group is very small, the Orcs might choose to ambush them instead.
7	Collapsed Cairn	A great mound of stones has been scattered near the road, a SCAN roll reveals a large barrow has been dug down into the wet earth. Unfortunately, this makeshift tomb has become the lair of a Barrow-wight, who will attack anyone who intrudes upon its resting place.
8	Burnt Homestead	Once the farmhouse of someone who lived upon the Greenway, it is now a ruined pile of burnt rubble. A successful SCAN roll reveals that the occupants did not escape the fire, and that several appear to have been slain by Orc arrows before the flames took them.
9	Displaced Southerner	A wandering Southerner, weary and travel-worn, asks for the Player-heroes' charity by letting him share their food and fire for the evening. If treated kindly, he will provide them with many stories about his distant country.
10	Slain Wanderer	The characters come upon the corpse of a Man slain no more than a few days ago with vicious cuts and Orc arrows. His clothing is tattered, and a small brooch is clasped under his cloak, in the shape of a rayed star. Anyone who makes a successful LORE roll can identify him as a Ranger of the North. If his brooch is returned to his people, a small favor might be asked in return.
👁	Corrupted Tomb	Long ago, wars raged across these lands as kingdoms fought against the armies of the Witch-king and each other. This tomb once held a great captain, but now it is only home to Fell Wraiths from ancient Angmar who will harass and delay the company.



Tharbad, until it was flooded and mostly abandoned, and the crossing reduced to a dangerous ford.

Having lost most of its traffic, the Greenway has earned a dark reputation as a dangerous thoroughfare, plagued by bandits and cutthroats. Yet, groups of honest folk endure in small communities, spread thinly along the way. Many of these settlements are composed of a handful of homesteads, populated by refugees from Tharbad and their descendants. Huddling together for protection, they live an isolated existence, leaving their fortified sanctuaries exclusively to trade. They are often glum and taciturn, and may seem concerned only with their own survival in this wild, lonely place.

But the folk of the Greenway are not without kindness in their hearts, and have, on occasion, offered refuge to wayward travellers. Some still cling to very ancient traditions, considering themselves scions of the ancient kingdom that once held all this land under its protection. Proof of their ancient ancestry, they say, is evident in the many ruins that can be found near their settlements along the Greenway, and in the remains of the ancient buildings that are found under their very homes, every time that anyone digs for just a few feet.

The Barrow-downs

To the east of the Shire, beyond the Old Forest, rise the green-grey hills known in Hobbit-legend as the Barrow-downs. It is a maze-like country, made of grassy ridges rising one after another, with deep green hollows in between. If on a journey, it is much wiser to travel around them, especially since the great East Road lies immediately north of the Downs. If a traveller must pass through them, they go quickly and only when the sun is up.

By day, the scent of turf is strong and sweet, and the air itself is often still when caught between hillside and hillside, silent except for the high calls of strange birds. As one proceeds eastward coming from the forest, the hills grow higher and steeper, their tops crowned with mounds and standing stones. When the sun begins to set, a mist rises to obscure the landscape, slowly turning into a thick and cold fog, covering the land as a shroud.

THE COLD STONE

At the very centre of the Barrow-downs is a hill with a wide and flattened top, rimmed by a low raised edge. A single monolith stands tall in its middle, like a finger raised in admonishment. Its stone surface is always cold at the touch, even when hit directly by the light of the sun.

Whoever climbs to the top of the hill is cursed to encounter a Barrow-wight as soon as the night comes. Additionally, anyone touching the monolith gains 1 point of Shadow.

Anyone caught in this white sea risks falling prey to the dreadful spells of the Barrow-wights, spirits inhabiting the hollow chambers buried under the green mounds on top of the hills. These crypts served as tombs for those who once ruled over Eriador, in the time of the kings, but there is no rest for them, as their bones are stirred by an evil will. Travellers who lose their path in the fog find suddenly in the shadow of huge standing stones, and hear cold voices coming out of the ground, calling them. If they fail to resist the call, they will be taken by the Barrow-wights and imprisoned.

THE GREAT BARROW

Rising on one of the highest hills in the Barrow-downs, this burial mound conceals a vast underground complex, descending deeply into the bowels of the earth, with dark and cold tunnels winding into many lesser burial chambers, where dozens of warriors are entombed with their gear of war and precious treasure. The stink of decay, stagnation, and rot chokes any who are foolish enough to push aside the great carven stone that blocks the entryway into this labyrinth of the dead.

This is the haunted lair of the Wight-king, the chief of all blighted creatures who dwell in Tyrn Gorthad. Some say he was the last King of Cardolan, buried in the Barrow-downs before the Great Plague. Others hold him to be the malicious spirit of some fell captain who once served Angmar. What is certain is that in the ages since the barrow was dug, the Wight-king has carved for himself a great throne room, deep in the darkness. Concealed from the light of day, he sits and festers in his own hatred, his lust for death satiated only when intruders dare enter his domain, or on the rare occasions when he walks among the mists of the Barrow-downs under cover of darkness. Stories of his empty eyes, his broken blade, and his terrible song have kept most would-be tomb robbers from daring to come near his domain — and those who do are seldom heard from again.

The Wight-king

Scant few have seen the Wight-king and lived to tell the tale, but mad tomb-robbers who have come out of the Barrow-downs tell of a fleshless warrior wearing the blackened raiment of an ancient noble. Empty black eyes burn behind a great, cracked helm, and a pitted blade is clutched in his left hand. All that is dead and yet still lives by sorcery or the will of the Enemy is his to command.

The Wight-king leaves the Great Barrow only at night, and moves in darkness and silence across Tyrn Gorthad, singing songs of hopelessness and sorrow in both the Common Tongue and the Black Speech of Mordor.

THE WIGHT-KING
Cunning, Fierce, Vengeful

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL 9

ENDURANCE	MIGHT	HATE	PARRY	ARMOUR
45	2	9	–	4

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Ancient Sword 3 (5/18, Pierce), Icy Touch 3 (6/12, Break Shield)

FELL ABILITIES: *Darker than the Darkness*. Spend 1 Hate to summon a supernatural darkness. Player-heroes in close combat *lose (2d)* on their first attack against the creature, while ranged attacks *lose (2d)* for the whole fight.

Denizen of the Dark. All attack rolls are *Favoured* while in darkness.

Dreadful Spells. Spend 1 Hate to make one Player-hero gain 3 Shadow points (Sorcery). Targets who fail their Shadow test or who are Miserable fall unconscious and may be roused only with a SONG roll. Otherwise, they wake up after one hour.

Hate Sunlight. The creature loses 1 Hate at the start of each round it is exposed to the full light of the sun.

The North Downs

The North Downs are a landscape of high hills and gullies, covered in grass and dotted by many ruins. They stretch in a north-eastern direction for many leagues from where the Greenway ends, until they give way to the empty Lone-lands running towards Angmar of old. Once the North Downs stood at the heart of a great kingdom, but these wild lands are now deserted, and all that is left are broken towers and crumbling walls. The region is not entirely devoid of life though, quite the contrary — wild hares and sheep roam the land, grazing on the lush grassland, and kestrels cross the sky searching for prey. If this place wasn't shunned as cursed, the North Downs would prove bountiful as a hunting ground.

Recently, a particular type of predator has made its lair in the North Downs, profiting from its ill-repute and contributing to it — a good number of reckless robbers and brigands have found refuge in its half-ruined towers and stone homesteads. They waylay travellers along the Greenway, and exact payment from merchants heading to Bree or returning from there, ready to disappear into the North Downs if pursued.

The presence of these bands of rogues is starting to worry those who have sworn to keep safe the land of old Arnor. Indeed, the Rangers of the North used to maintain several of their secret refuges in hidden dales close to where the city of Fornost Erain used to be, centuries ago, and they have been forced to abandon them when the bandits moved in the North Downs. Of course, the Rangers won't suffer this interference for long. Talandil, a veteran Ranger and self-appointed guardian of Fornost Erain, is already seeking help among adventurers willing to fight to free the area from the bandit threat.

FORNOST ERAIN

In the southern foothills of the North Downs lies what remains of a great city of stone, now almost completely reclaimed by time and nature. This place is called Deadmen's Dike by those who live in Bree and fear it, and Norbury by the most scholarly among Shire-hobbits. But only those mysterious wanderers called the Rangers recall its former glory as a great fortress and city built in the time of the kings out of the sea, and called Fornost Erain.

Centuries ago, the walls and towers of Fornost were broken when the city was attacked by Angmar and sacked. Though the Witch-king sat upon the throne of Fornost for only a brief while, the defilement of the city left a scar so deep that it never rose again. In the Twilight of the Third Age, the roots of trees hundreds of years old have broken through the stones that paved its streets, and ivy and lichen have covered its once white walls. The folk of the Bree-land call this place cursed, and none dare dwell there. Even the most callous tomb-robbers do not cross into the ruins of Fornost Erain, for it is said that the spirits of the men who died protecting the city still linger there, hoping to redeem their name by forbidding anyone to enter.

Only the Rangers of the North venture into that broken place, and for their bravery, they are scorned by the people of Bree, for they believe that anyone willing to live in the shadows of the fallen city must themselves be as cursed as the place itself.

THE DOME OF SIGHT: Caved in upon itself from the weight of the years, this great, domed chamber once housed the Seeing Stones of the North Kingdom: the chief stone that once was kept at Amon Sûl, and the Stone of Annúminas, now both lost. A part of the chamber is now underground and is still accessible from the surface. If reached, one can observe part

RUINS AND BROKEN STONES

Characters exploring the North Downs will often stumble upon ruins and ancient testimonies of the war that destroyed this place. The Loremaster can roll on the following table to determine what they find.

FEAT DIE ROLL	RESULT	DESCRIPTION
ᚠ	A Secret Hoard	The Player-heroes uncover a spiralling mosaic on the floor of a ruined building. A SCAN roll reveals a removable slab of marble. Under it lies a hoard of treasure, hidden there before the city was plundered. Golden dishes, cups studded with precious stones, lacquered drinking horns, and a small armoury of items of worth is secreted here. The amount of Treasure points is up to the Loremaster.
1	Forgotten Words	The Player-heroes uncover an inscription in Adûnaic (on a wall, a slab of marble, or on a mosaic floor, for example). A roll of LORE is required to translate it. The content hints at the whereabouts of one place among The Dome of Sight (page 196), The Throne Room of Arvedui (see below), or The Records of the Last King (page 198).
2	A Lingering Shadow	On a successful AWARENESS roll, the Player-heroes discover that they are being shadowed by someone. The mysterious spy disappears after a few hours, or if called out.
3	Home Brought to Ruin	The players discover the remains of a stone house that is still accessible. Inscriptions allow the Player-heroes to identify it as the ancient home of a noble from Arthedain, but idle scrawls and foul symbols also indicate that the building suffered from the ruin that Angmar brought upon the city.
4	Scavengers	The Player-heroes stumble upon a group of three Highway Robbers in the middle of plundering what might be a tomb. Whether or not they become violent depends on how they are treated by the Player-heroes. What treasures they have on them (if any) should be determined by the Loremaster, but their finds would be typically worth 1–2 Treasure.
5	Voices from the Past	While travelling across the North Downs, the Player-heroes hear the galloping of steeds at full charge, the sound of steel on steel, and the cries of both the victorious and the dying. The sound appears and fades without warning, seeming to come from all around the characters.
6–8	Unstable Foundations	The earth beneath their feet gives way, and the Player-heroes tumble into a chamber of a long-collapsed building.
9	Battered War Gear	The Player-heroes discover a helm that, though dented and weather-worn, looks like it could easily be repaired and polished. It bears the crest of the Kings of Arnor, and might once again protect a noble brow.
10	Restless Soul	The Player-heroes share a dream where a warrior of Arthedain asks them to give their remains a proper burial. A SCAN roll around their night camp uncovers a collapsed watchtower and the skeleton of a fallen guard.
	Spirits out of Angmar	A group of Fell Wraiths of equal number to the Player-heroes, rise out of the darkness of a burned ruin that projects from the fields of the North Downs like a jagged wound. They attack, filled with malice for all who live and would dare to trespass on their long absent Witch-king's field of victory.

of the dome that hasn't collapsed yet, a high vault covered by mosaic tiles composing the image of a starlit sky. Some among the Rangers say that the ceramic tiles of the mosaic still retain images of faraway places.

THE THRONE ROOM OF ARVEDUI: Some among the older Rangers of the North talk of a vast, underground chamber, surviving intact under the ruins of what they claim was the Hall of Eärendur, the royal palace of Fornost. It's the throne

room of Arvedui, a long hall with tall pillars reaching up towards the ceiling, carved with a craft now lost to the ages. A raised throne stands among broken stones that fell from the ceiling, its high marble back decorated with the image of a single, many-rayed star. The throne itself seems untouched by time.

THE RECORDS OF THE LAST KING: The life of Arvedui, Last king, was ill-fated, and most of what is remembered of him concerns his fall. Few recall that in life he was considered Elven-wise, and that he held council with many among the Fair folk. He kept many books of lore and records of these meetings in a private library, a chamber of records now concealed beneath the ruin of his palace. Should it be discovered, its content would offer great insight into the mind of the last king and the affairs of his final days.

The South Downs

Bordered to the west by the Greenway and to the north by the East Road, the South Downs is a range of hills running from east to west for about a hundred miles. Dreary, empty and featureless, the hills sport little vegetation and few animals make their lairs there. The Bree-folk and the Rangers have little reason to travel across this wild region, and avoid it whenever possible, disliking in particular the occasional miasma that drifts east from the Barrow-downs.

THE HOWLING HOLLOWS

Long ago, Wolves from the Misty Mountains came west into Eriador to hunt. Some never returned, and made new lairs in the South Downs, as they found the desolate hills to offer good sanctuary. In time, they have burrowed deeply under the hills, creating a web of caves. From here, they go out at night to search for prey.

These secret hollows give shelter to a pack of a dozen Wolves, but word is spreading among the cunning beasts, and more wicked creatures are coming to the South Downs.

Búrzgul

Búrzgul is a wicked Orc warrior, the chieftain of a ragged band of Orcs from Goblin Gate that made the trip from the Misty Mountains to the South Downs, to join forces with the Wolves of the Howling Hollows. Búrzgul heard of the place from his most trusted friend, a large Warg with

midnight-black fur and gleaming yellow eyes, going by the name of Ash. For the moment, no one, not even the Rangers of the North know of the threat festering under the hills of the South Downs. On their part, the Wolves and Orcs bide their time, and for the moment have made only a few careful attacks, leaving no survivors. Perhaps most dangerous of all is that Búrzgul regularly sends runners back to larger Orc forces in both Angmar and the Misty Mountains, so news of Bree is never far from the ears of the agents of the Shadow.

BÚRZGUL
Cruel, Keen-eyed

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL: 5

ENDURANCE	MIGHT	HATE	PARRY	ARMOUR
22	1	5	+3	3

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Scimitar 3 (3/16, Break Shield), Spear 2 (3/14, Pierce)

FELL ABILITIES: *Orc-poison*. If an attack results in a Wound, the target is also poisoned (see page 134 for the effects of poison).

Snake-like Speed. When targeted by an attack, spend 1 Hate to make the attack roll *Ill-favoured*.

Yell of Triumph. Spend 1 Hate to restore 1 Hate to all other Orcs in the fight.

ASH
Cunning, Swift

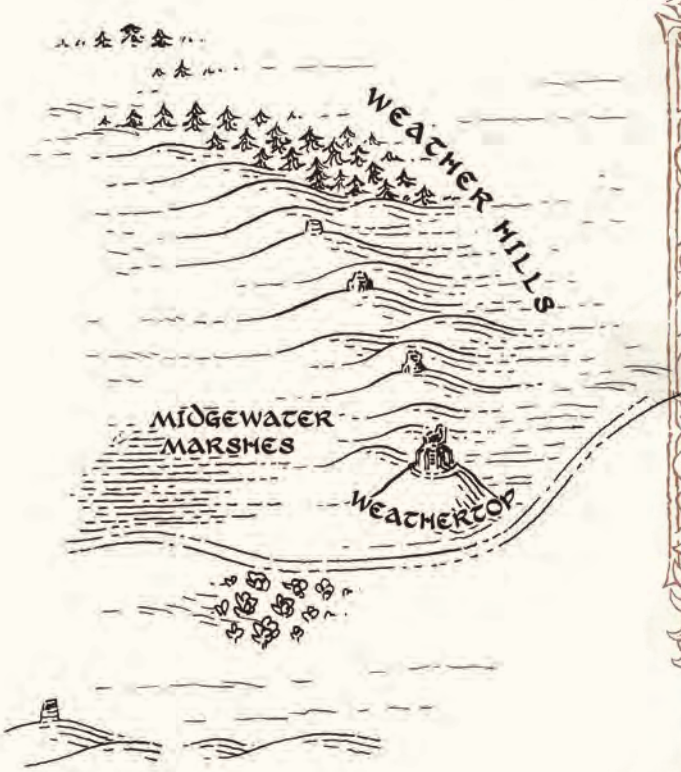
ATTRIBUTE LEVEL: 4

ENDURANCE	MIGHT	HATE	PARRY	ARMOUR
20	1	4	+2	1

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Fangs 3 (4/14, Pierce), Claws 2 (5/14)

FELL ABILITIES: *Fear of Fire*. The creature loses 1 Hate at the start of each round it is engaged in close combat with an adversary wielding a torch or other burning item.

