

~ MEN OF THE LAKE ~

The denizens of Lake-town and the inhabitants of Dale are two separate folks sharing a common heritage. Esgaroth was first founded by merchants coming from Dale, but soon the city grew independent from that powerful city of Northmen, and ended up out-living it when Smaug destroyed Dale and scattered its population. For almost two centuries the survivors of Dale and the original Men of the Lake lived together under the threat of Dragon-fire, until their destinies were suddenly sundered by the flight of the Black Arrow.

Today, the city of Dale has been rebuilt and its crown restored to the head of the rightful heir of Girion; one of the first pronouncements of King Bard has been the recognition of the independence of Esgaroth and the rule of its council. The Men of the lake busied themselves for many years with the great works needed to build their town anew, and the rebuilt Esgaroth emerges

today from the surface of the Long Lake as a testimony to their strength of purpose.

The Men of the Lake are among the most enterprising and ambitious inhabitants of Wilderland. Even in their darkest years they never completely stopped looking beyond the borders of the Long Lake, and the most daring among them traveled far when everyone else cared only for their own defenses. Today, Lake-town sits in the middle of a crossroads of opportunities, with a stronghold of Dwarves needing provisions, an ambitious young kingdom of Men to the north, and an ancient realm of Elves to the west.

DESCRIPTION

The Men of the lake distinguish themselves from their neighbors, the inhabitants of Dale, by their greater love for 'modern' things and exotic novelties, a contrast with the Bardings' healthier respect for tradition. Where the wealthiest among the men and women of Dale display their status wearing gold bracelets and torques, or pins and brooches with precious stones, the inhabitants of Lake-town favor rich furs and fine-woven fabrics, often the product of foreign craftsmanship. Their differences extend beyond mere appearance though: Bardings are said to prize nobility and lineage, while Lake-men value above all men or women who elevate themselves through resourcefulness and daring.

STANDARD OF LIVING

Since the death of the Dragon, trade has steadily become more profitable than in times past. With every advancing year more wealth goes up and down the Running River, as the demand for the goods that only Esgaroth is able to provide increases – with the Kingdom under the Mountain and Dale adding their requirements to those of the Elves of the Woodland Realm, the Men of the Lake rank as belonging to a *Prosperous* culture, allowing your character to begin our game with twelve (12) gold pieces. Some may be left at home, with family, or hidden in a cache somewhere, as you choose; record this in the Treasure block on the back of your character sheet.



MEN OF THE LAKE ADVENTURERS

The everyday occupations that make up the busy life of a young merchant or fisherman of the Long Lake do not leave room to develop a thirst for adventuring or other flights of fancy. It needs a particularly venturesome soul to take heed of old songs, rather than be absorbed by "trades and tolls ... cargoes and gold". But when this happens, the proverbial determination of the Men of the Lake makes sure that the choice is carried out to the full. Choose one of these and record it on the Calling line on the front of your

character sheet; see the section, in Customizing & Completing Your Character, labeled Callings for further information.

Suggested Callings: *Treasure-hunter* or *Wanderer*. The inhabitants of the Long-lake work hard, and now reap the abundant fruits of their labor. But some among them dream of even greater riches - either the unparalleled treasures of ages long past, or the unknown beauty of lands they have yet to visit.

Unusual Calling: None

CULTURAL BLESSING

- Tenacious -

They began planning a new town, designed more fair and large even than before...

The Men of Esgaroth are quick to find and exploit the positive in everything they experience, however little it seems. Every defeat is a chance to learn, every blow suffered is a lesson taken by heart.

- If you are wounded, or fail at a roll with seriously negative consequences, you may spend a point of Hope to gain an Experience Point for the skill failed. Eligible rolls are, for example, all Fear Tests made during combat, all Corruption Tests, or any rolled deemed suitable by the Lore-master.

STARTING SKILL SCORES

Cultural/Half-Skills: Most common tasks can be completed by members of any culture, though some cannot, based on the cultural environment or limitations to learning. To make characters more viable for the game system of *The One Ring*, Players are allowed to roll 1D6 as an addition to their Feat Die (1D12), but only for cultural, aka half-skills. Normally, this extra 1D6 would represent a Success Die, or a full Rank added to the skill, where the Tengwar Rune (6 on the D6) would represent an added success; for my game, the half-skill die represents basic capability, instead, so unless the first full Rank is shaded in, the Tengwar Rune has no effect on game-play, and simply represents a roll of 6. To signify these cultural skills, shade in one-half of the first Rank block for all skills EXCEPT the following: *Explore*, *Stealth* and *Travel*.

