

# HITHER LANDS

## INTRODUCTION

There have been a number of attempts to design a system that allows those to adventure in the wonderful realm J.R.R. Tolkien created, this is but another one. The effort of Hither Lands is to keep that journey as close to the true spirit set in the texts of Middle-earth. A system cannot dominate this place, it must be as transparent as a roleplaying design can be, thus to prevent the rules from overbearing the setting. The motive here is not for profit or personal gain, only to seek out the highest standards for the greatest of all fantasy settings.

It is not the intention, nor the endeavor of Hither Lands to disparage the creative works found in the LOTR RPG from Decipher. As an official product that game is bound to legal license and therefore is limited in scope and context. The creative freedom of being an unofficial game is that it does not have to adhere to these restrictions.

Within these pages you will find the basic information required to roleplay in Middle-earth. This is the teaser version of Hither Lands and not the final product. There are still some issues to work out and it is an opportunity for you to make an overall impact on the final version of the system. A few friends, some pens and paper, and at least one twelve-sided (d12) are all that is required to get started.

One fortunate individual is responsible for the overall management of the game. Not an easy task, but certainly rewarding and enjoyable if the effort is put in to run a worthy campaign. A Gamemaster must describe the happenings of the world around the players and control the actions which will occur from encounters with friend or foe. The other players form the Fellowship and join together characters they have created to battle against the forces who oppose them.

## SETTING

There are those of noble heart who have stood steadfast against the forces of darkness never wavering in the face of such vile wickedness. Middle-earth has always been a place for heroes. It is a land like no other; one that captivates as if magic was truly woven into its elegant prose and verses. These Hither Lands have been a place of awe and wonder to all those who have chosen wander its narrative roads.

Here you will find adventure and drama set against a beautiful backdrop of lilting, evocative songs, poems, and vignettes. A place where moral, heartfelt messages are entwined with storied histories, cultures, and languages that waits to be discovered again and again.

What has made Middle-earth so beloved is the manner in which Tolkien seamlessly crafted a classic struggle between good and evil. An epic work of fantasy fiction, that is at the same time, so believable. It is a place of vivid imagination that is both awe inspiring and often times terrible to behold. It is Light and Shadow. A world where the Children of Ilúvatar – immortal wise Elves, stout stalwart Dwarves, simple amiable Hobbits and the brave moreover passionate Race of Men wage battle against the foul spawn of Dark Lord Melkor – cruel Orcs, massive Trolls, ominous Dragons, and terrible Balrogs.

It is here where you will have the chance to storm into the First Age, with the Wars of Beleriand, and aid the Host of Valinor in the overthrow of Morgoth. Overcome the dark years of the Second Age, and bring glory to Numenor in the Last Alliance of Men and Elves. Answer the call of the Wise to see the One Ring unmade as the Third Age draws to a close in the Great Years. Sail with the light of hope into the Fourth Age to face new dangers and the yet unknown threat of the New Shadow.

## ROLEPLAYING IN MIDDLE-EARTH

# HITHER LANDS

## RULESET

A system is little more than a way to resolve matters within a game. It is simply a tool that is used to make the setting work to your satisfaction. A ruleset can have an enormous impact on actual play. Middle-earth can prove daunting for any system because it generates such passion from those who have distinct, personal views on its intricate ethics and significance.

The base mechanic for all actions is resolved with a twelve-sided die (d12). A player will in most cases take the appropriate Attribute and/or Skill and roll a d12. If the total result is 12 or greater, the action was successful. Any result of 11 or less is considered a failed attempt. Some actions, if they prove to be difficult, will require more successes. Modifiers can also vary the result of certain total roll requirements.

In most situations the Gamemaster will determine one Attribute and one Skill which will be added to the roll of the d12. If no skill corresponds to the action, the Attribute can be doubled and added to the d12 roll. In the case of a difficult action the Gamemaster may not allow the Attribute to be doubled. The final arbitrator in all situations is the Gamemaster.

There will be cases when the character is attempting an action that is opposed by another. This is called a Resisted Roll, it is resolved in the same manner as other actions, but both sides will roll. If both rolls succeed, the higher total wins and the margin of success is the difference in the totals. Obviously if one character makes a successful roll and the other fails, the one who succeeds is the winner. If both sides make a failing roll, then neither side accomplishes the desired action. In the case of a tie, the defender always wins (assuming there is a defender, if not it remains a tie).

## MODIFIERS

Not all actions are the same. Some are either more difficult or can be much easier. In cases such as these the Gamemaster will apply a positive or negative modifier to the attempt. The table which follows will indicate the range of possible modifiers for the given situation.

### TEST MODIFIERS

Mundane	+6
Simple	+4
Easy	+2
Normal	0
Hard	-2
Difficult	-4
Extreme	-6

## MARGIN OF SUCCESS

There are times for a character when simply making a minimal success is not good enough. This is the reason for the margin of success. The greater the margin, the higher the success of the action. It works much in the same manner as a target number (TN); however the player may not always know the minimum number required in order to succeed. The difficulty of the action and amount of successes needed is determined by the Gamemaster.

### NUMBER OF SUCCESSES

Marginal	1
Fair	2
Decent	3
Good	4
Very Good	5
Superb	6
Excellent	7
Astounding	8
Glorious	9
Miraculous	10+

# HITHER LANDS

## COMBAT

When fighting occurs the action is divided into three-second segments called Rounds. It is during this brief bit of time when a character will have the opportunity to Strike and Defend. During a round a character may do both actions with no penalty. More accomplished characters can perform additional actions in a single Round.

An Initiative Roll is required at the start of each round, unless there is a situation (such as a surprise ambush) which will forego this process. The Attributes of Wisdom and Nimbleness are added to the roll of a d12. The same rules apply for Initiative Rolls as with Resisted Rolls. This can be particularly dangerous if one side or the other fails their roll (one or both actions for that given round may be lost if the Gamemaster sees fit). A tie means that both sides will act simultaneously.

Once the order of initiative has been determined, the characters declare their intentions. These actions are limited by time and some extended moves may not be possible to accomplish within this three-second window. Again it is the Gamemaster who has the final say in regard to such matters. Let common-sense dictate what can and cannot be achieved within a single Round.

The distance a character can move within a Round, and still manage to both Strike and Defend, is determined by their Movement. The formula for this distance is (Nimbleness + Might + 12). You will notice that this is the same as the maximum distance a character can cover in one second. But remember that is at a full sprint and a character would lose all other actions in that Round should they wish to do so.

Characters with a higher Nimbleness earn extra actions per round. With a Nimbleness of 6 the character will get one extra action; A 9 Nimbleness two extra actions; A 12 Nimbleness three extra actions.

The reward for receiving such actions does not come without a cost. All extra actions suffer a cumulative penalty of -1. The breakdown will be thus: -1 to 2<sup>nd</sup> Action; -2 to 3<sup>rd</sup> Action; -3 to 4<sup>th</sup> Action after the first free action in a Round.

In close combat the Character will Strike adding the scores of the Attribute Might and the Armed Combat Skill, then rolling a d12. The opposing character will add the Attribute Nimbleness and the Armed Combat Skill then roll a d12. Projectile weapons are similar, but will use Nimbleness and Ranged Combat. There are distance modifiers to the ranged attack; Close there is no penalty; -1 if at a short distance; -2 at a medium distance; and -3 if at a long distance. Also defense against a thrown or loosed weapon is more difficult. The Defend modifier is -1 to thrown weapons and -3 to loosed weapons.

Defend is a catch-all word that covers a number of different types of defensive actions in Armed Combat training such as dodging; parry; or block. There can be special types of Defend actions which would be listed in Battle-feats. There are times when the only chance for a character to succeed at a combat action is to make a Full Attack or Full Defense. By foregoing their second free action in a Round the character will receive a +3 bonus in Armed Combat to either their two Strike or Defend actions.

There are a number of different attacking Battle-feats that a character may learn and then attempt in combat. Each offers a unique style or method that can have a greater impact on the Armed Combat Strike. Some more daring or bold moves will have the potential to slay an opponent in a single attack, but often times it will come with a penalty to perform such a maneuver.

When a character fights in non-lethal combat they will use the Unarmed Combat Skill (and/or the Might or Nimbleness Attribute + d12) and damage from success will be applied to Stamina. Once a character's Stamina has been completely spent they will fall to the ground unconscious. Any further attacks upon an unconscious

# HITHER LANDS

character would turn lethal and thus it is then applied to a character's Lifeblood.



*O! What are you doing,  
And where are you going?  
Your ponies need shoeing!  
The river is flowing!  
O! tra la la lally  
here down in the valley!*

*O! Where are you going  
With beards all a wagging?  
No knowing, no knowing  
What brings Mister Baggins  
And Balin and Dwalin  
down into the valley  
in time  
la' la!*

## ROLEPLAYING IN MIDDLE-EARTH

# HITHER LANDS

## COMPLICATIONS IN BATTLE

Combat does always play out in complete order, the field of battle can be confusing and actions are carried out at a rapid pace. To follow are a few complications which can (and often do) play a part in combat.

**STRIKING FROM BEHIND** – It is difficult to defend an attack from the rear. A distracted character that is occupied with another opponent or the victim of a surprise sneak attack cannot defend against the action. Those with the Wary Merit are the exception, and even then, should they be caught off-guard will suffer a -3 penalty to Armed Combat Defend rolls.

**KNOCKED DOWN** – When a character has been knocked to the ground or is lying down they will be unable to make a Strike during that round. Until a character returns to their feet, all further actions (Initiative, Strike, and Defend) are done with a -3 penalty. Getting back up must be accomplished by adding the Nimbleness Attribute to the Balance skill and rolling a d12 (with a score of 12 or higher).

**FULL ATTACK** – As mentioned earlier, this is a desperate action taken with no regard to making a Defend effort. A +3 bonus will be applied to all Armed Combat Strike rolls (this action does not apply for ranged attacks) during the round.

**FULL DEFENSE** – Allows for a character to take two Defend actions in a round. Further, there is a +3 bonus added to these actions. However the character loses any offensive opportunity and is still vulnerable to ranged attacks.

**MULTIPLE OPPONENTS** – Each additional foe (beyond one) attacking a single opponent will get a +1 bonus to all actions (to a maximum of six or +6) in the round. Also, they can only make their allotted number of Defend actions and if there are still opportunities for the extra attackers to Strike, the character will have a zero for Defend on rolls.

**FIGHTING ON OR AGAINST A MOUNT** – When combat occurs between those on horseback or other type mount and those on foot, modifiers will need to be applied. The mounted individual will have a +2 bonus to both Armed Combat Strike and Defend rolls. While the individual on foot will have a penalty of -2 on Strike and Defend rolls. There is also the size modifier which needs to be considered. A mount will increase the size by one, thus a normal (man) would be moved to the Large category. If a mount were to be struck down in battle, the mounted character would be subject to falling damage, as well as the rule for being Knocked Down.

## FEAR

In the Hither Lands there are forces, both for good or evil, which evoke terrifying powers. The mere presence of some adversaries is enough to cause dread and inaction in their enemies. Fear is one of the most forceful weapons of the Shadow. Long has it been used to cause anguish and despair, while both weakening and bending the wills of those exposed to its threat. Always it serves as an underlying, subversive peril, Fear is a force which can compel others to either stand or fall through the manifestation of awe and terror.

In certain situations, most often seen in combat or other direct encounters, Fear requires a test of Will. Characters need in unopposed Fear tests to double their Attribute of Will and will roll a d12. If the result is 12 or higher the character can act without hindrance. Situational modifiers may apply and thus make the test more difficult to pass. Should a character fail, they are panicked and the severity of the Fear effect is dependent upon the degree of failure.