Savage Assault. Spend 1 Hate after a Fangs attack to immediately roll a Claws attack on the same target.



The Weather Hills

The Weather Hills rise in a long, northward undulating ridge, starting in the south where the East Road passes under the shadow of their tallest rise, the hill of Weathertop. Overgrown walls and old, broken stonework are on full display atop these high hills, visible to any wanderer travelling on the road. The Men of the West did not live here, but fought and died in bitter wars against Angmar — the ruins that dot the hills are what remains of ancient forts and watchtowers, and the paths and tracks that served them. A mournful air hangs over the Weather Hills. The hilltops are bleak and treeless, and the dells deep and shadowy.

WEATHERTOP

Weathertop, or Amon Sûl, as the Rangers call it, is the southernmost hill of the Weather Hills. On its summit once stood a tall and fair watchtower, built in the days of the North Kingdom. It was once used to store a Seeing Stone, one of the greatest treasures that Elendil brought out of Númenor. The tower was burned and broken during the wars with Angmar, and only a ring of stonework remains to crown the hilltop.

The Rangers of the North often come here, to watch over the surrounding land, and to pay tribute to one of the places they hold in greater regard. Those few who make the long ascent to reach this ancient place often find encrypted notes and supplies left by the mysterious wanderers of Eriador.

ANGMAR

In the northern reaches of eastern Eriador, beyond the Ettenmoors and the peak of Mount Gram, lies the land that of old saw the witch-realm of Angmar. Long ago, the Chief of the Ringwraiths himself ruled this land from his fortress of Carn Dûm, wielding fear and terror and commanding great armies of Orcs, Goblins and Hill-men. He made war against the North Kingdom of Arnor and its successor kingdoms, destroying them. But his kingdom was obliterated in turn, when a great host of Elves and Men came north to challenge him. He fled from the ruin of his armies, deserting them.

Now, as a new darkness descends on Eriador and smoke issues forth from Mount Doom once again, the ancient realm of Angmar seems to stir once more. A cold wind blows from the north and all evil things feel a call to return to Carn Dûm. The Wise worry that a new servant of Sauron occupies the fortress again. Orcs are coming north from the south and east; Trolls venture out from their hiding holes in the Ettenmoors, crossing the Grey Waste northwards. Even tribes of Hill-men from Rhudaur have started to answer the call.

Although the High Elves and the Dúnedain keep a careful watch on its borders, few dare to venture into that desolate land. Who has explored Angmar and returned speaks of a grey desert of gnarled trees and broken stones. Freezing winds blast down from the mountains, to bite at every traveller. It seems that winter rules all year long in this land and that Carn Dûm itself lies still and waiting under the ice.

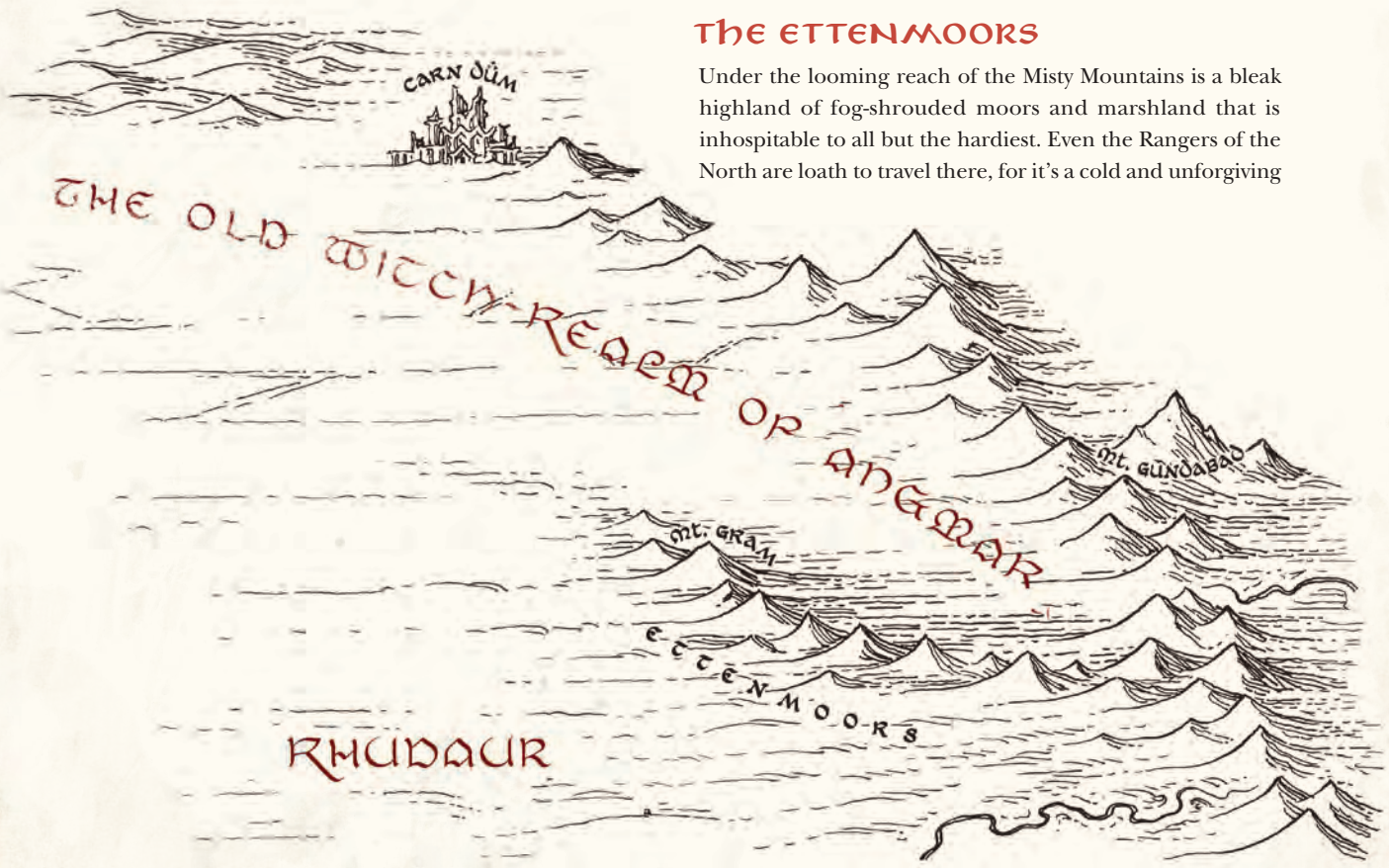
Beneath the snow are bare traces of the roadways that once crossed this land. Towers, encampments and entire villages lay dead beneath the cold. But at night one can sometimes see lights in the towers and hear strange sounds on the wind. It may be that Angmar is waking up, and that may bring doom to the North and prevent the Wise from sending any help south to combat the growing threat of Mordor.

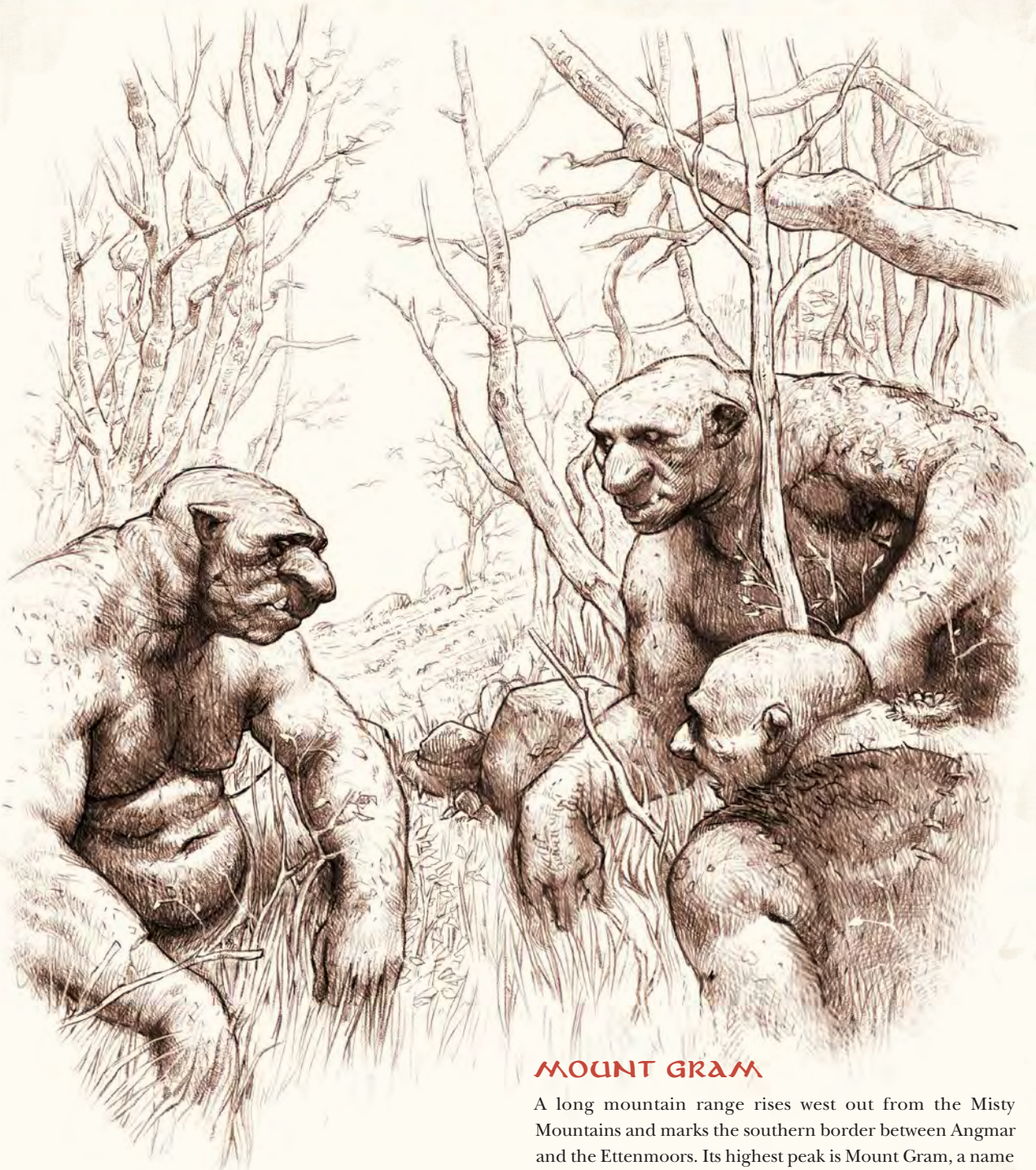
CARN DÛM

Once the seat of power of the Witch-king of the North, this icy tower is hidden in the endless labyrinth of passes and tunnels that snake through the Mountains of Angmar. Even though the Witch-king himself has yet to return home, rumours of rekindled forges, gathering armies, and fell sorcery occurring in the dungeons of the broken tower are heard as far as Bree itself. Whether these rumours have any substance to them or not remains to be seen, but the growing threat of the Enemy's forces and their increased presence in Eriador hints at there being a terrible truth behind these dark whispers.

THE ETTENMOORS

Under the looming reach of the Misty Mountains is a bleak highland of fog-shrouded moors and marshland that is inhospitable to all but the hardiest. Even the Rangers of the North are loath to travel there, for it's a cold and unforgiving





land. Its close proximity to both Mount Gram and the Misty Mountains keeps the Ettenmoors wrapped in a thick fog that sunlight never seems to fully pierce. A great many Trolls wander this region, eager to catch wayward travellers lost in the wilderness and devour them. So brutal are these terrible beasts that, as if driven to madness, they have even turned their attention to Mount Gram itself and on more than one occasion raided the Goblin tunnels that are still hidden from the sun beneath the stone cliffs of that rocky terrain.

MOUNT GRAM

A long mountain range rises west out from the Misty Mountains and marks the southern border between Angmar and the Ettenmoors. Its highest peak is Mount Gram, a name remembered mostly in songs from the Shire as the domain of Golfimbul, who was slain by Bandobras "Bullroarer" Took during the Battle of Greenfields several hundred years ago. In that silent and shadowy region, Orcs, Goblins, and even some Trolls have restored their numbers, now rivalling those of the days when Angmar drove them to war. Though they remain secret, it is only a matter of time before their craving for blood and the will of their master drives them to fall once more on Eriador.

The Trollshaws

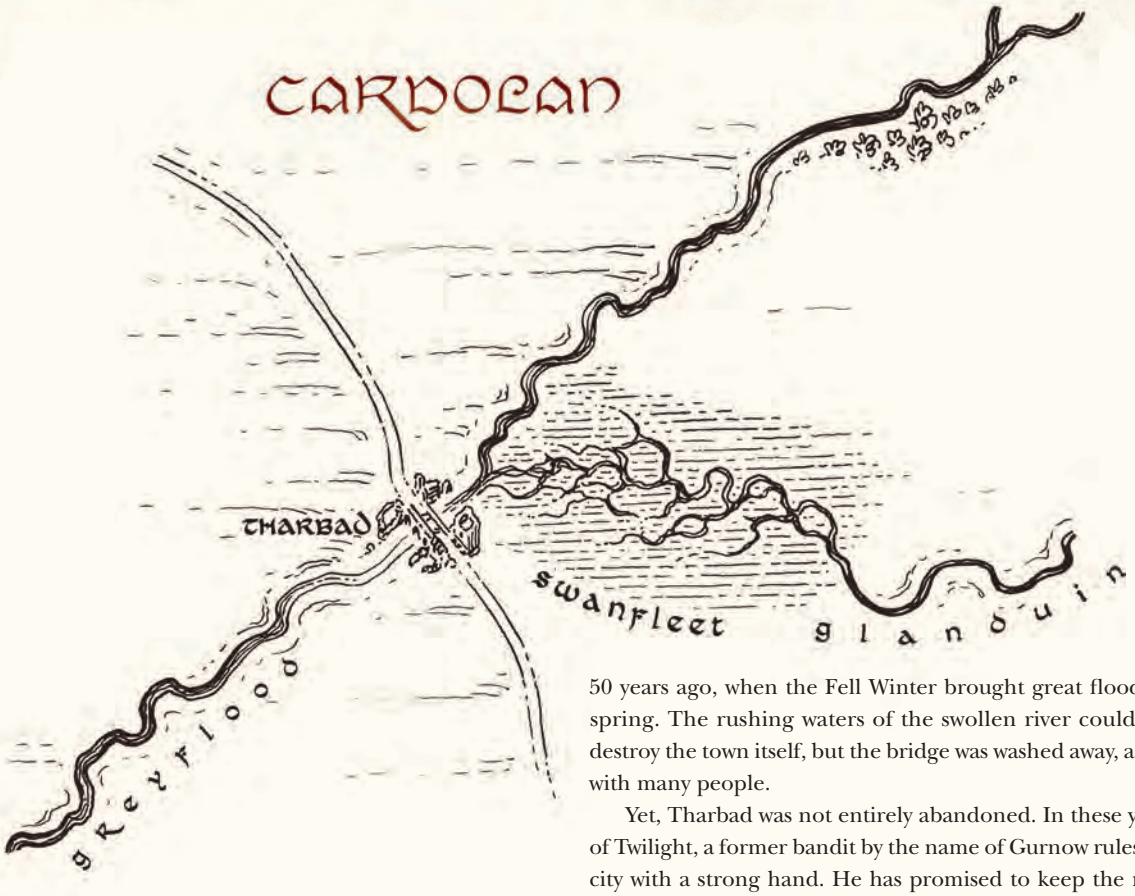
In the land beyond the Last Bridge, between the Hoarwell River in the west and the Loudwater River in the east, the East Road is almost swallowed by a rough, rocky landscape, broken only by thick patches of woodland. The horrid brutes that hide in the numerous caverns that dot the stony landscape are the source of the land's name: The Trollshaws. The few hardy (or foolish) travellers that dare go so far from civilisation and travel so near to the Misty Mountains should be wise to never stray from the Road.

Should some reckless wanderer step off the path, they will find broken towers and ancient castles dragged down to rubble, hidden atop the low stony highlands that cast long shadows over the East Road, while the forests between these long abandoned buildings are filled with dangerous predators and savage foes — many of whom have come down from the Coldfells or out of their dark holes in the Misty Mountains. Regardless of their origin, they have no love for the Free People, seeing them as little more than prey to be slaughtered.