Common Skills: Copy the following skill ranks onto the character sheet and underline the avored skill:

| | | | | | |
|-----------|---|----------|---|-----------------|---|
| Awe | ½ | Inspire | 0 | <u>Persuade</u> | 2 |
| Athletics | 2 | Travel | 2 | Stealth | 0 |
| Awareness | 1 | Insight | 2 | Search | ½ |
| Explore | 0 | Healing | 2 | Hunting | ½ |
| Song | 2 | Courtesy | 2 | Riddle | 2 |
| Craft | 2 | Battle | 1 | Lore | ½ |

Weapon Skills: Choose one of the following two Weapon skill sets, and record it on your character sheet:

- 1) Great Bow 2, Sword 1, Dagger 1
- 2) Sword 2, Bow 1, Dagger 1

SPECIALTIES

Choose two Traits from the following:

- Boating, Fishing, Swimming, Minstrelsy, Trading, Wood-wright

BACKGROUNDS

You may choose (or roll 1d6 for) one of the following six backgrounds for your character. Those available to you are...

1 - Legends Spring to Life

Your old nanny taught you many songs about the Dwarf-kings of the Mountain, and you grew up thinking that their halls of stone were as real as the bone-littered cave of the Marsh-ogre she told you about when you misbehaved. Now you know that dreams and legends are real and that there are treasures and wonderful new lands out there, waiting for you to go and seek them out.

Basic Attributes: Body 5, Heart 7, Wits 2

Favored Skill: Song

Distinctive Features (choose two Traits from those listed): Adventurous, Clever, Curious, Energetic, Fair-spoken, Merciful, Merry, Nimble

2 - Restless Pupil

Your father spent much of his hard-earned gold on your education, to make sure that one day his rightful heir could aspire to the loftiest positions in the city council. But you seemed able to focus only on myths and legends, your single-mindedness finally proving too much for your teachers and your father's patience. Soon you will have to make a choice: to renounce your dreams or take the road as an adventurer, to be soon forsaken by your family in favor of your younger siblings - unless you return as a hero.

Basic Attributes: Body 4, Heart 6, Wits 3

Favored Skill: Lore

Distinctive Features (choose two Traits from those listed): Adventurous, Clever, Grim, Robust, Secretive, Steadfast, Suspicious, Willful

3 - Masterful Fingers

Everyone who knows you has, at least once, seen you sitting for long hours at your hearth or on the steps of the market-square quays with your knife in hand, whittling pieces of wood into animals, blossoms and leaves. Your ability has even drawn comments from passing raft-elves, their praise music to your ears: you feel a measure of kinship with those graceful and silent forest-dwelling people, and you will one day go and visit their halls with many pillars, to see with your eyes the fabled carved throne of the Elven-king.

Basic Attributes: Body 6, Heart 6, Wits 2

Favored Skill: Craft

Distinctive Features (choose two Traits from those listed): Clever, Curious, Elusive, Fair, Just, Keen-eyed, Nimble, Tall

NAMES OF THE MEN OF THE LAKE

A traditional Esgaroth'ian name is usually composed of one or two elements (for example, Dag, Day, or Lif-stan, Life Stone). Like most Northmen, Men of the Lake often name their sons and daughters after a renowned ancestor or relative, or choose a name beginning with the same sound or sharing one element with that of the father (whose name is often given with their first name when introduced formally - for example, Lifstan son of Leiknir, or Ingrith daughter of Ingolf).

4 - Lordling

You are born into a family of envoys and diplomats, serving in councils of the Barding-lands before Bard was crowned. Your manners are so naturally dignified that you could have passed for the heir of a noble house - if you weren't born in a town where the only lords are merchant princes. But, you don't see that as a flaw; where you are planning to go, the actions of an individual are not lessened in worth by lack of a proper lineage.

Basic Attributes: Body 4, Heart 7, Wits 3

Favored Skill: Courtesy

Distinctive Features (choose two Traits from those listed): Clever, Energetic, Forthright, Merciful, Merry, Steadfast, Tall, Trusty

5 - Watchman

You, your father and his father before him served in the city watch, until the town was incinerated by the fiery death throes of the Dragon. When you saw the great beast fall from the sky, you realized how countless years looking at the distant Mountain had been spent in vain - for of what use is a watchman when his warning is not heeded by heroes who can do something about the coming threat?

