

## Middle Earth Engulfed

*This version: December 2007*

*All essential rules are on the map- board. What follows is a supplement.*

***“This is the Master-Ring, the One Ring to rule them all. This is the One Ring lost many years ago, to the great weakening of its maker's power. Now, he greatly desires to have it again, - but he must not get it”***



***Ash nazg durbatulúk, ash nazg gimbatul, ash nazg thrakatulúkagh burzum-ishi krimpatul. “Never before has any voice dared to utter the words of that tongue in Imladris, Gandalf the Grey,” said Elrond, as the shadow passed and the company breathed once more. “And let us hope that none will ever speak it here again” answered Gandalf.***

## 1. Overview

- In a standard two player game, one player is Free Peoples (FP), one is the Shadow Powers (SP). The Free People's player must get the ring to Mount Doom, while the Shadow player must capture the ring. However, the chances of Sauron or Saruman capturing the ring rise dramatically as the Free nations are defeated; hence a large part of the game concerns the attack on and defence of the Free Peoples' lands of Gondor, Rohan, Shire, and the homes of the Elves and Dwarves.
- The Shadow player has the advantage of being able to build large armies, and to quickly rebuild them if they are initially defeated. The Free Peoples player must supplement their small armies with Individuals, and with cards played as a result of the presence of those Individuals.
- **Free Peoples Individuals** are the most valuable resource that the Free Peoples player possesses. Individuals may do the following:
  - Be part of the Fellowship of the Ring, moving with the Fellowship and permitting Ring cards to be played to aid the Fellowship's passage across Middle Earth.
  - Aid the Activation of a FP nation, by being in an appropriate nation (a list of Individuals that may so aid is provided on the national information section of the mapboard). Being part of a Fellowship in the appropriate area does count for this purpose. Gandalf and Aragorn raise the roll by +2. All others raise the roll by +1.
  - Move with or without Free Peoples regiments. All Individuals move 3 areas per turn, with the exception of Gandalf and Aragorn who move 4.
  - If present at a battle Individuals may lead a regiment (subsequent to nation restrictions, listed on the Individual's piece), allowing a bonus to hit. In addition, Individuals may permit combat cards to be played, allowing the Free Peoples forces to fight with a strength which belies their numbers.
  - If one or more Individuals has not done any of the above – not activated, moved, fought, or been part of the Fellowship – then one new FP card (only) may be drawn. The maximum size of the FP hand is always four cards. However, a new card may be drawn when already holding four cards, so long as a card is then immediately discarded to reduce the hand to four.

- **Strategic suggestions: use of the Fellowship.** The key choice is how large to make the Fellowship, and when – if ever – to voluntarily scatter it. And this choice depends upon how much Power that the Shadow player can dedicate to the Ring Hunt. Note carefully how this maximum Power is calculated: the base figure is the *lower* of the area maximum and size of Fellowship. This means that where the area maximum is low – generally, towards the start of the Fellowship’s journey – there is no penalty to be had from a large Fellowship. And a large Fellowship is very helpful both in dispersing the risk to Frodo and in permitting a wider range of ring cards to be played. However, as the game progresses and the area maximum goes up, a large Fellowship becomes increasingly risky. Near Orthanc (Saruman’s base) and Mordor (Sauron’s base) a large Fellowship is suicidal – unless you have appropriate cards.

Specifically, the initial Fellowship strategy is likely to take on one of the following three characteristics, or a mix thereof.

- (i) Quickly get all Individuals to Rivendell, form a large Fellowship, use lots of Ring cards, and move the Fellowship fast before too many nations fall. Try to influence nations as the Fellowship passes through them.
- (ii) Use a small Fellowship (just the hobbits and perhaps Aragorn or Gandalf, depending on your initial card draw). Move the Fellowship irregularly. Use the other Individuals to activate nations and to aid in battle.
- (iii) Move the initial Fellowship slowly to Rivendell, and wait there while other Individuals first attempt to activate the Free People’s lands. Once that is achieved, form a large Fellowship and depart. This final strategy possesses the advantages of each of the first two, but has the significant disadvantage of taking many turns, and thus permitting the Shadow player to build a vast army.