TROLL-HOLES

The Trollshaws are literally riddled with caves, opened or dug by Trolls to serve as their lairs. The Loremaster can use the table below to quickly and easily come up with a unique location for a Troll-hole.

FEAT DIE ROLL	RESULT	DESCRIPTION
ᚠ	Abandoned	The Player-heroes stumble upon a Troll that has been turned to stone by the sun while within sight of its Troll-hole. A successful SCAN roll reveals items worth 1–2 Treasure among the Troll's ill-gotten gains.
1–2	Root Nest	A large tree has split wide open at its base and descends into a shallow, muddy hole that serves as lair to a Troll. It is slippery and difficult to navigate.
3–4	Crumbling Tower	A once magnificent tower that has collapsed in on itself has become the home of a Troll. It is of dubious stability and could cave in entirely at any time.
5–6	Shallow Cave	A cave that goes no more than a few feet into the side of a small stone hill is as close to a traditional Troll-hole as one can imagine, and could easily be avoided were it not so close to the East Road.
7–8	Behind the Falls	A small pool of water with a low waterfall coming off a stone rise serves as the home to a Troll, who wades into the water before ducking beneath the falls and coming up on the other side in an easily overlooked lair.
9–10	Under Construction	The characters stumble upon a Troll who is tearing away at trees and rocks, freeing an opening leading to a cave.
	Not Alone	The Player-heroes begin to explore a cave that seems both shallow and abandoned. But looks are deceiving and when they find their way deeper into the cave, they suddenly come face-to-face with a Troll!



THE LAST BRIDGE

Approximately one hundred miles east from Weathertop, a great stone bridge crosses the Hoarwell River in three arches over a deep gorge. Crossing it means entering the Trollshaws, a very dangerous wild land. As its name implies, this bridge is the last opportunity for a wanderer to turn back and return to more civilised areas.

The stones of the Last Bridge are old and worn, often slick when rain has fallen, with little more than a knee-high barrier on each side to prevent travellers from slipping and falling into the cold, rushing waters of the Hoarwell far below. This is taken as yet another sign of both the Bridge's age and the impending doom awaiting any who cross it.

Tharbad

This ruined city lies where the Greyflood is no longer navigable for sea-going ships. Of course, this hasn't mattered for many, many years, but there was once plentiful commerce in Tharbad, even before the founding of the city proper. A great bridge was built first, then a fortress to guard it, and then an entire city grew up around the crossing. Tharbad endured, through wars, plagues, and worse, though its population dwindled. It became no longer a place where travellers met, but a market town for the locals. The latest calamity struck about 50 years ago, when the Fell Winter brought great floods in spring. The rushing waters of the swollen river could not destroy the town itself, but the bridge was washed away, along with many people.

Yet, Tharbad was not entirely abandoned. In these years of Twilight, a former bandit by the name of Gurnow rules the city with a strong hand. He has promised to keep the road safe, repair the bridge, and protect the surviving inhabitants from harm. He tells the folk that he has many friends in other lands and that Tharbad will be restored. The city waits to see if his speeches will yet turn into actions.

More detailed information on Tharbad can be found in *Ruins of the Lost Realm.*

Lindon

The wide seaward land to the west of the Blue Mountains is the Elven realm of Lindon. The region is what remains of the great country of Beleriand, destroyed almost entirely in wars that only the long-lived Elves remember. Originally populated by the survivors of that land, it was for a while the greatest nation of the Elves in Middle-earth. Gil-galad, the last king of the Noldor, dwelt there, as did Celeborn and Galadriel, before they went to Lórien. In time, Celebrimbor led many of the High Elves away east, to found Eregion, after hearing of the discovery of mithril in the mines of Moria.

The land of Lindon comprises Forlindon and Harlindon, the coastlands to the north and south of the Gulf of Lhûn. It once included land to the east of the Ered Luin, but today the Tower Hills represent its most eastern borders. No Men cross into Lindon, but Dwarves still maintain some remote halls in the Blue Mountains, both north and south of the Gulf of Lhûn.

OTHER LANDS

Where the Misty Mountains reach their southernmost end, there opens the Gap of Rohan, the gate leading from Eriador to the lands of Calenardhon. It is a green province of rolling hills and meadows, bordered to the south by the Ered Nimrais, the White Mountains. It is today known as the Riddermark, the Mark of the Riders.

Further to the East, the Great River descends from the North in wide bends, eventually slowing its course into a vast marshland. Before the Anduin reaches the Sea, it enters the land of Gondor, the South-kingdom of the Men of the West. Beyond its borders lies Harad to the south, and to the east, the black land of Mordor.

MORDOR: Encircled by ranges of broken and barren peaks to the north, west and south, lies the Land of Mordor. It is a vast, desolate region, made of mournful plains of ash and blasted rock, dominated in the north by Orodruin, the Mountain of Fire.

It is here that Sauron forged the One Ring, long ago, in the Chambers of Fire of Mount Doom, when he tried to seize domination of all Rings of Power. And it is here that he has returned, when he left his fortress of Dol Guldur.

Since his return, Sauron has bent his will on the rebuilding of his power and the Dark Tower of Barad-dûr. In the last twenty years, his many servants have bored all the hills and rocks about the Black Gate of Mordor, filling every tunnel with deep armouries for the mustering of a great host. Away south, by the dark waters of Lake Núrnen, slaves till the fields for the provision of many armies.

At the mouth of the Gulf of Lhûn is Mithlond, the Grey Havens, from where the Elven-ships bound to leave Middle-earth set sail and where Círdan the Shipwright is master. Since the death of Gil-galad at the time of the Last Alliance of Elves and Men, the rule of the master of the Grey Havens is acknowledged all over Lindon. Accounted among the Wise, he sends messengers often to Elrond, to offer and receive counsel.

The Blue Mountains

The Ered Luin are an ancient mountain range, where two of the greatest cities of the Dwarves once were found. Nogrod and Belegost are no more, as they were destroyed at the end of the First Age, when Thangorodrim was broken. At that time, many Dwarves went to Khazad-dûm, but the Ered Luin were never entirely forsaken. Many halls and mines are still open and populated, especially now that the Kingdom Under the Mountain has been restored, and there is travel and commerce between the Blue Mountains, Erebor, and the Iron Hills. In fact, Dwarves passing along the great East Road are the most reliable source of news in places like the Shire and Bree.

Most of the mines that are still active in the Blue Mountains are in the southern reach, below the Gulf of Lhûn. Many Dwarves dwelling there do not belong to the House of Durin. Some veins have been worked for thousands of years, slowly and steadily by the same family of Dwarves over the ages.

little lune
HALLS OF THE DWARVES
FOREMOOR
FORELAND
MICHLOND
ARTHEDAIN
FORLOND
GREY HAVENS
WHITE TOWERS
ELOSTIRION
GULF OF LUNE
TOWER HILLS
HARLOND
HAREMOOR
HARADRIM

Adventuring in Middle-earth

"The brave things in the old tales and songs, Mr. Frodo: adventures, as I used to call them. I used to think that they were things the wonderful folk of the stories went out and looked for, because they wanted them, because they were exciting and life was a bit dull, a kind of a sport, as you might say."

Chapter 6 already tackled the issue of how to present an Adventuring Phase. This section presents a number of questions that can help the Loremaster to make the world of Middle-earth itself a main element in the adventures of the Player-heroes.

When?

When is the Adventuring Phase taking place? Time is an important element to consider in *The One Ring*, as whatever happens will become an episode in the Player-heroes' lives. Moreover, important events involving the Company will eventually find their rightful place in the game's Tale of Years, alongside the historical facts which make up the Twilight of the Third Age.

CURRENT SEASON

The passing of the seasons is a powerful descriptive tool. Across the twelve months of the year, the Free Peoples respect seasonal festivals and ceremonies, and the landscape of Middle-earth changes drastically from summer to autumn, and from winter to spring, providing a backdrop to the deeds of the Player-heroes that is always different.

The Loremaster can add flavour to the game by simply keeping a calendar, and reflecting the changes as the seasons pass. But seasons have a direct effect on the gameplay too — climbing a mountain in winter poses a more serious challenge than doing so in spring, as trails disappear and wolves prowl the land in search of food. The mountains themselves appear to heed a more sinister call when their passes are thick with snow, and the winds rage around their peaks (it is for good reason that a Company generally prefers to sit out the winter months in the warmth and safety of a Fellowship Phase).

CURRENT YEAR: There is nothing like taking into consideration the passage of time to make the players feel part of a living world — year after year, the intertwining of the Company's deeds and the events related in the stories and their chronologies creates a campaign with depth and texture.

There are many ways to incorporate wider events into the Player-heroes' adventures. They could witness a great gathering, cross paths with groups involved in the timeline events or discuss the goings-on with the people they encounter on their Journey. Every Adventuring Phase can benefit greatly from making the Company's exploits part of the chronology of Middle-earth, provided that the focus of the narration remains firmly fixed on the Player-heroes' own deeds.

Where?

Where is the action taking place? There are two answers to this question — either a precise location is vital to the action, and the Loremaster chooses a specific place from those described in this guide or in the source material (see also Landmarks, on page 221), or the adventure requires nothing more than a generic setting and any ruin, forest glade or river will do.

In either case, the Loremaster should consider a place that is either close to the current location of the Company, or one that they can reach conveniently (using the Journey rules). In the latter case, the trip itself gives the Loremaster the chance to set up a challenging situation for the Company.

EXPLORING MIDDLE-EARTH

Every so often, their adventures will bring the Company to one of the places described in Tolkien's books. For many players, this is what roleplaying in Middle-earth is all about. Having the Company enter the Hall of Fire in Rivendell for the first time, or seeing the White Tower of Elostirion on the horizon, can turn an ordinary Adventuring Phase into a particularly meaningful experience.

When this happens, the Loremaster should allow the Company to interact with the setting. What players remember of a place they have read about should be brought to life and incorporated into the narrative. One way to achieve this is to challenge their Skills with some simple tests. For example, a Company crossing the Trollshaws in the east of Eriador and passing a roll of **SCAN** might locate the glade where three Stone-trolls stand, forever frozen in their stupor at having been tricked by a Wizard.

What?

What is going on? This question defines the heart of the Adventuring Phase, and summarises the information that a Loremaster presents to the players at the beginning of the first game session.

KEEPING IT THEMATIC

A simple way to start out on the right foot with a *The One Ring* campaign is to pay tribute to the source material at the very beginning. This is a quick and easy way to establish the right atmosphere, showing players that they really are in Middle-earth now.

To do so, the Loremaster can propose rumours and story hooks that reference the stories directly in a way that the players will easily recognise. For example, they may choose a chapter title from either *The Hobbit* or *The Lord of the Rings*, and be a little creative with it, always trying to weave in a level of personal investment.

Here are some examples:

- *The Shadow of the Past.* The first meeting of the Company is observed by, or has been organised by, their main Patron. Otherwise, an old letter from a relative who disappeared a long time ago involves the Company in a larger scheme of events.
- *There and Back Again*. The Company uncovers a rumour about a long-lost place, item or treasure hoard that a renowned character from the stories tried to reclaim a long time ago and failed.
- *Over Hill and Under Hill*. The session starts with the Company already on a Journey, travelling to reach a place connected to one of the heroes.
- *A Knife in the Dark*. A safe place, such as the inn where the Company meets, turns dangerous as an agent of the Shadow attempts to murder one of the Player-heroes.
- *Riddles in the Dark*. The Company encounters a dark, ancient creature they heard about as a folk tale in their homelands.

Sometimes, this is summarised by a rumour that the Company has gathered during the last Fellowship Phase (see page 121), but can otherwise be something tied to what happened in a previous Adventuring Phase — travellers talk of a strange luminescence they see while on the North Road; word of a stolen treasure and the reward offered to recover it reaches the inn at Bree; an important personality the Company was scheduled to meet is kidnapped or killed by an unknown threat. Any situation pointing the Player-heroes in the right direction on their path to adventure is a good starting point.

Another way is to begin an Adventuring Phase with a direct challenge — something that provokes the Company into action right from the start. There's no need to plan a complete series of events, as the Company will provide enough material for the Loremaster to improvise upon as the game progresses.

SIMPLICITY

The objective of an Adventuring Phase doesn't have to be tied to an epic endeavour, or be about a world-threatening menace — at least, not every time. In *The One Ring*, an epic level of gameplay is reached by playing through many smaller events that reveal their greater significance only when woven together. In time, everything a Player-hero endures will be easily raised to a greater importance, especially when set against the game's overarching motif — the struggle against the Shadow.

For example, simply picking a worthy opponent from *Chapter 8*, or an interesting location from this chapter will provide the Loremaster and the Company with enough material to keep the game going for multiple sessions.

PLOT TWISTS: Once in a while the Loremaster might decide to complicate things by adding a twist or two to an otherwise straightforward Adventuring Phase. The Company will then have to figure out how to 'solve' a situation, instead of simply being asked to endure or overcome a series of difficulties.

In some cases, the Adventuring Phase might end without providing a clear answer; this opens up an opportunity to investigate the matter further during the Fellowship Phase which follows, or during a subsequent Adventuring Phase.

why?

Why should the Player-heroes get involved in the current events in the first place? Is there something that interests them personally? This question directly addresses the reasons why the members of the Company choose to become adventurers — heroes brave dangers that other individuals try to stay clear of, usually because they have a personal stake that pushes them to do it. While the very concept of adventuring provides a simple answer to the question, the Loremaster should focus on those motivational 'buttons' which are far more effective in capturing the players' interest.

During the first few games, the Callings and Distinctive Features of the Player-heroes composing the Company can provide enough material to build upon. Once each member of the Company has a number of entries in their personal Tale of Years it will become much easier to find personal reasons for them to get involved in an Adventuring Phase. As the game progresses, the players themselves will start to explore their individual goals, and provide the Loremaster with personalised story hooks.

who?

Tolkien has populated his stories with a multitude of memorable characters, and the Loremaster will need to do the same for an adventure to be successful. Will one or more familiar personalities feature in the story? Will the adventure introduce a new recurring character? The personalities that the Loremaster controls are a fundamental element of any game, as much as any other feature of Middle-earth.

ROLE MODELS

The deeds of a familiar character can be a powerful inspiration for a player looking for an example of what it means to live in Middle-earth. Meeting their favourite hero helps players to integrate into the epic tapestry of the campaign, adding as it does an additional layer of involvement in the events that the Company is witnessing.

SUPPORTING CAST

Loremaster characters should be used sparingly and with careful judgement. Players don't like to see their Player-heroes play second fiddle to a powerful individual. To avoid this, the Loremaster could try the opposite — have the famous character in need of the Player-heroes' help, or even need rescuing outright (a twist that Tolkien himself often utilised).

PATRONS

During play, the Company may adopt an important personality as their Patron. This provides an excellent source of story hooks and support, and is an easy way to make a familiar hero a recurring motif in the Company's adventuring. However, the Loremaster must make sure that a Patron is not simply reduced to a gameplay asset; instead they should be worked into the narrative as an active element.

The Patrons section on page 212 contains several suggestions on how to introduce important characters as Patrons in the game.

appendix

"But great though his lore may be, it must have a source."

The following sections contain information on a variety of topics — Patrons presents biographical data and rules concerning many wise or otherwise distinguished individuals living at the end of the Third Age and suited to become allies of the Company; Nameless Things gives gaming substance to ancient horrors that can become formidable opponents of the Player-heroes; Landmarks discusses one of the main ways that *The One Ring* presents playable material, including The Star of the Mist, a full example of the new format.

Patrons

"And now," said the wizard, turning back to Frodo,
"the decision lies with you. But I will always help you."

As seen on page 52, in the course of their adventures the Player-heroes will sooner or later encounter others who, like them, oppose the encroaching Shadow. Among them are Men, Elves, and Dwarves, even Hobbits, who started to fight the Enemy long before them, and are actively seeking worthy allies to join in their fight.

Whenever a Company makes the acquaintance of such an individual, they might adopt them as their Patron. A Company typically encounters a potential Patron during play, in the course of an Adventuring Phase.

In time, the Player-heroes are bound to meet several such individuals throughout their career, but may designate only one of them as their main Patron at any time — a Company enjoys exclusively the Fellowship Bonus and advantages related to the Patron they choose as their main one.

> The Player-heroes designate their main Patron when they are in the same place as the selected individual during a Fellowship Phase, by choosing the Meet Patron Undertaking (see page 121).

The following section presents some of the most influential individuals living at the end of the Third Age who may act as Patrons for the Company.

Balin, son of Fundin

...there was a very old-looking dwarf on the step with a white beard and a scarlet hood; and he too hopped inside as soon as the door was open, just as if he had been invited.

