

# *AMT-ARDA*

*(A guide to Role-Playing the World of J.R.R. Tolkien in the Live Action  
Role-Playing Game Amtgard)*

*by*

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## *Introduction*

Writing a guide for adapting Tolkien's work for use in Amtgard is a daunting task to say the least. In case there is any question, all of the creative work here was done by a legendary author named J.R.R. Tolkien, and none of the creative credit should go to me. I am simply analyzing and giving my own impression of how his universe can be used in our more generic fantasy LARP like Amtgard.

The works of J.R.R. Tolkien have always been a mainstay of the fantasy genre, some going so far as to call Tolkien “the father of modern fantasy literature.” His works *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *The Silmarillion* have captivated audiences for nearly a century; and Tolkien’s work has seen a new resurgence of popularity due to the incredibly popular *Lord of the Rings* movie trilogy directed by Peter Jackson. The fantasy world where all of his major works are set, called Arda or Middle-Earth, is compelling enough and specific enough to spark the imaginations not only of a generation of fans, but many generations of fantasy writers. In fact, most contemporary fantasy writers wittingly or unwittingly pay homage to Tolkien’s work in their own writings.

If Tolkien’s world is so compelling, so specific and so universal, it must be applicable in some way to more general fantasy role-playing games like Amtgard. Since his work is already arguably the basis for so much of the fantasy genre, it does not seem unreasonable to use his work on a more specific level within our game. This book is intended to be resources for those Amtgard players (and possibly players of similar generic fantasy games) who wish to adhere more closely to the universe set down by J.R.R Tolkien. While this guide is by no means definitive or exhaustive, it hopefully will give some insight as to how Tolkien’s universe can be used within the context of our game, and hopefully iron out some of the difficulties that trying to meld the two of them presents.

### *Dos and Don'ts for Role-playing Tolkien in Amtgard*

Firstly, it’s important to realize that, by placing our fantasy game within Tolkien’s universe, we are *not* attempting to re-create or re-write any of his books. This is very important to remember, since not only does it pose copyright issues, but it is quite a lot less fun and more predictable to play out stories that have already been written rather than writing your own completely original tales. In fact, I will go so far as to say that it is inappropriate to take on or use any name or character that was written into Tolkien’s “contemporary history” of his world, that being of *The Hobbit* or *The Lord of the Rings*. As my interpretation, I also believe it is not appropriate to reference Tolkien’s “contemporary” locales within our universe: meaning that Pittsburgh is not and should not be referenced or used as “Rivendell”, and Nebraska is not the Amtgard location of “The Shire”. Sauron should not be around mucking with people, and no-one should have one of the 20 rings of power created by him, since all of these would be essentially either re-creating or revising Tolkien’s work, and that isn’t appropriate for our type of game.

However, I feel it is entirely appropriate to utilize the ancient history of Middle Earth as written Tolkien's work for our fantasy. The vast majority of this history is presented in *The Silmarillion*, which records the history of the world all the way from the creation of the world up until essentially the time period of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. While it is appropriate to use the history written there, it always should be regarded as *ancient history*. Never should it be played or re-played, and even though perhaps an elven character may remember exactly what happened or may say that they were there at that time, they should not re-play or re-create these already written scenarios.

The most difficult question that this brings up is where to cut off Tolkien's history? At what point does ancient history turn into contemporary history? I have a few ideas on this that I will present more specifically later.

### *The Alternate Continent Concept*

To me, the easiest way to make all of these problems jive together is what I call the "Alternate Continent Concept." What this says is that we should treat our current universe of Amtgard as a wholly separate continent from that where the events of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* occur. There is the same ancient history to our two continents; we are essentially on the same world which allows us to have the same races, the same monsters and the same cultures as in those two books, but without the logical hang-ups associated with using the same lands where the two "contemporary history" books occur. There should be no travel possible between the two continents, so it should be impossible for someone to travel to Middle Earth and say that they met any of the characters from the "contemporary history" books. The sole exception to this should be Valinor—the island of the gods. Since Valinor itself exists on essentially a separate plane of existence and the vast overwhelming majority of those elves who make the trip only go one-way, it can be used as an actual place—though by no means a casually visited locale. Even though I suggest that Valinor be used in our universe, let me reiterate that I feel there should be no overt or implied interaction between characters in Amtgard and characters made famous by *The Hobbit* or *The Lord of the Rings*. In other words, even if an elf decides to go to Valinor, it should be impossible that he/she actually meet Frodo, Bilbo, Galadriel, Elrond, or anyone else from the novels who traveled or lived there.

That being said, it does not mean that we are bereft of so much really good useable material. Following is my basic guide for what I feel is usable for us, as Amtgard players, from what Tolkien wrote.

## *Celestial Beings in Tolkien's World*

The celestial godlike beings of Tolkien's world are not too dissimilar from those in the Judeo-Muslim-Christian tradition, but with one major difference: people in the contemporary world of Tolkien's fiction can and do have interactions, sometimes frequent interactions with these beings of great power. While this is present in religious texts like the Torah, the Bible and the Qu'ran, it is not (at least most) people's experience today. That is one of the compelling things about playing in Tolkien's world, the possibility to talk with, interact with, and fight alongside (or against) the gods and/or angelic beings.

### *Eru, also known as Ilúvatar*

Eru is the absolute singular Supreme Being in Tolkien's world, acting much as a supreme god figure. He is the source of all existence, the creator of the lesser gods and the entity that conceived the world. However, Eru is on a plane of existence that is outside the world and can have no direct interactions with it, which is why he sent the Valar and the Maiar to watch over it. The only being in the world that ever interacts with (and takes direction from) Eru himself is Manwë, the head of the Valar.

### *The Ainur*

The Ainur are the servants of Eru who live with him in the hallowed Timeless Halls that rest beyond and pre-date the universe. The music that the Ainur created is what became Eru's plan for the world. After the world was created, Eru called many of his Ainur to the world to help shape and keep it safe- those Ainur were called the Valar or the Maiar.

### *The Valar*

The Valar are one step below Eru; they are his primary servants and they watch over and take care of the world. They are fifteen beings of immense and unfathomable power, able to alter the very shape of the world. However, the Valar are not necessarily aloof characters in Tolkien's works. Though they are supremely powerful, they take a very vested interest in the safety of the world and will try to ensure it's survival at any cost, even so much as personally going to war. The Valar have physical presences, but very very very rarely leave the halls of Valinor, only ever physically intervening in the affairs of the world three times, in order to prevent Morgoth from destroying the world. Each Vala (Vala is singular, Valar is plural or collective) has certain messengers that it can opt to send if they want their will to be communicated, and each Vala has a certain jurisdictions, relationships, and personalities, similar to the Greco-Roman pantheon of gods. Each Valar can be researched individually.

The Valar should never be used lightly in any role-play scenario, because doing so will diminish their mystique and power. For those writing storyline or quests, if ever possible, it is preferable to use a Maiar or messenger of the Valar.

### *The Maiar*

The Maiar are lesser celestial beings of Arda, roughly equivalent to Angels in contemporary religious mythology. They were originally spirits serving one of the Valar and took basic elemental properties. Some were spirits of fire, some of water, some of stone, some of music. It is never stated exactly how many Maiar spirits there were, so it can be assumed that there were quite a large number of them, possibly infinite. The Maiar are directly beholden to the Vala who they serve, but like any servant they are both fallible and free-willed; they can rebel against their Vala lord. Maiar, when sent to the world by the Valar, always manifest themselves in a form, though that form is never the same. If that form is killed, then the Maiar is sent back to the Vala that they are bound to serve and the Vala can opt to send the Maiar back if it is deemed that their work is not complete. Some take the shape of the races of Arda to more easily walk amongst them, while some are given horrible shapes like that of the Balrogs. In the end, the good Maiar are always sent to the races of Arda as guides and aids, not as Kings. Their function is to help the races of Arda achieve good ends, not to necessarily do it for them.

Even though Maiar are celestial beings, they are definitely prone to corruption. All of the demons created by the dark powers were once Maiar, and the wizard Saruman, though a Maia, was corrupted to the service of Sauron. In fact, Sauron himself was also a Maia. Maia also have a range of power; they always have some gifts granted to them by their patron Vala, like the magic granted to the Wizards, but not all of them are nearly as powerful as Sauron. So for those writing adventures, be wary about over-powering any Maia NPCs. Because the Maiar are always powerful and unpredictably so, it is not appropriate for any player to use a Maia as a character except as a short term NPC as requested by the person running the adventure.

Also, even though in *The Silmarillion* there is one Maia who takes elven shape and marries a king of the Elves, this was written as a singular event. It was not meant to imply that there were other Maia elsewhere doing the same thing, or that it was a common occurrence; so it is inappropriate to have as part of a character history to be either married to or related to a Maia, as that would belittle the extraordinary nature of the story from *The Silmarillion*.

### *The Dark Powers*

The evil in the world of Arda is entirely the work of Melkor (also known by the elves as Morgoth and by many other names in other cultures as well). Melkor was one of the most powerful, if not the most powerful Vala, and brother of the lord of the Valar, Manwë. Melkor was originally one of the servants of Eru, however he disagreed with how the world should be and rebelled against Eru with many of the Maia, sowing discord into the music of the creation of the world. After the world was created, he set about the task of destroying everything that Eru and the Vala had created. His powers became

twisted so that he only had the power to corrupt, twist, and taint the creations of the Valar and he was unable to truly create anything of his own. Melkor's greatest goal was to destroy the world, and but for the Valar he would have succeeded. Melkor did, however, achieve in creating two apocalypses which shook the world to its very core. Even though Melkor is banished from the world of Arda as part of The Silmarillion, he has dispersed his essence throughout the world, which is why evil of any kind persists in the world. Any who do evil are either intentionally or unintentionally doing the will and the work of Melkor. Any time "dark powers" are referenced in this guide, I am referring to Melkor and/or his servants. Melkor and his servants thrive only in darkness, shadow, decay, and destruction.



## *Basic Geography of Arda*

### *Eä*

Eä is the name that Tolkien gives our universe and everything in it. There are the Timeless Halls outside of Eä, which is a place beyond understanding, and is the realm of the one god Eru Ilúvatar and all the Ainur. Eru created this before he created anything else. Then came Eä, the Universe, and within Eä was Arda.

### *Arda*

Arda is Tolkien's name for the Earth. No, not a different planet or made up world, his fantasy is set on the same exact Earth that we all are familiar with, but in a time far predating any histories we have recorded. He, in essence, has created a whole new mythology for us, complete with a creation story and leading up mostly to our present history.

### *Aman—Also known as Valinor, the Undying Lands*

Located far west of middle earth, over the sea, Aman is the name for the whole of the island continent which encompasses not only the realm of the Valar, Valinor, but also the Elven realms and cities therein. Valinor, the realm of the Valar, makes up the vast majority of the island continent, and so often the whole island is simply called Valinor. It is a place of unending beauty and peace, being the homes of the Valar. Aman is also sometimes called the Undying Lands, not because any who go there are kept from death, but because the vast overwhelming majority of its inhabitants (Elves and Valar) are immortal. Notably, on the east coast of Aman lie the Halls of Mandos, where elven spirits go if their bodies die until they are summoned at the end of the world (with a very few exceptions).

