THE HALL OF FIRE
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THE HALL OF FIRE
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In This Issue

GREETINGS, SALUTATIONS...

Welcome to the first issue of the Second Age of Hall of Fire. We know that there have been a few rough spots over the last few months. While we can't promise that we will be able to get rid of all of these problems, we are certainly going to try our best to smooth things out. Having said that, one of the ways that will help immensely with our continued regular publication is going to be submissions from from you, our readers. For an encouraging thought on that subject, here is an excerpt from one of Professor Tolkein's letters:

> "I would draw some of the great tales in fullness, and leave many only placed in the scheme, and sketched. The Cycles should be linked to a majestic whole, and yet leave scope for other minds and hands, wielding paint and music and drama."
> -J.R.R. Tolkien, The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien, Letter 131

We are those hands and minds. Everyone of us who has ever played in a Lord of the Rings game has shaped Middle-earth.

As for this issue we have a couple of new NPCs, an extension to the rules for bows and the introduction to the First Age Sourcebook. We hope that you enjoy it and we look forward to bringing you many more issues.

One last thing. Don't forget to check out the new Hall of Fire Wiki at http://wiki.halloffire.org.

Micah A. Walles
Co-Editor

The Unofficial Guide to the Elder Days

Introduction

By Afrodyte

Welcome to an unofficial sourcebook for the First Age. Within this and other threads, you will find the tools you need to play and run Decipher's Lord of the Rings RPG during the First Age of Middle-earth.

This work cannot in any way replace reading The Silmarillion or Tolkien's other writings about the First Age. Therefore, this sourcebook assumes that you are already familiar with the major peoples and events of the First Age. What I offer here is merely a guide to help you use Decipher's CODA system in a way that captures the scope and grandeur of the First Age.

To give you a better idea of what informed some of the design decisions in this sourcebook, here is a list of some inspirational material.

The Silmarillion (edited by Christopher Tolkien)
The History of Middle-earth series (edited by Christopher Tolkien), Volumes X (Morgoth's Ring), XI (The War of
       the Jewels), and XII (The Peoples of Middle-earth).
The Complete Guide to Middle-earth from The Hobbit to The Silmarillion (compiled by Robert Foster)
Ardalambion (http://www.uib.no/people/hnohf/)
The Encyclopedia of Arda (http://www.glyphweb.com/arda/)

WHY THE FIRST AGE?

Examining my liking of The Silmarillion and the last three volumes of the History of Middle-earth series as opposed to the LotR trilogy or The Hobbit, I realized that it was mostly due to the differences I observed in the narrative forms of these stories. I had a nagging feeling that the reason why I liked The Silmarillion and the latter works of HoME had nothing to do with the scope being greater or the characters more powerful. I realized that I enjoyed The Silmarillion in the same way I enjoy fairy tales and classical myths. Thinking on it further, I discovered that the reason why I liked these types of stories is that they touched on something more essential and universal than LotR did. I looked up words often used to describe these stories: epic, legend, and myth. When I retrieved my battered copy of Webster's New World Dictionary (3rd College Edition) to see if there are distinct meanings between them, I found that my initial feelings were right, but the dictionary helped articulate it better. It said that:

a legend is "a story handed down for generations among a people and popularly believed to have a historical basis, although not verifiable." I put down The Hobbit as a legend not only because of its extraordinary events, but because they are believed (or known) to have a historical basis (at least, in the world of Middle-earth, although the Hobbits of the Shire may or may not believe Bilbo's wild stories).

an epic is a narrative "characterized by events of historical or legendary importance." The historical importance aspect is what made me decide that The Hobbit was not an epic but that LotR was, especially considering that after the War of the Ring, the kingdoms of the Dunedain are once again united and the Men of the West become the dominant power of Middle-earth. These things are of tremendous importance to everyone involved, except perhaps those who have no strong cultural or historical ties to Gondor.

a myth is "a traditional story...ostensibly with a historical basis, but serving usually to explain some phenomenon of nature, the origin of men, or the customs, institutions, religious rites, etc. of a people: myths usually involve the exploits of gods and heroes of legend." In other words, myths generally have cosmic significance. Why is there evil in the world? What happens to us after we die? Where does the world come from? For this reason, I decided that The Silmarillion fits the mythic mold more than LotR. By the time LotR starts, the physical, social, and moral realities of the world are firmly established. Yet, in The Silmarillion, things seem a great deal more flexible. In addition, the structure of The Silmarillion fits Ovid's Metamorphosis or a collection of fairy tales than a single narrative.

With those definitions in mind, it becomes clear that mythic stories operate by a different set of rules than epics or legends. Unlike epics and legends, consistency is not necessarily a goal in myths. The only consistency required is that which is related to the story at hand. In a roleplaying game, this typically means the story of the PCs.