Born in the year 2763 of the Third Age, Balin is the eldest son of Fundin, one of Durin's Folk. He and his younger brother Dwalin are of royal blood, as they count King Náin II among their ancestors. A venerable Dwarf, Balin has seen much, including the death of too many allies and dear friends. He fought the Orcs when his father died defending Moria, was there when Thráin disappeared in Mirkwood, and was with Thorin Oakenshield on the quest that ended with the liberation of Erebor and the death of the Dragon.

For decades, Balin was Thorin's counsellor, and now serves Dáin Ironfoot, the King Under the Mountain. One of Dáin's most trusted officers, he is an adventurer at heart, and rarely remains at court for long periods of time. Despite his status among his kin, he is surprisingly humble and polite. While still doughty, Balin's age is beginning to show. He sometimes mutters to himself and dodders as if every day of his years press upon him.

BALIN SON OF FUNDIN: Adventurer, Envoy

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Eager, Honourable

ENCOUNTERING BALIN

According to his nature as a wanderer and his duty as a messenger of Dáin, Balin is often on the road, travelling across Wilderland and Eriador. He sometimes journeys with Gandalf, to suit his own or the Wizard's purposes. Balin enjoys his visits to the Shire to see his dear old friend Bilbo Baggins, and out of a general fondness for Hobbits and their excellent hospitality. He also goes to the Blue Mountains regularly, to work with the Dwarves residing there.

Balin is unusually woodcrafty for a Dwarf, adept at tracking, fire-making, and pathfinding. He often serves as a lookout and takes pride in his acute sight. Balin knows well the regions he traverses when he journeys from Erebor to the Blue Mountains, having made the trip several times, though he prefers not to cross Mirkwood, even to this day.

One might encounter Balin in a small inn along the way between Erebor and the Blue Mountains, camping in the wild near the road, or sharing a pipe with old friends. He is generous to a fault, kind of spirit, and easily the wisest and best of those who reclaimed the Lonely Mountain. He may accompany a group of adventurers if their purposes align, or even for a while if they are going roughly in the same direction.

BALIN AS A PATRON

Unlike many Dwarves, Balin is genuinely interested in other folks and takes kindly to Hobbits especially. Of the Dwarves of Thorin's Company, Balin is the only one still associating with Gandalf long after the death of Smaug, as he shares the Wizard's concern about the growing Shadow.

In addition to that, Balin aims to restore the strength and prominence of the Dwarves in Eriador, whether through direct action, or by setting into motion agents who might affect the change he wishes to see. Like all his folk, he hates Orcs and their ilk, and seeks in every way to drive them back wherever he can. His adventuring has made him wiser and more cautious though, and he often counsels patience and observation as a tactic, versus rash or violent action.

Balin is eager to know anything that can be learned regarding Dwarf-holds fallen to the Enemy, and actively encourages his allies to scout those places or rid them of any foul denizens therein. In particular, Balin is interested to find out all he can about Moria, where his father was slain. Together with two of his fellow survivors of Thorin's company — Ori and Óin — he speaks often about entering Khazad-dûm and exploring it. So far, King Dáin of Erebor has cautioned them against such an endeavour, though it is clear that they are not to be dissuaded.

FELLOWSHIP BONUS: +1

ADVANTAGE: *Balin's Counsel*

You can spend Fellowship points to make a combat roll *Favoured.*

Bilbo Baggins

... he looked and behaved exactly like a second edition of his solid and comfortable father, got something a bit queer in his make-up from the Took side, something that only waited for a chance to come out.

In the year 2965, Bilbo is a vigorous Hobbit – At seventy-five he is very much the same as he was at fifty, at the time of his remarkable disappearance and surprising return. On the surface, the son of Bungo Baggins and

Belladonna Took is a prime example of a respectable Hobbit. He is a great lover of pipe-weed, good food, and fine waistcoats, and lives in one of the coziest Hobbit-holes in the Shire. But this is not all there is to Mr Baggins.

Bilbo's unexpected journey with Thorin Oakenshield and company changed him profoundly, setting him apart from his fellow countrymen. Perhaps that adventure provided a spark that ignited his Tookish and more adventurous side, and he certainly returned from Erebor a wealthier Hobbit. All this estranged him from much of the (admittedly tedious) Shire society, leading him to focus on his own, peculiar lifestyle, the company of friends, and working on his diary.

Twenty years after his great adventure, Bilbo remains curious about news from outside the Shire, and is always gathering rumours and bits of lore to add to his personal records – he is planning to turn his private diary into a real book.

BILBO BAGGINS: Retired adventurer, Burglar

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Fair-spoken, Cunning

ENCOUNTERING BILBO

The Bagginses have lived in the neighbourhood of The Hill from time out of mind, and Bilbo has no desire to break that long-standing tradition. His address is at Bag End, Underhill, Hobbiton, and it's at Bag End that the Hobbit is likely to be found, probably having tea, or standing at the door, smoking a pipe. That said, his experiences with Thorin's Company and a Dragon have awakened in him a certain appetite for adventure, and sometimes he stays away from home for much longer than is considered appropriate in the Shire. When travelling further away than Buckland, or Michel Delving, he is often in the company of Dwarves.

If encountered outside the Shire, Bilbo might carry his Elf-dagger, Sting, sheathed at his side. But he has yet to encounter a danger that might require him to use it — if threatened, the Hobbit displays an uncanny ability to disappear almost instantly, a talent far outstripping the normal Hobbitish affinity for escaping notice. He always remembers to bring a pocket-handkerchief along.

BILBO AS A PATRON

Unbeknownst to his fellow Hobbits who just consider him to be strange, if not completely mad, Bilbo knows a lot about the world outside the Shire, and is well aware of its dangers. He keeps himself as informed as he can, exchanging tidings

BILBO'S MAGIC RING

Bilbo found many valuable things in the course of his last adventure, but the greatest treasure he brought back is one he doesn't know much about. It's the magic ring he found in an underground cave, under the Misty Mountains, and that he has kept a great secret. To him, it's a precious commodity, as wearing it makes him invisible – a quality that Bilbo finds invaluable when unpleasant callers come looking for him.

This ring has been in Bilbo's possession for more than twenty years now, and what in the beginning seemed nothing more than a curiosity to the Hobbit is slowly developing a growing hold over his mind. He keeps it in the pocket of his waistcoat upon a fine silver chain at all times, and has acquired the habit of slipping a finger or two in the pocket to touch it, as if to reassure himself that it's still there.

with travellers and by writing and receiving letters. When he learns about potential threats that might affect the Shire, he does what he can to enlist the help of anyone who might do something about it.

Being a Hobbit of considerable means, Bilbo is all too happy to arrange hospitality, finance expeditions, and to generally encourage those who would dare to go out and have adventures. He provides support merely in return for a good story and perhaps a souvenir or keepsake — he is especially interested in maps, and geographical lore in general, which he uses to amend his own charts.

Contrary to this inclination towards hosting a veritable rogues gallery of guests from far afield, he is growing increasingly isolated when it comes to his fellow Hobbits. He finds them staid, close-minded, and demonstrates little patience for their shenanigans and petty foibles. To the eyes of the Shirefolk, Bilbo is becoming more and more an eccentric recluse.

FELLOWSHIP BONUS: +2

ADVANTAGE: *Bilbo's Hospitality*

By choosing the Meet Patron undertaking to visit Bilbo you additionally raise the Fellowship rating by +1 until the next Fellowship Phase.

Círdan the Shipwright

As they came to the gates Círdan the Shipwright came forth to greet them. Very tall he was, and his beard was long, and he was grey and old, save that his eyes were keen as stars...

Círdan is perhaps the most ancient Elf still living in Middle-earth. He has witnessed three ages of the world, and has been given many titles. Today, he is mostly known as the Shipwright, and the Master of the Grey Havens. He is accounted among the Wise and the Great, and has served as a member of the White Council for many long centuries. For a time, he was the keeper of one of the three Elven Rings of Power, for he bore Narya, the Ring of Fire, until he gave it to Gandalf the Grey.

Círdan is currently the chief of all Elves residing west of the Blue Mountains, in Lindon. He has been leading them since Gil-galad died fighting Sauron in the War of the Last Alliance. Many consider him to possess the greatest gift of foresight, and thus to be able to see further and deeper than any other in Middle-earth. That is perhaps why the task of preparing the ships that all Elves board when leaving Middle-earth to cross the sea to Valinor is appointed to him.

CÍRDAN THE SHIPWRIGHT: Emissary, Lore-master

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Courteous, Lordly, Wise

THE ELENDIL STONE

Círdan and the Elves of Lindon guard one of the seven "seeing stones" brought to Middle-earth from Númenor by Elendil. It is locked away in the tower of Elostirion, in the Tower Hills. Also known as a palantír, this stone is a perfectly smooth globe, made of a dark, glassy material, about a foot in diameter. According to old lore, the palantíri allowed their owners to see things from a distance, and could communicate with each other. Only few among the Wise know whether the Elendil Stone is still capable of revealing any vision, as the other stones are deemed lost, or destroyed.

ENCOUNTERING CÍRDAN

Círdan dwells with his people at the great port of Mithlond, on the banks of the Gulf of Lune. He rarely ventures forth from the Grey Havens, but all who are of good spirit and come in peace are welcome to come and see him there. Galdor of the Havens is his herald and envoy, and often travels across Middle-earth representing the Shipwright wherever needed, and speaking with his full authority.

In person, Círdan is very tall, even for an Elf. His appearance is that of a grey but vigorous individual, with a long, silver beard, a rarity among the Fair Folk. He is gracious and hospitable, receiving all guests with full courtesy and kindness. His bright eyes are keen, yet profound — If anyone was to look into them for a few moments, they would see a deep well of memory and experience, telling of the countless things that Círdan has accomplished over his long lifetime.

CÍRDAN AS A PATRON

Círdan knows that the Grey Havens play a role of primary importance in the war against the Shadow. The Five Wizards landed here when they came to Middle-earth almost two thousand years ago, and it is here that many great fleets armed for the defeat of Sauron found safe harbourage. In the twilight of the Third Age, Mithlond serves as the last refuge for those who desire to leave Middle-earth, and Círdan considers it his duty to ensure that their passage is made as safely as possible.

The Grey Havens also guard a great wealth of knowledge. Círdan's memory goes back to a time before the light of the Sun and Moon, and his knowledge rivals that of Elrond, greatest of lore-masters. The Lord of the Havens and that of Imladris seek the counsel of one another, and their messengers can be often found on the great East Road on errands from their masters.

FELLOWSHIP BONUS: +1

ADVANTAGE: *The Shipwright's Foresight*

You can spend Fellowship points to repeat any one roll.

By choosing the Meet Patron undertaking to go and see Círdan you additionally receive a rumour from the Loremaster.

Gandalf the Grey

At the end of the second week in September a cart came in through Bywater from the direction of the Brandywine Bridge in broad daylight. An old man was driving it all alone. He wore a tall pointed blue hat, a long grey cloak, and a silver scarf.

To the Hobbits of the Shire, Gandalf the Grey is just a pilgrim, a wanderer without a home. He says he's a Wizard, but the extent of his magical skill seems to be limited to his wonderful fireworks and to the prodigious smoke-rings he produces with his pipe. But the wanderings of Gandalf have brought him much farther than his beloved Shire, to lands where he is known by different names: to the Elves he is Mithrandir, Tharkûn is how the Dwarves know him, and Men in the South call him Gandalf Greyhame. In these countries, Gandalf is not always welcome – indeed, some call him a bringer of ill-news, as he often comes when a threat is near.

In truth, Gandalf is the greatest enemy of Sauron in the Third Age. Few among the Wise know that the Wizards first came to Middle-earth out of the Uttermost West almost two thousand years ago, on a mission to thwart the Dark Lord's machinations. Gandalf's appointed task is to bolster the hearts of those who would fight against evil everywhere, and that's what he has done for centuries now, counseling Dwarves, Elves, and Men, always bringing light where darkness lies.

Gandalf is the secret bearer of Narya, the Ring of Fire, the third Elven-ring created by Celebrimbor of Eregion. It was given to him for safekeeping and for his own use by Círdan the Shipwright. Narya is an invaluable aid to Gandalf in his mission to inspire others in their struggles against the Shadow. If pressed into combat, the Grey Pilgrim unsheaths Glamdring, an ancient Elven blade, forged in Gondolin for the Goblin-wars.

GANDALF THE GREY: Adventurer, Wizard

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Bold, Cunning, Wise

ENCOUNTERING GANDALF

Gandalf can be encountered almost anywhere — riding across the countryside on horseback, walking alone or in the company of friends or allies, or even in the seat of a horse-drawn cart. He may not show up when called but often appears when needed. Gandalf holds a particular fondness for the Hobbits of the Shire and when he is meeting someone in Eriador, he will always choose the inn in Bree as a meeting place.

When encountered along the road, the Grey Wizard may appear just as an old man, with a long white beard and carrying a staff that he sometimes leans upon as he walks. But when he sits in council, his white hair and piercing dark eyes make him look like a wise king from some ancient legend.

Gandalf does not resort to using magic lightly, as he fears it would betray his presence to the eyes of the Enemy. When he does, he displays a mastery of fire and smoke, a reflection of his personality. Seemingly irascible, the old Wizard is also just as quick to burst into warm laughter. He might gently chide a friend, offer words of reassurance, then wax wroth at those who fail to show him due respect.

GANDALF AS A PATRON

Once, Círdan of the Havens said that the Grey Wanderer's mission is to 'rekindle hearts in a world that grows chill'. In accordance with this mandate, Gandalf labours to inspire all individuals into action, and set events in motion that will eventually spiral into greater consequences. The Quest of

Erebor is an example of how Gandalf acts — helping Thorin Oakenshield to reclaim his lost kingdom led to the elimination of a Dragon that could have become a terrible weapon in the hands of the Enemy.

Unlike the head of his order, Saruman, who deals in devices and instruments from his high tower in Isengard, Gandalf moves among those who oppose Sauron, listening to their pleas and providing help when emergencies occur. This has made Gandalf welcome in most places, despite his reputation as a troublemaker.

A member of the White Council, Gandalf is the one among the Wise that is most likely to act promptly. While the others may counsel patience and caution, Gandalf moves decisively, putting himself in danger, infiltrating the lairs of the Enemy, and facing evil without hesitation. His goal is to lead the Free Peoples by example, encouraging them to set aside ancient rivalries and petty disputes, and to work together in defence of all that is good and worth keeping.

FELLOWSHIP BONUS: +2

ADVANTAGE: *The Wisdom of the Grey Pilgrim*

You can spend Fellowship points to make a Shadow Test *Favoured.*

Gilraen the Fair

After a few years Gilraen took leave of Elrond and returned to her own people in Eriador, and lived alone...

A woman of noble lineage, Gilraen is the mother of Aragorn, the current chieftain of the Rangers of the North and Heir of Isildur. She was quite young when she married, and became a widow soon after she gave birth to her son. When that came to pass, Elrond took her and her newborn to dwell with him in Rivendell, and he raised Aragorn as a son of his own – Aragorn was called 'Estel' in Imladris (Sindarin for 'Hope'), to conceal his lineage and true name from his enemies.

In the year 2965, Gilraen is not yet sixty years old. Being one of the long lived Dúnedain, she is in the fulness of her strength of body and mind, and possesses a measure of the foresight of her people. When her son left Rivendell to seek adventure a few years ago, Gilraen decided to remain in Imladris. She often leaves the Last Homely House on short trips, to visit her own people in Eriador and confer with the captains of the Rangers of the North, in the absence of their chieftain.

GILRAEN THE FAIR: Counselor, Seer

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Cautious, Fair, Steadfast

ENCOUNTERING GILRAEN

Gilraen is accorded great respect among the Dúnedain of Eriador as the widow of Arathorn, their previous chieftain, and as the mother of the Heir of Isildur. She is also deemed to be foresighted, having inherited that gift from Ivorwen, her mother. Many captains of the Rangers seek her advice, knowing her to be a wise and prudent counselor.

Anyone who meets her will find Gilraen to be a tall and slender woman, her demeanour marked by sorrow, but who refuses to be bent under the weight of her misfortune.

Gilraen can be met in the company of small bands of Rangers, along the many paths trod by her folk in the vicinity of Rivendell, or in the Weather Hills and the North Downs. She never stays away for more than a few weeks at a time though, always returning to the safety of the house of Elrond to rest.

GILRAEN AS A PATRON

Having lost her husband Arathorn to an Orc-arrow, and his father Arador to the ferocity of Hill-trolls in the Coldfells, Gilraen has experienced personally the hatred of the Enemy for her folk. She knows full well that the Dúnedain of the North and the entire region of Eriador will never be safe if evil creatures are allowed to prowl undisturbed. In the absence of her son the chieftain, Gilraen makes sure that the Rangers don't forsake their duty as guardians of the land of old Arnor and the borders of the Bree-land and the Shire. In this, she has found a staunch ally in the Wizard Gandalf. When she is in Rivendell, she never misses a chance to encourage the sons of Elrond to go out and hunt all monstrous creatures.