### *Middle-Earth*

Middle-Earth is the term that Tolkien used both for the continent where the main action of his novels takes place and also, at times, for the world itself. The word Middle-Earth came from the Anglo-Saxon word *Middenyearth*, which was the world where humanity lived as opposed to the land of the Gods or the Elves.

### *Beleriand*

Beleriand is the small continent to the north-west of the continent of Middle Earth where much of the action of *The Silmarillion* takes place. The only land connection to Aman also is in the very north west of Beleriand, the Helcaraxë. The Helcaraxë are a huge system of floating arctic glaciers stretching all the way from the Arctic Beleriand to the northern tip of Aman. The Helcaraxë are a complete and utter wasteland, and generally deemed completely impassible. The whole of the continent of Beleriand and the Helcaraxë were sunk in the War of Wrath at the end of the First Age of the Sun.

## *Other Continents*

There are other continents that Tolkien refers to but does not talk explicitly about, and none of them are the setting for any of his works. There is far Harad to the south-east (most likely the home of the Haradrim, from *The Lord of the Rings*), there are the Sun Lands over the East Sea to the Far East, and there is the Dark Lands far to the south-west across the Straights of the World. To me this says that Tolkien was more than creating a simple fantasy setting, he was creating a whole new mythology of the world. This whole, essentially unused world gives us permission to create new stories of our own in those settings, so long as we do not use or impinge upon the stories he created.

## *History of Arda (a brief Timeline)*

WARNING: This is very complex. I have tried to boil it down as best I could, but be forewarned that this is quite a lot of information. I have put character names in *italics* to ease comprehension.

### *Before the creation of Eä*

- *Eru Ilúvatar* creates the Timeless Halls and the race of the Ainur.
- The Ainur create the the “Music of the Ainur”, which is the perfect vision of the universe. The greatest of the Ainur, *Melkor*, rebels against Eru and tries to corrupt the music.
- *Eru* creates Eä (the universe) and Arda (the world) with the Secret Fire at its center according to the (now flawed) Music of the Ainur.

### *Creation of Arda*

- *Eru* sends many Ainur to the world to prepare Arda for the coming of *Eru's* children, the Elves and Humans. Those Ainur become the Valar and the Maiar. *Melkor* infiltrates the world as well.
- The First War: *Melkor* assaults the Valar and the Maiar; Arda's symmetry is marred.
- *Melkor* runs from the Vala *Tulkas* and hides in the Outer Void, beyond Eä.

### *c. 5000: Years of the Lamps*

- lasted five Ages.
- The Valar create the first great sources of light, the Two Lamps.
- Order is brought to the world by the Valar.
- The Spring of Arda: first forests grow and animals are awakened.
- *Melkor* returns secretly and builds his fortresses, Utumno and Angband
- Rebel Maiar enter Arda at the summons of *Melkor*. They become demons, dragons, and other foul creatures.
- Destruction of the Two Lamps by *Melkor* and his followers; the spring of Arda ends and the world is covered in darkness.

### *c. 10000: Years of the Trees*

- lasted six Ages
- The Valar retire to Aman in the west of the world while *Melkor* rules Middle-earth; Valinor is founded on Aman.

- The Valar create two great light-filled trees to provide light for their side of the world.
- *Manwë*, the lord of the Valar, creates the Eagles. The Vala *Aulë* the Smith creates the Dwarves but is not allowed to awaken them yet, because the Elves are destined to be awoken first.
- *Yavanna* creates the Ents in response to *Aulë*'s creation.
- c. 20000: The Vala *Varda* begins gathering light from the Trees of the Valar to create the Great Stars.
- *Melían* the Maia and others of her kind depart from Valinor to live on Middle-earth.
- *Varda* creates the Great Stars, setting the constellation “the Sickle of the Valar” in the north of the sky as a challenge to *Melkor*.
- *Eru* awakens the Elves as the Great Stars are created.

### *Years of the Stars (in Middle Earth)*

- The fathers of the Dwarves and the first Ents are awakened by *Eru*, the Elves discover the Ents and begin teaching them language.
- *Melkor* discovers and begins capturing Elves in secret.
- *Melkor* begins breeding the Orcs from captured Elves and Trolls.
- Khazad-dûm, later known as Moria, founded by *Durin the Deathless*, father of the Dwarves.
- *Oromë* the Hunter is the first of the Valar to learn of the Elves' awakening, he spends time with them, befriends them and then returns to Valinor to notify the other Valar of their awakening.
- The Valar fear for the Elves' safety so they make war on *Melkor*. *Melkor* is captured, chained, and is sentenced to serve a term in the Halls of the Vala *Mandos* for three Ages. One of *Melkor*'s strongholds, Utumno, is destroyed by the Valar.
- *Sauron*, *Melkor*'s chief lieutenant, escapes capture and remains in Angband, breeding Orcs and Trolls for *Melkor*.
- *Oromë* brings three ambassadors of the Elves to Aman: *Ingwë* of the Vanyar, *Finwë* of the Noldor and *Elwë* of the Teleri.
- The Great Journey of the Elves: The Elves are summoned to Aman (not all answer the summons—see the Silvan elves).
- A group of Teleri under *Lenwë* abandons the march at the river Anduin and become the Nandor.
- The Vanyar and Noldor arrive in Beleriand and wait to be taken across the sea.

- *Elwë*, High King of the Teleri, meets Melian in the forests of Middle Earth and is entranced by her. He lives for years entranced under the magic of her beauty. The Teleri are unwilling to continue the journey without their king.
- *Ulmo*, the Vala of the sea, is unwilling to wait until *Elwë* is found, and the Vanyar and Noldor are ferried across on the island of Tol Eressëa while the Teleri stay behind looking for their king. The Vanyar and Noldor found the city of Tirion near Valinor.
- *Ulmo* finally returns for the Teleri, but many stay behind because *Elwë* has not yet been found; those elves who have stayed behind become the Sindar.
- The majority of the Teleri abandon the Sindar and are ferried across the sea on the island of Tol Eressëa, which is anchored in the bay of Eldamar near, but not on, Valinor.
- In Valinor, *Finwë*, King of the Noldor marries *Míriel*. Later she gives birth to Fëanor and dies.
- *Elwë* returns to his people with *Melían* and reunites with the Sindar. He becomes known as *Thingol* and founds the great Sindarin kingdom of Doriath on Middle Earth.
- The Teleri of Tol Eressëa learn the art of shipbuilding, and travel across the bay of Eldamar to Aman, where they found the city of Alqualondë.
- The Vanyar abandon Tirion and settle in Aman proper at the feet of the Valar. The Noldor remain in Tirion under the Kingship of *Finwë*.
- *Fëanor* crafts the Silmarils, the greatest creation of the Noldor. The three Silmarils are elven jewels with the light of the two trees at their heart.
- Dwarves enter the Sindarin kingdom of Doriath and establish trade with the Sindar elves.
- *Melkor* is freed from his sentence and secretly begins corrupting some of the Noldor in Tirion.
- *Fëanor*, deceived by *Melkor*, draws arms against his brothers and is banished from Tirion by the Valar: his father *Finwë* and many of the Noldor follow him into exile.
- *Melkor*'s treachery is discovered and he hides from capture and joins forces with *Ungoliant*, the great queen spider.
- *Manwë* tries to heal the feud of the Noldor, and summons *Fëanor* to a festival in Valimar. During the festival, *Melkor* and *Ungoliant* destroy the Two Trees, kill King *Finwë* and steal the Silmarils. *Fëanor* swears vengeance against *Melkor* and names him "*Morgoth*".
- *Fëanor* and his sons swear an oath to regain the Silmarils or die trying, and the majority of the Noldor depart from Valinor.
- The Noldor murder many Teleri and seize their ships in the "First Kinslaying."
- "Prophecy of *Mandos*", saying that the oath of *Fëanor* will lead to nothing but the doom of the Noldor: the Noldor are banished from Valinor.

- *Morgoth* returns to Angband and tries to conquer Beleriand: the First Battle of Beleriand is fought.
- The Noldor arrive at the Helcaraxë. *Fëanor* and sons betray many of the Noldor and sail across the sea without them, then burn the stolen ships of the Telerin. Many Noldor cross the Helcaraxë by foot.
- *Fëanor* and sons return to Middle Earth. *Morgoth's* army attacks *Fëanor*.
- “Dagor-nuin-Giliath”, the Battle under Stars, is fought. *Fëanor* is slain by Balrogs.
- The Valar begin devising the Moon and Sun.
- The remainder of the Noldor arrives in Middle-earth after traveling the treacherous road through the Helcaraxë.
- The Moon arises.

### *c. 30000: Years of the Sun*

(From this time on years are of normal length, unlike previously in the years without the sun. Events from Valinor during the Years of the Sun cannot be accurately dated.)

#### *First Age of the Sun, 583 years long*

- Year 1 - The Sun first sets sail. Humans awaken in the far east of Middle Earth.
- 50 - *Turgon* and *Finrod*, two of the betrayed Noldor, are instructed by the sea Vala *Ulmo* to establish secret refuges for the elves.
- 75 - The Noldor, now ruled by *Fingolfin*, start the Siege of Angband.
- c. 100 - Foundation of Nargothrond, one of the hidden Kingdoms of the elves, by *Finrod*.
- 126 - Completion of the secret underground elven fortress of Gondolin by *Turgon*. *Turgon's* people begin the migration there in secret.
- 265 – *Glaurung*, father of the Dragons, ravages Beleriand, but is driven back to Angband.
- 305 - *Bëor* leads The First House of the “Edain”, Humans who become friendly with the Elves, into Beleriand: Humans are discovered by *Finrod*.
- 443 - Birth of *Beren*.
- 455 - *Morgoth* breaks the Siege of Angband in the Battle of Sudden Flame; *Morgoth* personally kills King *Fingolfin* in duel.
- 457 - Capture of *Finrod's* fortress of Minas Tirith by the forces of *Sauron*. Minas Tirith is renamed Tol-in-Gaurhoth, Isle of the Werewolves
- 461 – *Barahir* (son of *Bëor* and father of *Beren*) and his companions are killed by the forces of *Morgoth*. *Beren* survives but must go into hiding to survive.