### FEAR EFFECTS

ROLL RESULT	OUTCOME
10 – 11 (1-2)	Loss of Initiative for round; -1 to all rolls
7 – 9 (3-5)	Defensive action only for round; -2 to all rolls
4 – 6 (6-8)	Loss of all actions for round; -3 to all rolls
1 – 3 (9+)	Flees in terror; fall and cowers; -6 to all rolls

Some Fear tests can be resisted rolls. In most cases the minion (or ally) will use their skill of Intimidate plus Attribute of Will and roll a d12. The opposing character opposes using their Will x 2 + d12 roll. Should the Intimidate roll be 12 or higher and is greater than the resisted roll, the Fear attempt is successful. The strength of effect is determined by the margin of success. This is shown in parentheses on the Fear Effects table.

Situational modifiers can be applied to some Fear tests. These will apply to the roll and will either a bonus or penalty in resisting fear. The range of the modifier should be +/- of 1 to 6.

# HITHER LANDS

## BATTLE-FEATS

Heroes often attempt bold, dangerous moves in combat and though the risk of failure is great, the benefit of such an action is well worth the cost. The lists of combat maneuvers provided in Hither Lands are merely a sample of the possible moves available. Gamemasters and players are free to make additions to the list of Battle-Feats, but it should be done so with a strict balance of risk and reward. As with Merits and Flaws the use of these combat maneuvers should not come to dominate the intent of the system and may be left out to allow for grittier, realistic play.

## LIST OF MANEUVERS

- ❖ AIM – is a time-consuming action which seeks to locate the weakest point of the enemy. The character immediately forfeits Initiative for the round and a -2 on Defend, but it will yield a +1 on Strike and Threat.
- ❖ BLADERUNNER – an exceedingly dangerous and difficult maneuver where a character grabs an opponent's weapon and then uses it against them. A -6 penalty is applied to the Strike. If successful the character gets a +3 to Threat. The opponent cannot Strike until they find another weapon. They also have a -3 to Initiative and Defend rolls in the next round.
- ❖ BLOOD-LETTER – a daring, lunging action that attempts to drive through and knock-back an opponent. It has a -2 to Strike and a +2 to Threat. If successful the opponent will have a -2 on Strike and -2 on the next Initiative roll.
- ❖ CLOVEN WRATH – is an offensive action where the character attempts to cleave the opponent in a driving, downward motion. There is a -4 to Strike, but if successful a +4 is added to Threat. The move will leave the character exposed with -2 to Defend.
- ❖ COMEBACK – a defensive move that will reduce the advantage of the attacker. It requires a -2 on Defend, but will yield a -2 for the opponent's Initiative and Defend in the next round.
- ❖ COUNTER-FEINT – is an offensive action used to slow the opponent's attack and also leave an opening to exploit. It requires a -2 on Strike, but will yield a -2 to the Strike for the opponent in the current round; -1 to opponent's Initiative and Defend in the following round.
- ❖ DISARM – a very risky maneuver that will relieve an opponent of their weapon. It will yield a -4 to Strike; -2 to Defend; should the disarm succeed the opponent will drop the weapon; lose Initiative the next round; cannot Strike during the current and next round; and opponent has a -4 to Defend.
- ❖ DOUBLE-SHOT – is an action where two arrows are used in the attack. There is a -2 to Strike, but if successful the Threat from the arrow is doubled.
- ❖ GOUGING FURY – this action typically uses a ranged weapon, such an arrow, in close combat. There is a -1 to Strike and a +1 to Threat – if successful.
- ❖ HEROES GAMBIT – a risky opening move that will benefit the attacker, but can leave them vulnerable if unsuccessful. It has a +1 to Strike and Threat. However, a failed roll will cost the attacker -2 on Defend roll and a -2 on the next Initiative roll.
- ❖ HEWN RAGE – is a sweeping attempt (of an edged weapon) to behead an opponent. There is a -5 penalty applied to Strike, but if successful a +5 is added to the Threat of the weapon.

# HITHER LANDS

- ❖ **HURRIED STRIKE** – from this attempt one can quickly gain an advantage in battle. The action is declared before the round occurs. It yields a +3 to Initiative; -3 to Strike; and a +3 bonus to Threat.
- ❖ **LEAPING PASS** – is an attacking move in which the character will both leap and pass by the opponent while attempting to hit. It will yield a +2 to Strike; a -1 to Threat; and if successful the character will have a +2 to Defend; and the opponent will have a -1 on their next Strike.
- ❖ **LOW-SWEEP** – this move is an attempt to harm and knockdown an opponent. It is a difficult action with a -3 to Strike. Should it succeed, the opponent will have a -3 to all further actions (Initiative, Strike, & Defend) until they have returned to their feet.
- ❖ **PRESS** – is used to slow the actions of the opponent while also seeking for an opening or attacking advantage. It has a -1 to Strike and a +1 to Threat. A successful action will yield a -2 to the opponent's Strike and a -2 for their next Initiative roll.
- ❖ **RECKLESS COUNTER** – a defensive move where the character gives up Initiative to attempt a intrepid and deadly counterstrike. The character has a -3 to Defend, however if successful they will then get a +3 bonus to Strike and Threat.
- ❖ **RUINOUS SMITE** – a great forceful action where the character bashes the opponent. A -3 is applied to the Strike, if success a +3 is added to Threat. Also the opponent is knocked down. The opponent will have a -3 to all further actions (Initiative, Strike, & Defend) until they have returned to their feet.
- ❖ **RUN-THROUGH** – is an attempt to drive a weapon through the chest or heart of an opponent. It is an exceedingly harsh move that is difficult to accomplish. A -6 penalty is applied to the roll, however if successful a +6 is added to the Threat of the weapon. Regardless of success or failure, a -3 is then applied to the Defend roll.
- ❖ **SUNDER SHIELD** – is an offensive move to destroy an opponent's shield. There is a -3 penalty to Strike, however, if successful the shield is rendered useless. In this move the opponent does not take physical damage.
- ❖ **TRIPLE-SHOT** – is an action where three arrows are used in the attack. There is a -3 to Strike, but if successful the Threat from the arrow is tripled.
- ❖ **WILD STRIKE** – is a desperate and reckless maneuver similar in likeness to Full Attack. A -3 is applied to Strike; +3 to Threat; and a -3 for the character's Defend roll.

## SIZE

Not all the races and creatures found within Middle-earth are of the height. Smaller folk are more difficult to hit, yet at the same time are susceptible to greater loss of Lifeblood. It is the opposite for those greater in size. For instance, a Hobbit attempting to attack a very large minion such as a Dragon would have a +3 bonus to the Armed Combat Strike roll, while having a -3 to the Threat. Again the same logic applies in reverse for larger sizes.

SIZE MODIFIER (from a Hobbit's viewpoint)

CATEGORY	TO STRIKE / TO THREAT
Very Large – Dragon	+3 / -3
Large – Troll	+2 / -2
Normal – Elf or Man	+1 / -1
Small – Dwarf or Hobbit	- / -

# HITHER LANDS

## DAMAGE

Once a successful attack has occurred a character will suffer a wound. This damage is measured in Vitality and once that amount has reached its limit the character is mortally wounded. Vitality is determined by adding together the Attributes of Might and Will.

On the character sheet next to Vitality there are sets of circles which come in pairs. There are six pairs for a total of twelve; this is the maximum number of Vitality available to a character. Also there is a reserve, which will be explained later. Most characters will not have twelve in Vitality (at least to start) and will need to fill in those circles beyond the amount of points which they have. For instance, a character with nine (9) of Vitality will fill in the last three circles. This means is that should a character receive a wound(s) of nine points they would then be on the verge of death.

The damage system in Hither Lands is, in certain ways, a combination of hit points and wound levels. Characters will suffer penalties to all further rolls should a wound take them beyond a number of Vitality points. Taking damage beyond any pair of circles means that the character has received a certain type of wound.

### WOUNDS

Healthy	0
Graze	-1
Minor	-2
Deep	-3
Severe	-4
Grave	-5
Mortal	-6

Next to Vitality there are an additional twelve circles. This is a Reserve for characters who have beyond six in each Attribute of Might and Will. Damage would first be applied to the Reserve before filling in the Vitality circles.

## THREAT

Every weapon in Hither Lands has a Threat rating. Should a character have a successful Armed Combat roll higher than the opposing character's Armed Combat Defend roll, then that Threat would be added to the number of successes. For instance, a character has a Strike roll of 14, while the opponent has a Defend roll of 12. This is two successes. It is then that the Threat rating of the weapon is applied to increase the number of overall successes. The number of successes is the damage which will take away Vitality points.- Armour (if worn) will then soak and thereby reduce the number of total successes from the Strike and Threat.

### WEAPON THREAT

Crude Weapon; Dagger; Short Knife; Arrow	1
Short or Thrusting Blade; Axe; Hammer; Mace	2
Curved Blade; Spear; Flail; Great Arrow	3
Long Blade; Great Axe, Hammer or Mace	4
Great Spear; Great Flail; Great Sword	5
Pole-arms; Large Rocks; Siege Weapons	6

Enchantments can further increase the Threat of a weapon, Spell-crafted items are +1; Lore-Crafted items are +2; and Dwimmer-crafted items are +3. It is also possible for an item to have a combination of these enchantments. The highest total number of enchantment bonuses is +6 and would be reserved for the most powerful items crafted in Middle-earth.

A character can wear some sort of protection that will soak up the number of overall successes from a Strike and Threat.

### ARMOUR

No Protection – Raiment; Tunic	0
Some Protection – Habergeon; Hame	+1
More Protection – Corselet; Hauberk	+2
Full Protection - Panoply	+3

Enchantments give equal bonuses to Armour as that of a weapon and thus increase protection.

# HITHER LANDS

Shields will provide a bonus to the Armed Combat Defend Roll. They do not, however, soak up successes after a Strike and Threat has succeeded.

## SHIELDS

Small Shield	+1
Large Shield	+2
Tower Shield	+3

Enchantments give equal bonuses to a shield as that of a weapon or Armour and thus increase the bonus of the shield on a Defend Roll.

Cover can also provide a bonus to a Defend Roll, making the character more difficult to hit. It can also absorb an equal amount of damage and will reduce the number of overall successes from a Strike and Threat.

## COVER

No Cover	0
Some Cover	+1
More Cover	+2
Full Cover	+3

There are some Merits (Qualities) and Flaws (Flaws) which can also come into play during combat. The full list of Merits and Flaws will be detailed in a later section.

It is important to keep in mind that there are only two types of damage a character will take in Hither Lands, which are lethal and non-lethal. As stated before all lethal damage will be applied to Vitality and non-lethal damage will be applied to Stamina.

## CONDITION

Hale	0
Winded	-1
Weary	-2
Drained	-3
Sapped	-4
Exhausted	-5
Collapsed	-6

Stamina, which is a measure of endurance and resolve, is handled in a similar manner as Vitality in Hither Lands. The formula for determining this amount is  $\text{Might} + \text{Will} \times 2$ . On the character sheet there are sets of four circles, which can be filled in each time they expend energy or need to reduce their overall condition. The Condition table in the previous column indicates the varying states of Stamina and applicable penalty modifiers (if any) on all further rolls.

## FĒA (SPIRIT)

Fëa is a Quenya word in Middle-earth that signifies the soul or spirit. It is the set of values which goes beyond the mind or body to define the complete makeup of an individual. There are six principles used to represent the Fëa of each character in Hither Lands.

Valour is an inner strength which enables a character to act with courage in the face of overwhelming odds. These points, if used wisely, are often the difference between life and death. However they should not be used for trivial matters or haphazard ways. Valour points may not be purchased, once used only the Gamemaster can give them back to a character.

## VALOUR POINTS BY RACE

Hobbits	12
High Men	11
Silvan or Dwarf	10
Sindar	9
Noldor	8
Middle Men	7
Low Men	6

Valour may be used in several ways, some of these include: adding a +6 bonus to a particular roll; reducing damage from a wound in half (this is taken after the combat rolls have been resolved); re-rolling during a critical situation.