Adventurers worthy of Gilraen's trust find themselves enjoying the respect of the Rangers of the North. When out in the wild, they can count on the help of many scouts, and are provided directions to find their hidden refuges and caches of supplies.

FELLOWSHIP BONUS: 0

ADVANTAGE: *Gilraen's Folk*

As long as you are within the territory that once was the old realm of Arnor, all Journey Events are determined as if you were in a Border Land.

By choosing the Meet Patron undertaking to go and see Gilraen you additionally receive a rumour from the Loremaster.

Tom Bombadil and Lady Goldberry

'Tom Bombadil is the Master. No one has ever caught old Tom walking in the forest, wading in the water, leaping on the hill-tops under light and shadow. He has no fear. Tom Bombadil is master.'

Old Tom Bombadil roamed all over Eriador, when the woods that today are called the Old Forest reached Dunland in the south. As the forest shrunk, so did his domain. He is a strange creature, known by many names — to the Elves he is Iarwain Ben-adar ('oldest and fatherless'), a name that attempts to define him. For he is ancient even for the long-lived Elves, and they don't know whence he came. He was there before the Dark Lord arrived, he welcomed the first rivers and trees, and his life is tied inextricably to that of his land.

Tom appears as a red-cheeked man with curly brown hair, wrinkles around his eyes etched deep from mirth, usually clad in a blue coat and yellow boots. He is often engaged in seemingly frivolous activities, like picking water-lilies, as if he hasn't a care in the whole of Middle-earth. In truth, the opposite is true: Tom cares about all living things, so much so that he cannot distinguish the worth of one life over another.

Bombadil shares his life with Goldberry, the River-woman's daughter. She is a lady as fair as an Elf-maiden, and she is as enigmatic as her companion. Just standing in her presence provokes a marvelous delight in those who enter the house of Tom Bombadil, a joy that is felt deeply in their hearts.

TOM BOMBADIL: The Master

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Absent-minded, Merry

GOLDBERRY: River-daughter

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Fair, Fair-spoken

ENCOUNTERING TOM AND GOLDBERRY

The house of Tom Bombadil is found just beyond the Old Forest to the east, where the Withywindle runs down from its spring in the Barrow-downs. Under Tom's roof and at his table, guests will find their heart contented with peaceful slumber, fine company, joyous song, and all the simple pleasures that come with a humble heart.

Bombadil is known to journey into the Old Forest and the Barrow-downs, having no fear of Old Man Willow nor the Wight-haunted hills. With a laugh and a wink, Tom charms all he encounters, singing the fierce to sleep and rousing the rest with a song and a merry dance.

Goldberry can be found anywhere along the course of the Withywindle, braiding daisies or water-lilies, or singing to the gurgling waters. She acts as if there is no menace in the world worth her concern, as she knows that Tom will come running if ever she needs him. The two are friendly to strangers but

are no less strange to their friends, and they open their doors to any who they meet.

TOM AND GOLDBERRY AS PATRONS

Though Tom's power is as deep as the earth is old, his mastery seems to be limited to his little land, within bounds that he has set. Within those bounds he fears nothing, and he is seemingly unconquerable, but he won't step beyond them for any reason. Adventurers winning his friendship and that of Goldberry will find that when called, they appear almost instantly anywhere within their domain. Even the weather itself seems to behave according to their needs and whims.

Tom knows all the ways and the lore of the Old Forest, and he can speak at length about all manner of such things, for there is little in his realm that he does not understand fully. He tells many remarkable stories, speaking softly or even singing, inspiring strange flights of fancy, vistas of untold history and of things forgotten, both majestic and meager.

Tom asks little of his friends directly, but he might point them in the direction of a problem that needs solving, whether it's an unruly Wight from the Barrow-downs or a calf lost within the Old Forest. Goldberry seems to have no need of anything beyond what she has, but she might call upon a Company of well-meaning heroes to aid others in need.

FELLOWSHIP BONUS: +2

ADVANTAGE: *Master of Wood, Water and Hill*

You can spend all your remaining Fellowship to call Tom or Goldberry's intervention anywhere in Tom's country.

LANDMARKS

Not far ahead were dreary hills, rising higher and higher, dark with trees. On some of them were old castles with an evil look, as if they had been built by wicked people.

A look at the map of Eriador shows how northwestern Middle-earth is a vast region, seemingly empty for the most part. What the map cannot reveal is the long history of this area, the borders of the many kingdoms that rose and fell in centuries long past.

The land still bears many traces of that long history — ruins dot the countryside, broken towers and walls that the current denizens of Eriador use as landmarks to find their bearings, or to delineate the boundaries of their fields, or even quarry to build their modest houses.

But many more hide under the tall grass, or lie buried under dirt accumulated over countless years. Some are known and shunned, and even more have not been visited by the living in centuries.

THERE AND BACK AGAIN

In the course of the game, the Player-heroes learn of the existence of landmarks by gathering rumours, small snippets of legends and hearsay, speaking of frightening creatures and hidden treasure (see Gather Rumours, page 121). When they decide to explore them during an Adventuring Phase, the Loremaster uses the rules for Journeys to get the Company there, and then refers to the description of the landmark to play out its exploration.

In brief, landmarks allow the players and the Loremaster to play open-ended, self-contained scenarios, complete with the description of locations, denizens, and events. What that they don't provide is a predetermined plot, articulated in orderly scenes.

Loremasters can design their own landmarks using the guidelines in this chapter, but complete landmarks are included in supplements for the game.

The Star in the Mist, the section starting on page 223, is an example of a fully-developed landmark.

STRUCTURE OF LANDMARKS

All landmarks presented for the game will follow the same structure of presentation. Loremasters can use this information to create their own adventure locations.

1. NAME

Generally, this is the name that local superstition or legend gives the place ('Deadmen's Dike', 'Norbury of the Kings', 'Moria', etc.)

2. RUMOUR

A rumour is the piece of information about the place that the Player-heroes pick up while adventuring or during the Fellowship Phase. It might contain a mix of true and false information, filtered through local prejudices, superstitions, etc.

OLD LORE: Further information available to Player-heroes who research the landmark, while adventuring or during the Fellowship Phase. Generally, Old Lore has more precise and truthful information.

3. BACKGROUND

This is an overview of the place for the Loremaster, summarizing its main features and relating why it is interesting or dangerous.

It should include general directions on how to get there starting from a known place ('three days north of Amon Sûl'), but no information about how to get there in game terms is presented — for that, the Loremaster needs simply to use the rules for Journeys.

JOURNEY EVENTS: This section relates information useful to set up potential accidents or other noteworthy events that might occur when the Company is approaching the landmark.

4. MAP

A drawing illustrating the landmark in as much detail as possible. It may be a map or cutout, always keyed to the descriptions given in the Locations section.

5. LOCATIONS

A number of paragraphs describing the place in detail, including information on Treasure, or potential encounters with denizens and Loremaster characters. Some encounters may be connected to the Schemes and Trouble section.

6. SCHEMES AND TROUBLE

This final section describes how external forces can interfere with the exploration of the site. Also, here are listed potential self-contained events and accidents that may occur in the course of the Adventuring Phase.

Sometimes, this section contains information potentially tying a landmark to a greater picture, for example, including the schemes of a recurring villain.

A NOTE ABOUT RULES PRESENTATION IN LANDMARKS

Landmarks offer descriptions that are as simple and to the point as possible. The text assumes that the Loremaster is able to direct the Adventuring Phase conforming to the decisions of the playing group, and able to adjudicate all situations simply applying the rules as presented in the game.

For example, this means that if a landmark requires the Company to travel many miles to reach it, the Loremaster will set up a scene using the Journey rules – without the text of the landmark addressing this specifically.

Likewise, if the description of a landmark confronts the Player-heroes with an obstacle, for example a sheer tower to climb, the Loremaster will set up a scene using the rules that apply best to the situation – for example, those for Skill Endeavours, Risk levels, or Sources of Injury.

As an exception to this rule, the sample landmark presented in the following pages provides an additional level of description, as far as the rules are concerned, for the sake of illustrating the concept. These suggestions are presented under the 'Tutorial' heading.

The Star of the Mist

…the Witch-king came down upon Arthedain before winter was ended.

RUMOUR

"There's an ancient tower in the easternmost foothills of the southern Ered Luin, what remains of a powerful castle from the time of the Kings. Wanderers speak of an eerie blue light that sometimes can be seen even from Sarn Ford, like a star shining above the river mists. No one goes there, and recently people have started to disappear in its vicinity."

OLD LORE

"The tower is what is left of a fortress built at the time of the North Kingdom of Arnor. It was built atop a Dwarven subterranean ruin. It was besieged at the time of the war with Angmar, and fell after a long resistance. Some say that treasonous Dwarves betrayed the Dúnedain, allowing the forces of the Witch-king to enter the castle by secret ways."

Background

There was once a fortified town in the foothills of the southern Ered Luin, in what was the kingdom of Arthedain. It had been built above an abandoned Dwarven city, an underground complex extending for miles into the roots of the mountains. The castle was the seat of a valorous Dúnadan lord who fiercely resisted the Witch-king in the time of the wars with Angmar.

Eventually, the fortress was put under siege, and the lord captured alive during a sortie. He was tortured in sight of the castle's battlements, before the eyes of his spouse. She was a valiant warrior herself, a daughter of sea-kings, and she continued to defend the castle, despite her grievous loss. Eventually, the stronghold fell to black treachery, and both the castle and the surrounding town were razed, the ruins cursed by the Lord of the Ringwraiths himself. The noblewoman was consumed by grief, and with the passing of the years she became a Fell Wraith, while her followers degenerated into horrible, almost deathless creatures.

What remains of the fortress and town today is a tower in the midst of ruins. The area can be accessed only by finding the entrance to an underground guard post, and by a bridge crossing a narrow but deep ravine.

The entrance is currently used by a band of brigands as their base of operations. Influenced by evil men from the south, they are responsible for the disappearances of several wanderers in the area.

Locations

Advancing towards the southern Ered Luin, the Company sees the distant mountains rise steadily, like a high wall lining the horizon from north to south. But even closer to them are mountains running away from the main range,

JOURNEY EVENTS

Once the Company gets to Sarn Ford, at sunset they spot a faint luminescence to the west, and can follow it easily, like a beacon. As they head in its direction, they can find traces of the presence of a large band of brigands operating in the area – they find the remnants of their camps, and may even hear stories about them told by a lonely wanderer or two.

If the Player-heroes are not careful, the brigands may notice the Company and send a group of fighters to ambush them while they camp (see Schemes and Trouble, on page 229). If the players are careful enough, for example, by following the brigands' tracks and trying to stay one step ahead of them, they may be able to avoid them and reach their encampment without having to face them before that (see The Brigands' Camp).

forming an eastward arm. When twilight comes, the light that guides them appears at the feet of that arm. It's a land of bleak hills, and deep valleys filled with turbulent waters, running to join the river to the south.

Once they get near, the Player-heroes find that the tower they are seeking lies on the other side of a deep ravine. No means to traverse the chasm seem to be available — if the Player-heroes scout the ravine, for example walking along its border, they eventually spot a broken bridge some yards below the edge of the fissure, the two sides joined by a makeshift wooden ramp.

THE BRIGANDS' CAMP

As they look for a passage across the ravine, the Player-heroes find the camp of the brigands. It is located in front of a small cave, near the edge of the chasm. This is easily spotted, as a plume of smoke can be seen rising from a distance.

> The camp is garrisoned by a small group of brigands, composed of one Footpad for each Player-hero (see page 145). The majority of the brigands are away, looking for unwary travellers to rob.

The brigands look like a mix of southerners and mean-looking Men of Eriador, maybe coming from Tharbad. Among them is a short, wiry fellow by the name of Sabian, swarthy and dressed in black (see page 230). When the Player-heroes get close enough to the brigands' camp, Sabian is seen emerging from the cave, telling the others to be alert, as 'she is unquiet'.

TUTORIAL – MEETING THE BRIGANDS

A scene taking place at the Brigand's Camp is likely to concern the Company trying to ambush the garrison there. The precise circumstances are going to vary a lot though, based on what the Player-heroes have done so far. For example, the Player-heroes might have encountered the brigands on their way here, and maybe someone escaped to tell the others of the threat the Company poses. The Loremaster must take what happened before into due consideration, to make this new scene an ideal continuation of those that preceded it.

If the scene is going to involve combat (very likely), then the Loremaster should remind the players how killing non-monstrous enemies without provocation may be considered a Misdeed, and thus cause a Shadow gain. Then the Loremaster should provide a description of the area, trying to visualize the location and adding details to what has been written above. For example, a clear path might lead directly to the mouth of the cave, but that is certainly going to be in plain sight of the brigands in the camp. On the contrary, less visible tracks may lead to the back of the cave, behind a rise allowing the Player-heroes to stage a surprise attack using ranged weapons from superior ground, and thus giving them an additional ranged weapons volley.

All the Loremaster needs to do is to 'see' the location with their mind's eye, and be consistent in describing it to the players.

THE CAVE: If the Player-heroes deal with the brigands they can enter the cave. Once inside, they discover that ancient steps cut into the rock lead underground to a stone bridge that once crossed the ravine.

The bridge is now broken, but a makeshift wooden ramp joins the two sides. If the Company attacks the brigands without denying them the ability to retreat into the cave, Sabian seeks refuge underground, and cuts the ropes that hold up the ramp, letting it fall in the seemingly bottomless crevice.

The distance separating the two sides of the bridge seems too much to be jumped across, and the fall seems very dangerous — a noisy stream of water runs many yards below,

among broken rocks. The Company will have to find a way to cross the chasm safely…

TUTORIAL — SETTING UP OBSTACLES

Crossing the broken bridge is a good example of those obstacles that the Loremaster should use to challenge the players. The situation should lead them to discuss at length about how to overcome it — when they have declared their intentions, the Loremaster translates their approach into game terms.

A few examples follow, referencing the rules used to set them up, just to give an idea on how to apply the rules to model the choice of the players:

- The Player-heroes try to build a ramp — a Skill Endeavour certainly involving CRAFT (see Skill Endeavours, page 131);
- An Elf character jumps across, and then builds a rope bridge with the help of the others — the Elf spends Hope to invoke a Magical success, then everyone rolls ATHLETICS to get across at a Hazardous Skill level (see The Consequences of Failure, page 130);
- The Company goes down into the ravine using ropes, and then climbs up on the other side — one ATHLETICS roll each, again set at Hazardous Risk level.

THE DWARVEN GATE

This was one of the entrances that led to the Dwarven underground ruin. The Men of the West made it into a guard post. Now, the mostly empty room is littered by debris and refuse left by the brigands, as they use it as their sleeping quarters (not daring to go deeper into the ruins).

Player-heroes spending time here can hear the sound of dripping water, and the occasional gurgling sound coming from the next chamber. The only door leading somewhere interesting is the arched gate leading to the Flooded Chambers.

THE PANTRY: A small but deep niche on the west wall of the chamber was used as a pantry by the brigands. If the Player-heroes inspect the niche, they find that a small cache of stolen gold is hidden here, behind a supply of dry kindling, stale bread, and dried meat.

> The gold is worth a total of a Success die of Treasure points.

Among the gold are several personal items, that certainly belonged to the victims of the brigands:

> All Player-heroes who take a share of the gold gain 1 Shadow (Greed).

THE FLOODED CHAMBERS

When the Player-heroes cross the threshold leading here, an inexplicable sense of dread falls over them. This pillared hall was once a Dwarven chamber of records, that was later adapted by the Arnorian lords to become their Hallows. The survivors of the siege were buried alive here. The Witch-king then flooded the area, and laid a curse on it.

> The air is unwholesome, and seems thick and stuffy, as if a weight is gradually oppressing the Player-heroes — staying here causes all Player-heroes to gain 2 points of Shadow (Dread).

The hall is partially collapsed, and almost completely filled with muddy waters, waist-high. The walls are decorated by Dwarven inscriptions and carvings (Dwarves of Durin's Folk recognise the art as typical of the houses that used to dwell in this area - probably the Firebeards). Opposite the entrance opens a passage leading to a flight of steps, going up to the surface (they lead to the Accursed Halls, see page 226).