From a roleplaying perspective, mythic chronicles can be intriguing on a number of levels. You can go along with the structure and conventions of mythic stories, perhaps trying to fit the mythic mold as much as possible or telling the same story from multiple (and conflicting) perspectives. You can take mythic stories and add greater depth and humanity to them, taking the broad brushstrokes of the characters as described in myths and making them more human by adding layers and other traits that make them more than superhuman. There is a lot you can do with mythic roleplaying that you cannot do quite as well with epics or legends because things are so much more malleable.

The First Age is a time of extraordinary deeds of skill and courage. A song can return a loved one from the dead. The grave of a powerful and noble king may be a ward against evil. Three crystals can hold within them a holy, primeval light. In this, The Silmarillion is more akin to The Iliad and the Old Testament than to LotR. The characters are not Everymen simply trying to do the right thing for their homes and loved ones. They are heroes and demigods whose might and majesty can change the fate of the world. The villain is not merely someone who works against the heroes. He is a being of vast power who seeks to wholly corrupt then finally annihilate the world.

In practical terms, this means that players do not have to strategize to create characters that excel at what they do; Narrators do not need to hamstring PCs in order to challenge them. Keep in mind that although heroes of the First Age were very powerful, their enemies were also powerful. They were still prey to folly and treachery. In fact, these were more dangerous to the heroes than all the servants of Morgoth combined.

Canon and Approaches to Tolkien
Is this canon? Is that true to Tolkien?

Those are perhaps the most oft-asked questions in roleplaying games based on Tolkien's works. For most Tolkien aficianados, ascertaining whether something is in canon or true to Tolkien is child's play. Everything is right there in black and white. All you have to do is read the books. It's simple.

Or is it?

For gamers who wish to go beyond the LotR trilogy for chronicle settings and ideas, the issues of canon and staying true to Tolkien get more complex. Read the books. OK. What books? The Silmarillion has some interesting ideas, but it's not exactly a finished product. How about the History of Middle-earth series? What about the letters he wrote?

"But those don't count," some would say, because those materials were never authorized by J.R.R. Tolkien himself. Fine, but who's to say he may not have if he lived as long as an Elf or one of the Dunedain? He thought enough of some of his ideas to write them down, so he obviously considered them important. Let's not get into contradictory information. Do we go by his original answer, or by his most recent answer? It would seem simple enough, wouldn't it? Examining "Myths Transformed" and the parentage of Gil-galad illustrates that Tolkien, like everyone else, was capable of going back and forth on certain issues.

The point of all this is to show you that the issue of canon is much more complex than it initially seems. Middle-earth was Tolkien's lifelong passion, and the wealth of resources (books, letters, essays, even scribblings on notebook paper) written by Tolkien himself reveals as much. However, gamers may not have a lifelong passion for Middle-earth. We may just want to play a game based on what we're interested in doing, but we don't want people to do just anything and justify it simply because it has the word "Tolkien" in it. The works you consider canon go a long way towards demonstrating what is and is not permissable in your game. It can also establish a clear understanding of what your game is about. Your canon can be as large (like the LotR trilogy or the History of Middle-earth series) or small (such as a single letter or essay) as you wish. You can even base it on second-hand sources such as the LotR films or essays and articles about Tolkien's works. Regardless of your decision, you must make sure that you are clear on canon before playing to prevent arguments about canon later on.

Now that we know what canon we're using, all we have to do now is stick to it, right? Well, not exactly.

The problem is human nature. People have this maddening tendency to observe the same thing and come to vastly different conclusions, especially with something as highly interpretive as the arts. When it comes to Tolkien and roleplaying, though, and various perspectives and approaches to canon, there are three major styles: literal, essential, and quasi Tolkien. Each style can encompass a variety of attitudes and behaviors, but they are differentiated most by their goals and how they use canon. Styles are only better or worse depending upon the interests and temperaments of the players.

Literal Tolkien
"God [aka Tolkien] is in the details."
Key word: Emulate

Literal Tolkien roleplaying is perhaps the easiest to understand because it is clear what the players are expected to do. Like a reporter or photographer, the goal is accuracy based upon the explicit statements of the text. Naturally, then, most of the decision-making in this style relies upon getting the details right.

Essential Tolkien
"Don't sweat the small stuff."
Key word: Emphasize

Essential Tolkien roleplaying is more concerned with what is often dubbed the spirit of Tolkien. This style focuses on the intangible elements of Tolkien's works. Most of the decisions in essential Tolkien roleplaying are based upon the big picture: overarching themes, implicit meanings, and other aesthetic elements that distinguish Tolkien as the creator of Middle-earth.