# HITHER LANDS

Corruption is an effect that can occur when a character resorts to foul deeds or succumbs to wicked influences. The farther as one falls into Shadow, the more difficult it is to return to the Light. After every three points of Corruption a character will incur a penalty on all Tests of Will.

## CORRUPTION

Light	PURE
Dim	-1
Twilight	-2
Fading	-3
Shadow	CONSUMED

Taint is an affliction caused from delving or focusing too deeply on a subject that can consume a character. It is similar to Corruption, yet may not always send one into Shadow. In most cases the character will become so enamored by this subject that the outside world is no longer of any interest. Radagast the Brown is a great example of one who had been completely tainted. Tests of Will for Taint are handled in the same manner as Corruption.

## TAIN T

None	SOUND
Intrigued	-1
Charmed	-2
Captivated	-3
Enamored	LOST

Three remaining characteristics help to form the composition of the Fëa. These are Honor, Duty, and Ardour. All act to illustrate the distinguishing features of one's personal nature. At defining times of play the Gamemaster may call into question any one or more of these elements of the spirit. Bonuses or penalties that range from +3 to -3 can be applied to rolls during that situation. It is up to the character alone to choose the actuating causes of their own life and to either benefit from or suffer the consequences by these choices.

Honour is the sense of what is right, true, and just in the world. It leaves the mark of glory and respect while in turn defines the integrity and worth of one's character.

Duty is that which one is bound by moral obligation to defend. This responsibility can also be a burden, for one is compelled to preserve these courses of action.

Ardour can be either love or loyalty. It is an intense feeling of passionate fervor for a person or cause. Many deeds of Valour have been born out of this fiery zeal.

## HROÄ (BODY)

Hroä is a Quenya word in Middle-earth that signifies the physical body as opposed to the spirit or Fëa described earlier. All characters live and breathe by the necessary union of these two parts. Formulation of the Hroä is represented again in Hither Lands by six characteristics. Four of these (Lifeblood, Stamina, Movement and Initiative) have all previously been discussed in detail.

Encumbrance is the weight or burden one can maintain or achieve by lifting. The pack carrying capacity is determined by the following formula:  $\text{Might} \times \text{Will} \times 12$ . To lift or hold something above one's head is the total of the first formula times two. The capacity to lift something off the ground (or carrying capacity for a mount) is the total of the first formula times three.

Perception is ability to be aware of something (dangerous or otherwise) through sense. This capability of discernment can prove to be very valuable to a character during key events. A keen awareness cannot be underestimated, and may be the only difference in saving one's own life. The formula for determining a character's Perception is  $\text{Wisdom} + \text{Notice} + d12$ .

# HITHER LANDS

## MOVEMENT – BY THE NUMBERS

NIMBLENESS + MIGHT (+12)	MAX. DISTANCE IN FT. PER SEC.
2	14
3	15
4	16
5	17
6	18
7	19
8	20
9	21
10	22
11	23
12	24

\* (Optional) The Formula for a Hobbit is Nimbleness + Might + 9

\*\* (Optional) The Formula for a Dwarf is Nimbleness + Might + 10

As indicated earlier the Movement distance is the maximum amount one can achieve in a second. This is an all-out sprint and thus could not be maintained but for a short time only.

## ENCUMBRANCE – BY THE NUMBERS

MIGHT + WILL (X 12)	PACK LBS.	LIFT LBS.	HOLD LBS.
2	24	48	72
3	36	72	108
4	48	96	144
5	60	120	180
6	72	144	216
7	84	168	252
8	96	192	288
9	108	216	324
10	120	240	360
11	132	264	396
12	144	288	432

A character may carry up to the pack capacity without suffering any loss of Stamina. Should one be forced to carry above this amount the rate of loss is one point of Stamina per hour. Carrying twice as much will cost two points per hour and three points should it be three times as great. Lifting off of one's chest or over one's head will result in a loss of one Stamina point per minute. Trying to lift a heavy object off the ground or out of the way will result in a one point loss in Stamina every twelve seconds.

## ATTRIBUTES

Traits or statistics are known as Attributes in Hither Lands. There are six such Attributes, of which five are constant – Wit, Might, Wisdom, Nimbleness, and Will, while one – Luck, is fluid. Each of these provides a character with mental and physical abilities. Attributes range from 1-6, with 3 the average (from a mortal view). In rare cases characters can go well beyond the maximum limit (not to exceed race).

Each race begins the game with a certain number of Attribute Points. During creation Attributes may be purchased on a one-for-one basis. No Attribute may be two points greater than another.

### ATTRIBUTE POINTS BY RACE

Noldor	24
Sindar	22
Silvan or Dwarf	20
High Men	18
Middle Men	16
Low Men	14
Hobbits	12

There are limits placed for each race in Hither Lands. For players seeking a place where the races are balanced, Middle-earth is not it. Elves, especially the Noldor and Sindar, are a very powerful people in comparison to some of the other races. A Hobbit, for instance, cannot hope to reach the same level in Attributes as one of the Firstborn.

### ATTRIBUTE LEVEL LIMITATIONS

Noldor	12
Sindar	11
Silvan or Dwarf	10
High Men	9
Middle Men	8
Low Men	7
Hobbits	6

# HITHER LANDS

The six Attributes which have been listed can be defined as follows: Wit is one's intellectual ability; Might represents a character's physical strength and power; Wisdom is a trait of gaining knowledge from insight and common-sense; Nimbleness is the ease and elegance of movement and reaction; Will is the capacity to be resolute and steadfast in purpose; Luck is a character's overall condition or luck in life.

## LUCK

Luck is the only fluid Attribute. A character may buy Luck points just the same as other Attributes. For each point in Luck, a player will roll a d12 and record the number. During the game a character can use these Luck numbers to alter the roll to their advantage. For instance, a player buys two Luck points at character creation. They then roll a d12 for each point. The first roll was a 9 and the other was a 3. Now the higher number can be used to replace a low roll by the character. The lower of the two results can be used to alter a high roll of an opposing character. Once a Luck point is used, it is removed from the Attribute. At zero or below a player may still use Luck points. However, each time it is used the Gamemaster will receive a point of Luck that can be used against them. Luck may be bought back at the normal cost of Experience points.

## SKILLSET

There are twenty-four skills that a character may choose from in Hither Lands. Each of these skills is broadly defined allowing players and the Gamemaster alike the freedom to enjoy the game without the constraints of domineering rules.

The skill range for characters is nearly the same as those for Attributes. However, a character does not need to take a point in any one skill. A zero in a skill indicates that a character is not proficient or is untrained.

Again, each race will begin the game with a certain amount of points to spend on Skills. During character creation Skills can be purchased on a one-for-one basis. No Skill may be more than a point greater than the highest Attribute a character has at the time.

### SKILL POINTS BY RACE

Noldor	36
Sindar	33
Silvan or Dwarf	30
High Men	27
Middle Men	24
Low Men	21
Hobbits	18

As there are limitations set for races on the highest level of the Attributes each may reach, the same rule will apply for Skills.

### SKILL LEVEL LIMITATIONS

Noldor	12
Sindar	11
Silvan or Dwarf	10
High Men	9
Middle Men	8
Low Men	7
Hobbits	6

The list of individual skills in Hither Lands is as follows:

Armed Combat	Unarmed Combat
Ranged Combat	Battle
Performance	Influence
Counsel	Diplomacy
Knowledge	Notice
Artisan	Languages
Aid	Culture
Wilderness	Survival
Leadership	Stealth
Balance	Riding
Seafaring	Gaming
Tending	Tradecraft

# HITHER LANDS

## SKILL DESCRIPTIONS

- ❖ **AID** – covers the diverse types of care given to aid those suffering or injured. This skill makes use of herblore, medicines, poultices or leech-craft in such treatments.
- ❖ **ARTISAN** – this is a general term used to cover the composition of music, poetry or stories, painting, sculpting, and other such artistic talents.
- ❖ **BALANCE** – handles those stunts of agility which include (but not limited to) jumping, tumbling, climbing an obstacle, moving across a ledge, crossing a river by rope, or other acrobatic feats.
- ❖ **BATTLE** – is the skill which makes use of the various options of tactics and the building of fortifications for defence or offensive measures such as siege engines, as well as in the planning and preparations used in battle.
- ❖ **SEAFARING** – general skill of a mariner. From sailing to steering and building or repairing. However, it does not include shipwright, which is covered in Tradecraft.
- ❖ **COUNSEL** – a courtesan type skill that covers emissary, statecraft, stewardship or lordship, negotiations and courtly affairs.
- ❖ **CULTURE** – the knowledge of customs, folklore, histories, peoples, and places.
- ❖ **PERFORMANCE** – performing with instrument and/or voice. Also the measure of oratory ability in social situations.
- ❖ **DIPLOMACY** – covers the skills of advise, design, intent, planning, and schemes.
- ❖ **INFLUENCE** – is the ability to compel, deceive, inspire, manipulate, persuade, or seduce others.
- ❖ **LEADERSHIP** – the power and presence to dominate and control others. Used to intimidate, instill fear and cause dread in opponents or enemies.
- ❖ **RANGED COMBAT** – this skill is used for ranged attacks such as bows, slings, and thrown weapons.
- ❖ **GAMING** – used for games of chance and skill as well as that such as riddles or puzzles. It may also include contests of physical prowess.
- ❖ **KNOWLEDGE** – is a skill that covers most academic studies and other general disciplines.
- ❖ **LANGUAGES** – indicates the use of native and foreign tongues. At zero a character can only speak their native language. At one they can read and write. Each level beyond they will strengthen native language. Every 2 levels an additional language is learned (speak, read, write).
- ❖ **NOTICE** – the skill used to spot someone or search for something. Through this observation characters can discern important clues or facts.
- ❖ **UNARMED COMBAT** – forms of unarmed combat (usually non-lethal). This covers forms of fighting such as brawling, fisticuffs grappling, martial arts, and wrestling.
- ❖ **RIDING** – is the ability to ride a horse or other type of mount.
- ❖ **ARMED COMBAT** – Is divided between Strike and Defend actions. Strike are various techniques and offensive actions used in close, armed combat, while Defend are measures of defence in combat such as block, dodge, and parry.
- ❖
- ❖ **SURVIVAL** – is the skill of basic cooking, fishing, foraging, field dressing, hunting, rudimentary first aid shelter building, trapping, et al.
- ❖ **TENDING** – covers the skill of maintaining and/or caring for crops, farms, livestock or vineyards.
- ❖ **STEALTH** – the ability of sneaking and skulking. Also for picking pockets, breaking and entering, streetwise endeavors, and other illicit activities.
- ❖ **TRADECRAFT** – this skills covers mercantile commerce and trades such as armour-smith, black-smith, bowyer/fletcher, brew-master, weapon-smith, or similar.
- ❖ **WILDERNESS** – the learned understanding of the wilds. This covers directional sense, fire starting, hard marches, swimming, tracking, weather-sense, etc.

# HITHER LANDS

## ADVANCEMENT COST

Progression in the advancement of an Attribute or Skill beyond initial character generation is subject to the following costs for each race.

### ATTRIBUTE COST

LEVEL	NOLDOR	SINDAR	SILVAN/DWARF/HIGH MEN	MIDDLE MEN	LOW MEN	HOBBITS
1	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	7	8	9	10	11	12
3	13	14	15	16	17	18
4	19	20	21	22	23	24
5	25	26	27	28	29	30
6	31	32	33	34	35	36
7	37	38	39	40	41	-
8	43	44	45	46	-	-
9	49	50	51*	-	-	-
10	55	56	57**	-	-	-
11	61	62	-	-	-	-
12	67	-	-	-	-	-

\* Maximum for High Men

\*\* Maximum for Silvan or Dwarf

### SKILL COST

LEVEL	NOLDOR	SINDAR	SILVAN/DWARF/HIGH MEN	MIDDLE MEN	LOW MEN	HOBBITS
1	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	7	8	9	10	11	12
5	13	14	15	16	17	18
6	19	20	21	22	23	24
7	25	26	27	28	29	-
8	31	32	33	34	-	-
9	37	38	39*	-	-	-
10	43	44	45**	-	-	-
11	49	50	-	-	-	-
12	55	-	-	-	-	-

\* Maximum for High Men

\*\* Maximum for Silvan or Dwarf

# HITHER LANDS

## EXPERIENCE

The noticeable difference in the power levels of the races is somewhat offset in the limits of Experience that each can gain per session. These numbers are the highest one can hope to achieve and certainly the Gamemaster can grant less than this amount if warranted.