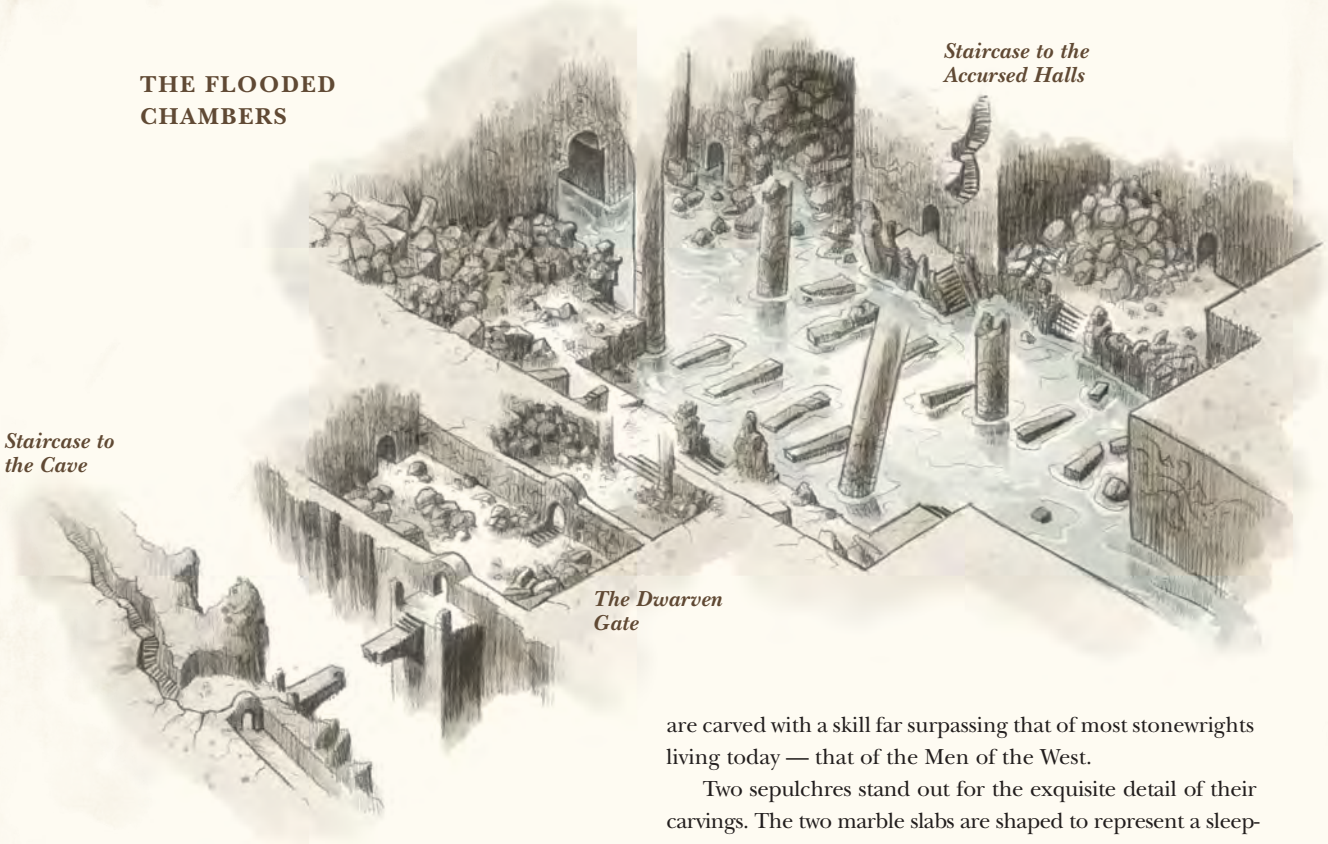
THE RUINS OF NARAG-NÂLA

The Dwarven underground complex is a small part of a Dwarven domain, the city of Narag-nâla (Player-heroes paying attention to the runes inscribed on the walls and arches of the place discover the name quickly). It is a dark maze of narrow passages, often leading to empty rooms, corridors blocked by fallen rocks, and half-collapsed halls.

> If the Player-heroes show an interest in exploring the various doors opening into the rooms shown in the Locations maps, the Loremaster must improvise the description of a seemingly endless labyrinth, or simply limit their exploration by describing how most passages lead to dead ends.

But the ruins are not entirely deserted. There are several Dwarves yet in Narag-nâla who still draw breath... (see Schemes and Trouble, page 230).

THE FLOODED CHAMBERS



A few minutes after the Company enters the Flooded Chambers, they notice someone, maybe a Dwarf, escaping into a side passage, and soon after they hear the deep toll of a bell. Moments later, a group of ghoulish creatures with sharp teeth and clawed hands emerge from the muddy waters of the chamber, and attack the Company!

- The Marsh-dwellers (see page 155) number twice the number of Player-heroes in the Company.
- The creatures concentrate their attacks on any Ranger of the North in the Company. Hobbits and Dwarves who confront the monsters while immersed in the waters are moderately hindered — they *lose (1d)* on all rolls.

No one can say if these creatures are what became of the Dúnedain that were trapped here long ago, cursed by the King of Angmar, or if they are evil creatures that came here on his command, to haunt the ruins.

THE SEPULCHRES: In the central section of the hall are a series of stone sepulchres. Some are intact, while others look like they were damaged by violent upheavals of the earth. All are carved with a skill far surpassing that of most stonewrights living today — that of the Men of the West.

Two sepulchres stand out for the exquisite detail of their carvings. The two marble slabs are shaped to represent a sleeping figure — one shows a lord and the other a lady, composed in the sleep of death. Both sepulchres are empty.

Inside the other tombs are buried the stewards and house-guards of the noble house that once ruled here. One of them contains the mortal remains of Angnir, the chief steward, and the house records, telling the story of the fallen lord. The text is incomplete, having been damaged by the passage of time. (See The House Records box nearby for the relevant information contained therein).

A LESSER HOARD: A small arched gate opens in the north-eastern corner of the chamber. Accessible easily only by Dwarves and Hobbits, it leads to a small room, where many precious things have been hoarded by the Marsh-dwellers.

The treasure chamber contains what amounts to a lesser hoard (see page 158 for the rules on Treasure).

THE ACCURSED HALLS

Once they get back to the surface, the Player-heroes emerge among a vast expanse of ruins, floating in a sea of dense mist. It is dark, regardless of the hour of the day — if morning or afternoon, the sun can be seen as a pale disc, incapable of penetrating the veil of fog.

THE HOUSE RECORDS

"Here is recorded the Fall of the House of Hadirion, and his wife Elwen. I, Angnir, steward and captain of the guards, write this record to preserve its memory. It was in the time of ..."

"They built a wooden seat, in mockery of a throne, in plain sight of the castle walls. Then, they tied our Lord Hadirion to it, to torment and ridicule him. They tortured him for hours ... When the Orcs nailed an iron crown to his head, hailing Hadirion as the rightful ruler of the land, the Lady Elwen summoned me, and asked me to prove my reputation as the best bowman of Arthedain. I chose an arrow from those that I received from my father, and he from his father before him. A white plumed, slender dart."

"I bent my bow with all my strength, and the arrow flew straight, piercing the hand of a huge Orc who was tormenting Hadirion, and burying itself deep into the chest of my Lord. I broke my bow after the deed..."

The rest of the records chronicle the fall of the castle, in broken fragments – treasonous Dwarves allowed the enemy to enter the castle undetected. Those who survived the onslaught fled underground, and were trapped. The Lady Elwen disappeared.

THE ACCURSED HALLS

Staircase to the Flooded Chambers

Advancing among the rubble is difficult — crumbling walls and pillars jut out from thick tangles of vegetation, and twisted and bare trees split ancient flagstones with their roots. Nothing rises for more than a few yards — the city of Lord Hadirion and Lady Elwen was literally razed to the ground.

The exception to this is the Tower of the Star (see next page), and what appears to be an island of broken stonework, a cluster of ruins rising where once was a majestic palace. The shape of a main hall is still recognisable, a flight of wide, cracked steps leading to it. Its walls are covered in crude graffiti, probably drawn by Orcs.

Among the graffiti are mixed sentences composed using Elvish letters, of an ancient mode — they are written with horrible care, using the Black Speech, to form the curse of the Witch-king.

> Player-heroes who read the words gain 2 Shadow points (Sorcery), regardless of whether they can read Elvish or understand the language of Mordor.

Whoever gains at least 1 Shadow point learns the meaning of the curse — it was laid by the Witch-king of Angmar himself, wroth at how strongly the Dúnedain opposed him. The ruins are bound to suffer from its effects, as long as the torment of Lord Hadirion continues (see The Tower of the Star).

TUTORIAL — EXPANDING THE ACCURSED HALLS

The Accursed Halls are just a part of the vast ruins that once were a city of the Dúnedain. For the most part, they're just ancient, cold stones, but who can say what lurks there, in the shadow of the tormented spirit of Elwen?

If the players show an interest in exploring the place, the Loremaster can expand their descriptions as they see fit. Here follow a number of ideas that can help the Loremaster in giving further substance to the ruins:

- An old well, covered by rotten planks. It is very deep, and at its bottom lies the skeleton of an exceptionally large Orc, a veritable monster. He was a lieutenant of the Witch-king, and died in the attack — a Númenorean arrow still pierces his skull.
- A wild apple tree, grown among the rocks. Anyone eating one of its sour apples and resting in its shade experiences strange visions belonging to the past of the city.
- An enormous, leprous deer haunts the ruins. It is an eerie apparition and a sign of ill-omen. Player-heroes gain 1 point of Shadow (Dread).
- Beyond a rusty iron gate lies a patch of greenery, where the orchard of an herbalist once was. Several ancient and useful herbs still grow there, and can be gathered — they grant a bonus of *(1d)* to a HEALING roll, for a Success die worth of applications.
- Jalin, a lunatic Dwarf of Narag-nâla, sometimes comes to dwell in the ruins. An outcast from his own people, he lives off rats and other disgusting things. Jalin's dreams are haunted by the spirit of Elwen, as he feels a mix of love and fear for her. He will try to kill or drag into a trap any trespassers in "his city".
- The pieces of a battering ram forged in the smithies of Angmar lie among the fragments of a shattered gate. Its huge metal head is shaped like that of a monstrous Orc with gaping maws. It is imbued with dark magic — If the heroes touch it, the ground under their feet collapses, causing them to fall for several yards into a buried chamber below (a long fall, see page 134).

THE COMING OF THE LADY ELWEN: Once the Company reaches the Accursed Halls, at a moment when the Loremaster considers it most appropriate, the Lady Elwen approaches. She was once a valorous Dúnadan noble lady, but when her city fell, she survived, only to be slowly consumed by grief and by the curse of the Chief of the Ringwraiths — she is now a Fell Wraith, bound to roam the ruins of her castle.

As a Fell Wraith, she appears as a crooked hag, wrapped in tatters hiding her spectral features. Her flesh is almost transparent, and her eyes glow like embers. Thin strands of white hair escape her hood. She addresses the Company speaking in a hissing voice and strange accent:

"Why have you come? There's nothing here, only death. Leave this place, or join me in my torment!"

She is armed with a long, pitted sword, and a spear, the weapons she used to defend her city and fortress.

Elwen

FELL WRAITH
Horrific, Sorrowful

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL: 5

ENDURANCE	MIGHT	HATE	PARRY	ARMOUR
24	2	5	+2	2

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES: Pitted Blade 3 (4/16), Spear 2 (4/14, Pierce)

FELL ABILITIES: *Deathless.* Spend 1 Hate to cancel a Wound. When an attack inflicts damage to the creature that would cause it to go to zero Endurance, spend 1 Hate to bring the creatures back to full Endurance instead. This ability is ineffective against Player-heroes wielding a magical weapon enchanted with spells for the Bane of the Undead.

Denizen of the Dark. All attack rolls are *Favoured* while in darkness.

Fear of Fire. The creature loses 1 Hate at the start of each round it is engaged in close combat with an adversary wielding a torch or other sort of burning item.

Heartless: The creature is not affected by the Intimidate Foe combat task, unless a Magical success is obtained.

Thing of Terror: At the start of the first round of the battle all Player-heroes in sight of one or more creatures with this ability gain 3 Shadow points (Dread). Those who fail their Shadow test are daunted and cannot spend Hope for the rest of the fight.

TUTORIAL — BUILDING UP THE CLIMAX

The confrontation with Elwen can be run in many different ways, again based on what the players choose to do. The Loremaster can have her appear as a ghost would, in the middle of the night while the Player-heroes are sleeping (hopefully with someone standing guard), or, they may spy her from afar, climbing down the stairs of the tower, and then turning towards them, slowly but inexorably. The ruins of the town offer many hiding places, should the Player-heroes choose to stay away from her, but they won't be able to get near the Tower without engaging her in combat. Moreover, she seems to possess an uncanny ability to sense where the Player-heroes hide.

THE CURSE OF THE LADY ELWEN: If the Player-heroes manage to kill the Fell Wraith (reducing her to zero Endurance, or Wounding her twice), they will experience for a moment a vision of a high Númenorean lady, in full armour, beautiful but terrible — she looks at the Player-heroes, then screams!

As they recover their senses a moment later, they discover that Elwen is gone, only to return at some point later, fully restored and ready to fight (when the Loremaster deems it most appropriate for dramatic effect).

During the time needed for her to return, the luminescence at the top of the Tower of the Star intensifies (it's the stone set on Hadirion's crown, the focus of the curse).

The Lady Elwen can be finally put to rest if the crown nailed to the head of Hadirion is removed (see below). When this happens, Elwen recovers her lost beauty for an instant — then, her body crumbles to dust. The curse has been lifted.

THE TOWER OF THE STAR

Beyond the Accursed Halls rises the Tower of the Star. Built of a harder and more ancient stone than the rest of the ruins, it proved impervious to the power that crushed this place centuries ago, and time itself was unable to cast it down. Only its highest floor was damaged in the war, and its jagged stonework makes it look like a hand with stunted fingers.

It is here at the top of the tower that the mortal remains of the Lord Hadirion lie, a mummified body tied on a rotting throne of wood, a metal crown nailed to his head. A shining blue gem is set on the crown, its luminescence visible for miles and miles.

If the crown is removed from the brow of Hadirion, the curse is lifted (see The Curse of Lady Elwen) and the mummified body of the Dunadan lord finally is reduced to dust. Until that moment, Elwen continues to haunt the ruins of the town and castle, attacking everyone on sight, until no living soul remains to remind her of what she lost…

A GREATER HOARD: Once the curse is lifted, the Player-heroes have time to search the ruins. On the ground floor of the tower, hidden by debris, is a trapdoor. This leads to an underground chamber, probably used as a dungeon once.

The dungeon contains what amounts to a greater hoard (see page 158 for the rules on Treasure).

SCHEMES AND TROUBLE

This section presents events that can occur in the course of the Adventuring Phase session, based on the actions of the Player-heroes. How to employ them is up to the Loremaster.

THE BRIGANDS

The band of brigands sheltering in the area west of Sarn Ford is a large company of ruthless men. Driven by necessity and greed, they waylay those few travellers they meet on the road, and plunder the many ruins dotting the land, looking for treasure. They are careful to hide any proof of their misdeeds, to avoid raising the attention of the Rangers of the North — so far their strategy is working.

If the Company is not careful and the Loremaster deems it appropriate for the brigands to notice them, a group of bandits composed of one Highway Robber for each Player-hero, plus two or three Footpads (see page 147) tries to ambush them.

SABIAN, THE SPY FROM UMBAR

The brigands are being manipulated by a group of Men from Umbar, who seem to have an interest in exploring the ruins of Cardolan and Eriador. They have infiltrated the group of robbers, and are slowly taking the lead among them. Sabian is among them, a Southron mariner who now is leading the band operating beyond the Brandywine river.

He is a spy, using the brigands' activities as cover to explore Eriador and its ruins.

How to employ Sabian is up to the Loremaster. He is stealthy and clever, and can hide easily, unless the Player-heroes make capturing him their primary goal. Sabian can spring traps on the Player-heroes, or sabotage their plans. If left to his own devices, Sabian will eventually leave the ruins, and join the brigands outside (see Trapped!, below).

Sabian is a Southerner Raider (see page 146).

THE TOWER OF THE STAR

TREACHEROUS DWARVES

A colony of Dwarves from the southern Ered Luin lives deep underground, far below the Flooded Chambers. They are the descendants of the Dwarves that betrayed Hadirion and Elwen, and they still pay the price for the misdeed of their ancestors: to this day, they haven't been able to reclaim the upper halls of their underground realm, as they are infested by the Marsh-dwellers.

A suspicious lot, they initially intend to harm the Player-heroes, as they see them as trespassers in their domain — one of them rings the bell attracting the Marsh-dwellers when the Company first enters the ruins.

If the Company deals with the Marsh-dwellers efficiently, the Dwarves might stop harassing them, as they start to believe they might indeed be able to lift the curse once and for all.

From time to time, the Loremaster should give the Player-heroes a chance to notice they are being spied upon from a distance, always by one single figure, perhaps a Dwarf, who immediately disappears when noticed.

If the Player-heroes are determined to contact the Dwarves, they have a chance to succeed only if they look for them once the curse of the Tower of the Star has been lifted. In that case, the Dwarves themselves may choose to talk to the Player-heroes.

TRAPPED!

In all likelihood, the Player-heroes will spend the best part of their adventure inside the ruins, on the other side of the ravine. As they are busy dealing with the creatures haunting the place, the brigands will return to their refuge, and find out what happened to their garrison there.