Quasi-Tolkien

"Beauty [aka Tolkien] is in the eye of the beholder."
Key word: Innovate

Save for a few aspects, quasi-Tolkien roleplaying would seem barely recognizable to many players. The goals of quasi-Tolkien roleplaying vary. They do not center on getting the details right, as with literal Tolkien roleplaying, nor on staying true to the big picture, as with essential Tolkien roleplaying. Quasi-Tolkien roleplaying takes aspects of Tolkien that suits the purposes of the game and changes everything else.

Quasi-Tolkien roleplaying deserves a special mention. Players favoring one of the other styles may look askew at this style because it changes a lot of the things that many people like about Tolkien's works. While it is true that sometimes those changes can be absurd, it is also true that changes can make something engaging and thought-provoking for everyone involved.

These categories are by no means absolute, nor are they meant to be a straight-jacket. They're simply general descriptions that outline certain behaviors, preferences, and types of decisions prevalent in each style of game. Styles change from player to player and game to game. A player may yearn for literal Tolkien roleplaying for one chronicle and then do quasi-Tolkien roleplaying for another. Are there extremes of each style? Probably. Yet it is far more likely that each game has elements of all three styles.

As with choosing your canon, figuring out which style best resembles your own perspetives and tendencies goes a long way to communicating your preferences and expectations to your group and determining the points at which each player (including the Narrator) needs to adapt to the others. It keeps the focus on the game instead of the other players, much the same way the Fellowship of the Ring focused more on the quest than on personal differences. In this regard, that will probably be the most Tolkien-like thing you can do in your game.

It's All Optional
Bows
by Atgxtg

*To Legolas she gave a bow such as the Galadhrim used, longer and stouter than the
bows of Mirkwood, and strung with a string of elf-hair.
-The Fellowship of the Ring*

In the Lord of the Rings RPG, bows are by far the most common missile weapon.
Outside of the occasional tossed spear, rock, apple, or flaming pine cone all we see
in the books are bows. Yet despite the fact that we have a multitude of bladed
weapons, from dagger to longsword, we have very little to choose from in the way
of bows. For most characters the choice is between the shortbow and longbow,
with the longbow being superior in game terms. The Steel Longbows of Númenór
are the best bows of all, but are so rare that no character really "chooses" to use
one, so much as is lucky enough to stumble across one.

In the books and films several different types of bows appear, from shortbows of
horn, wielded by Dwarves and Orcs, to great bows of Yew. Since bows are the predominant missile weapon,
used by all the peoples of Middle Earth, and as it is even an elite order for Archers, it seems appropriate to pay
a little more attention to the different types of bows and their abilities. The table below expands the selection
of bows by draw weight. The rules for crafting bows will add more variety by allowing for the inclusion of
laminated, composite, recurve, and reflex bows.

Expanded Bow Tables

Longbow

Draw Weight	Strength	Damage	Range (in yards) (PB/S/M/L/X+S)	Weight	Price
20 lbs.	2	2d6/1d6+2	5/20/40/100/+20	2 lbs.	2 SP
30 lbs.	3	2d6/1d6+3	5/25/50/125/+25	2 lbs.	2 SP, 1 sp
60 lbs.	6	2d6/2d6	5/30/60/150/+30	3 lbs.	2 SP, 2 sp
80 lbs.	8	2d6+1/2d6	5/35/70/175/+35	3 lbs.	2 SP, 3 sp
100 lbs.	10	2d6+2/2d6	5/40/80/200/+40	3 lbs.	3 SP
120 lbs.	12	2d6+3/2d6	5/45/90/225/+45	3 lbs.	3 SP, 1 sp
140 lbs.	14	2d6+4/2d6	5/50/100/250/+50	4 lbs.	3 SP, 2 sp
160 lbs.	16	2d6+5/2d6	5/55/110/275/+55	4 lbs.	3 SP, 3 sp
180 lbs.	18	3d6+1/2d6	5/60/120/300/+60	4 lbs.	4 SP
200 lbs.	20	3d6+2/2d6	5/65/130/325/+65	4 lbs.	4 SP, 1 sp