Basic Attributes: Body 5, Heart 6, Wits 3

Favored Skill: Awareness

Distinctive Features (choose two Traits from those listed): Clever, Forthright, Grim, Keen-eyed, Suspicious, Trusty, Vengeful, Willful

6 - Innocence Lost

When you were a kid you could be seen running starry-eyed along the busy streets of the city, pulling pranks with your friends on noble emissaries, rich merchants, shady traders, even silent sell-swords and menacing cut-throats. Your stare lost its innocence when, one night, your older brother disappeared after a night of drunken revelry. You don't know what happened to him - he may have fallen into the water, but you know well that in Lake-town even drunk men know not to walk close to the edge of the quays...

Basic Attributes: Body 5, Heart 5, Wits 4

Favored Skill: Awe

Distinctive Features (choose two Traits from those listed): Clever, Elusive, Fair, Fair-spoken, Just, Robust, Secretive, Vengeful

Male Names: Aegir, Agmund, Agnarr, Alfrim, Alfwald, Arn, Arnulf, Bain, Balki, Bard, Bern, Bragi, Brand, Brandulf, Dag, Domarr, Drengi, Egil, Einar, Eirik, Erland, Erling, Farald, Farmann, Farulf, Fastarr, Finn, Finnulf, Folki, Folkmarr, Galmann, Galti, Gautarr, Geirmund, Gismund, Gorm, Grimarr, Guthorm, Hafgrim, Haki, Hakon, Halfdan, Hamarr, Hedinn, Helgi, Hergrim, Hildir, Holgeir, Holti, Holvidur, Hord, Ingi, Ingolf, Ioli, Isolf, Jarl, Jarmarr, Joalf, Joar, Jofur, Jokell, Karl, Ketill, Ketilmund, Kol, Kolbeinn, Kori, Leiknir, Lifstan, Lodin, Lomund, Magni, Mord, Munan, Nari, Nefstan, Nerulf, Odd, Oddmarr, Odvarr, Olaf, Olvard, Omund, Ornolf, Ottarr, Ragnarr, Randur, Reinald, Runolf, Sandarr, Saxulf, Sigdan, Sigfast, Sigmarr,

Sigvald, Sigward, Sigmund, Skarf, Skefill, Smidur, Steinarr, Thorald, Thorfast, Torwald, Ulfarr, Ulfied, Unnarr, Valbrand, Valdimarr, Vali, Vandil, Varinn, Varr.

Female Names: Aldis, Aldrif, Asfrid, Asny, Astrith, Bera, Bergdis, Brinhild, Dagmar, Dagny, Dalla, Edda, Eilif, Erna, Eydis, Estrild, Frida, Geira, Gerda, Grimhild, Gudrun, Gundrid, Gunnhild, Halla, Halldis, Halldora, Helga, Hild, Holma, Inga, Ingirun, Ingrith, Lif,

Linhild, Kelda, Ragna, Runa, Saldis, Sigga, Signy, Sigrid, Sigrun, Solveig, Thora, Thordis, Thorhild, Thorleif, Ulfhild, Ulfrun, Una, Valdis, Vigdis, Walda.

Adventuring Age: 16-30

Bardings don't usually become adventurers before their 16th year of age, and rarely continue beyond their forties, when they retire to serve their family and folk.

Customizing & Completing Your Character

Once you've chosen your characters' culture, background and Distinctive Features, and copied the relevant information to your character sheet, you can further customize your hero's characteristics and abilities.

CALLINGS

While choosing your character's Calling, use this section as a reference for each normal and/or possible unusual Calling; here, you will find descriptions and relevant information concerning the Calling's available to your character's culture, out of which no member is typically able to stray. Note that these Callings are subject to change. The following descriptions do not represent your character's profession or trade, but the ambitions and aspirations that eventually set them on the road. While a Calling can be used to summarize your character's drive as they start out, these should be viewed only as the most common origins for your character's culture; your character will become more during the course of game-play.

From a gaming perspective, the choice of a Calling offers you a way to customize your character and add details about who they begin their adventuring career as.

For your *Favored Skill Group*, select either one skill from each group or two skills from one of the two groups; these skills become Favored, meaning you underline them and are able to add your Favored governing attribute score when spending a point of Hope for the extra bonus. Record the *Trait* and *Shadow-weakness* gained by taking your chosen Calling onto your Distinctive Traits line and Shadow-weakness line on the front of your character sheet.