In general terms, the brigands won't enter the accursed ruins, and will lay in wait for the Player-heroes to come back out.

Staircase to The Accursed Halls

They are too many for the Company to tackle head-on — the Loremaster can consider them to be at least four times as numerous as the Player-heroes, counting among them an assortment of Highway Robbers and Footpads.

One way could be to search for another way out by exploring the Dwarven underground city. It seems very hard to navigate, and seems only to go deeper and deeper.

If the Player-heroes do so, the Loremaster can use the A Council Underground event, presented below.

A COUNCIL UNDERGROUND

If the Company is determined to explore the underground city, they are eventually beset by fire-bearded, fierce Dwarven warriors, armed with great axes. They say that they cannot pass without leave from their lord, nor will they be able to find the way out without assistance — do they wish to seek counsel with him?

If they ask to see their lord, an underground bell tolls, and a single female Dwarf shows up: 'You have asked to meet Veiko, lord of Narag-nâla" (the Black River).

All Player-heroes must accept being blindfolded. Then, they are led even deeper underground, to a dark hall resounding with the noise of running water.

Veiko is an ancient Dwarf, sitting on a crude throne of stone. She is blind, and speaks exclusively in the Dwarven speech, almost whispering — her daughter, Ilmi, leans over to hear what she says, and translates. Her guard stands by, old, grizzled Dwarven warriors armed with axes. Between themselves, they speak using the secret sign-language of the Dwarves.

The meeting with Veiko can be set up using the rules for Councils. If the Player-heroes are only asking to be led out of the Dwarven city and nothing else, their request can be considered reasonable (Resistance 3) if they have lifted the curse, or bold (Resistance 6) if they haven't.

If the council results in a Failure, the Dwarves deny safe passage, and lead the Company to the upper halls again. On a Success with Woe, they allow the Company to pass on a condition — they must yield the stone that was set on Hadirion's crown (it was made by the Dwarves). On a Success, they are allowed safe passage simply on a promise that they will leave the Dwarves alone. They add that they want to be forgotten.

The Player-heroes are led out by secret passages, still blindfolded, until they emerge on the surface once again, at a safe distance from the entrance, where the brigands lay in wait.

VEIKO'S TALES

The following information can be used by the Loremaster in the course of the Interaction stage of the council.

Veiko and her folk are among those who decided not to go to Khazad-dûm when Thangorodrim was broken, and chose to remain in the Ered Luin. But Veiko is so old she fought at Azanulbizar, and saw many Dwarves of her kin die in vain. If asked about their treachery, Veiko confesses with a broken voice that long ago a misguided Dwarf belonging to their kin helped the Witch-king, but was betrayed himself. For centuries, they have waited for the day when the curse would be lifted from the upper halls, so that they could reclaim them.

Nameless Things

"There are older and fouler things than Orcs in the deep places of the world."

The darkest legends of the Dwarves whisper of ancient things living in the pools and lakes of remote dales, and lurking in dark tunnels dug before the Orcs came to the mountains. So little is known about these beings that no one ever gave them a name. They do not seem creations of the Great Enemy, Morgoth, for they are older than his lieutenant Sauron, and unknown to him. Their accursed breed might be akin to that of the monstrous Ungoliant, the mother of all Spiders, but they might be something else entirely. Whence they came no one can say — they are evil, but they do not heed the call of the Shadow.

What is certain about all of them is that they are always a horrible sight to behold, and that they are very dangerous. They are not just simple beasts, but have a primitive intelligence, linked to their survival instinct, certainly, but often betraying some deeper drive or craving. They all hate the light, and thus live in the darkest recesses of the earth, or in

the depths of lakes or underground rivers, which is the reason why no one has ever seen one of them in their entirety. If they come to the surface, they do it for a short time, enough to spread fear and despair, and then they return to their hidden lairs to rest undisturbed.

Nameless Things in The One Ring

Nameless Things can be introduced to the game by a Loremaster looking for a formidable adversary for their Company of heroes. Differently from most opponents presented in this volume, they do not really belong to a specific breed, and thus must be designed by the Loremaster personally, using the guidelines offered below. The result will be a unique creature, complete with a level of backstory, to underline the long years that the creature has spent troubling the unhappy world.

CHILDREN OF DARKNESS

To create a Nameless Thing, the Loremaster must make a number of rolls on the tables presented in this section, using either a Feat die or a Success die, or by directly choosing the entries they see to be most fitting.

The tables numbered from 1 to 5 are used to create the identity of the thing, and give it a story.

- Table 1 is used to determine how the Thing is referred to.
- Table 2 is used to generate its general description.
- Table 3 is used to determine what the Player-heroes notice moments before the Thing appears, and then what they see first.
- Table 4 is used to generate a rumour about the Thing.
- Table 5 is used to discover where the Thing is remembered.

Tables 6 to 8 are instead used to determine the characteristics of the Nameless Thing in gaming terms.

- Table 6 determines all the usual stats required to use the Thing as an adversary, including the number of Fell Abilities it should possess.
- Table 7 is used to determine the forms of attack that the Thing employs.
- Table 8 lists all the Fell Abilities available to give the thing the powers it requires.

Finally, all Nameless Things display tremendous resistance to damage but suffer badly under the light of the sun — they all possess the Hate Sunlight and Hideous Toughness Fell Abilities.

- **HATE SUNLIGHT:** The thing loses 1 Hate at the start of each round it is exposed to the full light of the sun.
- **HIDEOUS TOUGHNESS:** The creature is unaffected by unarmed attacks. Additionally, when an attack inflicts damage to the creature that would cause it to go to zero Endurance, it causes a Piercing Blow instead. Then, if the creature is still alive its Endurance score is set back at half its maximum rating.

TABLE 1. THE THING IS REFERRED TO AS...

ROLL A FEAT DIE		ROLL A SUCCESS DIE ONCE FOR EACH COLUMN		
	The Bane	1	...in the Dark	...by Men
1	The Scourge			
2	The Horror	2	...of the Abyss	...by Elves
3	The Terror			
4	The Defiler	3	...in the Deep	...by Dwarves
5	The Devourer			
6	The Stalker	4	...of the Pit	...by Orcs
7	The Hunter			
8	The Watcher	5	...of Udûn	...by the Wise
9	The Crawler			
10	The Lurker	6	...in the Water	...in ancient lore
	The Flame			

TABLE 2. THE THING CAN BE DESCRIBED AS...

ROLL A FEAT DIE ONCE		ROLL A SUCCESS DIE	
	Bat-like	1	...with remorseless eyes
1	Spider-like		
2	Fish-like	2	...with great horns
3	Slug-like		
4	Worm-like	3	...with luminous skin
5	Centipede-like		
6	Insect-like	4	...with a huge head
7	Crustacean-like		
8	Octopus-like	5	...with a swollen body
9	Man-like		
10	Toad-like	6	...yet greater
	Troll-like		

TABLE 3. WHEN FIRST ENCOUNTERED...

BEFORE YOU SEE IT, YOU... (ROLL A FEAT DIE ONCE)		WHAT YOU SEE FIRST... (ROLL A FEAT DIE ONCE)	
	...notice a deadly silence		...is a great shadow, in the middle of which is a dark form
1	...hear a sinister hissing	1	...are its great claws
2	...hear a low growl	2	...are its eyes, glowing in the dark
3	...see the bones of its victims	3	...is that its body is flaccid and translucent, as if composed of gelatinous material
4	...feel your skin crawl	4	...is its gaping mouth, opening and closing as if gasping for air
5	...hear a deafening sound or scream	5	...is a large maw, with fangs eerily similar to human teeth
6	...notice its tracks	6	...is that swarms of insects or other vermin are crawling before it
7	...hear a terrifying scream	7	...is a long, sinuous tentacle, slithering towards you
8	...smell a hideous stench	8	...are its huge fangs, so big and long that it cannot close its mouth
9	...feel a violent gust of air	9	...are its wide, blind eyes
10	...hear a piping sound	10	...are many twisted horns of stained ivory
	...feel a terrible cold		...is a vision of a beautiful creature, a phantom of the mind

TABLE 4. A RUMOUR ABOUT THE THING:

ROLL A FEAT DIE	
	When Sauron reoccupied Dol Guldur, he sought the allegiance of the many dark things living in Mirkwood. Some refused, and were imprisoned in the vast dungeons of the fortress. When the White Council attacked, one such creature was still kept there in chains, dying. Later, it managed to break free and vanish into the darkness, a sworn enemy of any living being.
1	When Annúminas was young, the Men of Arnor disturbed something monstrous that had been sleeping on the bottom of Lake Evendim for millennia. One summer night, the thing lashed out in fury at several ships anchored near the harbour, dragging them into the depths, along with their crews. Then, it disappeared again. For a while.
2	Forced long ago to serve Sauron, the thing fought at the battle of Dagorlad, spreading terror among the ranks of the Elves. Since no one had the courage to face it, Gil-galad himself had to intervene. Surprised by the steadfastness of the High King and the splendour of Aiglos, his great spear, the thing chose to retreat. With the defeat of its master, the thing regained its free will and fled across Middle-earth.
3	After the Great Plague, the once wealthy Tharbad fell into decay, and its population diminished. One night, some among those who still lived in the city saw a large black shadow slowly approach the bridge, encompassing it. After a few moments, with a great roar, the bridge crumbled into a thousand pieces.
4	Ohtar, Isildur's squire who was among the few to save himself from the ambush of the Orcs, escaped the disaster of the Gladden Fields, taking with him the sword of Elendil. Some say he was chased for a long time by a monstrous creature, which moved only at night. The thing seemed able to 'smell' his movements.
5	Fornost didn't fall by normal means. The Witch-king of Angmar unleashed against the city a terrifying creature that owed the Wraith-king a debt of gratitude. It was this enemy of all light and life that disrupted the defenses and brought them down. The debt paid, it returned to the darkness from which it had been called.
6	The Dwarves spoke of many horrors haunting the Grey Mountains. Emerging from who knows where, they crawled into the mines, killing and destroying. Eventually the Dwarves managed to drive them out, but one of them just wouldn't go away. It is said that it was Thorin I who defeated and drove it away, in a long duel that took place in the dark depths of the mine.
7	For a long time, the thing dwelt in a deep cave in the northernmost foothills of the Misty Mountains. The Hillmen worshipped it as a god, feeding and caring for it. Then war came to those territories. Armies of Elves and Men drove out the Hillmen, and the thing was deprived of its followers, developing an irrepressible hatred against the invaders.
8	Centuries ago, the thing dwelt in the darkest recesses of a valley on the east side of the Misty Mountains. One day, it came to a village of the Woodmen, when the hunters were away. When they returned, they were met by a gruesome scene: dismembered bodies, destroyed houses, a terrible smell that filled the air. No survivors.
9	Once every certain number of years, the thing returns to the Mountains of Mirkwood. When it does, hundreds of Spiders, large and small, swarm as if crazed to the south or west, overwhelming whatever they encounter in their path.
10	The thing is greedy. Not for treasure, but for bones. Animal ones are easy to get, and so are those of Orcs, Men, or Dwarves – this has made the thing hungry for the bones of Elves.
	When Beleriand was broken, many creatures fled its ruin. Among them is a thing that is particularly large and cruel. Since that time, it has been moving east.

TABLE 5. WHERE THE THING IS REMEMBERED:

ROLL A FEAT DIE

	Orcs hate the evil things that crawl in the dark perhaps even more than Men, Elves, and Dwarves. For they are more often the ones who end up as food to feed them. Being able to talk to an Orc could prove very useful, if the thing is nearby.
1	The Great Eagles see many things from above, but they don't speak of them unless they have a good reason. They do not tell, for example, of the monstrosity that after darkness haunted the banks of the Great River long ago, devouring lonely travellers. They spied it incessantly. One day, it was gone. The Eagles searched the surroundings for a long time, but to no avail.
2	There is only one Elven song that tells of the mournings caused by the thing, but being immensely sad, it is seldom sung in the Hall of Fire of Rivendell. Some say that if it's nighttime and you fear the thing is nearby, singing the whole song will keep it from getting closer.
3	A sentence carved onto the wall of a dark cave in the north near the Grey Waste, reads: "Here Belegorn son of Bergil of Dol Amroth banished the thing from the Abyss but died of its foul wounds. Glorfindel of the Elves retrieved his body to return to his family"
4	Among the ancient scrolls and books preserved in Minas Tirith, there is a brief chronicle of the times when the city itself was built. Despite numerous missing pieces of text, it is clear that it concerns the presence of an evil thing under Mount Mindolluin, horrible to look upon and very aggressive.
5	Few traces remain of the countless generations of Northmen who inhabited the southeastern edge of Mirkwood. Among them is a burial monument covered in soft moss. An inscription speaks of the death of Crinna, a village chief probably, caused by a terrible thing that came out of the woods at night and could only be kept at bay by lighting large fires.
6	Since many Hobbits are afraid of the water, there is a common test of courage among the youth of the Eastfarthing that involves reciting a nursery rhyme while sitting on the shore of the Brandywine, at night. The rhyme, handed down since the dawn of time, speaks of a thing made of darkness, which comes out of the water and devours those who look at their reflection in the moonlight.
7	The Rangers tell many tales of the horrible and mysterious things that prowl in Eriador. Most are made up, the Elves laughingly say, but one is definitely not. A creature that can suddenly appear at your side while you're sleeping. The Elves speak of it as well, but they are less concerned, since they never sleep...
8	Saruman loves secrets. And he is adept at keeping quiet about his well-stocked collection of texts concerning the presence of dark creatures roaming Middle-earth. He tried to classify them once, but soon desisted: too many, and too different from each other.
9	The Seeing Stone on the tower of Elostirion, in the Emyn Beraid, constantly looks westwards, beyond the sea. Only on very few occasions does it turn its gaze elsewhere, when a creature as ancient and evil approaches the Grey Havens. It follows this hideous thing in all its movements, and only when it passes out of sight does the Stone return to look towards the immortal lands.
10	In the private library of Elrond, in Rivendell, there is a parchment entirely dedicated to the creature, with many indications about its habits and the places where it might lurk.
	Only the wisest of Middle-earth know anything about this dark creature as old as the earth. And they fear it. But by asking them directly, some good advice might be acquired. If you want to avoid it or flee from it of course, not on how to fight it, for no one would be so foolish...

TABLE 6. CHARACTERISTICS:

FEAT DIE ROLL	ATTRIBUTE LEVEL AND HATE	ARMOUR	ENDURANCE	MIGHT	COMBAT PROFICIENCY	# OF FELL ABILITIES
	12	5d	120	3	4	5
1–2	11	4d	110	3	3	4
3–4	10	4d	100	3	3	4
5–6	9	3d	90	2	3	3
7–8	8	3d	80	2	3	3
9–10	7	3d	70	2	3	2
	6	2d	60	2	2	2

A Nameless Thing should be given a Parry modifier if the concept suits the description of a creature that can deftly avoid the attacks of its enemies (ranging from +1 to +3). If the thing is slow and bulky, no Parry modifier should be applied (and a negative modifier could be considered instead).

TABLE 7. ATTACK FORMS:

SUCCESS DIE ROLL*	ATTACK	DAMAGE	INJURY	SPECIAL DAMAGE
1–2	Crush (hooves, paws)	Attribute Level	12	Break Shield
3–4	Bite (bite, beak)	Attribute Level –2	14	Pierce
5–6	Rend (fangs, claws)	Attribute Level –2	16	Seize

* Roll twice on the following table to determine the primary and secondary attacks of the Nameless Thing.

TABLE 8. FELL ABILITIES:

ROLL A FEAT DIE		
	Thing of Terror	At the start of the first round of the battle all Player-heroes in sight of one or more creatures with this ability gain 3 Shadow points (Dread). Those who fail their Shadow test are daunted and cannot spend Hope for the rest of the fight.
1	Deadly Wound	Wounded targets make an *Ill-favoured* Feat die roll to determine the severity of the injury.
2	Denizen of the Dark	All rolls are *Favoured* while in darkness.
3	Great Leap	Spend 1 Hate to attack any Player-hero, in any combat stance, including Rearward.
4	Horrible Strength	If the creature hits and causes a Piercing Blow, spend 1 Hate to make the target's Protection roll *Ill-favoured*.
5	Poison	If an attack results in a Wound, the target is also poisoned (see page 134).
6	Heartless	The creature is not affected by the Intimidate Foe combat task, unless a Magical success is obtained.
7	Thick Hide	Spend 1 Hate point to *gain (2d)* on a Protection roll.

8	Strike Fear	Spend 1 Hate to make all Player-heroes in sight gain a number of Shadow points (Dread) equal to the Might rating of the creature. Those who fail their Shadow test are daunted and cannot spend Hope for the rest of the fight.
9	Snake-like Speed	When targeted by an attack, spend 1 Hate to make the attack roll *Ill-favoured*.
10	Foul Reek	Spend 1 Hate point to cause all combatants engaged with the thing to *lose (1d)* on all rolls for the round.
V	Fear of Fire	The thing loses 1 Hate at the start of each round it is engaged in close combat with an adversary wielding a torch or other sort of burning item.