| SHORTBOW | | | Range (in yards) | | |
Draw Weight	Strength	Damage	(PB/S/M/L/X+S)	Weight	Price
20 lbs.	2	2d6/1d6+2	5/15/30/50/+15	1 lb.	1 SP
30 lbs.	3	2d6/1d6+3	5/20/40/75/+20	1 lb.	1 SP, 1 sp
60 lbs.	6	2d6/2d6	5/25/50/100/+25	2 lbs.	2 SP
80 lbs.	8	2d6+1/2d6	5/30/60/125/+30	2 lbs.	2 SP, 1 sp
100 lbs.	10	2d6+2/2d6	5/35/70/150/+35	2 lbs.	2 SP, 2 sp
120 lbs.	12	2d6+3/2d6	5/40/80/175/+40	2 lbs.	2 SP, 3 sp
140 lbs.	14	2d6+4/2d6	5/45/90/200/+45	3 lbs.	3 SP
160 lbs.	16	2d6+5/2d6	5/50/100/225/+50	3 lbs.	3 SP, 1 sp
180 lbs.	18	3d6+1/2d6	5/55/110/250/+55	3 lbs.	3 SP, 2 sp
200 lbs.	20	3d6+2/2d6	5/60/120/275/+60	3 lbs.	3 SP, 3 sp

Note: For those using the alternate attribute modifiers (0-1 = -3, 2-3= -2, 4-5= -1) simply consider the 30 lb bow to be a 40 lb bow.

Draw Weight : The draw weight or "pull" in pounds. It is an indication of how powerful a bow is, how fast it launches an arrow, how far the arrow will fly, and how much Strength it takes to wield it effectively. A character can use a bow with a Draw Weight up to his Average Burden (Strength x 10 lbs.), although many archers will prefer using a less powerful bow since such bows are easier to hold back and can be aimed longer.

Strength: This is the Required Strength needed to use the bow effectively, and is simply one tenth the Draw Weight.

Damage : This ids the damage inflicted by arrows shot from the bow. The number before the slash is used at Point Blank, Short and Medium ranges, and the number after the slash for shots at Long or Extreme range.. The damage is based on the Draw Weight/Required Strength of the bow and is figured much the same way as character's Strength modifier.

Range: Bows that are weaker or more powerful have different range characteristics. Generally speaking a bow with a hundred pound pull will be able to shoot an arrow farther than one with only a 50 pound pull.

Price: Because more powerful bows require stronger materials, require more skill to manufacture, and take longer to produce they are more expensive.

BOW USE

With the addition of bows of different draw weights a few adjustments should be made to the game rules.

Aiming: The more powerful the bow, the less time the bowstring can be held back, and thus the less time to aim a shot. A character using a bow with a damage modifier equal to his Strength modifier can only aim for one action. One using a bow with a damage modifier 1 point lower than his Strength modifier can aim for two

actions. A character using a bow with a damage rating 2 points lower than his own can aim for the full 3 actions.

Horse Archery: A character cannot wield a longbow on horseback (the asymmetrical Longbow is unknown on Middle Earth).

Unwieldy Longbows: In thick woods, and confined space, a Narrator may with to apply a penalty to characters wielding a Longbow. The penalty would vary depending on the environment. The Elves of Mirkwood favor shortbows partly for this reason.

Overbowing: A character who uses a bow with a higher draw weight that he can use effectively (more than 10x his Strength), is "overbowing" and suffers several penalties:

- The character cannot hold back the string long enough to get a proper aim, and cannot take the aim action.
- The character attacks at at a -1 penalty *per each point* of Strength he is short. Apply a flat -1 to the damage rating.
- If a character cannot meet at least half the Strength requirement of a bow, double the penalties.
- Of a character cannot meet at least one third of the Strength requirement, he cannot wield the bow.

Ranged Combat: Bows
With the addition of bows of different draw weights, the Ranged Combat: Bow skill can be expanded with a new "trigger".

Trigger-Higher Draw Weight: Long hours of practice means that archers tend to develop certain muscles in the arms, shoulders and back that aid in drawing a bow. As a result, as archers gain in skill they can draw progressively more powerful bows.

Special: At skill ranks 6, 9 and 12 add one to your Strength modifier when determining how powerful a bow you can draw, and to determine you maximum aiming time.

Example: Legolas has an 8 Strength and 12 Ranks in Ranged Combat: Bows. He can wield a bow as if his Strength modifier were +4 instead of +1, allowing his to wield a bow with a draw weight up to 140 lbs. Or, he could wield a 100 lb bow and still be able to aim for a full 3 actions.

ARROWS
Bows require arrows. An expanded selection of arrows is presented.

Broadhead Arrows These arrows have wide heads that cause larger wounds, and are used for hunting. Broadhead arrows inflict an extra d6 damage, but any armor or cover protects at double its normal protection rating, making these arrows less effective against foes in metal armor.

Bodkin Arrow: These arrows have a bullet-like pointed tip. Bodkin tipped arrows do not inflict as severe a wound as a broadhead, but are better at penetrating armor. Bodkin arrows are considered standard combat arrows are apply no special adjustments.