- **The Power of Sauron and Saruman:** Per turn, Sauron receives 20 power, Saruman 10. Any left unspent at the end of a turn is lost. Power is spent on:
  - **Activation:** Preventing Free Peoples nations from Activating, and encouraging the Shadow’s potential allies to Activate. The cost is cumulative, going up by one Power per extra pip modified on that nation. So, while modifying by one die pip costs one Power, to modify a second pip costs an additional two power, for a cost of three overall. (This ‘cumulative’ mechanic is also used in other rolls in the game.)
  - **Magic Protection:** Attempting to breach Elven and Shire magic protection, to enable an assault on these lands. Power must be assigned cumulatively, such that one Power allows the magic to be breached on a roll of 6, three Power on a roll of 5-6, six Power on 4-6, and so on.
  - **Hunting the ring:** Successfully hunting the ring is the ultimate aim for the Shadow player, though the amount of Power that can be used in this way is limited. You will need to defeat Free People’s nations to raise that limit. Each Power that is *both* committed *and* allowed by the game circumstances raises the ring hunt roll by one.

- **Mustering troops:** Building new regiments and reinforcing existing regiments. Costs vary from ½ per step to 4 per step.
- **Morale:** Stiffening the morale of Shadow forces in battle. One power committed raises the morale roll by +1.
- **Strategic suggestions: playing Sauron and Saruman.** There is a lot of power to spend, but much to spend it on. Saruman should be wary not to provoke the Ents, so a cautious initial strategy is to spend power on rousing and mustering the Dunlending, building a small number of good quality troops (the four step regular infantry representing the *Uruk Hai*, the cavalry representing the Wolf-riders, and the artillery), and hunting the ring. Depending on the route taken by the Fellowship and the actions of the Free People Individuals, a successful game for Saruman can consist merely in surviving long enough to divert the Free Peoples from the greater threat of Sauron.

Sauron has no such need for caution, and would do well to swiftly amass a large number of regiments, both Orc and allied men (Haradrim and Easterlings). In general, focus on one target nation at a time, allowing that strategy to inform your policy in the Activation phase as well as the muster, movement and battle phases. In particular, if you know that you will shortly be attacking a given nation, there is less need to spend power to stop it activating. Don't overlook building elsewhere than Mordor. Angmar is well placed to take the Shire early, and so put a little more pressure on the Fellowship from the start of the game. An army in Dol Guldur puts Lorien, Mirkwood, the Dwarves, and even Rohan at risk.

Once the Ring Hunt maximum has been raised by Saruman's and Sauron's conquests (by perhaps four or more, if events go to plan), then seizing the ring should be only a matter of time. The challenge at the start of the game is to make your opponent be wary of ever moving the Fellowship quickly, without actually spending large amounts of power each turn in hunting the ring.

- **Preparation for play:**
  - assemble the blocks comprising the force pools
  - make sure you have markers for: Sauron's power (20), Saruman's power (10), the power secretly committed to the ring hunt (two multi-sided dice, one for Sauron and one for Saruman, with a screen to keep their placement secret), shaken regiments and other battle markers (10 or so should do), FP and Shadow specific counters, for recording the Activation of each nation on the main board, and change of control of any areas on the mapboard (10 or so for each side).
  - FP player shuffles the deck of cards, randomly selecting four to form their starting hand (see the document 'MEE cards' for a full list)
  - set up Individuals in their starting places (shown on mapboard). Start with Gandalf, Aragorn, Frodo/ Sam, Merry/ Pippin, Boromir, Legolas, Gimli, and the Ringwraiths.