Treasure-hunter

*"Far over the Misty Mountains cold,
Through dungeons deep and caverns old,
We must away ere break of day,
To find our long forgotten gold."*



This world has seen the passing of the glory of many Dwarven kings and Elven lords, and their heritage is now buried in deep dungeons and dim caverns. Pale gold and bright jewels beckon all who dare to find them. Be it a family treasure stolen by raiding Goblins or the golden hoard of a Dragon, you seek what is lost, even when this means you will have to brave unspeakable dangers.

Favored Skill Groups: Movement, Perception

Trait: Burglary

Shadow-weakness: Dragon-sickness

Wanderer

"...most of our kindred have long ago departed, and we too are now only tarrying a while longer, ere we return over the Great Sea."

You see the wonders of living in Middle-earth even where the Shadow is deepest. Every corner of the land holds a promise of untold secrets, and this is why you have decided that any dell, cave and river vale can be your home, albeit briefly. For when the morning comes, another horizon will beckon you on to your new destination.

Favored Skill Groups: Custom, Survival

Trait: Folk-lore

Shadow-weakness: Wandering-madness



FAVORED ATTRIBUTES

Body, Heart and Wits are the fundamental ratings of all heroes in the game. Each character starts with a set of basic values determined by their chosen background. Players now get to generate their characters' favoured Attributes, by adding bonuses to the basic scores. Favoured Attribute scores represent the character's potential to excel when drawing on his experiences and training.

To generate the scores possessed by a hero as favoured Attributes, players add 3 to one Attribute, 2 to a second Attribute, and 1 to the

remaining one, copying the new totals in the smaller boxes overlapping the Attribute boxes on the character sheet.

Peter is determining the favoured Attributes for his Woodman warden. The background for his character has given him the following basic scores: Body 3, Heart 4, and Wits 7. Peter decides to enhance his already high Wits score by adding +3 (raising his favoured Wits score to 10), and then to add +2 to his Body and +1 to his Heart, raising both favoured Attribute scores to 5.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

You see your character a certain way, but maybe they are not quite where you want them to be. Each Character gains some life experience which, hopefully, will put you closer to your vision of your Character. You are granted ten (10) points to customize any of your character's Common or Weapon Skills, though none may present above three Ranks at this time. This allotment of points is for Character generation only; after this, Common skills will use Advancement Points, while all other improvements require Experience Points.

Here, Common Skills are improved with a cost equal to the next Rank being purchased (ie – you have 2 Ranks in Hunting, and wish to have 3, instead, which will cost 3 of these 10 points). Weapon Skills cost double this number after the first Rank.

Improvements other than Common and Weapon Skills are disallowed at this time, nor may any of these skills be improved above three ranks for Character Generation.

ENDURANCE & HOPE

Men of the Lake begin the game with Endurance equal to your Character's basic Heart score plus 22 points, and Hope is equal to Heart plus 8.

STANDARD GEAR

A hero's traveling gear includes their weapons and armor, as well as personal gear, musical instruments, and the like. When resolving Fatigue test failures, players only take into consideration the Encumbrance ratings of their traveling gear (see page 158, LMBR). The last page of the [TOR Short Rules](#) document will be very handy, here. Press CTRL + Click on that link to open it.

Armor, Helmet & Shield: Select one each of Armor, Helmet, and Shield of your choice; you are not required to select any. Keep in mind the Encumbrance of each, as you can only carry so much.

Weapon(s): You may have one of each of the weapons for which you have a skill; you are not required to select any. Size limitations exist in our game, as represented in the following table for your character's race:

| Race | One-Handed Weapons | Two-Handed Weapons |
|-------|--|--|
| Human | Dagger, <u>Short Sword</u> , <u>Sword</u> , <u>Long Sword</u> , Spear, Axe | Great Spear, Great Axe, Long-hafted Axe, <u>Bow</u> , <u>Great Bow</u> , Mattock |

Traveling Gear: The Encumbrance rating of traveling gear varies depending on the time of the year:

Winter and autumn gear (in the cold months of the year): thick warm clothes (winter coat, fur-lined cloak [hooded or not], layered breeches or traveling dress/robe, water-proof leather boots), water and food for one week. Winter traveling gear for one character has an Encumbrance rating of 3, causing the loss of three (3) Endurance on a failed Fatigue test.

Summer and spring gear (in the warm months of the year): light clothing (shirt, jacket, breeches or traveling dress/robe, cloak [hooded or not], worn boots or shoes), water and food for one week. Summer traveling gear for one character has an Encumbrance rating of 2, causing the loss of two (2) Endurance on a failed Fatigue test.

Both sets of traveling gear include food supplies for one week of active journey time (if the journey is going to last more than a week, the companions will generally have to rely on their skills as hunters).