Long-nose Arrow: These arrows have long thick point designed to fit in the gaps between links of mail. They ignore ignore 2 points of armor protection, but suffer a -2 to attack tests as the tips often shatter rather than penetrate.

Crude Arrows: Crude arrows are those that are hastily produced by a fletcher, and are not as carefully crafted, perhaps having fire handed sharped wooded points instead of arrowheads, and usually lacking fletching. A crude arrow is -3 to damage , and treat 2d6 as 1d6+4 for purposes of damage reduction. A bow that normally inflicts 2d6 damage would inflict 1d6+1 with crude arrows.

Blunt Arrows: Arrows with blunt tips (no arrowhead) can be used to execute Stun attacks at range (see page 232 of the *Lord of the Rings* Core rules). Note that to conduct a Stun attack the archer will need to make a called shot at an appropriate spot on the target. Additionally, an archer might be able to knock items out of people's hands by using the Stun rules.

Small Fletchings: An archer may purchase or make arrows with smaller fletchings than normal. Such arrows shoot faster and have greater range, but at a cost in accuracy. Treat as if they were fired from the next draw weight up on the chart), but apply a -2 penalty.

Large Fletchings: An archer may prefer arrows with larger fletchings than normal. Such arrows are more inherently stable, but the increased dragon slows them down, reducing their range. Arrows with large fletchings grant a +2 bonus to Ranged Combat tests, but use the range characteristics of a bow one "step" (20 lbs.) lighter on the bow chart.

Fan Flavour
New Traits ~ Edge

Courage of Master Samwise
by Micah A. Walles (razor77@halloffire.org)

Sam did not wait to wonder what was to be done, or whether he was brave,
or loyal, or filled with rage. He sprang forward with a yell…
- The Two Towers

Sometimes the fate of someone or something other then a character is more important to them than even their own life. And, at times when that person or thing is threatened, the character can summon courage and strength that they never knew they had.

Effect

Once per session, when the person or thing that your character wishes to protect is threatened, you can use this edge to gain additional Courage Points equal to your Will modifier. These points remain for the rest of the session.

Improvement

This Edge can be bought multiple times. Each time it is bought an item that it will apply to must be chosen. The item chosen must be of great importance to the character choosing it. It can be another character, either another players or an NPC; it could also be a place such as the Shire, Meduseld, or Rivendell; or it could be a personal item that they carry with them. As far as items go, the item should be of great importance to the character to be chosen. This is not to say that any item chosen must be on par with Andúril to be chosen, just that it must be of great importance to the character.

Although this Edge can be bought multiple times, the effect of the Edge will can only apply to three items at a time. If a character has bought this Edge three times and wishes to apply the benefit to a new item, they must choose which current item the affect is no longer going to apply to when they buy the edge for the new item. If they ever wish to add the benefit back to the item they dropped, they treat it as if it were a new item.

At any time a character may choose to give up the the edge for one of their items. They do not get any points back for this.

New Elixirs

Glînen ~ Drink of the Wandering Elves
by Celebraen

"…the Elves had filled their bottles with a clear drink, pale golden in colour: it had the scent of a honey made with many flowers, and was wonderfully refreshing."
- The Fellowship of the Ring, A Short Cut to Mushrooms

When Frodo Baggins, Peregrin Took, and Samwise Gamgee meet Gildor Inglorion and his companions wandering through the Shire, the Elves invite the Hobbits to dine with them & spend the night in their woodland hall. Though the Elves have gone by the time the halflings awaken the next morning, they leave food and drink for the Hobbits. The drink, while not comparable to miruvor, does contain some of the light-heartedness of its makers.

Glînen is easy to make while traveling, closer to a tea or infusion than a wine or ale. The recipe varies slightly among the Wandering Companies, depending on what ingredients are available, but always includes honey and different edible flowers. Other ingredients might include apples, various berries, and even birch bark, all carefully boiled together to create a drink that suits its maker's individual tastes. It keeps well, retaining its sweet taste & invigorating properties for at least a week. The Elves are generous with the drink, freely giving it out to those they consider friends, regardless of race.

A character who drinks a half-cup of glînen receives a +2 bonus to Stamina tests to resist weariness, sleepiness, etc. This effect lasts for an hour. He also recovers one Weariness Level automatically. The Narrator may choose to add additional effects, such as a small bonus to resisting Fear or a temporary Courage Point, if desired and appropriate to the situation.