- 462 - *Beren* travels to the Sindarin Kingdom of Doriath
- 463 - *Beren* first comes upon *Lúthien*, the Sindarin Princess, and they instantly fall in love. *Beren* is brought before *Thingol*, her father, who says the only way he will give up his daughter is in exchange for a prize of equal value, one of the Silmarils. This becomes the founding of the "Quest of the Silmaril." *Thingol's* fate is sealed as part of the curse of the Noldor and the "Prophecy of *Mandos*."
- 468 - *Finrod* and *Beren* are imprisoned in Tol-in-Gaurhoth. *Finrod* is slain by a werewolf, but *Beren* is rescued by *Lúthien*.
- 469 - *Beren* and *Lúthien* infiltrate Angband, subdue *Morgoth* pry one of the Silmarils from *Morgoth's* iron crown. When they try to escape, however, *Beren* is killed. Because of this *Lúthien* abandons her life. *Lúthien* pleads with the Vala *Mandos*, and *Beren* and *Lúthien* are restored to life as mortals. *Beren* and *Lúthien* take up bodies again far away from their previous home in Doriath.
- 471 – The Noldor are inspired by the Quest of the Silmaril, and decide that Angband can be assaulted. This causes “Nirnaeth Arnoediad”, The Battle of Unnumbered Tears; *Fingon* is slain, *Turgon* escapes.
- 495 – Nargothrond sacked by *Morgoth*.
- 499 - *Thingol* is murdered by Dwarves in an attempt to capture the Silmaril, and the Kingdom of Doriath is sacked in the process. *Beren*, Nandor elves and Ents hunt down and destroy the Dwarves responsible. *Melian* returns to Valinor in grief. *Dior*, *Lúthien* and *Beren's* son, refounds Doriath
- 500 - Birth of *Elwing*, daughter of *Dior*, granddaughter of *Lúthien* and *Beren*.
- c. 502 - Final deaths of *Beren* and *Lúthien*. *Dior*, son of *Lúthien* and *Beren* becomes the owner of the Silmaril.
- 505 - Doriath is destroyed by the Sons of *Fëanor* in an attempt to capture *Dior's* Silmaril. This becomes known as the "Second Kinslaying"; *Dior* and many of the Sindar elves are slain. *Elwing* escapes to the Mouths of Sirion with the Silmaril and some of the remaining Sindar.
- 511 - The last remaining hidden kingdom of the elves, Gondolin, is betrayed and sacked by *Morgoth*.
- 525 - *Elrond* and *Elros* are born to *Eärendil* and *Elwing*.
- c. 580 - "The Third Kinslaying": while *Eärendil* is at sea, the remaining Sons of *Fëanor* attack the elves at Mouths of Sirion and try to claim the Silmaril. *Elwing* casts herself in the sea but survives and is brought to *Eärendil* by *Ulmo*. *Eärendil* sails to Valinor to beg for rescue and forgiveness for the elves.
- 583 - "The War of Wrath"; The Valar leave Aman to assault *Morgoth*. *Morgoth* is cast into the Void, and most of the continent of Beleriand is sunk in the ensuing apocalypse; the Sea of Helcar is drained through the Great Gulf, the plateaus of Mordor, Khand, and Rhûn rise from the former seabed.

- 583 - The remaining two Silmarils are stolen by *Maedhros* and *Maglor* but are lost in the earth and in the sea.

*Second Age of the Sun*

I feel that the beginning of the second age of the sun is an appropriate setting for Amtgard.



## *Tolkien's Races that are appropriate for Characters in Amtgard*

### *Elves (also known as the Eldar):*

Tolkien wrote more about Elves than perhaps any other race, and they are the primary subject of his most detailed book, *The Silmarillion*. Elves are the oldest of the races in the world, and are irrevocably tied to its fate. Elves are, at first glance, very similar to humans: they are generally around as tall as humans, with similar build, but that is where the comparison ends. Elves are fairer than humans, without facial hair and with striking features. They are also said to be stronger of spirit and of limb than humans, and they very literally have starlight in their eyes, and the glow of the moon shines all around them. Though it is still debated by some, it is generally accepted that elves have gently pointed ears (anime fans: gently pointed does not mean big bunny-flopping pointy elf-lobes). Aside from the physical differences, the differences between humans and elves really distinguish themselves: Elves, though they do grow older, are essentially immortal. In fact, their spirits are so tied to the world that an elf's spirit will not perish until the end of the earth. Though it is impossible to destroy an elf's spirit, their bodies are still somewhat vulnerable to being destroyed. There are only two ways to destroy (kill) an elf's body: they can be killed by means of warfare, or the elf can choose to die if they are under extreme emotional or physical duress. However, even if they do die, their spirit goes to Valinor to wait at the halls of the Vala of the afterlife, Mandos, until the end of the world. They are immune to disease, have superior senses and a seemingly natural tie to the magic of the world around them.

Elves, though technically mortal, have a definite connection to the Valar and to Eru. They were the first mortal race to be awakened in the world and are the first mortal children of Eru. So even though they do not possess the god-like powers of the Valar, their spirit is more similar to the Valar than to humans or dwarves. There is a nobility that is pervasive through the elven spirit, but it generally does not manifest itself as bluntly as the "arrogant prick" elven character many are accustomed to. The nobility is generally manifested in an implicit desire to affect the world in a positive way, and watch over the other races (particularly the humans) in a sort of older sibling sort of capacity. Though they may resent it, they understand that humans generally need looking after, and though they should be allowed to make their mistakes, elves don't generally want to see humanity destroyed or fall wholeheartedly to the darkness. In addition, though they definitely have their own wills, Elves as a whole will try to spread the light of the Valar and Eru; they are some of the strongest agents against the forces of darkness in the world.

### *Cultures of Elves*

Many people think of the different cultures of elves as completely disparate people, with different looks, features, abilities, whatnot; a conception that was only worsened by Dungeons and Dragons estimation of elves. In reality, Tolkien's elves are not that disparate; they are only different culturally, rather than racially. The difference between the Noldor and the Sindar are not equal to the difference between someone who

is Japanese and someone who is South African, it is more akin to the difference between someone who is French and someone who is German. The difference is not really physical, but linguistic and subtly cultural. Consequently, it is a mistake to claim that you are "half-Noldo half-Sinda" in the way that someone today might say they are "half-Asian half-White"-- it depends upon which culture you were born into, grew up with, and claim as your identity. In that way, "Noldorin" is more similar to "British" than "Caucasian".

The primary cultures of the elves are as follows:

***Noldor***-- Also known as High Elves. These elves went to Valinor and learned at the feet of the gods there, which means they are typically nobler, wiser and more powerful of spirit than other elves-- however this nobility is at times a downfall, as it can cause them to be proud and overconfident, so much so that the greatest folly of the Noldor was to scoff at the wisdom and counsel of the gods and go on a massive quest which cost them and all the other elves dearly, and has distanced themselves from many of the other elven cultures. The Noldor are superior craftsmen, and pride themselves more than anything on the works of their hands. The Noldor speak Quenya, the ancient form of Elvish.

***Telerin***-- Also known as Sea Elves. These are elves that attempted the road to Valinor, but were delayed because they lost their King. Eventually the Teleri went on without their King, but fell so much in love with the sea that they never lived on the island of the gods, preferring to live on a separate island off its shores. The prized possessions of the Teleri are their ships which are shaped like huge swans and are the most seaworthy ships in the world, being the only ships that are able to make the voyage across the sea to Valinor. Teleri love sailing, and thus their cities are often on the coastline or islands. Some Teleri still retain a grudge against the Noldor for long ago stealing and burning many of their ships and murdering a large contingent of their people in cold blood, in what became known as "The First Kinslaying". The Teleri speak Telerin, a dialect of Quenya.

***Sindar***-- Also known as Grey Elves. The Sindar are of Telerin origin, being elves that attempted the road to Valinor, but instead of going on without their King when he was lost, the Sindar waited for him. When they found him and his Maiar bride, they decided to abandon the road to Valinor and live in a new kingdom founded by their king and new queen. Though the Sindar never saw Valinor, they are usually counted amongst the elves who did because they lived for so long and gained so much wisdom from their Maiar queen Melian. The Sindar became an incredibly insular people, drawing upon the power of Melian to shield them from the outside world, which grew incredibly hostile to the elves. The Sindar were eventually betrayed both by the Noldor and the Dwarves to the ruin of their great kingdom. Even though that wound is mostly healed, it is still at times a source of cultural distrust. The Sindar speak a distinct derivation of elvish called Sindarin. After the betrayal by the Noldor, it was decreed by the first king of the Sindar that no other Sindar elf would ever speak Quenya again.

*Nandor*-- Also know as Green Elves. The Nandor are Teleri that undertook the great journey to Valinor but got lost and eventually abandoned the quest. Some of them eventually settled within the Sindar kingdom, while others went on to form their own kingdoms. Because they developed great forestry skills during their years cut off from the other elves, and since they were often required to live secretly, donning green camouflage in the forests to avoid being captured or killed, they also became known as the Green elves. They are the most insular and suspicious of elves, having become accustomed to a life of hiding themselves from the world around themselves. The Nandor generally speak Sindarin.

*Silvan*-- Also known as Wood Elves, Avari elves, and Dark elves. Silvan elves are elves that either undertook the great journey and abandoned it or those who never undertook the journey in the first place. Some of them banded together to form small kingdoms and the Silvan dialect of elvish was born. However, through many ages of strife and hardship in the world, most of these elves were killed, forgotten, or integrated themselves with the Nandor or the Sindar, and the Silvan dialect of elvish is considered extinct. **NOTE: Even though Tolkien occasionally calls Silvan elves "Dark Elves," they are *not* to be confused with Drow. Silvan elves and Drow are completely different. For more information, see the section on "Differences between Tolkien's World and Role-Playing in Amtgard as it is Today."**

*Vanyar*—Also known as Light Elves. The Vanyar are the elves who undertook the great journey to Valinor and succeeded. They eventually founded cities in the foothills of the mountains of Valinor and they lived there in relative peace forever. Because it is written that none of the Vanyar ever left Valinor, it is not appropriate for Vanya to be played as characters.

#### *Suggested Classes for Elves:*

**Warrior:** Elves are some of the best warriors in the known world, but rarely engage in combat unless they absolutely have to. Knowing that one of the only ways they can die is by warfare, they are usually reluctant to fight; however, when they are pressed they are an incredibly well trained and organized fighting force.

**Healer:** Elven magic is mentioned as being specially attuned to the art and magic of healing and mending, so playing a healer is especially appropriate. However, the elves do not have a “priest” caste. Their idea of religion is very different from what we know of as contemporary religion because they have had intimate and personal contact with the Valar on many occasions.

**Paladin:** Elves, because of their heritage and spirit, are natural defenders of the light. Also, because of the fact that they are able to use healing and protective magic with some skill, this hybrid healer/warrior class is especially appropriate for elven characters.

**Archer:** Elves are the unequalled masters of the longbow, and any contingent of elven warriors is likely to include a good number of longbowmen.

**Scout:** Nandor and Silvan elves, having gained such a level of cultural symbiosis with the woods as they have, are natural scouts.

**Bard:** Elvish magic is most typically realized through song-- ancient elven heroes and heroines have sung songs of power which achieved such effects as breaking open prisons, causing enemies to fall asleep, and causing light to shine to name just a few. It should be particularly noted, however, that these songs are not intended for performance in front on an audience, but are more spontaneous outpourings of extreme emotion that is so powerful it resonates with and alters the very fabric of the world.

## *Dwarves:*

Dwarves are one of the older races of the world, having been awakened shortly after the first awakening of the elves. The Dwarves were made to endure the hardships of a world that was still under the dominion of the great evil, and so were made short and stocky, strong-limbed and strong-willed. They were created by the Smith Vala, Alue, and so they take great pride in the works of their hands. They sport long beards that seem to be a strong part of their cultural and physical identity. It has been said by Tolkien that it is often difficult for non-dwarves to tell a male and female dwarf apart, leading most to believe that female dwarves are also bearded.