INDEX

A
Action Resolution (Combat) 97
Adelard Took 187
Advantages 102
Adventure Points 56
Adventuring Career 56
Adventuring in the Third Age 8
The Adventuring Phase 12, 92
Ambushes 95
Armour (Adversaries) 144
Armour and Shields 75
Athletics (Skill) 61
Attack Roll 98
Attribute Level (Adversaries) 143
Attributes 29
Awareness (Skill) 62
Awe (Skill) 62
Axes (Combat Proficiency) 66

B
Balin, son of Fundin 52
Banes (Treasure) 162
Bardings 32
Barnabas Butterbur 183
Battle (Skill) 62
Beinion and Arin of Evendim 180
Bilbo Baggins 52
Blessings 162
Bold (Distinctive Feature) 67
Bonus Success Dice 20
Border Land 113
Bout of Madness 139
Bows (Combat Proficiency) 66
Brawling Attacks 67
Break Shield (Adversaries) 144
Bree-hobbits 181
Búrzgul 198

C
Callings 44
Canon and the Loremaster 129
Captain (Calling) 44
Carrying Treasure 159
Champion (Calling) 44
Change Useful Items (Fellowship Phase) 121
Changing a Distinctive Feature 67
Characteristics 29
Círdan the Shipwright 52
Close Quarters Rounds 95
Combat Proficiencies 65
Combat Proficiencies (Adversaries) 144
Combat Tasks 102
Common (Standard of Living) 72
The Company 51
Complications 102
Complications and Advantages 101
Conditions 22
Council Sequence 104
Council Structure 106
Courtesy (Skill) 62
Craft (Skill) 62
Craftsmanship (Treasure) 162, 163
Creating the Heir 57
Cultural Virtues 81
Cunning (Distinctive Feature) 67
Current Year 207
Cursed Items 167

D
Dark Land 113
Defensive Stance 96
Degree of Success 18
Derived Stats 29
Die Roll Modifiers 20
Die Roll Procedure 23
Disaster! 131
Distinctive Features 30, 67
Distinctive Features (Adversaries) 144
Dread (Shadow) 137
Dwarves of Durin's Folk 34
Dying 101

E
Eager (Distinctive Feature) 67
Elves of Lindon 36
Enchanted Rewards 165
Ending the Journey 111
End of a Council 108
Endurance 69
Endurance (Adversaries) 143
Endurance Loss 98, 134
Endurance Loss Levels 134
Engagement 96
Engagement Limits 97
Enhearten (Skill) 62
Experience 55
Experience Points Costs (Fellowship Phase) 119
Explore (Skill) 62
Exploring Middle-earth 207
Extreme Cold 134
Eye Awareness 170
Eye of Sauron 17

F
Fair (Distinctive Feature) 68
Fair-spoken (Distinctive Feature) 68
Faithful (Distinctive Feature) 68
Falling 134
Fatal Injuries 134
Fatigue 69, 111
Favoured Rolls 20
Favoured Skills 60
The Feat Dice 17
Fell Abilities 144
Fellowship Focus 55
The Fellowship Phase 13
Fellowship Phase Structure 118
Fellowship Rating 54
Fend Off (Special Damage) 99
Fierce (Distinctive Feature) 68
Fire 134
First Aid 101
Fitch Talltree, the Forester of Archet 188
Flawed Heroes 141
Flaws 141
Fleeing 104
Foolish Actions 131
Forced March 111
Forward Stance 96
Frugal (Standard of Living) 72
Further Adventures 56

G
Gandalf Rune 17
Gandalf the Grey 52
Generous (Distinctive Feature) 68
Gilraen, daughter of Dírhael 52
Glossary of Game Terms 24
Greed (Shadow) 138
Growth (Fellowship Phase) 119
Guide (Journey Role) 109

H
Handling Scenes 126
Harden Will 137
Hate (Adversaries) 143
Hazardous Actions 131
Healing (Skill) 62
Heavy Blow (Adversaries) 144
Heavy Blow (Special Damage) 99
Heirs 56
Heroic Ventures 93
Hoarding Riches 73
Hoard rating 158
Hoards 158
Hobbit-Ponies and Full-Sized Horses 50
Hobbits of the Shire 38
Honourable (Distinctive Feature) 68
Hope 71
Hope Bonus 20
Hunter (Journey Role) 109
Hunting (Skill) 63
Hunt Threshold 172

I
Ill-favoured rolls 20
Improve Standard of Living 73
Inquisitive (Distinctive Feature) 68
Insight (Skill) 63
Inspiration 20
Interaction (Councils) 106
Intimidate Foe (Combat Task) 102
Introduction (Councils) 106
Items of Superior Worth 79

J
John Ferny 184
Journey Event Resolution 112
Journey Events 114
Journey Events Table 112
Journey Length 111
Journey Log 108, 110
Journey Path 109
Journey Roles 109
Journeys 108
Journey Sequence 109

K
Keen-eyed (Distinctive Feature) 68
Knockback 98

L
Landmarks 221
Languages and Typical Names 30
Load 49
Look-out (Journey Role) 109
Lordly (Distinctive Feature) 68
Loremaster Actions (Combat) 98
The Loremaster as Director 128
The Loremaster as Narrator 129
The Loremaster as Referee 128
Loremaster Characters 135
Lore (Skill) 63

M
Madness 139
Magical Success 21
Magical Treasure 159
Making Rolls 17
The Map 108
Marching Test 110
Men of Bree 40
Merry (Distinctive Feature) 68
Messenger (Calling) 45
Might (Adversaries) 143
Misdeeds (Shadow) 138
Miserable 22, 71, 137
More Enemies than Player-heroes 97
More Player-heroes than Enemies 97

N
Named Weapons 80

O
The Onset of Battle 93
Opening Volleys 94
Open Stance 96
Opposed Actions 132
Oswald Breeker 186

P
Palantír 216
Parry (Adversaries) 144
Patient (Distinctive Feature) 68
Patron 52, 212
Penalty Success Dice 21
Perilous Areas 111
Persuade (Skill) 64
Pierce (Adversaries) 144
Pierce (Special Damage) 99
Piercing Blows 99
Playing the Game 8
Poison 134
Poor (Standard of Living) 72
The Prancing Pony 181
Precious Objects 159
Prepare Shot (Combat Task) 103
Previous Experience 46
Prolonged Rest 71
Prosperous (Standard of Living) 72
Protect Companion (Combat Task) 103
Protection Test 99
Proud (Distinctive Feature) 68

R
Raising an Heir 56
Rally Comrades (Combat Task) 102
Rangers of the North 42
Rearward Stance 96
Recovering Hope 71
Repeating a Roll 17
Resistance (Councils) 105
Resolve (Adversaries) 143
Resolving Attacks 98
Resting 71
Revealing the Company 172
Rewards 78
Rich (Standard of Living) 72
Riddle (Skill) 64
Risk Levels 131
Rustic (Distinctive Feature) 68

S
The Safe Haven 53
Scan (Skill) 64
Scholar (Calling) 45
Scout (Journey Role) 109
Secretive (Distinctive Feature) 68
Seize (Adversaries) 144
Session Length and Advancement Rate 57
The Shadow of the Past 9
Shadow Paths 140
Shadow Points 136
Shadow Tests 137
Shield Thrust (Special Damage) 99
Short Rest 71
Singing Songs 123
Skill Categories 60
Skill Endeavour Sequence 132
Skill Groups 61
Skill List 61
Skill Points 56
Skills 60
Skills and Combat Proficiencies 30
Smoke Ring Festival 187
Song (Skill) 65
Sorcery (Shadow) 139
Sources of Injury 134
Sources of Shadow 137
Spears (Combat Proficiency) 66
Special Damage 99
Special Damage Options (Adversaries) 144
Special Successes 18
Spiritual Recovery (Fellowship Phase) 119
Stances 95
Standard Actions 131
Standards of Living 72
Starting Gear 47
Starting Patrons 52
Starting Reward and Virtue 51
Starting Treasure rating 72
Stealth (Skill) 65
Stern (Distinctive Feature) 68
Structure of the Game 12
Subtle (Distinctive Feature) 69
The Success Dice 18
Success Icon 17
Succumbing to the Shadow 140
Suffocation 134
Support 20
Surprise Attacks 95
Swift (Distinctive Feature) 69
Swords (Combat Proficiency) 66

T
Talking with the Enemy 99
Tall (Distinctive Feature) 69
Target Numbers 18, 29
Tom Bombadil and Lady Goldberry 52
Training (Fellowship Phase) 119
Travel Fatigue 111
Travelling Gear 49
Travel (Skill) 65
Treasure Hunter (Calling) 45
The Treasure Index 160
The Treasury 164
True-hearted (Distinctive Feature) 69

U
Undertakings (Fellowship Phase) 121
Unengaged Heroes 97
Useful Items 49
Useful Skills (Councils) 107

V
Valour 78
Very Rich (Standard of Living) 73
Virtues 80
Virtues of the Bardings 81
Virtues of the Dwarves 82
Virtues of the Elves 84
Virtues of the Hobbits 85
Virtues of the Men of Bree 87
Virtues of the Rangers of the North 88

W
Warden (Calling) 46
War Gear 47
Wary (Distinctive Feature) 69
Weapons 73
Weary 22, 69
When to Roll 16
The Wight-king 195
Wild Land 113
Wilful (Distinctive Feature) 69
Wisdom 78
Woe 131
Wounded 22
Wounds 101
Wound Severity 101

Y
Your Characters 28
Yule (Fellowship Phase) 120

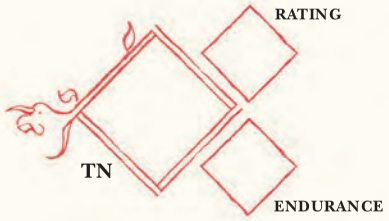
NAME

Heroic Culture | Age | Standard of Living | Treasure | Distinctive Features

Cultural Blessing | Patron

Calling | Shadow Path | Flaws

STRENGTH

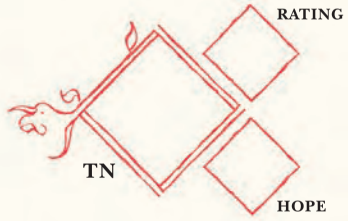


- ☐ Awe
- ☐ Athletics
- ☐ Awareness
- ☐ Hunting
- ☐ Song
- ☐ Craft

COMBAT PROFICIENCIES

- Axes
- Bows
- Spears
- Swords

HEART



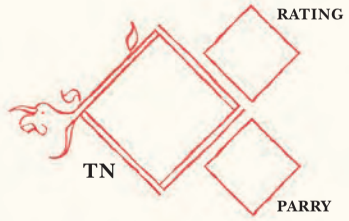
SKILLS

- ☐ Enhearten
- ☐ Travel
- ☐ Insight
- ☐ Healing
- ☐ Courtesy
- ☐ Battle

REWARDS

VALOUR

WITS



SKILLS

- ☐ Persuade
- ☐ Stealth
- ☐ Scan
- ☐ Explore
- ☐ Riddle
- ☐ Lore

VIRTUES

WISDOM

ADVENTURE POINTS | SKILL POINTS | FELLOWSHIP SCORE

CURRENT ENDURANCE (LOAD / FATIGUE)

CURRENT HOPE (SHADOW / SHADOW SCARS)

CONDITIONS

- ☐ Weary
- ☐ Miserable
- ☐ Wounded

Injury

TRAVELLING GEAR

WAR GEAR

	Damage	Injury	Load	Notes

ARMOUR	Protection	Load
Helm		
SHIELD	Parry	Load

THE ONE RING™

Journey Log

Year

Season

Journey from

Destination

Days of travel

The Company

Name	Journey Role	Travel Fatigue
		☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
		☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
		☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
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		☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
		☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
		☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Ponies and Horses

Name	Vigour

Journal

Journey Path

Event 1

Target

Event

Result

Event 2

Target

Event

Result

Event 3

Target

Event

Result

Event 4

Target

Event

Result

Event 5

Target

Event

Result

Event 6

Target

Event

Result

SET JOURNEY PATH

Set a journey path connecting the point of departure to the destination, and record it on the Journey Log (counting the hex containing the destination but not the departure).

MAKE MARCHING TESTS

The Guide of the Company makes a Marching Test rolling **TRAVEL**, to determine where journey events take place along the journey path.

- If the **TRAVEL** roll succeeds, an event takes place 3 hexes away, plus 1 for each Success icon.
- If the **TRAVEL** roll fails, an event occurs 2 hexes away in Summer and Spring, and 1 hex away in Winter or Autumn.

Follow the Event Resolution rules (page 112) to determine the precise nature of the event.

Once an event has been resolved, the Guide makes a new Marching Test to determine where another event will take place.

- The journey ends when a Marching Test result matches or exceeds the number of hexes left between the Company's current position and their point of arrival — the Company has reached its destination.

END OF THE JOURNEY

A journey lasts a number of days equal to the number of hexes in the journey path, plus 1 day for each hard terrain hex (hills, woods, marshes, etc.). If the entire Company is travelling on horseback, halve the resulting total (rounding fractions up).

- On a forced march, count 1 day for each 2 hexes in the journey path instead of 1, but each Player-hero accumulates 1 additional point of Fatigue each day.

CALCULATE TRAVEL FATIGUE

Fatigue is recorded on the journey log sheet, and cannot be shaken off while the journey lasts.

- At the end of the journey, Player-heroes with a mount reduce their total Fatigue by their mount's Vigour rating (see page 50).

All Player-heroes can further reduce their accumulated Fatigue with a roll of **TRAVEL**.

- A success reduces the total Fatigue by 1, plus 1 point for each Success icon (ᘔ).

Any remaining Fatigue is removed at the rate of 1 point of Fatigue for each Prolonged Rest taken in a sheltered and safe refuge.

Border Lands

Wild Lands

Dark Lands

Impassable Terrain

Perilous Area

1 hex = 20 miles

OF FOROCHEL
FORODWAITH
CARN DÛM
ANGMAR
MT. GUNDABAD
THE LONE-LANDS
F EVENDIM
MT. GRAM
NORTH DOWNS
ETTENMOORS
ETTENDALES
RHUDAUR
FORNOST
ANNUMINAS
WEATHER HILLS
NORTH MOORS
the water
HOBBITON
BRANDYWINE BRIDGE
CHETWOOD
MIDGEWATER MARSHES
WEATHERTOP
LAST BRIDGE
TROLLSHAWS
HIGH PASS
FORDS OF BRUINEN
the great east road
BREE
RIVENDELL
MICHEL DELVING
THE SHIRE
WHITE DOWNS
OLD FOREST
BARROW DOWNS
SOUTH DOWNS
the greenway
THE ANGLE
hoarwell
loudwater
misty mountains
SARN FORD
CARDOLAN
REDHORN PASS
EREGION
HOLLIN
ARNOR
baranduin
WEST GATE
EAST GATE
MORIA
THARBAD
OST-IN-EDHIL
LORIEN
SWANFLEET
glanduin
MINHIRIATH
greyflood
north-south road
ENEDWAITH
DUNLAND
LOND DAER
TO GONDOR
FANGORN
ISENGARD
ROHAN

Three Rings for the Elven-kings under the sky,
Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone,
Nine for Mortal Men doomed to die,
One for the Dark Lord on his dark throne
In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.
One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them,
One Ring to bring them all, and in the darkness bind them,
In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie

Enter the world of Middle-earth with *The One Ring*™, the official tabletop roleplaying game based on the works of J.R.R. Tolkien. Designed specifically to evoke the atmosphere of *The Hobbit*™ and *The Lord of the Rings*™, the game contains rules for creating heroes and sending them off on adventures in a land threatened by the growing Shadow.

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Now in its second edition, *The One Ring*™ comes with updated and revised rules, a new visual style, and a focus on the land of Eriador — the Lone-lands west of the Misty Mountains. Among its key features are:

- Rules for travelling across the land (Journey), facing frightening foes (Combat), and meeting the personalities of Middle-earth (Council).
- Thorough advice for the Loremaster on how to bring Middle-earth to life, including rules for magical treasure, the Shadow, and the Eye of Mordor.
- In-depth information on six Patrons — individuals sponsoring the adventures of the Player-heroes — including Bilbo Baggins and Gandalf the Grey.
- A bestiary containing a spread of adversaries, from lowly Orc Soldiers and Highway Robbers, to monstrous Cave-trolls and Barrow-wights.
- Rules to create your very own Nameless Things — unknowable beings from the dark corners of the world.
- A complete Landmark adventure, *The Star of the Mist*, with extra support for new Loremasters, in the form of tutorial advice throughout.

FREE LEAGUE

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