Personal Gear: You have a sling bag OR backpack containing a blanket, a wood tankard, a wood cutlery set and a small cooking pot. Finally, you may also carry a few personal items (a locket or necklace, a hidden purse, a rune-marked token, or anything that cannot be classified as a weapon or armor, nor is it required for survival).

Musical Instrument(s): Music and song is an important part of the culture of the Free Peoples of Middle Earth. Skilled musicians will usually carry one or more musical instruments with them on their travels.

If a player-hero possesses a **Perform** (*instrument*) skill level of 1 Rank or more, their traveling gear may include a musical instrument appropriate to their culture.

Other: Look to your background to see if there is more equipment to be had.

COMBAT RATINGS

Damage: Usually, a character's Damage rating is equal to his basic Body score, both for attacks made with a close combat weapon or a ranged weapon.

Players should record their heroes' Damage bonus scores on the character sheet. Should a character's ranged attack Damage rating differ from that of close combat attacks, the player should record it in the separate box (special abilities and items might benefit one type of attack or another).

VALOR AND WISDOM

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

Valor and Wisdom measure a hero's resistance to Fear and the influence of the Shadow, and track his stature in terms of power and renown. Both scores range from 1 to 6, and rise over the course of the game.

Starting Scores: At this point in character generation, players are asked to prioritize one characteristic over the other; a starting player gives a score of 2 to one characteristic, and 1 to the other. Both numbers are entered on the character sheet in the boxes labeled Wisdom and Valor Current.

Virtues and Rewards: Starting with rank 2, characters receive a special benefit with every new rank they reach in either Valor or Wisdom. Benefits obtained by raising a character's Valor score are

VIRTUES/MASTERIES (for Wisdom)

If your character's initial Wisdom is 2, and for each point accrued in Wisdom from 2 on, select one of the following Virtues or Masteries to help improve your character.

Bowman of the Guild: You have demonstrated a talent worthy of admission to the Bowmen's Guild of Esgaroth, an honorable association uniting the best archers of Lake-town. Now you may train and share secrets of the trade with many old friends of Bard the Bowman himself, all veterans of the Battle of Five Armies. Raise your Standing by 1 point. Additionally, from now on, when you are using a bow or a great bow, you may spend a point of Hope to upgrade the quality of a successful attack roll by one level, turning a success into a great success, or a great success into an extraordinary one.

Confidence: Overcoming difficulties has hardened your spirit, and at the same time renewed your faith in a brighter future. Raise your maximum Hope rating by 2 points. When you choose this mastery, set your Hope score again to its maximum rating.

Dour-handed: When you throw a weapon or bend your bow, your hand is steady and your aim is sure. Raise your ranged Damage rating by 1.

Expertise: You have practiced a skill until it has become as natural as breathing. You can choose a new favored skill (either a Common skill or a Weapon skill).

Fell-handed: You have learned to put all your strength into your blows in hand-to-hand battle. Raise your close combat Damage rating by 1.

Gifted: Adventuring is honing your inborn talents. Raise one of your favored Attributes by one.

Parry: This is a defensive bonus, reflecting a character's ability to keep his head in a dangerous situation, to be aware of opponents' actions and to ward off an opponent's attacks. Usually, the Parry rating of a character is equal to his basic Wits score, modified by a positive bonus if the hero is using a buckler, a shield or a great shield (see the equipment tables on page 123). Players should record their heroes' Parry score on the character sheet.

called Rewards, while benefits granted by ranks in Wisdom are called Virtues. Thus, when players choose between these characteristics during hero creation, they are also choosing if their character will start the game with a Reward or with a Virtue.

A starting character with **Valor 2 and Wisdom 1** has earned his/her first Reward, for which the player will select one from the list of Rewards or Qualities listed later in this document.

A starting character with **Wisdom 2 and Valor 1** has activated his/her first Virtue, for which the player will select one from the list of Virtues or Masteries listed later in this document.

Merchant Prince: Your family's fortune is rising with the reopening of the trading routes that lead to the markets in the South and East. This increased affluence has started to positively affect your adventuring life, as you may choose a servant from those employed in your household and have him join you in your next endeavor. At the start of an Adventuring phase you may pick one servant to accompany you.:

A *Page* assists you in all your daily routines, like washing and dressing, and takes care of your clothes and gear. He is at your side during any encounter, making sure that you are properly introduced and providing advice and counsel. When you enjoy the help of a page, you can roll the Feat die twice and keep the best result when you are making any *Courtesy* and *Insight* rolls.