### MAXIMUM EXPERIENCE PER SESSION

Noldor	3
Sindar	3
Silvan or Dwarf	4
High Men	4
Middle Men	5
Low Men	5
Hobbits	6

One of the key factors in establishing a sliding scale of Experience is age. Elves, Dwarves, and even the race of High Men are immortal or live unusually long lives. It can be assumed that these races have longer to hone their Attributes and Skills and thus do not require advancement as quickly in comparison to the relatively short-lived races of Middle and Low Men or Hobbits.

## AGE

Time does not remain still for the mortal races of Middle-earth. Eventually, as the years pass, and age will wear down the mind and body. Characters in Hither Lands will begin the game in the prime of their lives. However, a day will come when this is no longer the case and Attributes shall begin to decrease.

### STARTING AGE BY RACE

- ❖ Elven – Might x Wisdom x 72
- ❖ Dwarf – Might + Wisdom + 36
- ❖ Hobbit – Might + Wisdom + 30
- ❖ High Men – Might + Wisdom + 24
- ❖ Middle Men – Might + Wisdom + 18
- ❖ Low Men – Might + Wisdom + 12

## EFFECTS OF AGING

Once a character reaches a certain age in life, they must make an annual deterioration check. While in the age category of Old, a character will make a Test of Age (Wisdom + Will + d12) at -3. Failure will result in the loss of one Attribute point for each number under 12. Once a character has reached the Aged category the yearly test must be made with a -6 penalty. When any Attribute is finally reduced to zero, the character will pass away. The use of Luck or Valour is not permitted on Tests of Age.

### AGE CATEGORY BY RACE

RACE	OLD	AGED
Dwarf	168	216
High Men	84	108
Hobbits	72	96
Middle Men	48	60
Low Men	36	48

Though the Elves do not suffer the ills of a mortal life, their passing will yet still come. Of the Eldar, both the Noldor and the Sindar will feel the Call of the Sea – a longing to sail West from the Hither Lands to the Blessed Realm. This urge may manifest itself at anytime in an Eldar's life. It can be triggered by many events or through the burdens of time and should the Gamemaster see fit to require a Test of the Undying. The first test (Wisdom + Will + d12) is made with a -1 penalty modifier. Successive tests will follow with a -3; -6; -9; -12 and so on until the character fails and the Call comes at last.

Silvan Elves do not feel this call; however they will become weary of life in Middle-earth through the Burden of Time. It is a Fey wish, one of peril, and once felt, a Silvan Elf will seek out to find death. The Test of Fey will use the same formula as the Test of the Undying. Once the test is failed, the character must journey to seek search out to battle a foe(s) until slain. Elves who do not hear the call or become fey are Lingers.

# HITHER LANDS

## ENCHANTMENTS

For those who come to dwell within the bounds of Middle-earth, they will soon notice the use of esoteric lore, magic and maybe even spells. These enchantments can only be created, shaped, or dispersed through the innate magic of the Eldar, Maiar, or those rare individuals who were Gifted with this ability. The Doors of Durin, located at the West-gate of Moria, were just one example. They were enchanted through Lore-Craft and could be opened with a Spell. The Blades of the Westernesse, found in the tombs of the Barrow Downs, were made with Lore-Craft and Spells placed upon them.

Words to describe wielders of such spells, lore and magic are commonplace amongst the lexicon of Middle-earth. There were wizards and conjurers. Also mentioned were magicians and the foulcraft of sorcerers. Heard too were seers and necromancers. There were enchanters and lore-masters, sages and healers. Some looked to the stars while others studied alchemy. Tales told of Dwarven crafters who wrought mighty enchantments whilst singing in the smithies of their mountain halls. There were even those who were skin-changers.

How is possible to place each of them into a set of defined powers? For instance, delineate the innate ability of a Beorning to turn into a bear, yet seldom – if ever – allow him to work any other form of magic. Placing such terms into highly specific categories is no easy task.

It must also be remembered that in Middle-earth the word “Spell” or “Lore” does not always mean magic, think of it as a broad term for a work of wonder. Some of what appears to be magic is really lore. This is a learned skill by which the natural properties of things may be combined with certain techniques to produce magical artifacts, devices, and crafts.

## SPELL-CRAFT

A Spell is a predefined, verbal invocation designed for a specific effect. It is the simplest form of Enchantment. Often times it can be used in conjunction with Lore or through the innate magic of the Eldar, Maiar, or those rare individuals who were Gifted with this ability. The Doors of Durin, located at the West-gate of Moria, were just one example. They were enchanted through Lore-Craft and could be opened with a Spell. The Blades of the Westernesse, found in the tombs of the Barrow Downs, were made with Lore-Craft and Spells placed upon them.

## LORE-CRAFT

Through knowledge and study the creation of wondrous items such as the Helm of Hador or the Palantir were crafted with Lore. This practice of taking inherent qualities and creating objects is slow, laborious and is quite distinct from magic in Middle-earth. Lore-Craft is a more difficult form of Enchantment and there are few races who have mastered this talent. It is the Noldor who are among the greatest users of Lore-Craft and, to a lesser extent, the Dwarves.

## DWIMMER-CRAFT

It is only the Elves, Maiar, and the handful of select, Gifted individuals who are able to use magic in Middle-earth. Dwimmer-Craft is the greatest, most powerful form of Enchantment. This art is more effortless, more quick, and more complete than Spell-Craft or Lore-Craft. This capacity is something others in Middle-earth cannot deliver, for it exceeds Mortal limitations. It is a sub-creative faculty that reduces time to the point of instantaneous creation of effect from thought. Dwimmer-Craft can be combined with the lesser forms of Enchantment.

## ROLEPLAYING IN MIDDLE-EARTH

# HITHER LANDS

## SUB-CREATION

The inherent basis of the three types of Enchantment is called Sub-Creation. This is the source for the holistic design of Middle-earth and the manner from which all of these mystical illuminations are manifested. The font of Sub-Creation comes in four forms – Creation (Light) or Destruction (Shadow); and Preservation (Light) or Domination (Shadow). All Spells, Lore, and Dwimmer-Craft (magic) will take effect from one of these four sources of Sub-Creation.

## INTENT AND PURPOSE

Though the forms and methods of Sub-Creation are many and varied, all are bound to the common themes of Intent and Purpose. The premise is that Enchantment (in and of itself) has an open design, neither for good or evil, until these principles have been applied. For instance, Lembas or Elvish Waybread – made by one of the Sindar of Lorien, would have an Intent of Preservation and a Purpose of healing and nourishment. Each task is assigned a power level, which is dependant upon the desired effect. The stronger an Intent, the more difficult it is to complete the task successfully. Remember that Enchantments are subject to the limitations mentioned earlier; the scope of the Purpose cannot go beyond these barriers to accomplish all needs.

## METHOD

What of the Words of Command, Songs of Wizardry, or Runes of Power that are cited from the annals of Arda? The delivery of Enchantment is done through one or more of these three methods: Speaking; Singing or Shaping. No single method is greater than another; it is merely the manner in which one chooses to convey the Intent and Purpose of Sub-Creation.

## MATERIAL

Once the Intent, Purpose and Method of the Enchantment have been determined, there is still the matter of Material. As mentioned earlier, Sub-Creation is limited; it cannot merely make something out of nothing. There are a diverse range of components which may be required for any tangible Enchantment. For instance, Moon-letters – the secret runes of the Dwarfsmiths were written with silver pens and used a material made from Mithril – called Ithildin.

## TIME AND EFFECT

Enchantments are unique; some may call for one to utter a specific phrase, for others still, a complicated chant or a lengthy ritual. All such things do require Time. This measure can come in nearly an instant or a few short seconds to longer periods of hours, days or possibly even weeks and months.

As the range of time for an Enchantment can be infinite in variation, so too can be the effects. Some Enchantments are designed to affect a single being or thing. Others may have variable effects which are intended for multiple objects. Enchantments may have a lasting or permanent Effect. The greater intensity of the desired result is more difficult it is to attain.

## RESONANCE

Middle-earth is a place full of Enchantment. Often times this subtle nature will echo out from strong emotion or power. It is a Resonance that mirrors an action. Just as Corruption and Taint can cause ruin to an individual, Resonance may shape the very land to this will. The sanctuaries of Lothlorien and Rivendell are a reflection of goodness, while the blight of the Dead Marshes is a mirror of tragedy and loss.

# HITHER LANDS

## EXCLUSION

Not all of the races in Hither Lands have the ability to use Enchantments. Heard most often are the Eldar and the Dwarves who weaved into the stories of Middle-earth mystical deeds or the smithing of significant artifacts. Not often has the Race of Men, especially lines of lesser blood, been blessed with the power of Sub-Creation. Hobbits have neither magic about them nor are they capable of using any of the three crafts of Enchantment.

As are the Attributes and Skills limited by race in Hither Lands, so too does this rule apply in the art of Enchantment. It must be remembered that there are only a few examples of Men who actually worked any of these crafts. High Men or Middle Men must take the Gift of x-Craft to have any abilities in Enchantment. A Gamemaster must also keep in mind that this indeed a rare gift and not to be given without purpose if they so wish to remain faithful to the true spirit of Middle-earth.

### CRAFT LEVEL LIMITATIONS

RACE	SPELL	LORE	DWIMMER
Noldor	12	12	12
Sindar	11	10	11
Silvan	10	8	10
Dwarf	9	11	-
High Men *	8	9	9
Middle Men **	7	7	-

\* High Men – Gift of x-Craft Required

\*\* Middle Men – Gift of x-Craft Required

As an optional rule the races listed below may start the game with these free levels.

### INITIAL LEVELS IN CRAFT BY RACE

RACE	SPELL	LORE	DWIMMER
Noldor	4	4	3
Sindar	3	2	2
Silvan	2	1	1
Dwarf	1	3	-

## COSTS OF ENCHANTMENT

There are cost differences for advancement in each level of the three crafts. Some races are quicker to learn and/or have an in-born, natural proficiency to work such Enchantments.

### COST FOR EACH LEVEL OF CRAFT

RACE	SPELL	LORE	DWIMMER
Noldor	3	3	3
Sindar	3	4	4
Silvan	4	5	5
Dwarf	4	3	-
High Men	5	4	6
Middle Men	6	6	-

## POWER LEVEL

Costs for the creation of an Enchantment are dependant upon its Intent. Sub-Creation power levels range from one to twelve. A one indicates the most mundane and least wearing effort of crafting, while a twelve is most difficult, potent and taxing of efforts. To determine the exact power level for each Enchantment there are the principal factors of Intent, Purpose, Material, Time, and Effect.

## WEARINESS

The formula for working an Enchantment is the Attribute of Will + the Merit of x-Craft + d12, minus the Intent Power Level of the Sub-Creation. If the total of this result is a 12 or higher then the effort succeeds. Any lower number will result in failure. All Enchantments cause weariness which is taken from Stamina. This loss is equal to the Intent Power Level if successful, or double the amount if failed. It is a critical error in judgment to go beyond one's total Stamina amount. Should this occur a point of Will is first burned away and then any further points are reduced from a character's Lifeblood.