By nature, the typical Dwarf is stubborn, secretive, proud and stern, though they do make loyal and good friends. They do not suffer grievance or insult lightly, and their enmity is long-lasting. They are gifted in the ways of smithing and stone crafting and live in deep halls underground. Though Dwarves are long-lived (around 250 years or so), they are mortals, and, like Humans it is uncertain what happens to a Dwarven spirit after they die. For some reason, they are most commonly portrayed as having gruff Scottish accents. Dwarves are incredibly secretive about their culture, and in mixed company Dwarves are known by their common or Elvish names, never their true Dwarven names. It is extremely unlikely that any non-dwarf would know the Dwarven language as it is never shared with outsiders.

Unlike what many people have gleaned from "Dungeons and Dragons", Tolkien's dwarves are not necessarily rowdy drunken revelers, especially amidst the other races. Though occasionally they can proverbially "let their beards down" and have a good time, they are typically a very serious, proud, stern and honorable race.

### *Suggested Classes for Dwarves:*

***Fighter:*** This is the quintessential class for a Dwarf-- Dwarves are tough as stone and willing to wade into battle wielding their legendary Dwarven axes covered in tough Dwarven steel armor, avenging their ancestors and grinding their foes beneath their mailed heel.

***Barbarian:*** The Barbarian class is appropriate for Dwarves-- however Dwarves by no means fit the "uncivilized savage" idea of barbarians. Dwarves are a noble, proud and cultured race who fight with the ferocity of fire and the tenacity of steel. They will often be seen in the thick of a melee, but they do not give themselves over so much to battle-rage that they lose all reason. They can always be seen sporting their axes and large quantities of finely crafted armor.

***Archer:*** Dwarves are skilled with crossbows that they use to great effect.

### *Humans (also known as Men):*

In Tolkien's world, Humans are very much like we know of them in the real world. They are known as the Second-born children of Eru, because unlike Dwarves and Ents they were created by Eru himself as opposed to one of the other Valar. However, humans do not have the same relationship with the Valar that the Elves have and (as far as I am aware), Tolkien never mentions a human ever seeing or meeting with one of the Valar (except after their death). This leaves Humans in the special position of being unanswerable to the gods, and able to choose whether they wish to support or defy the gods' presence in the world.

Unlike Elves, Humans are masters of their own fate, not tied in any way to the world. In fact, it is said by Tolkien that the greatest gift that the gods gave to Humans was death. It is a great mystery to even the Valar what happens to the Human spirit after a human dies; the only person who seems to know the answer is Eru himself, and he isn't telling.

Humans are generally considered by the other races to be weak-willed, susceptible to corruptions and physically frail-- accusations that, by comparison to the other races, are not entirely without merit. Humans have all ranges of cultures and dispositions, from power-hungry warlords to druidic shamans to noble knights to stealthy rangers. Humans don't generally have the natural talent for magic that Elves do, although there are a very few exceptions.

#### *Suggested Classes for Humans:*

In my estimation, every class save *Wizard* is appropriate for Humans. They have an aptitude for most anything that they put their minds to, and though they never achieve the heights of greatness that the older races normally do, they are not without their gifts.

*Why not Wizard?* The Wizard class is not completely prohibited, but requires serious thought. That is explained more fully later in "Differences between Tolkien and Amtgard as it is played today."

## *Hobbits (also known as Halflings):*

Hobbits are the most well known of Tolkien's races, being the primary topic of his two best known books. Hobbits are an ancient offshoot of Humans (and so it is possible to say they are not a distinct race after all). They look very much like humans except for their short stature-- none of them ever reach more than four feet in height-- and their large hairy feet which they always leave unshod. When traveling amidst those unused to hobbits, they are sometimes mistaken for human children. Hobbits are simple folk, distinctly preferring a life of simple luxury and honest work over adventure and excitement. They have an incredible aptitude for gluttony (they have an incredible array of daily meals) and are sometimes accused of laziness. They are farmers and builders, herders and gardeners, barmaids and drinkers, fathers and mothers, but not powerful sorcerers or cunning assassins. The only real distinction that hobbits have in the way of adventuring is that, owing to their size and nimbleness, they have a great aptitude for hiding, sneaking and stealth.

One subtle distinction that hobbits possess, possibly due to their general lack of ambition, is that they are the least likely of the races to be corrupted by evil. However this is not widely known, even by hobbits, and so most other races tend to treat hobbits with more than a little bit of patronization.

### *Suggested Classes for Hobbits:*

**Fighter:** A Hobbit, if trained, makes a decent fighter-- although this is not usually their desire or their nature and only done out of extreme necessity.

**Scout:** This is possibly the class most well suited to Hobbits; though Hobbits do not usually travel beyond their home lands unless under extreme duress, while they are in their homelands they are very comfortable with the world, and can outrun and outmaneuver many that would underestimate them. If pressed, hobbits have a natural aptitude for throwing rocks as missiles-- so it is suggested that a GM allow a hobbit scout to use throwing rocks instead of bows or crossbows.

**Peasant:** Even though this is less a class and more a punishment in Amtgard, I couldn't help but mention that Hobbits, more than anything else, are peasants; they are more likely to want to enjoy a good pipe rather than rule the world, fling powerful magic or kill people for money.

## *Magic in Arda*

Even though magic is almost always an integral part of any fantasy universe, magic seems to hold a special place in Tolkien's world. Magic is at the time pervasive and non-existent, it is both there in its most overt forms and extremely rare, and, as is probably appropriate, it has a special place in Tolkien's creation.

The most overt user of magic in any fantasy universe is the Wizard, and Tolkien's is no exception. Gandalf is the prototypical wizard, and arguably the character that has most shaped our contemporary conception of what a wizard *is*-- the image of the haggard old man with the long beard, staff, and pointy hat has become the standard image of a Wizard, not just for fantasy geeks but for laymen as well. Gandalf is also incredibly wise and able, on a few choice occasions, to hurl powerful magic at his opponents to devastating effect. However, it needs to be noted that Gandalf is one of only *six* Wizards that ever existed in Middle Earth! Those Wizards are all Maia, essentially demi-gods, and so overall, magic on a Wizardly scale would be *extremely* rare to the average denizen of middle earth. Magic on that scale is seen on an extremely rare occasion and only wielded by the extremely powerful. That is very different from the way that magic is used in Amtgard-- Wizards are incredibly commonplace, so commonplace that it is even *expected* to see a huge fireball appearing out of nowhere in someone's hand, ripping across a field, and torching a hapless passerby. There is no mystique about magic in Amtgard because of its extreme commonality-- in essence; there is no 'magic' in Amtgard magic.

That is why I have not suggested the Wizard class for any of Tolkien's races, since true wizards, in Tolkien's universe, are so exceptionally rare.

However, that doesn't mean that Tolkien's world is without magic entirely. Magic permeates the world in Tolkien's universe but it is only with exceeding rarity that the races of the world are able to actually tap into it and manipulate it. Elves seem to have the best handle on magic, but they only use it with extreme rarity and mystery. When Galadriel uses the power granted to her by one of the rings of power, all we know is that it helps protect Lothlorien; it is never explained how. In *The Hobbit*, Beorn is able to transform himself into a bear seemingly at will, however how he does this is always shrouded in mystery.

Another interesting difference between magic in Amtgard and magic in Tolkien's world is that most magic is not learned. Magic is a natural product of power inherent in the individual. It is not quantifiable in power points or levels. Gandalf does not seem to be able to cast spells because he is a certain level or has a certain power stored up, he seems to be able to do his magic because he is one of the Maia, and he has had that power granted to him by the Valar. Elves seem to be able to use magic, especially in healing, protection and creation, not because of study but because they simply are Elves.



## *What Tolkien's Magic-Users Can Do*

### *Alter Minds*

One of the ways that magic seems most powerful in Tolkien's world is as a way to alter individuals—not physically, but mentally. Twisting or breaking the mind of a powerful leader is used twice as a tactic of the dark powers in *The Lord of the Rings*, by Saruman to incapacitate and control King Théoden, and also by Sauron to drive Lord Denethor of Gondor into madness. However, this is not the only kind of mind-magic that is used in Tolkien's world.

Mind-magic is not only the tool of the dark powers, it is used by good as well. Powerful elves like Galadriel have the ability to speak directly into the mind of those they wish, and also to read their thoughts. Sauron is said to be reaching out to read the thoughts of his foes. Conversely, also, Galadriel seems to be able to protect her mind and her realm against the seeking thoughts of Sauron, so there must be a type of magic to bolster defense against mind-magic. Luthien, an elven heroine of *The Silmarillion*, uses sung spells of charming and sleeping to help achieve the Quest of the Silmaril, spells that are so powerful that they are able to subdue Morgoth himself.

Mind-magic is also used to alter the one's perceptions; Saruman is reported to be a master of this sort of magic. He is not only able to influence how others see him, but what they think or feel about him, as Gandalf notes to Gimli in *The Two Towers*, "Saruman could look like me in your eyes, if it suited his purpose with you. And are you yet wise enough to detect all his counterfeits?"<sup>1</sup> It seems that he accomplishes this magic through the use of his voice, which is his most powerful tool. In fact, the voice is mentioned as an important, perhaps essential component to Saruman's magic of this kind. While hypnotic voices are not necessarily magical, it is definitely implied that magic at least bolsters, if not is the foundation, of Saruman's trickery.

Tolkien's mind-control magic is at its most powerful when it is used to corrupt an individual's spirit. Evil magic, on a number of occasions during *The Lord of the Rings* is used to try to draw Frodo further and further into the side of evil, breaking down his will and resistance to the power of the Ring. This is not the only time that magic has been used to corrupt—Gollum, after possessing the ring for half a millennia or so, has become an utterly corrupted, broken and twisted creature with no thoughts of his own except for his lust for the Ring. The Ringwraiths were also at one time kings of men who were corrupted by Sauron and became tools of evil, living a life of undead service to their lord. Corruption is very powerful, and Tolkien hints that once someone is corrupted, once they cross over the line into evil, there can be no redemption but death; Gollum's fated plunge into the fires of Mount Doom seemed to be the only way to end his evil, Morgoth is given numerous opportunities to repent and never does. It seems that corruption is, in Tolkien's world, a one-way street.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Two Towers* p.562

### *Change their Appearance*

On a number of occasions in Tolkien's books, wielders of magic have changed their appearance to disguise their true identities. This is definitely not relegated to just evil or good magic users, as both sides of the coin have used magic for this purpose. For example, in the *Silmarillion*, Felagund disguises himself and those in his party as a company of Orcs: "By the arts of Felagund their own forms and faces were changed into the likenesses of Orcs; and thus disguised they came far upon the northward road..."<sup>2</sup> Morgoth and Sauron also take different appearances in order to deceive the forces of good. In Tolkien's world, what you see is not always what you get.

### *Bless and Curse*

Blessings and curses seem to have real manifested consequences in Tolkien's world, though this is not always the case. The casual "Go to Hell" remark would not necessarily become a reality; however more powerful curses said by powerful people do. When the Men of Dunharrow betray Isildur, he curses them to remain on earth until they fulfill their oath to the King of Gondor. It is unclear, however, whether this curse is actually made true because of any sort of magic within Isildur himself, or if the Valar actually are the power behind his curse.