Allies and Adversaries

Hund (Norn-i-Glamhoth)

by Cliff A. "Drighten" Raeder

RACE: Man (Middle Man) Beorning
RACIAL ABILITIES: Skilled, Adaptable, Dominion of Man
ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 4 (+0), Nimbleness 12 (+3), Perception 8 (+1), Strength 13 (+3), Vitality 11 (+2), Wits 8 (+1)
REACTIONS: Stamina +4, Swiftness +3, Willpower +1, Wisdom –
ORDERS: Barbarian, Rogue, Ranger
ORDER ABILITIES: Hard March, Walk without Trace (Mountains), Fleet-Footed, Treacherous Blow (Unarmed), Cross-Order Skill (Unarmed Combat), Protector (Beornings)
ADVANCEMENTS: 18
SKILLS: Armed Combat (knives) +5, Climb +5, Conceal +2, Guise +3, Healing (Wild Herbs) +2, Jump +2, Mimicry (Voices) +2, Language: Beorning +5, Language: Westron +2, Language: Orkish (Misty Mountains Dialect) +2, Lore/Realm (Rhovanion) +5, Lore (Beorning) +3, Observe +4, Ranged Combat (rocks) +5, Run +2, Search +1, Stealth (Hide) +8, Survival (Mountains) +8, Swim +2, Track (Orcs) +11, Unarmed Combat (Wrestling) +12, Weather-Sense +2
SPELLS: None
EDGES: Woodcrafty, Fell-Handed 2 (all Orcs), Swift Recovery, Armour of Heroes, Dodge, Doughty, Hammerhand, Travel Sense, Wary
FLAWS: Dullard, Fey, Oath (Sworn to protect Beornings), Stiff-Necked
HEALTH: 15 (Medium, 6 Wound Levels)
COURAGE: 4
RENOWN: 3
DEFENSE: 13
MISCELLANEOUS: +3 with Grab Unarmed Combat Skill Maneuver
ITEMS: Knife, Elven-Rope, Camouflaged Clothes, Herbs

Background

Before his 13th year, Hund was on a journey with his uncle and brothers to the Grey Mountains, to trap silver-pelted snow hares and gather the sprigs of mint that grow on the southern slopes of the crags. During this trek, Hund got separated from his family one evening at dusk, and lost in the unfamiliar terrain. Weeks later, starving and still lost, he learned most of his kin had been ambushed by Orcs, after finding the despoiled remains of their bodies. He believed that he could never return home, and that somehow his failure to find his way in the wilderness led his family into a trap. He stayed apart from his folk, living off the land and slaying whatever Orcs he could find with his knife, thrown rocks, or even his bare hands. Unable to learn sword-craft from other Men, he became an expert in barehanded combat, especially against the swart, bandy-legged Orcs. Over the course of twenty years, Hund became a terror to the Goblins of the area, and waxed mighty in the ways of wood-craft, stalking, and hunting. Eventually finding his way back to his village, he stayed long enough to pledge fealty to the chieftain, and to promise to scout out the land and warn them should ever danger threaten from the West. Now, he is more than half-wild, living an almost feral existence and never staying in one place for long.

Hund's favorite tactics are to silently shadow a group of Orcs (for days, if necessary) to find the perfect spot to waylay them. He then lures the leader a little away from the others with Mimicry, before pouncing upon him from behind a tree or boulder, and wrestling him to the ground. Once he's out, Hund takes his time running the others to ground one-by-one, until there are none left. A solitary killer, Hund never works with others for more than a few days, speaking only in grunts and a few clipped words in Westron. Dressed in green leathers, smeared with brown mud and trailing twigs and moss from his black beard, Hund lives a bedraggled existence and can't usually be bothered to groom himself. While not exactly and Elf-Friend, Gildor Inglorion of the Wandering Companies once gave him an Elf-rope for his help in finding a lost girl that strayed too far from Thranduil's woodland realm. This adventure also earned him an Elvish name: Norn-i-Glamhoth (Sindarin, literally: The Twister of Orcs) for his skill at wrestling.

Location

Hund stalks Rhovanion from Mount Gundabad to the Gladden River, crossing the Anduin River at its fords. He is relentless in his pursuit of any and all Orcs, who sometimes come out of the Misty Mountains on their way to Dol Guldur. The easiest way a party can find Hund is to stumble across one of the caches he has made. These are typically just hollow places in rocks or fallen logs, big enough for a man to lie down in, well-hidden and stocked with emergency supplies (dried beef, fish-hooks, preserves, etc.). Stealing from Hund can earn his enmity, unless the Players can convince him that they are also foes of the Shadow, and great Orc-slayers in their own right. Then, he might stay with them a day or two on a search-and-destroy mission, or perhaps they can gain his aid as a guide through his territory.

*Notes: Astute Narrators may notice that Hund's Armed Combat skill is not enough to qualify him for some of his Edges and his Elite Order: Ranger. Since his main fighting capability is with Wrestling, he has gained the use of these extraordinary abilities due to his unusually high Unarmed Combat skill, instead. If this bothers you, please substitute Armed Combat: Knives for Unarmed Combat: Wrestling in your chronicle, and make the requisite changes to his character as you see fit.