# HITHER LANDS

## OUT OF THE FRYING-PAN INTO THE FIRE

### AN EXERPT FROM THE HOBBIT

*'He [Gandalf] gathered the huge pine-cones from the branches of his tree. Then he set one alight with bright blue fire, and threw it whizzing down among the circle of wolves. It struck one on the back, and immediately his shaggy coat caught fire, and he was leaping to and fro yelping horribly. Then another came and another, one in blue flames, one in red, another in green. They burst on the ground in the middle of the circle and went off in coloured sparks and smoke...'*

*'...but this was a most horrible and uncanny fire. If a spark got in their coats it stuck and burned into them, and unless they rolled over quick they were soon all in flames...'*

## PUTTING IT INTO CONTEXT

In the dire scene described in part Gandalf created an Enchantment which he then used to thwart the advances of the Wargs, who had trapped the group in a tree. Had it not been for this mystical action, Mr. Baggins and the Dwarves may not have survived the encounter.

So how does Hither Lands take the Wizard's effort and place it into the context of the game?

NAME: Colour-Flame  
CRAFT: Dwimmer  
INTENT: Creation (5)  
PURPOSE: To burn, frighten and confuse  
METHOD: Shape  
MATERIAL: Pine-cone (or a similar small, flammable object)  
TIME: Instant  
EFFECT: 1 x per Success Level; opponent must make a Defend Roll at -2; opponent must make a Fear Test at -2  
CORRUPTION: 0  
TAINT: 1  
RESONANCE: Very Little

## BREAKING DOWN THE EXAMPLE

Gandalf the Grey has a Dwimmer-Craft Merit (Quality) of 8. Knowing that the situation is turning from bad to worse, he notices that the tree which they are stuck in may actually be an advantage. He quickly gathers a number of pine-cones near to him (we will call it five). Using the Enchantment of Dwimmer-Craft, he sets aflame the pine-cones and drops them down on the Wargs below.

NAME – Provides a word or phrase to describe the Effect.  
CRAFT – Indicates the type of Enchantment used.  
INTENT – This is the source of Sub-Creation and the level of its power.  
PURPOSE – The reason(s) for the Intent  
METHOD – Since we are unsure that any Word or Song is used, it is assumed that Gandalf shaped the flame.  
MATERIAL – The pine-cone, naturally.  
TIME – Dwimmer-Craft can be formed in an instant and there is also no indication of it being a Spell.  
EFFECT – 1 x per Success Level, Gandalf takes his Merit (Quality) Dwimmer-Craft of 8 and adds it to his Will Attribute of 9 and then rolls a d12. He then subtracts the Intent Power Level, which is a five (5) and if the total is 12 or above the Enchantment succeeds. Now the Warg(s) can make a Defend Roll to see if they can avoid the inflamed pine-cone, with a minus -2 penalty. Let's assume Gandalf rolled a 7, so the total is 24 minus 5 for a total of 19. The Warg has a Defend of 4 and a Nimbleness of 5. The Warg rolls a 6, so the total is 15 minus -2 for the penalty which leaves it at 13. The difference is 6 (19-13=6) and at x 1 per Success Level (6), this is the Vitality lost for the Warg. Gandalf Enchanted five pine-cones, so the next Warg makes a Defend Roll and so on. After this, the Wargs will need to make a Fear Test (-2 penalty) or flee in terror. The Enchantment is not evil, so there is no Corruption. If Gandalf were to continue to use this Enchantment, he would eventually be Tainted (Enamored with fire in case) and dire consequences would develop. Once Taint is equal to his Will, he must pass a Test or the Taint is added to the character sheet. Taint will dissolve over time (at one point per week) should the Enchantment not be used again during this time. There is very little Resonance since the Enchantment was limited in Intent and Purpose. Now there is still the matter of weariness. All Enchantments cause a loss in Stamina. The Intent Power Level is equal to the amount of Stamina lost. If the Enchantment attempt were to fail, then the loss would be doubled. So if Gandalf failed, then he would have lost 10 points of Stamina. This weariness remains (until rested) and should any further Enchantments be attempted, then penalty modifiers would apply. And there you have the breakdown.

# HITHER LANDS

## MERITS

Each character possesses unique qualities which sets them apart from one another. It is these Merits which provide advantages outside of one's standard abilities. Often a positive trait will accentuate either an Attribute and/or Skill.

All races begin the game with a set number of points in Merits to spend. These points are in addition to any of the inherited racial benefits which will be discussed in a later section.

### POINTS IN MERITS BY RACE

Noldor	12
Sindar	11
Silvan or Dwarf	10
High Men	9
Middle Men	8
Low Men	7
Hobbits	6

The character's choice of Merits are meant to compliment the assets that they have already achieved from Attributes and Skills, not to change the focus of or overpower game-play. In most cases, a character will select but a few Merits to begin play with in Hither Lands. Though it is unlikely, there can be unusual circumstances where the Gamemaster will allow extra Merits to be purchased. Characters do however, have the opportunity to buy more levels (if applicable) to improve Merits after they have earned enough Experience Points. Also, after the creation of a character there can be changes during the course of play which can affect Merits.

There is an extensive number of Merits listed here in Hither Lands; however this does not preclude the addition of any new merits. The value of this characteristic needs to maintain the same balance already established. A Gamemaster has final approval for the inclusion of such designs.

## THE LIST

- ❖ **ALLY – 3-POINT COST PER ALLY (NA)**  
If you seek and ally's aid and they are in the area, they will give it if possible to do so. Allies may provide, rumors, hints or detailed information depending on the situation. They may also aid in other ways.
- ❖ **AMBIDEXTROUS – 6-POINT COST**  
Allows a character to wield a weapon in both hands and attack. However each Strike will have a -1 penalty. All further actions still carry any applicable modifiers beyond the -1.
- ❖ **ATTUNED – INNATE OR 3-POINT COST**  
Is a closeness to nature and animals. Elves carry this affinity with woodland animals and trees. This rapport is strong with horses and the eagles where this bond can be used to call upon them in times of need. Those who are Attuned can speak with animals and trees as well as sensing their thoughts and feelings.
- ❖ **AUTHORITY – 1-POINT PER LEVEL (6)**  
A character has been charged with liege over a group or lands. This title is greater as more levels are gained in it. Authority at the lowest level would be something similar to belonging to a specific post or gentry. While at the highest level it could equate to stewardship over a realm.
- ❖ **CLOSED MIND – 3-POINT COST**  
It is said that there are some people who have minds that cannot be breached by Enchantments or any other unique ability. Characters are immune to the effects of mind controlling or penetrating powers.
- ❖ **COUNTER-STRIKE – 6-POINT COST**  
A character has become skilled at using a number of defensive measures for counter-attacks in battle. They may utilize Defend methods in Armed Combat instead of the standard use of Strike.
- ❖ **DAUNTLESS – 3-POINTS PER LEVEL (3)**  
Is the strength of courage in the face of a fierce threat or grave danger. This bravery will appear in situations involving Fear, Intimidation or battle and a +2 bonus modifier will be given on these tests of peril.
- ❖ **ELUSIVE – INNATE OR 3-POINT COST**  
Halflings and others of this ilk have an uncanny ability to disappear. Hobbits receive a +3 bonus to tests when attempting to hide or move silently.

# HITHER LANDS

- ❖ **EMPATHY – 2-POINT COST PER LEVEL (3)**  
With this Merit a character can sense how someone is feeling. It is difficult to perceive their emotions with complete accuracy, the greater number of successes on a Perception test will get them closer to the truth. Each level of Empathy will provide a +1 bonus on these tests.
- ❖ **ENCHANTMENTS – INNATE OR GIFT ONLY**  
Only those with this ability (exception – Gift of x-craft) can work Spells, Lore and/or Dwimmer-craft. See the Enchantments section for more information regarding these abilities.
- ❖ **FAIR – INNATE OR 2-POINTS PER LEVEL (6)**  
The overall appearance and beauty of a character. For each level of Fair a +1 bonus is given to certain tests of Influence and Persuasion.
- ❖ **FELL-HANDS – 3-POINT COST**  
Will double the amount of Stamina damage delivered in non-lethal Unarmed Combat strikes. It will also add a level of Threat to the Hammer-hand Merit.
- ❖ **FLEET OF FOOT – INNATE ONLY**  
The lithe build and graceful movement of Elves gives them the natural ability to tread very lightly, allowing them to walk over snow and grass unbent, leaving no trace of their passing.
- ❖ **FORMIDABLE – 3-POINT COST PER LEVEL (3)**  
A truly awe-inspiring figure that can rouse friends and allies or terrify enemies. For each level of Formidable a +2 modifier will be applied to tests involving inspiration, fear or intimidation.
- ❖ **FURTIVE – 2-POINT COST**  
Quite clever and adept at skulking around and in other stealth-like activities. A character will receive a +1 bonus to all tests involving stealth and such similar actions.
- ❖ **GHOST-SCORN – INNATE OR 6-POINT COST**  
Elves and rare individuals of other races do not fear the Ghosts of Men. Elves, being bound to the fate of Arda, are immune to the implied fear of mortality that a ghost represents.
- ❖ **GIFT OF SPELL-CRAFT – 3-POINT COST**  
A rare gift, which when given, allows one the ability to work Enchantments in the form of Spell-Craft. See the section on Enchantments for more information regarding this ability.
- ❖ **GIFT OF LORE-CRAFT – 6-POINT COST**  
A rare gift, which when given, allows one the ability to work Enchantments in the form of Lore-Craft. See the section on Enchantments for more information regarding this ability.
- ❖ **GIFT OF DWIMMER-CRAFT – 9-POINT COST**  
An exceedingly rare gift, which when given, allows a character the ability to work Enchantments in the form of Dwimmer-Craft. See the section on Enchantments for more information regarding this ability.
- ❖ **GIFT OF FORESIGHT – 6-POINT COST**  
Is the ability to see into the future. Often it is merely a thought or uncanny premonition which will show things yet to come. This is a prevision or forecast which can intuitively acknowledge that an event may come to pass. Characters with this gift will have greater wisdom of fate and receive a +3 bonus to all tests of Insight.
- ❖ **GIFT OF FORETELLING – 6-POINT COST**  
Similar to – though not the same as Foresight, this is the gift of prophecy. It is a rare event which may come about little or even only once in a character's lifetime. Often this doom is manifested in a vision or dream that is cryptic and difficult to decipher. Rarely does this gift provide answers to the information revealed and it is up to the character to determine its relevance. A -3 penalty is applied on all tests of Wisdom related to a Foretelling.
- ❖ **GLADDEN – INNATE OR 3-POINT COST**  
It is said that Elves and some, select individuals can use the power of words or song to heal and revitalize the weary or injured. Every hour an Artisan test can be performed, which if successful, will double the rate of recovery for Stamina or Healing. A -1 penalty modifier will stack for performing each hour beyond the first.
- ❖ **HAMMER-HAND – 6-POINT COST**  
While most characters will use weapons to Strike with in combat, someone with this Merit need only their fist. The Unarmed Combat skill will replace the skill of Armed Combat in battle. A fist that succeeds in hitting will have a Threat of two. Should a character desire to throw a second fist in a round the penalty to succeed would be -2 and the fist would have a Threat of only one.
- ❖ **INCORRUPTIBLE – INNATE OR 3-POINTS PER LEVEL (3)**  
The forces of Shadow find it difficult to gain a foothold over a character of a pure and noble heart. Each level of Incorruptible will provide a +2 bonus to all tests of Will in resisting the effects of Corruption.