Gandalf also lays a blessing upon Bill the pony in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, "He laid his hand on the pony's head, and spoke in a low voice. 'Go with words of guard and guiding on you,' he said. 'You are a wise beast, and have learned much in Rivendell. Make your ways to places where you can find grass, and so come in time to Elrond's house, or wherever you wish to go.'"<sup>3</sup> It is unclear what kind of effect this casual blessing has and how it acts (even though it eventually comes true), whether it is literally guiding and guarding him, or if it changes destiny in a subtler way, but it is nonetheless effective.

### *Prophecy*

Prophecies, especially dreams, are very important in Tolkien's works. Though their source is not always clear, it seems that many are able to see the future, or possible futures, of Middle Earth either in a direct or symbolic way. The most obvious example of this is when Frodo uses the mirror of Galadriel and sees the scouring of the Shire, an event that is one possible future. Some powerful people in Tolkien's world are also claimed to be "far-sighted," having the ability to see the future, or possible futures more regularly. Elrond is said to be far-sighted, though his vision is clouded by the enemy, and at one point Aragorn is mentioned to be far-sighted, though that is never confirmed.

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<sup>2</sup> *The Silmarillion*, p. 201

<sup>3</sup> *The Fellowship of the Ring* p. 295-6

### *Create Light / Darkness*

Light is very important in Tolkien's works as a powerful symbol of good. Evil is always symbolized and literally represented by darkness and shadow, and light is the one thing able to counter that. Thus, in Tolkien's works, the ability to create light is not as benign as it might seem. Some of the powerful magical items in Tolkien's work create light; the Phial of Galadriel, the Elven blades and the Silmarils. In the case of the Phial and the Silmarils, it seems that the light created by these objects is able to drive away or destroy creatures of evil. The glowing elven blades, like Sting and Glamdring, do not overtly tie their light to their power, but it is implied that the magic that causes their light also helps to fight against evil creatures.

Gandalf also can conjure light to spectacular effect. In *The Return of the King*, Gandalf summons a shaft of light to drive away the Nazgul and save Faramir as he is retreating from Osgiliath; "But now the dark swooping shadows were aware of the newcomer [Gandalf]. One wheeled towards him; but it seemed to Pippin that he raised his hand, and from it a shaft of white light stabbed upwards. The Nazgul gave a long, wailing cry and swerved away; and with that the other four wavered, and then rising in swift spirals they passed away eastward vanishing into the lowering cloud above; and down on the Pelennor it seemed for a while less dark."<sup>4</sup> It seems that this light is different from ordinary light, as the Nazgul are not thwarted by sunlight.

Conversely, the evil powers seem to be able to conjure darkness and shadow that has powers beyond normal darkness. The shadow that is conjured by evil acts like a wet blanket over forces of good—it inspires fear, despair and hopelessness. It is never said, however, to be so dark that it makes it impossible to see—it is not a globe of darkness of pitch black with defined borders, but more like an encroaching, stifling, ever-deepening black haze.

### *Create / Manipulate Fire*

Gandalf is able to magically wield and alter fire, but in a much more limited capacity than is available to a fireball-slinging mage of other fantasy universes. Gandalf can conjure small amounts of magical fire or lightning for a short time on his own, but he actually references a limitation on his power in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, "But I must have something to work on. I cannot burn snow."<sup>5</sup> So this implies that Gandalf can create small amounts of fire and can burn things that naturally will burn and possibly manipulate fire that already exists (as he does with his spectacular fireworks displays), but can not shoot plasma from his fingertips like a human flamethrower.

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<sup>4</sup> *The Return of the King* p.791-2

<sup>5</sup> *The Fellowship of the Ring*, p. 309

## *Craft Magical Items*

Crafting magical items is the most obvious and common way that Tolkien manifests magic in his books, especially considering the number of magical items that crop up in his works. Magical weapons like Sting, Orcrist, Glamdring, the Morgul Blades, Grond and Anduril aid one side of the battle or the other. Other magical items like the Phial of Galadriel, the Seat of Seeing at Amon Hen, the Wizards' staves, and the Palantiri have a variety of other magical effects. Some magical items are so powerful that they shape the fate of the world, like the Silmarils, the Rings of Power and the One Ring.

Magical items seem to be able to be created by all races, but the most powerful of them generally are created by Elves, the Maia and the dark powers. Dwarves seem to be able to craft magical items as well, most especially weapons (which seems logical), but very little is written about these, except for as part of a song in *The Hobbit*, "The dwarves of yore made mighty spells, While hammers fell like ringing bells..."<sup>6</sup>

If ever an item of extreme power is created, it often takes away part of the spirit and power of the creator, meaning that the crafter has imbued part of themselves in to the item. This makes forging of powerful magical items not only very rare, but acts of self-sacrifice.

## *Strengthen/Hide Things*

Magic is also used in making things stronger—particularly the doors and walls of citadels. The doors to the mines of Moria and the halls under the mountain are not only impregnable, but unfindable without knowing the circumstance of their finding. Magic is also used to give specific circumstances for opening these doors, like the key for the hall under the mountain or the password for the mines of Moria. The Black Gates of Mordor and the tower of Orthanc also are said to have ancient spells of strengthening placed upon them to make them unbreachable (even by a cadre of boulder-throwing Ents). Making a structure permanent in this way, however, would undoubtedly require not only a very powerful magic-user but a tremendous exertion of energy and time, or else every hobbit hole built in Middle Earth would have a hedge-wizard making it impregnable!

The elven cloaks of Lorien that are given to the Fellowship of the Ring are also said to have a hiding magic placed upon them that subtly helps the wearer stay hidden from the eyes of their enemies.

## *Break Things*

As well as create and strengthen things, Magic is used in Tolkien's world to break things. In *The Silmarillion*, Luthien uses a spell to fantastically destroy the prison of Tol-in-Gaurhoth, "Then Lúthien stood upon the bridge, and declared her power: and the spell was loosed that bound stone to stone, and the gates were thrown down, and the walls

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<sup>6</sup> *The Hobbit*, p.14

opened, and the pits laid bare...”<sup>7</sup> Magical power of this kind is also used in *The Lord of the Rings*: Frodo’s sword is broken by the Witch-King without even touching it, Gandalf breaks Saruman’s staff with a word of power, and Grond, the massive battering ram of Mordor, has had “spells of ruin” laid upon it by the Witch-King to help it breach the gate of Gondor. Though these spells of destruction are present in Tolkien’s world, it is never said that they cause any of the broken objects disappear outright—they are not annihilated, they are simply smashed.

### *Heal People*

One of the magics specifically mentioned as “Elven” are the magics of healing and mending. This type of magic, though certainly able to be used to heal regular wounds, is most interesting because it also can be used to heal supernatural wounds as well. When Frodo is stabbed by the Witch-King in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, he must be taken to Elrond to be healed. Aragorn, who is not only a long, long, long, long descendant of a half-elf but who grew up under the tutelage of the elves, is able to heal Faramir, Eowyn, and Merry amongst others from the supernatural wounds they incurred at the battle of Pelennor Fields. It should be noted, however, that this sort of magic is never achieved with incantations alone—Aragorn needed the herb Aethalas to heal those in the houses of healing, and Elrond needed to melt the shard of the blade that had lodged itself in Frodo’s arm. So while there is definitely a magical component to healing of this kind, it also requires skill, tools and knowledge.

### *Change the Weather*

During the battle of Helm’s Deep in *The Two Towers*, Saruman sends a black rainstorm that lowers the morale of the defenders of the castle. Sauron also spews forth black shadowy clouds in advance of his armies, to bolster his troops and dismay the enemy. When Gandalf conjures light at the battle of Pelennor Fields, it also seems to create a temporary break in the oppressive clouds and lift the hopes of those around him, so weather change can be effected on a small scale either for good or for ill.

### *Shape-Shift*

People who are able to shape-shift or, as Tolkien put it, ‘skin-change’, are present in Tolkien’s world as well. Beorn from *The Hobbit* and a few characters from *The Silmarillion* are able to shift shapes, though it is never explained how, whether it be through innate power or by study. It also seems that though Beorn is a skin-changer, he can only change his form into that of a Bear and none other. It’s also good to note that it seems that he does not have any more magical powers than that of a skin-changer.

The Valar are able to change the shapes of themselves or others, but that is certainly within the scope of their godlike power.

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<sup>7</sup> *The Silmarillion*, p. 207

### *Speak with Animals*

Though it is debatable whether or not it is a magical or learned ability, all of Tolkien's magic users can speak to animals, and use certain animals as messengers or spies. Sauron and Saruman use large black crows as spies, Gandalf can speak with Eagles, and Aragorn has learned how to speak to horses from the Elves. Additionally, it seems that some animals, like Wargs are able to speak in the tongues of Men and Elves. It is debatable, however, whether this is achieved by magic, by study, or both.

### *Contests of Power*

Whenever two magic users engage one another in Tolkien's world, there is sometimes a contest of power or wills. Tolkien sometimes simply refers to these as contests, sometimes as "counter-spells", but they are all essentially the same thing. If one magic-user is enacting a spell and another wants to break it, they engage in a contest of wills that leaves the loser (and possibly the victor as well) severely shaken. One such contest of power is between King Felagund and Sauron in *The Silmarillion*: "Then befell the contest of Sauron and Felagund... Felagund strove with Sauron in songs of power, and the power of the King was very great; but Sauron had the mastery..."<sup>8</sup> Sauron wins that contest, and is able to strip Felagund of the magic disguise he wears and capture him and his companions in his dungeon on the Isle of Werewolves.

## *What Tolkien's Magic-Users Can Not Do*

### *Speak over Long Distances*

At one point, Gandalf actually says that it is impossible to speak over long distances without the aid of a Palantir. This sort of magic would also have thrown a wrench into many of Tolkien's stories if one party was able to warn another quickly or communicate a message long distance. Thus because it is so obviously *not* used, it can be inferred that it is impossible to do.

### *Resurrect*

Though healing is one of the primary types of magic used in Tolkien's world, it is never cited as being able to actually bring anyone back from the dead. It can bring people back from the brink of death, as is the case with Frodo being stabbed by the Morgul blade and Eowyn, Faramir, and Merry in the houses of healing, but this is only possible if they are not dead yet. The fate of Middle Earth would be completely different if Aragorn could run over to Boromir after he had been shot, declare a "do over" and resurrect him.

There are a few examples of resurrection in Tolkien's world, but they all are done by the Valar. The first example is when Beren and Luthien plead with the Valar during

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<sup>8</sup> *The Silmarillion*, p. 201

*The Silmarillion*. The Valar take pity on them, and decide to send them back to the world so they can live with each other, but with the stipulation that Melian live only a brief mortal life, and go to the final resting place of the humans. In choosing this, Melian has to make an ultimate sacrifice—eternal separation from her people, in order to live on Middle Earth again.