A *Physician* is an older servant who has long been trained in the arts of taking care of your health. He knows every little ailment you might have suffered from since you were a child, and possesses the knowledge to prepare a remedy. As long as you are assisted by a physician, you can roll the Feat die twice and keep the best result when you are making a Healing roll.

A *Porter* helps you in carrying your gear when you are adventuring. When you are making a Fatigue test, you can roll the Feat die twice and keep the best result.

A *Scrivener* is a personal servant who can read and write. He is usually well-learned and keeps a daily record of your exploits. If you are employing a scrivener you can roll the Feat die twice and keep the best result when you are making any Lore and Riddle rolls.

With the exception of a physician, a servant in a rich trading family is usually a young boy, often a minor relative of modest ambition. Regardless of his duty, your servant is no fighting man, but is considered to be always around and eager to perform his assigned task.

Resilience: Your determination and stamina have improved through hardship and toil. Raise your maximum Endurance rating by 2 points. When you choose this Mastery, set your Endurance score again to its maximum rating.

Shield-fighting: You have learnt to wield a shield like the boatmen of Esgaroth do when they fight to repel enemies trying to board their ships. If you are fighting using a shield of any type, when you successfully hit an enemy roll the Feat die again: on a roll of 8+ you inflict an additional loss of Endurance equal to your Damage rating plus the Encumbrance value of the shield you are using (1 for a Buckler, 3 for a Shield, 5 for a Great Shield).

Trader's Savvy: Some say that "fair speech may hide a foul heart", but you have lived among merchants and traders long enough to know that pleasant words are always received better than harsh ones when dealing with strangers. When you are about to play out

REWARDS/QUALITIES (for Valor)

If your character's initial Valor is 2, and for each point accrued in Valor from 2 on, select one of the following Rewards or Qualities to help improve your character. More information on Rewards and Qualities can be found on pages 113-114 of the LMB.

Brazen Armor (mail armor): Men-folk out of the East favor suits of armor made of overlapping brass plates, or composed of small scales arranged in a mesh, like the scales on a fish or the feathers of birds. Many of these elaborate coats have been hanging on the walls of the great hall of Lake-town, waiting for heroes worthy to wear them. A Brazen armor is the equivalent of a suit of mail armor, but wearing it allows you to roll one additional Success die on a Protection roll against an attack made with an edged or blunt melee weapon (swords, axes and clubs), and one Success die less against spears and arrows, or other types of penetrating attacks.

Close-fitting (armor or headpiece): A skillful smith has made this piece of protective equipment more difficult to overcome with a piercing blow. The selected item's Protection rating gets a bonus of +1. This upgrade may be applied to any suit of armor or helm, and can be selected multiple times (always up to a maximum of 3 Qualities per item).

Cunning Make (armor, headpiece, or shield): A skilled craftsman has made this piece of equipment lighter or less cumbersome than its lesser counterparts, thus reducing its Encumbrance by 2 (to a minimum of 0). This upgrade may be applied to any defensive item, and can be selected multiple times (always up to a maximum of 3 Qualities per item).

Fell (weapon, unique): Hard and straight, a piercing blow from a fell weapon is stopped less easily by a suit of armor. The weapon's Injury rating is raised by 2. This upgrade may be applied only once, to any one weapon type.

Grievous (weapon, unique): The weapon is strong and heavy, inflicting more harm on its targets. The weapon's Damage rating is raised by 2 (a weapon that can be wielded with one or two hands gets the bonus to both its Damage ratings). This upgrade may be applied only once, to any one weapon.

an encounter, you can attempt to raise its Tolerance rating making a roll with any custom skill (*Song*, *Courtesy* or *Riddle*) against TN 14. On a successful roll, add +1 to the Tolerance of the encounter, +2 if the roll was a great success, or +3 if the roll was an extraordinary success.

Water Legs: Life on the lake has taught you how to move appropriately when on board a moving boat. Now that you have taken up adventuring you can exploit your superior balance to your advantage even when you are on dry land. When an opponent is attacking you in combat, before the dice are rolled, you may spend a bonus Success die due to a Combat advantage to get a bonus of +3 to your Parry score. Additionally, if you are fighting on a boat, a raft, or other precarious or risky surface (for example, an Elven tree platform, a rope bridge) you receive one free Combat advantage bonus die during Onset.