Olen

by Cliff A. "Drighten" Raeder

RACE: Dwarf (Erebor)
RACIAL ABILITIES: Animal Aversion, Craftsmanship, Firestarting, Hardness of Body, Hardness of Mind, Healthy
ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 5 (+0), Nimbleness 12 (+3), Perception 12 (+3), Strength 8 (+1), Vitality 8 (+1), Wits 13 (+3)
REACTIONS: Stamina +1, Swiftness +3, Willpower +3, Wisdom +2
ORDERS: Rogue, Loremaster, Craftsman
ORDER ABILITIES: Lockpicking, Secretive, Expertise (Locks), Spellcasting, Masterwork, Preservation, Enchantment
ADVANCEMENTS: 23
SKILLS: Acrobatics +3, Appraise +3, Armed Combat: Blades (Eket) +4, Climb +2, Conceal +5, Craft: Locksmithing +7, Craft: Trapmaking +5, Games (Puzzles) +5, Inquire (Conversation) +5, Insight +2, Jump +1, Mimicry, Legerdemain (Open Lock) +10, Language: Khuzdul +5, Language: Westron +2, Lore/Realm Erebor +5, Lore (Traps) +5, Lore (Puzzles) +3, Observe (Spot) +8, Ranged Combat (Thrown Axe) +2, Run +1, Search +12, Smithcraft +12, Stealth (Surveil) +3, Stonecraft (Trapmaking) +5, Survival (Mountains) +2, Weather-Sense +1
SPELLS: Opening-spell, Shutting-spell
EDGES: Indomitable, Dodge, Furtive, Ambidextrous 2, Charmed Life, Travel-Sense, Two-Handed Fighting, Weapon Mastery-Eket
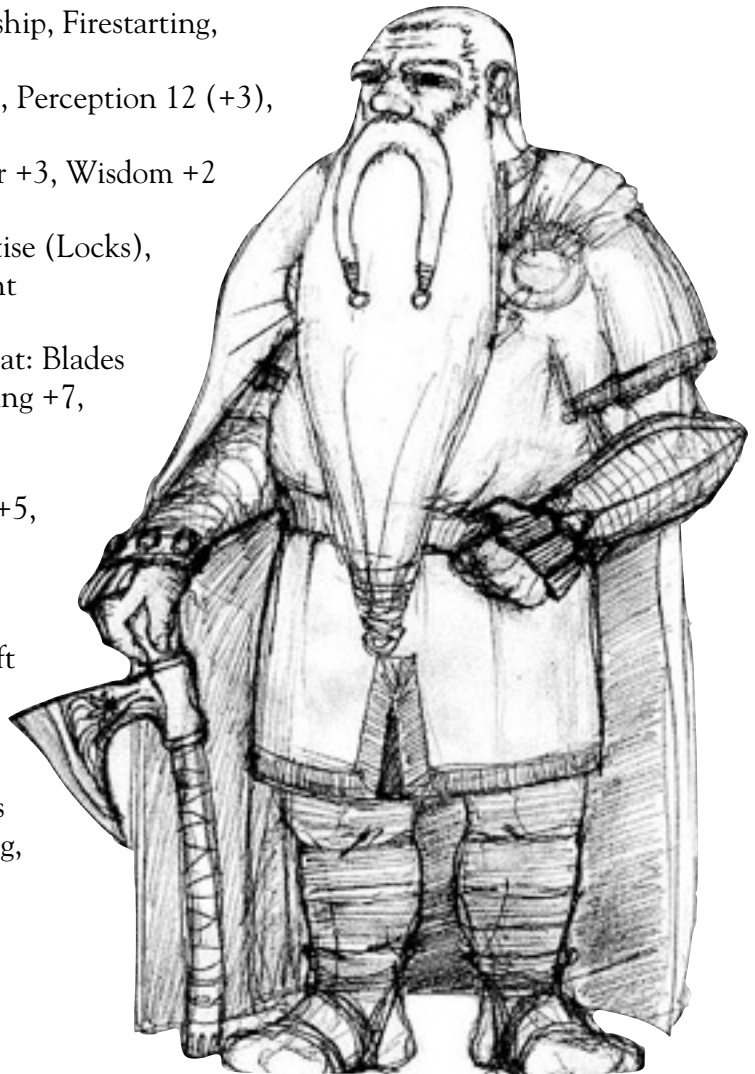FLAWS: Code of Honor, Enemy 2 (all Orcs), Oath (Secrets)
HEALTH: 10 (Medium, 6 Wound Levels)
COURAGE: 3
RENOWN: 1
DEFENSE: 13
ITEMS: 2 Masterwork (Eketi) Short Swords, splendid Clothes, Chains and Locks, Tool Kits, Book of Puzzles, 30 gold pieces, 12 silver pennies in a Rune-locked puzzle box