The most notable example of resurrection happens when Gandalf returns as Gandalf the white, but this is less a magic spell and more based upon the fact that he is a Maia. He says that, in essence, he has been “sent back” by the Valar because his job on middle earth is not yet complete. It seems that when a Maia is slain, the Valar can choose what to do with them, whether to send them back to Middle Earth, keep them in Valinor, or banish them to the void (in the case of corrupted Maia). So, even though resurrection happens in Tolkien’s world, it seems that only the Valar have the power to make this a reality.

However, it seems that experienced healers are able to bring people back from the brink of death. The aforementioned healing of Eowyn, Faramir and Merry is one example, and the healing of Frodo after he had been stabbed by the morgul blade is another. So, perhaps in Amtgard it is possible that the “resurrect” spell is simply a means to bring someone back from the brink of death, even if their spirit has not left their body. In the end, it is up to the individual healer how they wish to play and interpret their abilities.

### *Fly / Teleport*

Tolkien’s magic users are never cited as having the ability to teleport themselves anywhere—if he was able to teleport or fly, Gandalf would not have needed to have been carted around everywhere by eagles! Also, if Gandalf were able to transport people or things different places, he could have simply teleported Frodo and/or the One Ring to Mount Doom without having to go through that pesky quest of the ring!

### *Create Powerful or Permanent Magic Quickly*

Gandalf explains regarding why a shutting spell he placed on a door behind himself in them in Moria failed, that, “...to do things of that kind rightly requires time, and even then the door can be broken by strength.”<sup>9</sup> It seems that Gandalf, and probably by extrapolation all magic users, can only perform small, temporary magic quickly. Magic that is more permanent, spectacular or stronger takes a much longer time to accomplish, which is probably why we never see Gandalf bathing a battlefield in white fire—such a spell would take such a considerable time and energy to do it would be impractical, if not impossible, for use in battle. That is why we, as the reader, are mostly privy to small ‘sparks’ of magic from Gandalf, rather than more spectacular displays. It is also useful to remember that the persons who are generally using magic, Elves and Maia,

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<sup>9</sup> *The Fellowship of the Ring*, p. 318

are essentially immortal and so the perception of “a long time to cast a spell” may be fundamentally different from what we understand it to be today.

While many types of permanent magics can be created, it seems that these magics take not only a very long time but quite a lot of effort to accomplish, and so must usually be deemed incredibly necessary.

Of course, there are always exceptions when it comes to the world of magic in Tolkien’s universe. Whenever there is extreme emotion involved or an extreme need perceived, that usually has a tendency to spontaneously make magic especially potent—as exemplified by Luthien’s ability to smash the prison that held Beren captive or to put Morgoth himself to sleep. Though, as the daughter of a Maia and an Elf, Luthien was exceptionally powerful, it seems that she was able to do absolutely unprecedented things because of the extremity of her need and her emotions. Whether the extreme power was granted by the Valar or was something she did herself is unknown, but it must be noted nonetheless.

### *Evil magic*

Even though Elves, the Valar and the Maia, as creatures tied to the world of Magic are the primary magic-users within Tolkien’s world, he does allude to some “dark sorcerers” in the race of men. Apparently there is a branch of magic which is called “the black arts” or “sorcery,” that is the exclusive domain of the evil powers. One example of the men who practiced these arts were the Numenorians who settled the southern coasts and were under Sauron’s thrall—Tolkien refers to them in *The Return of the King*: “Many became enamored of the Darkness and the black arts...”<sup>10</sup> This magic also does not seem to be a part of inherent power, like the magic of the Maiar or the Elves, but seems to draw its power from somewhere else, perhaps the power of Morgoth or Sauron. This power, logically, seems only to be used to spread disease, death, ruin, and most interestingly to capture the spirits of the dead. It is said that the Witch-King taught the Barrow Wights to sacrifice their victims so that their souls can feed the army of Mordor. So it seems to Tolkien that spirit severing and capturing magics are inherently evil and draw their power from a dark place.

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<sup>10</sup> *The Return of the King*, p.662



## *Differences between Tolkien's World and Role-Playing in Amtgard*

### *What about Wizards?*

Yes, there are Wizards in Tolkien's universe and there are Wizards in Amtgard. However, the only true wizards in Tolkien's universe are the Istari, the five Maia sent to middle earth by the Valar. There are no other wizards. As I stated before, the only ones who can even use magic in any spell-casting capacity are Maia, Elves, Valar and Evil sorcerous humans. So, if you want to play strictly by Tolkien's standards and also want to play the Wizard class, it is best either to play a good elf, or an evil human.

### *What about everyone else who plays a Wizard?*

Well, that is a matter of personal preference. Any good elf or human would most likely not trust any non-elven user of magic, particularly if they use it irresponsibly or aggressively. Since it isn't appropriate to tell other persons what character to play or how to play their character, that's a question that I don't have a good answer for.

### *What about the Drow?*

The Drow, or Dark Elves, are a creation of R.A. Salvatore, a very well known fantasy writer who is best known for his work in the Forgotten Realms canon (the Icewind Dale Trilogy, the Dark Elf trilogy, the Cleric Quintet, etc.). Drow elves are not a part of Tolkien's mythology whatsoever. Even though Tolkien occasionally alludes to "dark elves" in his work, he is usually referring simply to those elves who did not see the light of Valinor—those who never made the great journey west. They are not 'evil' by any stretch of the imagination, they are just not as noble and wise as the "light elves," and notably look absolutely no different physically in any significant way. R.A. Salvatore's Drow, or Dark elves, are something entirely different: a race of dark skinned, white haired elves who were cursed and banished to live underground because of their prevailing evil. The Drow are the antithesis of everything that elves are—they live in dank caves, worshipping a spider goddess with a strict matriarchal hierarchy and an unbending hatred for any other elf (or race of good, for that matter). They cannot stand the light of day and seek little less than the utter destruction and/or enslavement of any and every other race. While this makes an interesting (and for Salvatore, a very successful) backdrop for fantasy literature, they are in no way associated with Tolkien's works and should not be treated as such. Simply put, if you wish to play within the scope of Tolkien's realm, you cannot play a Drow. Period.

### *What about all those other people who play Drow?*

That is an interesting question, and another problem with importing Tolkien's work into a realm such as Amtgard. Because there are no written rules about what sort of character any person can play, essentially it can be from any fantasy canon or none at all.

It is the players' onus to treat it as if anything were possible. This applies not only to Drow, but to any other type of character that is brought into Amtgard (Asian mythological creatures, Middle Eastern mythological figures, Native American mythological creatures, etc.). As a dedicated role-player, you must create a reasonable explanation within your own universe of how it is possible for Drow to exist, since doing otherwise is to proverbially stick your head in the sand. Since we are dealing with Tolkien's universe, in this situation we do have a small modicum of flexibility, since there are lands to the south and east that Tolkien rarely speaks about. They could be, essentially, completely different and alien cultures that could have their own names for the Valar, their own geography, their own creatures, etc. While I'm sure Tolkien would be rolling in his grave about this, I feel it is necessary to successfully integrate the two worlds in order to use Tolkien's work in Amtgard. However, just because you can manipulate those things Tolkien did *not* talk about doesn't mean that it is appropriate to change those things that he *did* talk about, which brings us back to the nagging question of the Drow.

The fact is, due to their extreme popularity within the realm of fantasy, the Drow are going to be a part of any generic multiplayer fantasy campaign created. The question is: how to integrate them into Tolkien's universe seamlessly- especially considering that Tolkien talks in such extremity about the creation and history of the elves in *The Silmarillion*? My personal compromise is this: Tolkien mentions how some elves, in the early years of the world were taken by the dark powers and corrupted, twisted to their own purposes. These elves were eventually twisted beyond recognition and became the horrible race known as the orcs. However, what if a few of these twisted elves, only in the start or middle of their corruption, either escaped from the halls of the dark powers or were released? Well, orcs have dark skin just like the Drow do, they have a fear and loathing of the sun just like the Drow do, live underground just as the Drow do, and are just as evil as the Drow are. So for the purposes of logically integrating the Drow into a Tolkien universe, I consider them to be elves that were taken by the dark powers and twisted to evil, but not fully broken to be creatures that mindlessly follow like the orcs are. Nonetheless, they are wholly evil and should be treated as such, similar to the orcs in Tolkien's world.

This is, however, only one solution. There may be more unexplored solutions to this problem, so I recommend thinking and talking about this with your fellow role-players to see what sort of resolution can be reached.

### *What about half-elves?*

Yes, there are half-elves in Tolkien's universe, but just like wizards they are characters of extreme rarity. In fact, there are only ever recorded five human-elf pairings in all of Tolkien's works, and all of those pairings are subject to what Tolkien calls "strange fates." The rarity of these pairings is also further reinforced by the taboo against these relationships within elven society. Because elves are essentially immortal and most humans have a normal lifespan of around 60-80 years or so, it is inevitable that the elf

will be forced to watch their partner grow old and die while they themselves remain relatively unchanged. Most elves, in the end, cannot cope with the death of their loved one because unlike elves, humans do not go to the halls of the Valar after they die; so to an elf, the death of their human partner is separation for all of eternity, not just separation until they join them in Valinor. Most elves succumb to the overwhelming grief of this fact and die or fade away after their partner's death.

Half-elven children also are subject to the "strange fates" that their parents are cursed with. Half-elves have the unique choice in their lives to either live out their days as an elf or as a human. Though, from what Tolkien says, they will look like a full-blooded elf until they die, elves that choose the latter option eventually grow old and die (albeit at possibly a slightly slower rate than most humans), and they will not go to the halls of Valinor after their death. They are usually treated as a human by elven society. Elves that choose an elven life, however, look, act, and seem just like any other elf. As in the case with Elrond, half-elves who live as elves are treated with just as much respect and no differently than other elves, and may rise to positions of power and authority just as any other elf.

The question of half-elves is a distinct difference between Tolkien's world and the world presented by Dungeons and Dragons--half-elves do not look like a mixture of elves and humans in Tolkien's world (as they do in Dungeons and Dragons), they look like elves but have the unique choice to live a mortal life. It is also implied by Arwen's choice to become mortal that the progeny of an elf and a half-elf who has chosen to live an elven life will also be given the choice to become a mortal as well. It seems that Arwen lives out her life as an elf until such point as she chooses to live a mortal life, and after that junction it is irreversible. Though it is conceivable that this could just be a product of the "strange fates" between elven and human pairings, since she chooses mortality when she makes the choice to marry Aragorn, it seems more defensible that it is by nature of her half-elven father. It is not that half-elves can 'waffle' between the two options; it seems that they can make the conscious choice at any time in their life to become mortal, and after that the choice is irreversible. Incidentally, it is never overtly stated how the progeny of a half-elf who chooses a mortal life and a human would look and whether they would have the same choice, but there are implications in the Silmarillion that indicate that they would look like, and live like humans but with slightly extended lifelines.

Because of the taboo presented against half-elves in Tolkien's world, a half-elf would generally not present themselves as such- they would live as an elf looking just like an elf under the assumption of their full-elvendom until they are proven otherwise or unless they make the choice to become mortal. However, because of the extreme rarity of half-elves, most likely their story (and the "strange fates" story of their parents) has preceded them, so it would be a known fact that they are half-elven even before they open their mouth.