Keen (weapon, unique): Sharp and well-balanced, this weapon is more likely to produce a piercing blow when hitting its target. The weapon's Edge rating is reduced by 1 (note that an Edge rating of Ψ becomes a rating of 10). This upgrade may be applied only once, to any one weapon type.

Keening Bog-stone: Among the most unusual and rare possessions of a Lake-men household are these unassuming whetstones, small flat pebbles never bigger than a pigeon egg, black in color and faintly traced with green veins. They can be obtained from the oldest and most superstitious fishermen of the town, who swear they get them in exchange for iron tool offerings left in certain areas of the Long Marshes. If you carry a Keening Bog-stone in a pouch or wear it as a necklace, it vibrates and emits a soft wailing sound when a creature possessing the Hate Sunlight or Denizen of the Dark special abilities is close (within 100 yards). Additionally, the first attack you aim at such a creature will provoke an additional loss of one point of Hate.

Reinforced (shield, unique): The shield's structure is reinforced, possibly with a metal rim or a larger iron boss, letting its wearer parry blows with greater ease. The shield's Parry bonus is raised by 1. In addition, the shield cannot be smashed. This upgrade may be applied only once, to any type of shield (buckler, shield or great shield).

Serpent Scimitar (sword): Exotic blades from the distant South are the most sought-after collector's items among the more fashionable merchants of Lake-town. Most of those that find their way to the North are useless ceremonial blades of cheaply damasked iron, with lacquered hilts and scabbards set with colored stones. A rare few are the work of truly superior craftsmanship, quick and deadly weapons in the hand of a skilled fighter. When making a melee attack using a Serpent scimitar, ignore any Parry rating bonus your target has that is due to them carrying a shield.

A SHORT WORD ABOUT FELLOWSHIPS

The life of a hero is one of excitement, but it is often full of hardships and trouble, and burdens easiest to bear when shared with others. For this reason, adventurers of all sorts gather in groups of companions, united by a common cause, be it to fight the Enemy, to lead a hunt for a prized prey, or to scour the land seeking for a lost or stolen treasure.

Representing friendship, loyalty and trust, Fellowship points and Fellowship focuses can be used by all player-heroes. Both provide a companion with a way to recover Hope points.

How Fellowship Points Work: Hope is an ever-dwindling resource; to overcome the many formidable challenges he is going to face, a player-hero who has just started his adventuring career is bound to count on it quite often (veterans might come to rely more on their own abilities).

To recover their much-needed trust and self-confidence, player-heroes should look no further than their own companions. Points taken from the Fellowship pool can be spent to refresh a character's Hope, while the company of a hero's Fellowship focus can allow him to recover points for free.

Fellowship Points: The number of points in a Fellowship pool available to a company of heroes at the beginning of the game is equal to the number of heroes in the group. These points are spent much like Hope, in that they can save the life of your character, be used to perform an extraordinary feat of strength,

agility, or skill that the character may otherwise not be able to perform. However, in order for this to work, the group has to agree that taking a Fellowship Point is in the best interests of the Player-hero and/or the group. Fellowship Points are not replenished during the course of an adventure, but are renewed at the beginning of the next, while Hope Points may be replenished at the GMs discretion. A character whose player has spent most or all of their Hope Points, may pull from the Fellowship pool, though only at the agreement of the group.

Fellowship Focus: Fellowship focuses represent the strong ties between brothers in arms, close kinsmen and compatriots. Fellowship focuses have two effects in gameplay, as sources of Hope or as sources of inspiration.

Source of Hope: The presence of a Fellowship focus affects the way a character recovers Hope. If a PHs focus survives an adventure without a wound, they may either regain one point of Hope, or add a new one, whereas if the focus is wounded they may lose one point of Hope, or three if the focus died.

Source of Inspiration: Being a part of a Fellowship, and having a Fellowship focus, if spending Hope to protect all for the sake of protecting the one, as well, may be deemed to have sacrificed enough to immediately, or by the end of the session, regain their spent Hope.

STANDING

When heroes return home after months or even years spent traveling abroad, they should not be surprised to find themselves receiving suspicious looks, or even presumed dead by hasty officials and neighbors. Valor and Wisdom may mean much to the Wise and Powerful, but for the common folk there is nothing as damaging to one's respectability than going away to have adventures, especially if one cannot disguise one's new queer habits and keeps disturbing the peace by disappearing on a regular basis.