## 2. Activation

***“Where is the horse and the rider? Where is the horn that was blowing?  
They have passed like rain on the mountain, like a wind in the meadow;  
The days have gone down in the West behind the hills into shadow.”***

- To enter any hostile, non-active, nation in this turn's coming movement phase, a **Breach** must first be made. Any effects on the activation status of the nation upon which this Breach is declared are made immediately. If a Breach would raise the nation to a level that has already been reached or surpassed, then there is no effect.
- Most Breaches are simply declared and are automatically successful. But prior to invading Lorien, Rivendell or the Shire (though not Mirkwood), the Shadow player must **breach magic protection**. Each of these three areas has separate protection, so each must be breached through an independent roll. Giving a one pip chance to successfully breach requires 1 power, and from there on each extra pip requires cumulative addition of power. Thus 1 power allows 6, 3 power 5-6, 6 power 4-6, 10 power 3-6, and 15 power 2-6. If Saruman breaches, the first regiment to enter must be Isengard/ Dunlending. If Sauron breaches, the first regiment to enter must be Mordor/ Haradrim/ Easterlings.
- If the Fellowship is in one of these three areas, then for the duration of their stay the magic protection of that area is ignored. Once the Fellowship leaves, no new enemy units may enter that area, though any who entered while the Fellowship were present may remain (though not re-enter).
- **Each nation has four stages of readiness:** at Peace, Neutral, Defence, and Active. All nations begin at Peace (with the exception of Mordor and Isengard, who are always already Active).
- For each non-Active nation make one roll. The Shadow nations are rolled in an order of the Shadow player's choosing, the FP nations in an order of the FP player's choosing. A successful roll moves the nation from Peace to Neutral, from Neutral to Defence, or Defence to Active. Alter the nation's on board record track as appropriate. Any forces and Individuals available as a result of increasing readiness are placed immediately, at a muster point (including fortresses).
  - When at **Peace and Neutral**, the nation has no forces available.
  - On **Defence**, the nation receives initial regiments and perhaps an Individual. Where there is more than one muster point, the placing player may choose where to place the regiments. (For example, the Elves may choose whether the starting position of their regiments is Lorien, Rivendell or Mirkwood). Certain nations may muster a limited amount of troops per turn.
  - When **Active**, the nation receives further regiments and perhaps an Individual. Certain nations receive a greater mustering power per turn.
- **Ents return to Peace**, removing all forces, once Isengard has fallen. They return to their previous state only if Mordor forces subsequently declare war on Fangorn. (Note also that Ents may only move between Fangorn and Isengard.)

### 3. The Fellowship of the Ring

***“I will take the Ring,” he said, “though I do not know the way.”***

- The **Fellowship** starts in the Shire and must move to the Cracks of Mount Doom and survive there to the end of the Ring Phase to win. There is a choice of routes (see Appendix C).
  - Frodo and Sam (represented by a single piece – hereafter F/S) always comprise the minimum Fellowship.
  - The Fellowship begins in the Shire with F/S and Merry/ Pippin (also a single piece – hereafter M/P).
  - Aragorn and Gandalf may join and leave at any point up to and including Rivendell.
  - All other Individuals may join at Rivendell only. No Individual may join the Fellowship beyond Rivendell, with the exception of Gollum who rolls to join in any Ring Phase where F/S are alone after Rivendell: on a 4-6, Gollum joins the Fellowship.
  - In order for Individuals to leave the Fellowship after Rivendell, it must be *scattered*. This is a once-only decision. If scattered, all Individuals must leave the Fellowship with the exception of F/S and – if the FP player wishes – M/P. M/P may not then later choose to leave. The Fellowship may not be scattered once Gollum has joined.
- **Order of Ring Hunt**
  - **The Shadow Player *secretly* decides the power to be allotted to the Ring Hunt.** (A numbered chit is placed upside-down, or the upside of a 12 (or so!) sided die is placed under a cup.) This Power comes *either* from Sauron *or* Saruman, and an indication of which should be placed next to the allocated power.
  - **Each permissible Power allocated raises the Ring Hunt roll by one pip.** See the flow chart on board for what is the ‘permissible Power’.
  - Roll for Gollum’s entry, if appropriate.
  - FP player decides which Individuals are to join the Fellowship (they must be in the same area), and whether it is to be scattered.
  - FP player moves the Fellowship. The maximum move is 3 areas – though moving further places the Fellowship in greater danger. The Fellowship may move in any direction, including backwards, so long as the Fellowship boxes are joined by an appropriate line.
  - Certain routes may require a successful roll before moving on. Each failed roll counts as moving one area (thus, the FP player may choose to make multiple rolls per turn, counting each as one move up to their maximum of three).
  - Certain areas require that the Fellowship halt on arrival and not move on in that turn.
  - FP player may play one (only) Avoidance card at this point.