There were never any pairings of elves with any other of the races outside humans, and it is debatable whether or not such a pairing would even be possible. The

only one even remotely feasible is with a hobbit, since hobbits are essentially long-distant cousins of humans, but this is nearly impossible due to the insular nature of elven culture, the taboo against mixed race marriages within elven culture, Elves' general patronization of Hobbits, and Hobbits' extreme reluctance to even venture beyond their own borders. It is also stated on a number of occasions how elves find dwarves to be hideously ugly and unattractive, and how insular both of their cultures are (dwarves are arguably more secretive about their culture and people than any other race) so the possibility of such a pairing would be singular, if not completely impossible. And orcs? Don't even get me started about orcs...

*What about half-elves by rape?*

Well, there are a number of cultural and simple physiological issues against the idea of half-elves being created by rape. Firstly, there is only one example in Tolkien's world of one elf forcing themselves upon another. That crime, and any crime like it, is seen as supremely reprehensible on two counts. Firstly, the person who has been assaulted is subjected to such extreme physical and emotional duress that they usually choose to die. So, in essence, the crime of rape is equal in all intents and purposes to the crime of murder.

Secondly, it is stated that the bond of marriage between two elves is actually created by the act of consummating their relationship. So an elf that rapes another elf is, essentially, forcefully marrying the other.

Furthermore, elves do not have children by 'accident', it is physically impossible. In Tolkien's world, an elven child can only be conceived when both parents actively choose to conceive by voluntarily giving up a part of their spirit in order to create the child. So, in the rape scenario, it is impossible for an elven woman to be raped by anyone and conceive; firstly, because she has very probably died during or immediately after the assault, and secondly, because she would never willingly conceive a child in that scenario. The offending human (or dwarf or hobbit or orc or dragon or badger) would most likely be hunted down by the elves of the community and slaughtered for their incredibly heinous crime.

In the scenario where an elven male is the assaulter, it is unlikely because firstly, the elven male has essentially forcibly married the other—and elves do not make that bond frivolously. Second marriages, to elves, are rare to the point of singularity in Tolkien's world-- usually when an elf's spouse dies, they never remarry.

Secondly, it is highly unlikely that they would willingly give up a piece of themselves to conceive when they are committing an act that is an act of extreme violence. It is a well known fact in contemporary psychological discourse that rape is not motivated by the desire for sex or procreation, it is motivated to be a violent assertion of power over another person. So even in the extremely unlikely event that an elven male were ever to rape a non-elf, the likelihood of them procreating because of that act of violence is essentially nil.

Thirdly, the offending elven male would probably be hunted down both by elves and the other race involved— not only has the elf proven his extreme evil to his kinsmen by his reprehensible actions, but also to the other race because of the crime he has committed.

Because of all of these factors, elven progeny being born because of some form of elven rape is essentially impossible.

*What about all my buddies who play half-elves?*

Well, that is one of the problems regarding a full conversion of Tolkien's world and ideas to be used within a general fantasy setting like Amtgard. In Amtgard, half-elves are popular to the degree that they are by no means uncommon, whereas in Tolkien's world they are extraordinarily rare. Though each player can take their own tack, my way of playing would be to treat all half-elves as if they were fully elven, and to be confused if they do not act accordingly. If someone playing a half-elf lives like a human and acts essentially like a human with pointy ears (as many half elves tend to do), then treat them, essentially, as humans. There may even be scorn or confusion as to why a half-elf would choose to do that, to live as a human, when they had the choice to live an elven life. That is only one possible option, and it is one of the problems that must be addressed for Amtgard players choosing to play their characters from within Tolkien's version of the fantasy universe.

*But I wanna play a half elf! Please?*

I would strongly suggest that you don't. Firstly, there are far too many people who play half-elves (particularly with stranger combinations than the standard human-elf combo) that it has become, in places, even more common to see a half-elven character than a full elven one. It is as if all the elves in the known world have decided that humans are much more attractive than other elves and have, to an elf, decided to have children with them. I would suggest very strongly against playing a half-elf. Is there any way that you can play a character that is a full elf and gain the same satisfaction from your roleplay? What about a full human? I feel that if these types of characters are played to their fullest, they can be just as, if not more compelling and fun to play than a half-elf.

I have very often said things are "very rare" or "unlikely" with regards to half elves. Yes, I know that leaves open the possibility of them actually happening, and I know how tempting it can be to make your character the "only one" of something. Much like in the Magic trading card game, if something is the "only one" of something or "extremely rare", that makes it better, more valuable, more powerful, right? That's not necessarily the case with regards to Amtgard though. Think about how many "only one of..." characters there are in Amtgard. Rarity has so become the so much the norm that I would very very strongly suggest, even though there are possibilities for insanely rare characters, not to play upon the extremely unlikely. It is far better to play a "normal" character **well** rather than playing a "rare" character poorly and your fellow role players will undoubtedly acknowledge and appreciate that.

If you absolutely *must* play a half-elf, always keep in mind the things I have said above and how they would affect your life. If you have chosen a mortal life, what made you come to that decision? If you have not, then in what regard would you hold those half-elves who had? What is a good, reasonable (most likely sappy and terribly romantic) story behind it? What sort of “strange fate” befell them, or do you even know? When did your human parent die (because, if you are a half-elven adult that has definitely already happened), and did your elven parent die after that? How did it make you feel?

*What about other half-breed combinations? (eg. Half-orc, half-dwarf, half-hobbit?)*

In a word, no. While these may be technically possible, the likelihood of such a cultural pairing is so low that it makes this sort of progeny implausible. Tolkien never ever mentions any sort of romantic relationship between any of the races aside from Elves and Humans. It is possible that this is because Elves and Humans are both literally "Children of Eru," and so there exists a very little possibility of compatibility between those two races. It is possible, because of their different natures, that a Human trying to procreate with a Dwarf is like a deer trying to procreate with a rock. Even so, the conjured image of a human procreating with an Orc is a more than a little bit frightening. Dwarven and Hobbit cultures are so insular that the likelihood of anyone ever procreating with another race is also nearly impossible.

At this junction, many people reading this may say to themselves, "well sure, you said "nearly impossible" which means it's possible, right? Won't it be so cool if I'm the only half-orc shape-changing ranger of doom? Well, yes, I can promise you will be the only half-orc shape changing ranger of doom. However, that does not mean it is a good character choice. Rarity does not equal quality. Not only do these sorts of characters not fit in with a true Tolkien sensibility, but your fellow role players will not have any basis from which to interact with you as a character. So if you want to play a good Tolkien character well, I *highly* recommend not straying too far from the framework Tolkien has given us. The framework given is interesting enough to allow you to play any number of "normal" or "boring" characters, without getting even the least bit bored.

If you still are interested in playing one of these insanely rare characters, I would ask you to please read my notes on “very rare” characters in the previous section. Read it again. Rinse, repeat as necessary.

### *What about playing a Vampire or Werewolf?*

In Tolkien, Vampires and Werewolves do exist, but are very different from the "Dungeons and Dragons" or "World of Darkness" concept of them. Firstly, they were exclusively evil. Period. They were Morgoth's creation, and are about as likely to do good as an noldor elf is to rape a bantha. It is also important to note that these creatures were creatures *in and of themselves*, rather than races afflicted by a disease or an abnormality. They could not spread their condition, they did not change from one form to another, they

were creatures in their own right. Please see the following section for more information on these creatures as they exist in Tolkien's role-play world.

## *Creatures of Arda*

Tolkien's bestiary is also particularly useable for quest situations in Amtgard. It is useful to note, however, that none of them are intended to be played as characters. There are distinct lines between good and evil in Tolkien's world, and I do not feel it would be appropriate for someone to play, for example, a good orc. Just as an example, orcs are creatures that have had their souls literally twisted by the dark powers where they can do no good and would never be accepted as a normal member of society.

Also, since these creatures are only supposed to be used in quest circumstances, the Q:M ratio and lives are flexible at the discretion of the person running the quest. They are not intended to be played on any type of regular basis by players, and thus I have assigned none of them "levels".

It should also be noted that some of these creatures are *incredibly* powerful. This is intentional, since in Tolkien's world, these creatures were only able to be taken down by either the most incredible of heroes or by very large groups. Also, it is at the discretion of the quest-master, champion, or GM to make these creatures *more* powerful than they are written here, but I believe these stats are the least powerful these creatures should be to maintain the realism of fighting these legendary creatures.

It also will be obvious that there are some creatures which are missing. These creatures, like for instance the Ring Wraiths, are exclusive to the timeline of *The Lord of the Rings* novels, and so I did not feel it was appropriate for use in Amtgard.

I have put all of these in a format that is congruous with the format of the *Dor Un Avathar, version 8*. All of the definitions of the traits and innate abilities which I do not explain may be found there.

### *Balrog of Morgoth*

(BAHL-rrog of MORE-goth)

By: Courynn Syl'vil'naius (Crystal Groves)

Type/Q:M ratio: Extra-Planar Monster/(Quest Only)

**Armor:** 10 points sectional invulnerability armor. Special advantages, vulnerabilities.

**Shield:** None

**Weapons :** Two-handed sword or axe (special attacks) one handed chain weapon (special attacks).

**Natural Lives:** 1

**Immunities:** Flame

**Traits & Abilities:**

**Fire Heal**

**Flame Weapons**

**Very Strong**

**Tough**

**Burning Body**

**Immolating** A Balrog will set aflame any object it touches, if it is possible for that object to be burned. Also, anyone not protected from flame that touches a Balrog receives a wound (ignoring non-immunity armor) to the area that touched the Balrog.

**Giant** Balrogs are up to 30 feet tall. Anyone in any situation (role-play or combat) with a Balrog must do so on their knees (unless medically unable to) and attempt to recognize the gargantuan size difference between the player and the creature. If fighting a Balrog, any melee hits delivered to the Balrog count as leg hits of the appropriate side until such time as the Balrog has a leg wound- then and only then can arm or torso shots be delivered. Non-touch spells and missile weapons count as normal.

**Weakness to Water** Any Balrog that is hit by 4 consecutive *iceballs* within a 20 count or is completely inundated by water (like a water elemental's *Wave* ability, and other as per the GM) extinguishes the Balrog for a 100 count. An extinguished Balrog's weapons count as red and the Balrog can be affected by normal weapons or touch attacks with no penalty.

**Description:** A Balrog of Morgoth was originally one of the Maiar, a spirit of fire that was corrupted to the service of the great darkness. They took the form of huge demons forged of flame and shadow, and were one of the most terrible allies of the dark power. Their preferred weapons are their whips of flame, but they also use terrible flaming swords or axes with great effect. In their full height they are over 30 feet tall with a wingspan of over 100 feet, with a countenance that inspires terror; but because they are creatures only of flame and shadow, they can move through restricting doorways and passages with ease (though most would simply smash through tight doorways and passages. In spite of a Balrog's impressive wingspan, they are unable to fly. A Balrog's



size and wreath of encroaching shadow can even blot out the light of the sun for any who encounter it.