# HITHER LANDS

- ❖ **INDOMITABLE** – INNATE OR 3-POINTS PER LEVEL (3)  
Similar to the Merit of Incorruptible, those with this quality are very difficult to unwillingly command. Each level of Indomitable will provide a +2 bonus to all tests of Will in resisting the effects of Domination.
- ❖ **KEEN-SENSE** – INNATE OR 2-POINTS PER LEVEL  
Gives a character a +1 bonus to any perception related rolls per level – bought to a maximum of three. Covers the five senses, a character may have bonuses in more than one type. Elf-eyes allow for the Eldar to forego the limit of levels in sight.
- ❖ **NIGHT-EYES** – INNATE OR 2-POINTS PER LEVEL (3)  
A character has the ability to see in the dark of night while those around may not. For each level of this merit a character can reduce the penalty modifier for actions in darkness or at night by two.
- ❖ **QUICK-STRIKE** – 6-POINT COST  
Deftly and dangerous, a character has become proficient with finesse attacks in combat. Someone with this merit can use the Attribute of Nimbleness in replace of the Might Attribute in battle to Armed Combat.
- ❖ **QUICK TO ACT** – 3-POINT COST  
Characters with this Merit have very fast reaction times in combat and other confrontations. A bonus of +3 will be given to all Initiative rolls.
- ❖ **RESILIENCE** – INNATE ONLY  
Hobbits are remarkably resilient to the effects of both Corruption and Domination. All Hobbits receive a +3 bonus to tests of Will to aid in this resistance.
- ❖ **RESISTANCE** – INNATE OR 1-POINT PER LEVEL (6)  
For each level of Resistance a character will receive a +1 bonus to all related rolls. These Merits are available in many types, such as resistance to: Pain, Poison, Fire, Mystical and Cold. A Gamemaster can assign additional types of Resistance as are deemed necessary.
- ❖ **RESOLUTE** – 6-POINT COST  
Having a fixed determination and purpose, characters are not easily deterred from their chosen path. Resolute provides a +1 bonus to all tests of Will, Stamina and Intimidation.
- ❖ **SENDING** – 9-POINT COST  
Is the ability to communicate using only the mind. The character can speak into the minds of someone who is near to them or if they know where they are. They will also hear any thoughts directed in response. It is not however the ability to read someone's mind. Sending allows the user to mind-speak with others equal to that of their Wisdom. Someone may also resist using their Wisdom and Notice in an opposed roll.
- ❖ **SENSE POWER** – INNATE OR 9-POINT COST  
The resonance from powerful Enchantments (items and areas), a lingering tragedy or an evil menace can be felt by the Elves and other select individuals. At times this power will be very apparent, while in other more subtle situations a test of Perception will be required.
- ❖ **SHOT OF MIGHT** – 6-POINT COST  
Characters with this Merit fire ranged attacks that are not dependent on the Nimbleness Attribute, but rather the Attribute of Might – which is added to the Ranged Combat. Skill.
- ❖ **STALWART** – INNATE OR 6-POINTS PER LEVEL (3)  
Characters with this Merit have a natural toughness which makes them hard to kill. Each level of Stalwart will give a permanent point of Vitality which goes in the reserve. This point will soak damage before the wound total to Vitality is taken. In addition, each point gives a +1 bonus to tests of Survival.
- ❖ **SURE TO THE MARK** – 3-POINT COST  
Characters are expert marksmen in ranged attacks. This will reduce the penalty modifier for all ranged attacks by one.
- ❖ **SWIFT TO RECOVER** – INNATE OR 6-POINT COST  
Elves and others who have this ability heal and recover from weariness much faster than the natural rate. For those with this Merit the recovery rate for Stamina and Vitality is doubled. In addition, Elves are immune to sickness and disease.
- ❖ **TIRELESS** – INNATE OR 3-POINT COST  
Characters have an amazingly strong endurance and can push themselves farther, when others would fall due to exhaustion. The rate of Stamina lost due to weariness is cut in half with this Merit.
- ❖ **WANDER-REST** – INNATE ONLY  
The race of Elves do not sleep as others do. They rest as their minds wander along the peaceful paths of Elvish dreams.
- ❖ **WARY** – 3-POINT COST  
Is someone who is very observant and quick to react in what is taking place around them. These characters will receive a +3 bonus to all Perception related rolls in sensing danger from the immediate surroundings. It is also nearly impossible for a character with this Merit to be ambushed or surprised in combat.
- ❖ **WOVEN-WORDS** – INNATE OR 6-POINT COST  
A rare gift that allows one to weave images to match the words from a lay or song. The margin of success on the Artisan test of Perform will dictate the completeness of this Glamour. This ability can be utilized in a number of situations.

# HITHER LANDS

## FLAWS

Characters will usually carry one or more flaws. Hindrances act to counter-balance the overall effect of the positive merits that have been previously detailed. These weaknesses will come to complicate and create difficulties which must be overcome in order for a character to accomplish their objectives.

All races begin the game with a set number of points in Flaws that they may opt to spend. These points are in addition to any of the inherited racial drawbacks which will be discussed in a later section.

### POINTS IN FLAWS BY RACE

Noldor	6
Sindar	7
Silvan or Dwarf	8
High Men	9
Middle Men	10
Low Men	11
Hobbits	12

When a character acquires a Flaw they gain extra points that can be put back into one or more Merits. However, this does not mean that players have to spend all of these Flaw points. More often than not, it will be less than the total amount.

## THE LIST

- ❖ **ADVERSARY** – 3-POINT COST PER INDIVIDUAL  
A character has gained the enmity from an individual. The adversary will be determined to seek retribution for this apparent offense. The Gamemaster may insert this foe into the campaign as they feel the encounter is relevant.
- ❖ **ARROGANT** – 3-POINT COST  
Will cause a character to look down upon those beneath them. It will be very difficult to feel compassionate or understanding and thus communication is a strain. A -3 penalty will apply in social tests related to this Flaw.
- ❖ **AVERSION** – INNATE OR 3-POINT COST  
There are some who do not do well around animals. It is said that the race of Dwarves fair poorly in calming, riding or training animals. This lack of affinity can be felt by the creatures and they will shy away from this noticeable dislike. Dwarves have a -3 penalty to Riding and other related tests of Aversion.
- ❖ **BATTLE-LUST** – 2-POINT COST (3)  
During combat an uncontrollable fury will overwhelm a character and they will not leave the field of battle until the last foe has fallen. Each level of Battle-lust will incur a -1 penalty on tests of Will to control this rage.
- ❖ **CALL OF THE SEA** – INNATE ONLY  
This urge may manifest itself at anytime in an Eldar's life. It can be triggered by many events or through the burdens of time and should the Gamemaster see fit to require a Test of the Undying. The first test (Wisdom + Will + d12) is made with a -1 penalty modifier. Successive tests will follow with a -3; -6; -9; -12 and so on until the character fails and the Call comes at last.
- ❖ **COVETOUS** – INNATE or 3-POINTS PER LEVEL (3)  
Is an overwhelming desire to have something that the character does not possess. It can be Greed, Power or Lust. Each level will incur a penalty of -1 on tests of Will to avoid this temptation. It is possible for a character to have more than one covetous wants.
- ❖ **CRAVEN** – 3-POINTS PER LEVEL (3)  
Is a lack of courage in the face of threat or danger. This cowardice will appear in situations involving Fear, Intimidation or battle and a -2 penalty modifier will be applied on these tests of peril.
- ❖ **CRIPPLED** – 3-POINTS PER DISABILITY  
The character has received a grievous and lasting injury from battle or accident leaving them disabled. The type and location of the wound can vary, but could include a crippled or missing hand/arm; foot/leg; or having sustained multiple injuries.
- ❖ **CRUEL** – 3-POINT COST  
A character is very fond of inflicting pain and suffering. There are no feelings of remorse and actions are done without the slightest hint of moral consciousness. There is a -3 penalty on tests of Will pertaining to the control of this cruelty. Control is maintained only from a fear of being stopped or unwontedly discovered.

# HITHER LANDS

## ❖ CURIOUS – 2-POINT COST

There are some who cannot help but look to see what is behind a hidden door or locked chest. So eager is the character to investigate or learn about something, that more often than not it will cause trouble than it was worth. There is -1 penalty modifier on test of Will to resist the temptation.

## ❖ CURSED – 1-POINT PER LEVEL (6)

There are more than one way for a character to be cursed in Hither Lands. Some may have been the victim of Enchantment, while others may have had a Curse laid because they broke an Oath. The consequences of the Curse vary by the cause. Each level spent represents a more powerful sentencing. Often times the Curse will come with conditions that, if fulfilled, will cause it to be broken or lifted from the character.

## ❖ DARK PAST – 3-POINT COST

Some foul secret or dubious deed haunts a character. This hidden fact would be damaging if ever revealed. A character's livelihood or renown is maintained despite this Dark Past, however that could surely change if the secret became known.

## ❖ DESPAIR – 3-POINT COST

Actions or places can bring the sense of impending doom upon a character. When this occurs, one will come to believe that all hope is gone and therefore can gravely hinder a character's spirit. A -2 penalty will be applied to tests of Will and Inspiration along with a -1 on most other rolls.

## ❖ DOUR – INNATE OR 1-POINT COST

A brooding behavior of ill humor is conveyed from this persona. Everything in life is taken with seriousness and very little seems to give them enjoyment. This facet can be deterring and bothersome to others who have made contact.

## ❖ DULL-SENSE – INNATE OR 2-POINTS PER LEVEL

Gives a character a -1 Penalty to any perception related rolls per level bought to a maximum of three. Covers the five senses, a character may have penalties in more than one type.

## ❖ ENEMY – 2-POINTS PER GROUP OR RACE

Either through birthright, culture, or heroic deeds the character has earned the enmity of a group or race. A foe such as this will do everything within its power to prevent a character from achieving their goals.

## ❖ FEALTY – 3-POINT COST

A character has made an commitment of responsibility to a lord or leader. Fealty requires obedience and is not broken without serious disregard. Failure to fulfill this obligation would result in possible punishment and the loss of Renown.

## ❖ FEEBLE – 3-POINT COST

A character has a very weak Stamina. All actions which result in the double the loss of Stamina – be that from weariness, affliction or other such cause. It also returns at half the normal rate.

## ❖ FEY – INNATE OR 3-POINT COST

A death-wish, one of peril, and once felt, a Silvan Elf, or other, with this Flaw will seek out to find death. The Test of Fey will use the same formula as the Test of the Undying. Once the test is failed, the character must journey to seek search out to battle a foe(s) until slain.

## ❖ FRAIL – 3-POINT COST

The body of character is delicate and fragile. Lifeblood, when lost is slow to return. All injuries that reduce the Vitality will take twice the amount of time to heal.

## ❖ HATRED – 3-POINTS FOR EACH

Your scorn for an individual, group, culture or race is all consuming. This loathing and spite is very evident and is very difficult to control. All social tests dealing with this Hatred is made with a -6 penalty modifier.

## ❖ ILL-FATED – 2-POINTS PER LEVEL (3)

Luck does not shine on the character, as each point in this Flaw will incur a -1 penalty modifier to rolls in potentially critical situations. It is also possible for the Gamemaster (per point/a session) to replace a character's roll with a lower one, much the same as the Luck Attribute.

## ❖ ILL-FAVoured LOOK – 2-POINT COST

Something about the demeanor is disturbing to another. A -1 penalty modifier will be applied to all rolls involving tests of Influence and Persuasion.

## ❖ OATHSWORN – 1-POINT PER LEVEL (6)

Is a pledge or vow that binds a character to a particular action or set of duties. When issued this Oath must be fulfilled no matter the cost and should a character fail or decide to break this bond, then the one whom the character swore the Oath to can lay a Curse upon them. A powerful Oath may, in fact, go beyond the bounds of a mortal life and the vow will not be lifted until this duty has been satisfied.