- **Reveal Shadow Power** – some or all of which, it might turn out, exceeds the maximum allowed. Any such excess is discarded.
- **Roll for Ring Hunt.** Roll one normal die, add the permissible Power from either Sauron or Saruman, and then add any additional area bonus (this number represents the danger to the Fellowship from characters other than Sauron or Saruman).
- The FP player may play one (only) Resistance Card after the Hunt roll.
- Carry out the effects of the Hunt roll as listed on the map board.

#### 4. Movement

***"Now is the hour come, Riders of the Mark, sons of Eorl! Foes and fire are before you, and your homes far behind. Yet, though you fight upon an alien field, the glory that you reap there shall be your own for ever. Oaths ye have taken: now fulfil them all, to lord and land and league of friendship!"***

- **Move Shadow forces first, FP second.**
- Cavalry may move two areas, though note that entering Swamp or Forest costs Cavalry their movement allowance of two areas.
- Individuals may move three areas, with the exception of Gandalf and Aragorn, who move 4. The Ringwraiths move up to three areas, or four after they have been dispersed – they then obtain their winged steeds. (Note that if dispersed, the Ringwraiths do not re-emerge at Barad-Dur until the *end* of the *following* turn.)
- **Battle is joined** by moving one's regiments into the same area as enemy regiments. (Individuals alone are ignored, though are revealed.) Once battle has been joined, the defender may not subsequently move out of the area in the same movement phase.
- Other forces may **reinforce** the defender in battle by moving into the area in the same movement phase. Reinforcing regiments and Individuals are treated differently from the main force (see Battle Phase).
- Two attacking forces who attacked from different areas must be treated separately, with one force designated as the primary attackers, and the other as the reinforcements. (Note, though, that a cavalry force could begin in a different area and yet not be treated as reinforcements if they join with the main force in their first move, and attack with their second.)
- All reinforcements are treated the same; there is only one reinforcing army, even if the troops and individuals came from multiple areas.
- Moving into an unoccupied enemy or neutral area, or winning a battle in such an area, is sufficient to turn that area to friendly status, relevant for lines of retreat.
- **Movement restrictions:**
  - FP regiments may not enter the Shire prior to a Shadow attempt to breach its protection.

- Ents may only move in Fangorn and Isengard.
- Shadow (including Ringwraiths) may not enter any FP nation unless either magic protection has been breached, or the Fellowship is in that area.
- Sauron's forces (including Easterlings and Haradrim) may never end their turn in the same area as Saruman's (including Dunlending).
- Only Individuals in the Fellowship may enter the special Underground areas of Moria, Cirith Ungol, and Mount Doom.
- **Terrain:**
  - Mountains may not be crossed. The only exception is the Pass of Caradhras, which permits crossing so long as both the areas being entered and exited are friendly or neutral. Such crossing takes two movement points; thus a normal regiment with a move limit of one should pause 'on the pass' for one turn before moving on in the next. Any Individuals (including Ringwraiths) may cross Caradhras, with no requirement that entry and exit points be friendly or neutral. If the Fellowship has tried and failed to cross Caradhras that turn, then no movement into, out of, or across Caradhras is allowed in this phase.
  - An area containing fortifications must be cleared before the fortifications themselves are attacked. However, it costs no movement allowance to travel from surrounding area to fortifications and vice versa. An invading force may fight units in the surrounding area and also in the associated fortification in the same Turn.
  - The only exception to the above rule are the fortifications of the Black Gate, Minis Morgul, and Osgiliath. Each of these fortifications blocks movement into the associated area as indicated on the map board, and must be defeated *before* entering that area.