Background

Small, even for a Dwarf, Olen stands eye-to-eye with Fallohide Hobbits. In the home he shared with two larger brothers under the Lonely Mountain, he had to learn very quickly that cunning and skill serve a person much better than even the brawniest of backs. Well-off from some good investments, Olen was schooled by the best his race could produce, and soon became fascinated by the delvings and curious portals used by his Folk beneath the mountain. He became adept with locks, wards, and the crafting of all manner of boxes and chests that had intricate mechanisms for opening and closing. Cutting secret caches and false floors into stone chambers and cubbyholes, he gained a reputation throughout the mountain as a Dwarf who could be trusted to keep a treasure hoard safe; indeed, was hired by private contractors to put his knowledge to use in the

wealthiest houses, to safeguard their valuables. Apprenticing with the Rune-masters of his clan, even later in life he was able to add dweomers to his creations, making containers and gates that would open only to their owners, or when certain mystic passes were made over the hinges. Not satisfied with what the Dwarves could teach him, he left his home and for a time became a merchant among the Men of Esgaroth, setting up a fine workshop and selling his silver lockets, rune-worked iron chains and self-locking strongboxes. Eventually his desire (some would say obsession) to learn all he could about doors, locks, and closures drove him to seek out the Elves, whose lore in such matters was well-known to the Men of Dale. Rich beyond the incomes of most common Dwarves, and caring much less for the coin than for what comforts it could bring him, Olen closed his shop and began a life of wandering.

Olen has honed his fighting-skills only after having more than one close call. Much preferring to trick his enemy rather than to wear him down through physical exertion, Olen does reluctantly enter battle when all other options have been exhausted. His teacher in weaponplay was a Dúnedain, and from him Olen learned the finesse of fighting two-handed. Since he is equally adept with either hand, when forced into combat Olen wields two broad Short Swords crafted specifically for him to be the perfect size and balance.

LOCATION

Olen originates in Erebor, but he has traveled to many secret places Middle-Earth on his quest for the knowledge of secret things. If your Chronicle is set at the appropriate time, Olen could even be in the party that went with Balin to recover Khazad-Dum from the Orcs. His reasoning for being there would be, obviously, to rediscover the lore that Narvi the Stonecutter left behind, especially his knowledge of the Doors of Durin, the West Gate of Moria, and countless other Dwarf-Doors that could be found there. Otherwise, Olen could be encountered nearly anywhere, but likes the finer things in life that his station can afford him. Olen should probably be met in a city; he will always stay at Inns with rare wines and unique meals, since he can afford the best and likes to entertain himself in the highest style.

WHAT'S OUT THERE

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

THE HALL OF FIRE WEBZINE http://halloffire.org **THE HALL OF FIRE WIKI** http://wiki.halloffire.org **DECIPHER'S LORD OF THE RINGS RPG HOME** http://lotrrpg.fanhq.com **ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ARDA** http://www.glyphweb.com/arda/default.htm **FAN MODULES FOR MIDDLE-EARTH** http://groups.yahoo.com/group/fan-modules **SCOTT'S RPG CENTRAL** http://www.geocities.com/scott_metz/ **CHRONICLES OF THE NORTH** http://roleplay.avioc.org/ **MERP.COM** http://www.merp.com **OTHER MINDS MAGAZINE** http://www.othermindsmagazine.com	**THE MAD IRISHMAN** http://www.mad-irishman.net **THE LAST ALLIANCE** http://thelastalliance.com **RPG TOOLS FOR DECIPHER'S CODA GAMES** http://groups.yahoo.com/group/rpgtools/ **THE STEWARD AND THE KING** http://www.stewardandking.net **THE TOWER HILLS** http://homepage.mac.com/jeremybaker/towerhills **TREK-RPG.NET** http://forum.trek-rpg.net/index.php **CODA WEBZINE REPOSITORY** http://groups.yahoo.com/group/coda_webzine **THE ONE RING.COM** http://www.theonering.com/ **THE ONE RING.NET** http://www.theonering.net

CALLING ALL GAMERS!

Interested in submitting…

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

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

Please note that if you would like to submit a mini-adventure, Decipher will not consider it for publishing.

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

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

Want to know what the submission guide lines are?

Visit http://wiki.halloffire.org/Submission_Information for the current submission guide lines.

If you would like to post an advertisement for:

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

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