# HITHER LANDS

- ❖ **OBSESSION – INNATE OR 3-POINT COST**  
Is a compulsive fixation of someone or something. This preoccupation will come to dominate a character's life and they will pursue it to almost any length, even forsaking friendship and neglecting duties. A -3 penalty will be applied to any tests related to this Flaw.
- ❖ **PARTED – INNATE OR 2-POINT COST**  
A past deed or time in history has caused relations to be strained between the character of this race and those of another (Elves-Dwarves). They will have a -1 penalty to all rolls on social tests dealing with the race which they are now Parted.
- ❖ **POSSESSIVE – INNATE OR 2-POINT COST**  
Occurs in an individual or race that is inheritably selfish. Someone of this type will hoard an item or treasure and is protective and suspicious of others believing they desire it.
- ❖ **PROUD – INNATE OR 3-POINT COST**  
Full of unrestrained pride a character will not heed the words of counsel from others. They are often haughty or presumptuous and do not take well to insults. A -3 penalty is incurred on tests of Counsel and Intimidation along with a -1 on social test rolls.
- ❖ **RECKLESS – 3-POINT COST**  
Extremely rash and overconfident, a Reckless character is willing to take foolhardy risks with total disregard of the potential consequences. They will act first and after waste little time with second-thoughts. Acting on such impulses, a character shows no consideration for their actions.
- ❖ **STERN – 4-POINT COST**  
A character has an unrelenting severity of nature. This demeanor will often make others feel uneasy, yet easier to control. A character will receive a +2 bonus on tests of Intimidation, but have a -2 penalty on social rolls.
- ❖ **STUBBORN – INNATE OR 3-POINT**  
Stiff-necked to the point of being a detriment, one who is Stubborn will find it hard to obey others or heed any words of wisdom. Once a character's mind has been made to do something, no amount of counsel will sway them away from this decision.
- ❖ **SWAYED – INNATE OR 1-POINT PER LEVEL (12)**  
Long have the people lived under the shadow of Sauron or Morgoth. They have been dominated and corrupted over time and have become evil by nature. Each level will add one point of Corruption and the applicable modifiers to a character. Also all tests of Will to resist Domination is done with a -3 penalty.

- ❖ **VENGEFUL – 3-POINT COST**  
A character has a strong reason for extreme hatred of an individual to the extent that they will rush headlong into battle against them unless they can maintain control. Should an opportunity to gain such revenge on the individual of this vengeance, a character must pass a test of Will at -3 or they shall unswervingly attack this enemy. A character may spend one point of Valour to avoid the attack. The character that makes this attack and kills the other will have a test of Will against Corruption with a -3 penalty modifier.
- ❖ **WEAK-WILLED – 1-POINT PER LEVEL (3)**  
This is someone who has great difficulty in resisting the threats of others. A character's will is very weak and all tests of Will are made with a -1 penalty for each level.

## RENOWN

As a character makes strides and grows in ability, so too will their Renown increase. Known also as fame, glory or reputation it will come to measure a character's visibility within the lands of Middle-earth. This level of status is measured in points (0 – 12) with a character starting out at zero. Most often points in Renown will increase with deeds in significant actions or participation in prominent events. The Gamemaster will award points based on these actions. A high standing can be a hindrance, for as one becomes well known the more difficult it is to move in disguise or without unwarranted attention.

Renown is used as a modifier in social tests often with the skills of Influence and Intimidate. Also it is used in determining recognition rolls.

### MEASURE OF RENOWN

None – Unknown (0)	0
	1
Little – Local (1)	2
	3
Some – Area (2)	4
	5
Heroic – Region (3)	6
	7
Extraordinary – Realm (4)	8
	9
Legendary – World (5)	10
	11
Mythical – Ages (6)	12

# HITHER LANDS

## OF PEOPLES

Players will have the opportunity to choose from any of the available Free Peoples of Middle-earth when creating a character. All of the races found here are uniquely different in their own ways and though at first glance the easiest choice may be to take an Elf, power does not always equate to fulfillment. The most compelling characters in Hither Lands are not the tallest, or wisest – yet for all their shortcomings the Little Folk or Hobbits as they are also called, have stood tall in the face of great evil and were charged with some of Arda's heaviest duties. The description to follow will provide information on each race and the branches within some of these cultures.

## THE RACES OF MIDDLE-EARTH

❖ **ELVES** – They are the Firstborn Children of Ilúvatar, also called the Eldar or Quendi. Tall, willowy and fair they are with the light of the stars mirrored in their eyes. Immortal and wise they are free from pestilence unless they fall in battle or perish in flames. They suffer no ills save one, the withering of the Fëa that is an affront to the desire of life. Lovers of beauty, the Elves delight in fine speech and eloquent song. They are skilled in crafts of all forms, especially in the art of Enchantments. It can be said that the Elves are staunch defenders of the Hither Lands, protectors of its wondrous splendor and have long stood vigilant against the minions of Shadow. Melkor hated the Eldar from the first, and from those unfortunate enough to be captured by his servants, he twisted into the Orcs, a cruel race that is in all ways a foul perversion of the Elves. Suffice to say that for all the wisdom garnered over the Elves long lives, their pride has caused rash acts, and by so doing they have brought added tragedy onto themselves.

**NOLDOR** also known as the Deep Elves or High Elves are the followers of Finwë. It is they who are the greatest of the Eldar, learned and strong and too were the Noldor unsurpassed in the crafting of Enchantments. They are very tall, fair of skin and grey-eyed, with dark hair, save for the golden house of Finarfin.

**SINDAR** are Eldar known too as Grey-elves or the Grey People from the name of their king, Thingol Greycloak. They are renowned for their gift of song and music. Edhel share an affinity with the sea more so than the other Eldar. The Sindar are also tall, strong and wise (though not as the Noldor) with most having dark or silver hair.

**SILVAN** dwell in the green, forested lands of Middle-earth. Also called Wood-elves, this group of Nandor are great lovers of the trees. They do not share the power, wisdom or majesty of the other Eldar; The Silvan are still tall in stature, fair and wise. They favor the solitude of the woods and are well adapted in defending their borders. Most often their hair is light or golden in colour with eyes in the shades of brown.

### INHERENT IN ELVES

MERITS	FLAWS
Attuned – N/S/T	Arrogance – N/S/T
Enchantments – See Section	Call of the Sea – N/S
Fair – N(5)/S(4)/T(3)	Fey *** – T
Fleet of Foot – N/S/T	Parted **** – N/S/T
Ghost-Scone – N/S/T	Proud – N/S/T
Gladden – N(2)/S(2)/T	
Stalwart – N(3)/S(2)/T(1)	
Keen-sense * - N/S/T (6) to Sight	
Resistance ** - N/S/T (3) Poison/Pain	
Swift to Heal – N/S/T	
Wander-rest – N/S/T	
Woven-words – N(2)/S(2)/T	

N = Noldor; S = Sindar; T = Silvan

\* Sight and Sound

\*\* Cold; Fire; Illness or Disease (immune); Poison; and Pain. Elves feel no discomfort to cold or heat – in weather.

\*\*\* As with Call to the Sea see Section for more information

\*\*\*\* Dependent upon the setting of the Age

# HITHER LANDS

❖ **DWARVES** – or the Khazad, as they called themselves their own tongue. Aulë the Smith carved the Dwarves from the very stone of the mountains. Indeed they were fashioned before Eru gave life to the Elves. The Seven Fathers of the Dwarves were made in secret for Aulë yearned to guide and love those other than himself. Upon seeing that they were not created for malice, Ilúvatar blessed them and were given Fëa. Yet, the Dwarves were not to awaken before the Elves and so they were laid deep under the mountains to slumber. Aulë was aware of the evil threats posed by Melkor, and thus the Dwarves were made a sturdy race unaffected by either cold or heat. They are short and stout, indomitable, persistent in all endeavours, if sometimes to the point of hindrance in their stubborn ways. Dwarves never forget a debt unpaid or forget a wrong done against them. They are fiery, strong and the hardest of all races. The Dwarves have a natural affinity for metals and delve deep into the depths of the earth. They are great miners and craftsmen of the mountain halls and despite their lack of polish, the Khazad are masters with stone, metal and jewels. However, it is told they work no magic beyond the items they craft. Steadfast, redoubtable warriors are Dwarves, yet not without flaws for they are also wrathful, possessive and covetous - with a lust for gold. They are long-lived (to around 250 years), though not immortal. Dwarves will wear beards, which will grow to be quite long during the span of their days.

## INHERENT IN DWARVES

MERITS	FLAWS
Enchantments – see Section	Aversion - Animals
Stalwart (2)	Covetous
Indomitable	Obsession **
Keen-sense (1)*	Parted – Elves
Resistance – Fire and Cold (3)	Possessive
Tireless	Proud
Sturdy	Stubborn

\* Sight and Hearing

\*\* Gold and Mithril

❖ **MEN** – awoke to the sunlight at the dawn of Arden, they are the Second-born – ever mortal, yet blessed with a gift given to no other. For the Race of Men may upon death depart the confines of Middle-earth and go beyond it. Whereas all other Fëa, including those of the Valar, are bound to the fate of Arda. With this gift, Men are free from this doom and thus allowed to shape their own destiny as they so wish. Men are known also as the Second People; or Atani. Though they are short-lived even to that of the Dwarves, the Followers are the most numerous and adaptable of all races. The houses of Men are many and varied, for they have come to know and dwell throughout all climes of the Hither Lands. There are the High Men or Men of the West who have descended from the Three Houses of the Edain. So too were there lesser groups named Middle Men also called the Men of the Twilight. Both of these branches left from the Shadow of Morgoth, but there was a third – who ever remained loyal and were named Low Men or the Men of Darkness. The bane of all Men is their desire for power and a weakness of the will. Many have succumbed to this vile lure, yet still more have remained ever faithful and do not despair even in the darkest of times. For the Race of Men shall come to rule the fate and future of all Middle-earth.

## A NOTE ON THE SETTING OF TIME

The following information will detail the types of Men that a player may create in Hither Lands. This material (as for all the other races) is set during the time of the Third Age, just prior to the War of the Ring. However, should one so desire, adjustments can be easily made to fit all periods or ages. The final, completed version of this role-playing game will cover, much more thoroughly, all the requirements for making characters and the running of quick adventures to lengthy campaigns set in any era of Arda.

# HITHER LANDS

HIGH MEN are tall (though not that of the Elves), noble and blessed with long life. It is they who have descended from the Edain tracing their lineage to Elessar, the island of Númenor. The Dúnedain or so called also Men of Westemnet, founded the twin realms of Arnor and Gondor. There are too few left with this royal heritage for their line has diminished with the mingling of blood from lesser men. Only the Rangers of the North and the secret guardians east of Osgiliath, the Rangers of Ithilien still carry true qualities of the Númenóreans. Long ago a group of High Men settled in the southern coastal region of Umbar, however they fell sway to the power of Sauron and were called Black Númenóreans they ruled over an evil haven that raided and pillaged the coastlands of Middle-earth. In Dol Amroth, the seat of Princes, on the coasts of Belfalas there remain the high descendents of Galador. His father, Imrazôr the Númenórean wedded the Silvan Elf-maid named Mithrellas. This Elven-blood is still carried in the houses of the small province ruled by Prince Imrahil. The Stewards of Gondor still hold the line of Númenóreans and are considered High Men. Lastly, there remain the Men of the Vales of Anduin who dwell in the great valley between the Misty Mountains and Mirkwood. It is said they are close in kin, or have descended from the Edain of the First Age. They are more closely related to the Dúnedain than others such as the Beornings or the Woodmen of Mirkwood.

Listed below are the choices for a player who wishes to create a High Man character. Note – all High Men begin the game with one free level of Fair.

## THE LAST REMENANTS OF HIGH MEN

- ❖ Dúnedain of Arnor – called the Rangers of the North
- ❖ Dúnedain of the South – called the Rangers of Ithilien and the Stewards of Gondor
- ❖ Knights of Dol Amroth
- ❖ Men of the Vales of Anduin

MIDDLE MEN are the lines of those who did not take the journey to Númenor. They do not have the stature or the natural life of the High Men. There are many branches to these groups of Middle Peoples – some are loftier than others.

Described below are the choices for those who wish to create a Middle Man character.