## 5. Battle: see Appendix B

***"All about the hills the hosts of Mordor raged. The Captains of the West were foundering in a gathering sea. The sun gleamed red, and under the wings of the Nazgûl the shadows of death fell dark upon the earth."***

- **Battle tactics.** Selecting the correct tactic comes from considering three elements: (i) the make up of your army, (ii) the likely make up of your opponents, and (iii) what your opponent is likely to choose. Of course, you are unlikely to be at all sure about the second and third, due to your opponent's secrecy and bluff.

## 6. Muster

*"This is the greatest jest in all the history of Gondor: that we should ride with seven thousands, scarce as many as the vanguard of its army in the days of its power, to assail the mountains and the impenetrable gate of the Black Land! So might a child threaten a mail-clad knight with a bow of string and green willow!"*

- FP may draw new cards. This is either based on inactive Individuals (see Overview), or on the presence of the Fellowship in a Sanctuary. If the Fellowship is in a Sanctuary, then up to 4 new cards may be drawn in a turn. The maximum size of hand is still 4 cards, so for each excess drawn, one must be immediately discarded to make room (it is permissible to draw and immediately discard a card).
- New regiments may be built, and existing regiments replenished, subject to available shadow points or FP muster points (as appropriate), geographical restrictions, and available units in the force pool.
- All new regiments must be built at some home muster point, and replenished in any home nation area. The only exception is **Sauron**, who builds and replenishes Mordor regiments in Barad Dur bar a maximum of one new regiment per turn in Dol Guldur and one new regiment per turn in Angmar. No replenishment is allowed in Dol Guldur or Angmar.
- **Free Peoples:** note the muster strength allowed by their status as Defence or Active (which, for some nations – Elves, Ents, Dunedain – is always zero). That muster strength is halved if any home fortress or muster point is enemy occupied. If all home fortresses and muster points are enemy occupied, then the muster strength is zero (though no existing troops are removed from the board in that circumstance).
- **Troop costs** shown on board. The initial regimental step costs double the subsequent steps.

## 7. Appendix: more than two players

- In a **four player game**
  - Player one is Rohan, Elves, and Ents. Player one controls the Fellowship as far as the Misty Mountains (including the special areas of Caradhras and Moria). Player one controls Gandalf.
  - Player two is Gondor, Dwarves, and Dunedain. Player two controls the Fellowship past the Misty Mountains. Player two controls Aragorn, and Merry/ Pippin.
  - Player three is Sauron.
  - Player four is Saruman.
- In a **three player game**, then SP split, and one player takes the FP forces.
- If the ring is destroyed in Mount Doom, then one of the two FP players win. Of these players, the winner is that who has lost the fewest points to the Shadow. Player one: loss of Rohan loses 2 points, Elves 1 point per area. Player two: Gondor 3 points, Dwarves 1 point, Shire 1 point. Player one wins if equal.
- If the ring is captured by the Shadow, then one of the two SP players win. Of these players, the winner is that who has defeated the most FP nation points: Saruman gains 2 for Rohan, 1 for Shire, 1 for Lorien, 1 for Rivendell; Sauron gains 3 for Gondor, 1 for Dwarves, 1 for Mirkwood. Saruman wins if equal.
- **Hunting the ring:** each SP player may allocate power to the ring hunt, though the players will most likely wish to secretly confer before allocating this power. If both choose to allocate power, then the player who allocates the most gets to roll; if equal, then Saruman rolls.