How Standing Works: A hero's Standing represents his position amongst the members of his own folk, as well as those in places he has visited. Depending on the traditions of a culture, Standing may translate to admiration, acclaim or simple respectability. Standing ranges from 0 (lowest) to 6 (highest), and players record their rank on their character sheet. Adventurers start their career with one rank in Standing for their home town, which is also their first Sanctuary. Standing is used to gauge how influential a hero can be in places they have been, and their rank is put to practical use, especially during the year-end Fellowship Phase.

WHAT THE MASTER OF ESGAROTH SAYS... (*attitude toward other cultures*)

- **Bardings:** "Rejoice, men of Esgaroth, for a new lord sits on the throne of Dale! No more will we fear the sight of the Mountain, but will see gold once again descend the river to reach the green shores of the lake. Our lake, the rule of which has been recognized today by King Bard in front of our counselors and has been confirmed by the envoy of the Elvenking!"
- **Beornings:** "It is a pity that Beorn doesn't see the advantage his own folk might derive from dealing with us. They do not have a lot to offer but for the most uneducated of tastes, with the exception of their celebrated honey-cakes, the secret of which Beorn doesn't seem interested in sharing..."
- **Dunlendings:** "I have heard whispers of these Dun Men, but little of their history other than they may share one in common with us. When we begin sharing trade routes with the Dwarves of the Blue Mountains, perhaps we will come to know these distant cousins."
- **Dwarves of the Grey Mountains:** "I know not these beggars, vagabonds, and trade-smiths who lived in the area now belonging to our wrong-headed kin now known as Hill-men, rumored to serve the Enemy. If, indeed, these Grey Dwarves are enemy to our Enemy, perhaps they will become friends and we can help them."
- **Dwarves of the Iron Hills:** "I understand King Ironfoot was direct relation to Thorin Oakenshield and, of course, he is now King Under the Mountain, so I imagine his kin to our East are stout and honorable folk, as much as Dáin. I welcome further trade with them."
- **Dwarves of the Lonely Mountain:** "Thorin Oakenshield and his company emerged from old songs to bring us back to a time of peace and riches. It is in the name of what they accomplished that our inns and taverns will always welcome adventurers hailing from any land."

THE ONE RING FANTASY ROLE-PLAY

- **Elves of Rivendell (*High Elves*):** "I've not met the Half-elf Elrond and will say nothing of him until I have. If, as the stories say, he has wisdom beyond that of Thranduil King, perhaps he can convince the other to allow us small space to work within Mirkwood. We can help to clear the taint, in exchange for wood and furs."
- **Elves of Mirkwood (*Silvan Elves*):** "The Elven-king is wise beyond the reckoning of mortal Men. Has this council grown to be so proud to deem its own judgement superior to that of a monarch who sat on his throne long before our town was built? If there is anything our esteemed predecessors have taught us, it is to use our common sense..."
- **Hobbits of Gladden Fields (*Wild Hobbits*):** "If I ever meet one of the famed and, heretofore absent *Wild* Hobbits, I will form an opinion. Until then, they are welcome in our halls as with their cousins."
- **Hobbits of the Shire:** "The journey of Bilbo the Hobbit has demonstrated once again that no distance is too great if the reason to get on the road is good enough. And what better reason for a Man of the Lake than to find a new market and new goods to carry home? Bilbo Baggins has already sent letters to several traders inquiring about the possibility of buying toys or fireworks from Dale, and I heard stories of this leaf..."
- **Men of the Lake:** "What sets us apart from all the realms we know about is that we have chosen not to be ruled by a king or a lord, wishing to take the fate of our community in our own hands instead. A man of the lake doesn't seek fame or fortune for himself, but to gain an eminent position in the roll of the benefactors of our town."
- **Rangers of the North (*Dúnedain*):** "I've never met one of these fabled long-lived of Númenor and, until I do, they do not exist to me."
- **Riders of Rohan:** "Eorl's kin from days long past, having gone South to the planes beyond the Brown Lands? He and his people are so far out of memory, it is hard to track their history among our own. I have much trade to do, and little time to speak of rude ghosts."
- **Woodmen of Mountain Hall (*Firienfeld*):** "As with the famed Wild Hobbits, we know little of the Wildmen of the Mountains. It is possible they are descended from the great Kings of the ancient North of Rhovanion, but that is not enough to say we know them, or can help them."
- **Woodmen of Wilderland:** "The denizens of the western eaves of Mirkwood are as we were before our ancestors followed the Running River to the south and east: they are brave and proud, but also simple and unlearned, unable to recognize the true worth of what they possess. It is our duty as distant kinsmen to be as teachers to them, opening new trade routes to bring them goods and tools they have never dared imagine, in exchange for what they fail to fully appreciate."

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