- ❖ Anóriens – are the people who live in and around the great city of Minas Tirith. Though they are descended in part from the Númenóreans of old only the Stewards of Gondor still retain this line.
- ❖ Beornings – famed for their cakes of honey, these are the heirs of Beorn. They live near the Carrock and in the northern vales of the Anduin. It is said that some Beornings are skin-changers who have managed to retain their ancestor's ability to take bear form.
- ❖ Drúedain – are a strange, secretive and dwindling folk who dwell in Drúwaith Iaur and the Drúedain Forest. Also called the Wild Men of the Woods or Woses. They are shy and have an odd affinity with nature and believed to have unique powers.
- ❖ Gondorians – make up in large part the peoples of the South-kingdom. Along with the Anóriens, they too are the weakened descendants of those Númenóreans exiles who fled to Middle-earth.
- ❖ Hillmen of Rhudaur – are an evil people that lived in the northeast of Eriador. Their origins come from the House of Béor. During the decay of Arnor they were allied with the Witch-King of Angmar, but were so diminished that it is not known if any are still left living.
- ❖ Lake-men – hail from the town of Esgaroth on Long Lake to the south of Erebor. A trading folk, they have dealings with the Men of Dale as well as Dwarves and the Wood-elves of Mirkwood.
- ❖ Men of Dale – dwell in the city of the same name which lies at the foot of the Lonely Mountain. In the great days of old, Dale in the north was said to have flourished. They are kin to the Lake-men.

# HITHER LANDS

- ❖ Men of Dorwinion – tend to the vineyards in the wine region of the Rhovanian Wilderland. These folk are akin to the Men of Dale. The vintners of Dorwinion trade often with Thranduil's Kingdom of Wood-Elves in Mirkwood and the Lake-men.
  - ❖ Men of Eriador – are the middle-folk that lived in wide area on the western edges of the Kingdom of Arnor. It is not known if any yet remain in the lone-lands running north of Minhiriath southward to the reaches of Endwaith.
  - ❖ Men of the Greyflood – dwelled at one time in the vales along the River Greyflood. They are kin to the Men of Eriador and share a similar fate as it is unknown whether any survived to this day.
  - ❖ Rohirrim – are the Horse-lords of Rohan who are renowned for their skills in the breeding and riding of horses. They are the last remnants of the Northmen that once dwelt in Rhovanian.
  - ❖ Woodmen of Mirkwood – share a distant kinship to the Rohirrim coming from the same folk who settled in the lands east of the Misty Mountains. They settled within the north-eastern and central-western borders of the great forest Mirkwood.
- LOW MEN – are the groups of mortals who have long been subjugated to the Shadow of Morgoth. Some of these Men are moved by the greed of conquest and plunder. Others of them have been ever hostile to the kingdoms of the West and bare a fanatical hatred to the High Men. A small number of these have moved away from the Darkness and are not completely evil.
- It is a difficult task for a player to manage a man of this type. Should one still wish to create a character of this type there are several choices; each with their own set of liabilities.
- ❖ Balchoth – are a fierce, barbaric people akin to the race of Easterlings, who dwell under the sway of Dol Guldur. Although they were defeated by the forces of Gondor and Rohan many centuries prior to the War of the Ring, they still remain allied to Sauron. They live on the eastern borders of Mirkwood.
  - ❖ Corsairs of Umbar – these pirates are a warlike race that traces their origins to a mixture of Black Númenóreans, Haradrim, and the coastal peoples of Gondorian descent. The followers of a once noble lord from Gondor – Castamir the Usurper, these men use slaves to pull oars on their black-sailed ships.
  - ❖ Dunlendings – are a sullen folk, descended from the people who dwelt in the vales of the White Mountains in ages past. They inhabit the Dunland in the southern region of Eriador. Dunlendings are the ancient enemies of the Rohirrim and consider the lands of Rohan theirs by right. These Wild Men have made a pact with Saruman and are pledged to drive the Horsemen from the Mark.
  - ❖ Easterlings – this is the given name to all the peoples from the unknown lands of the East. This name applies to all the Easterlings not specified in a distinct culture. These cruel fighters tend to be short and stocky with swarthy, bearded faces.
  - ❖ Haradrim – or Southrons, as they are also called come from lands in the far south of Middle-earth. They are a fierce, warlike people with doughty, dark-skin. These Men of Harad are believed to be desert wanderers and ride horses or the Mûmakil.
  - ❖ Men of Angmar – are the kin of the Forowraith who came to dwell in the lands on the northern fringes of Middle-earth. These evil men wandered into the fallow lands of Angmar and cast shadows of fear on Arnor. Called the Men of Carn Dûm, it is not known if any still exist.
  - ❖ Men of Bree – are descended from the People of the White Mountains and kin to the Dunlendings. They founded a settlement around a tall, wooded hill not far from the ancient Barrow-downs. Not given over entirely to evil, the broad, short and brown-haired men share Bree with the Hobbits.
  - ❖ Men of Khand – come from the little-known land south and east of Mordor. It is believed that they are of mixed blood of Easterlings and Southrons.
  - ❖ Thralls of Nurn – are the slaves who tend the fields in the lowlands surrounding the Sea of Núrn. It is believed Sauron has formed a host of grim, axe-wielding men from the strongest of these slaves.

# HITHER LANDS

- ❖ Snowmen of Forochel – called also the Lossoth, are a strange, unfriendly people, a remnant of the Forowaiith, men of the far-off days accustomed to the bitter cold of the icy wastes. They can make shelter using only snow and can run on the ice with bones on their feet and pull wheel-less carts.
- ❖ Variags – hail from the lands of Khand, they are akin to the Easterlings and Haradrim, though they have a distinct culture which separates them from the others who also dwell there.
- ❖ Wain Riders – are a people who come from the lands east of the seat of Rhûn, they are eager for conquest and are filled with a hatred for Gondor. These men are strong and well-armed; with their chieftains leading them in chariots. They defend their lands from many fortified camps of wagons and journey in great, laden wains.

## INHERENT IN MEN

HIGH MEN	A	B	C	D	E	F
Black Númenóreans,	3	g	Y	-	9	1
Dúnedain	3	m	Y	-	-	1
Knights of Dol Amroth	2	C	Y	-	-	1
Men of the Vales of Anduin	2	m	-	C	-	1
MIDDLE MEN	A	B	C	D	E	F
Anóriens	-	m	Y	-	-	2
Beornings	1	o	-	-	-	1
Drúedain	-	r	-	Y	-	-
Gondorians	-	m	Y	-	-	2
Hillmen of Rhudaur	-	d	-	C	9	3
Lake-Men	-	e	-	-	-	2
Men of Dale	-	e	-	-	-	2
Men of Dorwinion	-	m	-	-	3	2
Men of Eriador	-	a	-	-	-	2
Men of the Greyflood	-	a	-	-	-	2
Rohirrim	1	w	Y	-	-	1
Woodmen of Mirkwood	-	m	-	-	-	2
LOW MEN	A	B	C	D	E	F
Balchoth	-	m	-	-	9	3
Corsairs of Umbar	1	g	Y	H	9	2
Dunlendings	-	r	-	C	6	2
Easterlings	-	m	-	-	9	3
Haradrim	-	g	Y	H	9	2
Men of Angmar	-	d	Y	C	9	3
Men of Bree	-	-	-	-	3	2
Men of Khand	-	g	-	H	9	3
Men of Nurn	-	g	-	H	9	3
Snowmen of Forochel	-	-	-	C	6	2
Variags	-	g	-	H	9	3
Wain Riders	1	g	Y	-	9	3

A = Stalwart      B = Enemy      C = Proud  
D = Resistance      E = Swayed      F = Weak-Willed  
a – Angmar; c – Corsairs; d – Dúnedain; e – Easterlings; g – Gondor; m – Many  
o – Orcs; r – Rohirrim; w – Dunlendings (Wild Men)

- ❖ HOBBITS – concerning the race of the Little People. They are a folk with beginnings that are shrouded in mystery. They do not figure in any of the tales of earlier time for there are no records of their existence before the Third Age of the Sun. Their exact ancestry is uncertain, though it is said that the Hobbits are somehow related to the race of Men and it is known that they are mortal. Being such a quiet, unobtrusive people the Hobbits may well have been living their peaceful lives for sometime, all but unnoticed. The Hobbits are a short folk, shorter yet less stocky than the Dwarves. Also, unlike the Dwarves, they have no beards, though their feet are covered in hair. They settled in the peaceful lands of the Shire (though some dwell in Bree) and it was there they prospered, living in quaint holes with windows looking out of the hillsides. Hobbits live a simple life, tending to their land and compiling complicated genealogies. They eat four good meals a day (more if they can) and favor the smoking of pipeweed and the drinking of ale. They are a peaceful folk; the last battle in the Shire was a combined effort to rid the white wolves that had invaded in the harsh winter of 2911. Though they claim to have sent a company of archers to aid in the Battle of Fornost, there are no records elsewhere of their presence. Though Hobbits may appear to be as soft as butter, they can surprise even the wise in their resilience and courage in times of trouble. While it is true that Hobbits have no magic about them or craft Enchantments, their skills in hiding and moving quietly are such that some may think they use magic to disappear.

There are three branches of Hobbit-kind – FALLOWHIDES are the tallest and fairest, they too are the least numerous - loving the woodlands and the company of Elves. HARFOOTS are the greatest in number and are shorter than the rest. They favor the hills and have dealing with the Dwarves. STOORS are a broader folk, favoring the lowlands and river-bottoms. They are common to Buckland and the village of Bree.

## INHERENT IN HOBBITS

MERITS	FLAWS
Dauntless / Elusive	Aversion – Open Water **
Keen Sense (I) * / Riddle-Master	Obsession – Pipeweed & Ale
Resilience / Resistance – Pain	Wanderlust ***
Stalwart (I) / Sure to the Mark	

\* Sight and Sound      \*\* Except Stoors      \*\*\* Fallowhides only

# ROLEPLAYING IN MIDDLE-EARTH

# HITHER LANDS

## FURTHER PERILS

There are other hazards in the Hither Lands, outside of actual combat, that will come to face a character over the course of their adventures.

- ❖ **BURNING** – fire damage is capable of horrid effects on a character. It can leave someone with hideous scars and is difficult to recover from. All injuries from Burning take twice as long to heal. A character taking more than half of their total amount of Vitality will be left forever scarred. Smoke inhalation and subsequent suffocation is handled in the same manner as drowning.
- ❖ **DROWNING** – a character can hold their breath equal to the following formula:  $\text{Might} + \text{Will} \times 12 = \text{maximum number of seconds}$ . For each second beyond this amount, in which a character holds their breath, will result in a point of Stamina lost. Once unconscious, Vitality is reduced at the rate of one point per minute, until saved or death occurs. A test of Will ( $\text{Will} + \text{dl}2$ ) can be attempted to see if a character can be revived. Situational modifiers and any Vitality penalties should apply to such tests.
- ❖ **FALLING** – for general purposes a character can withstand a drop of less than six feet without sustaining any damage. At six feet, a fall will incur a loss of one point in Lifeblood. For every three feet thereafter, falling will cause one point of additional damage to Lifeblood. Gamemasters may apply appropriate modifiers in certain situations which might reduce or increase the impact of the fall.
- ❖ **POISONS/TOXINS** – shows the first signs of effects to a character's Stamina. The rate in which the poison works is variable, usually reducing Stamina at a rate of 1-12 points per minute. If the toxicity level is severe enough an antidote must be administered or a character may die. Once all Stamina a character will begin to lose points of Lifeblood. A test of Will, with any modifiers, may be attempted to see if the one's body can fight off the effects of the poison or toxin.

## HEALING

The healing rate for injuries is one point of Vitality for every six days. This is time it takes to recover under normal circumstances with the character receiving little treatment. It is possible for this rate to be altered through a number of methods of aid and care. There are Enchantments which can also speed the recovery time of those who have been wounded.