**Roleplaying:** A Balrog is a demon of the ancient world, an incredibly difficult foe. Only the greatest of heroes in legend have ever stood against one and survived. Thankfully, in spite of their terrible and enormous power, they are incredibly rare. A Balrog can speak and understand the black speech, but rarely has occasion or need to do so as its mere presence inspires extreme fear in allies and enemies alike. The only noise that anyone will usually hear issuing from a Balrog is its heavy footfalls and its primal roar. A Balrog does not kill in order to eat or to gain territory, its sole objective is to spread terror and darkness and aid the dark powers in casting down the Valar and all who stand with them. Any who serve the Balrog will usually follow its orders completely because their fear of the Balrog is greater than their fear of death.

**Garb:** Reds, yellows, oranges, and blacks. A Balrog is a demon made completely of fire and shadow, complete with fiery bat wings and can wreath themselves fully in darkness.

### *Barrow Wight*

(BARE-row White)

By: Courynn Syl'vil'naius (Crystal Groves)

Type/Q:M ratio: Undead Monster/(Quest Only)

**Armor:** Up to 6 points armor.

**Shield:** Any

**Weapons:** Any Melee weapon, sacrificial blade.

**Immunities:** Control

**Natural Lives: Serial Immortality** (until Barrow is Destroyed) If a barrow wight acquires more lives through the use of its sacrificial blade, it can return to life without the requisite 100 count by touching its barrow.

### *Traits & Abilities:*

#### **Tough**

**Barrow:** The Wight has a barrow mound that acts in the same way as a *lair*. The only way to permanently kill a barrow Wight is to pierce its barrow with light from the sun by delivering 10 solid blows from any weapon to the barrow.

**Charm:** As per Bard spell (2/life)

**Touch of Paralyzation:** As per Druid spell (unlimited)

**Sacrificial Blade:** A barrow wight has a special magical sword in its barrow, that if it delivers a killing blow to a victim within its barrow with the blade acts as both a *steal life* and *sever spirit* spell.

**Description:** Barrow Wights are demons whose bodies had been destroyed who went looking for other bodies where their evil spirits could dwell. They infested the burial barrows of ancient kings of men, animating their ancient jeweled armor and filling it with the substance of their darkness. They stalk the night, seducing the unwary with their hypnotic voices and luring them into their barrows where they sacrifice them and use their bodies to inhabit in case they are destroyed. The only way to kill a barrow wight is to expose its barrow to the light of day, which crumbles the wight to dust.

**Roleplaying:** A barrow wight prefers not to engage in combat unless necessary-- it prefers to use its powers of hypnotic charming and paralysis to lure one victim at a time into its barrow and sacrifice it, increasing its power.

**Garb:** Ornate armor and tattered old royal garb, a mask and a burial shroud.

### *Cave Troll*

By: Courynn Syl'vil'naius (Crystal Groves)

Type/Q:M ratio: Normal Monster/(Quest Only)

**Armor:** 5 points natural sectional armor. Special advantages, vulnerabilities.

**Shield:** None

**Attacks:** Single or two handed club, boulders

**Immunities:** None

**Natural Lives:** 2

### *Traits & Innate Abilities:*

**Strong**

**Giant:** Cave trolls huge creatures, typically around 20 feet tall. Anyone in any situation (role-play or combat) with a troll must do so on their knees (unless medically unable to) and attempt to recognize the gargantuan size difference between the player and the creature. If fighting a troll, any melee hits delivered to the troll count as leg hits of the

appropriate side until such time as the troll has a leg wound- then and only then can arm or torso shots be delivered. Non-touch spells and missile weapons count as normal.

### **Stone Heal**

**Stone Creature:** In addition to the Stone Heal trait, a *stone to flesh* spell will nullify a cave troll's armor completely. A *stoneskin* spell will repair two points of a cave troll's armor.

**Simpleminded:** Cave trolls are immune to all *feblemind* spells. *Charm* spells affect a cave troll as per a *confusion* spell.

**Alingual:** Cave trolls cannot understand or speak any languages.

**Description:** Trolls are creatures that were created by the dark powers in response to the strength of the Ents. They are tough-skinned, huge creatures with rocky hides and a foul disposition. Cave trolls are the stupidest of the trolls, unable to understand any language and living like beasts in their caves, unless they are driven into service by dark powers.

**Garb:** Crudest of clothing, grayish skin. Stupid expression.

### *Dragon*

There are a number of different kinds of dragons in Tolkien's work. Though the dragon Smaug is the archetypal winged fire-breathing dragon, but that is not the only kind of dragon in Tolkien's world. There are dragons that slither along the ground like serpents, there are those that crawl on the ground like lizards, and winged ones that can either crawl or fly. In addition to those types, there are fire drakes: dragons that can spew flames from their mouth, and cold drakes: those dragons that cannot breathe fire but have incredibly devastating piercing jaws.

By: Courynn Syl'vil'naius (Crystal Groves)

Type/Q:M ratio: Normal Multi-Person Monster/(Quest Only)

**Armor:** 20 points sectional invulnerability armor. (Can be increased at the discretion of the GM)

**Shield:** None

### **Weapons :**

Jaws: The head person is equipped with a polearm or with flame balls (special attack, see *innate abilities* section).

Tail: The tail person is equipped with a flail (the longer the better).

Claws: Each claw person is equipped with two swords.

Wings: Each wing person is equipped with a single long sword or glaive.

**Immunities:** Flame, Control, Subdual

**Natural Lives:** 1 (Like you wanted them to have more than that...)

**Traits & Innate Abilities:**

*All Dragons:*

**Multi-Person:** Slithering dragons are played by three people: A head, a body, and a tail. Walking dragons are played by seven people: A head, a body, a tail, and four legs. Flying dragons are played by nine people: A head, a body, a tail, four legs and two wings.

**Very Strong**

**Hard to Kill**

*Flying Dragons:*

**Natural Flight**

**Flying Grab:** The eagle may make a touch subdual attack with a claw while flying, saying "grab". After a vocal 20 count, the dragon may say "drop", delivering a siege hit to their victim. If the victim is dropped before a full 20 count, no damage is delivered. A dragon may also safely drop their victim by landing and then saying "drop". A dragon may only grab one person at a time. A dragon may not grab large creatures, giants, creatures immune to normal attacks, or creatures in flight. A dragon may not fly if either of the people playing a wing has been killed.

**Innate Abilities:**

Confusing Stare: The head of the dragon can cast *Charm* and *Confusion* spells as per the Bard spells. They can still use this ability if *silenced*.

*Fire Dragons:*

Breath of Fire: The person playing the head of a fire dragon should be equipped with a large number of red spellballs. However, these are always thrown two at a time (one in each hand), and anyone caught *in the path between* the fireballs is affected as if they had been hit by a fireball.

**Description:** A dragon is the ultimate foe. They are the most powerful creature the dark powers ever created, which makes them the most powerful mortal creature ever created; they have been known to lay waste to entire kingdoms single-handedly. Dragons are reptilian creatures of immense size, capable of growing up to 300 feet in length. They can be metallic gold, red, or green, but their color *does not* indicate anything about their power or abilities. Their scales are as hard as the most finely crafted mithril armor, which makes them very nearly invulnerable.

**Roleplaying:** Dragons are malicious and vicious creatures that enjoy little more than dominating and destroying others. They try to capture and collect large hordes of precious things, (gold coins, gems, weapons, armor, etc.), and will lay dormant for years upon their hordes. However, when they are roused, they are a sight terrible to behold.

It is rare to ever interact with a dragon, because they would much sooner devour their prey than sit down and have a talk. They have incredible senses, with the eyes of a hawk, the nose of a bloodhound, and the ears of a bat, which make them incredibly dangerous in combat.

If one ever is able to actually interact with a dragon, they are found to be incredibly intelligent and perceptive, but sadistic to a fault. They delight in causing pain and suffering, and love finding the weaknesses in their enemies and exploiting them. They also have a legendary arrogant streak, but it is almost justified.

There is no such thing as a "good" dragon. Like Balrogs, they are corrupted Maiar spirits that are bound to the service of the dark powers. They have been created to wreak havoc upon the world with wanton abandon, and do so like none other. Just the rumor of a dragon is enough to strike fear into men's hearts.

**Garb:** Reptilian, vicious, mean. Big, big pointy teeth.

### *Giant Eagle*

By: Courynn Syl'vil'naius (Crystal Groves)

Type/Q:M Ratio: Multi-person Beast Creature/1:4 (Quest Only)

Armor: 4 points natural sectional armor.

Shield: none

Attacks: The eagle is played by three people. The central person has a stabbing-only spear, portraying the head and jaws. There are two people next to the central person, each playing a wing and a single short sword for a claw.

#### **Traits:**

**Armor piercing:** Any successful attack by the eagle ignores all non-invulnerability armor.

#### **Natural Flight**

**Flying Grab:** The eagle may make a touch subdual attack with a claw while flying, saying "grab". After a vocal 20 count, the eagle may say "drop", delivering a siege hit to their victim. If the victim is dropped before a full 20 count, no damage is delivered. An eagle may also safely drop their victim by landing and then saying "drop". An eagle may only grab one person at a time. An eagle may not grab large creatures, giants, creatures immune to normal attacks, or creatures in flight.

## **Mount**

**Description:** Eagles are the noblest of the winged creatures of the world. They were created by Manwë, Lord of the Air and Yavanna, Queen of the earth, and are numbered amongst the most ancient and wisest of the beasts of the world. They are often the messengers of Manwë, and over the whole the world they were the eyes of Manwë and were like terrible thunderbolts upon the foes of the Valar. The Eagles of the Valar are giant, with a wingspan of up to 60 feet, and have sleek and beautiful plumage.

**Roleplaying:** The Eagles are the messengers of the Valar, and always fight on the side of the light. They usually arrive just in the last moment, when all hope seems lost to bring the hope of the Valar to those of the light that are most in need. They understand any language spoken by those of the light, and can speak directly and privately into the mind of anyone by staring into their eyes.

**Garb:** Anything to make you look more like an eagle.

**Lives:** 2

*Ent*

(ehnt)

By: Courynn Syl'vil'naius (Crystal Groves)

Type/Q:M ratio: Plant Creature/10:1(QUEST ONLY)

Armor: 6 points natural sectional invulnerability- special strengths and weaknesses (see below)

Shield: none

Attacks: Two unhinged one-handed weapons, boulders.

Traits:

**Very Strong**

**Siege Boulders**

## Blend

**Giant:** Ents, as living trees, are typically around 14 feet tall. Anyone in any situation (role-play or combat) with an Ent must do so on their knees (unless medically unable to) and attempt to recognize the gargantuan size difference between the player and the creature. If fighting an ent, any melee hits delivered to the ent count as leg hits of the appropriate side until such time as the ent has a leg wound- then and only then can arm or torso shots be delivered. Non-touch spells and missile weapons count as normal.

**Hurling:** An Ent may conduct an attack and say "Grab". This counts as a subdual attack. The Ent may then simply "Drop" the victim, which delivers a siege blow to the victim, or can point the same weapon which grabbed the victim and say "Throw". The victim then must run screaming and flailing their arms in the direction the Ent points for 50 feet, and the victim, along with anyone the victim touches during their flight receive a siege weapon blow.

**Vulnerability to Fire:** An Ent that is hit by any fire attack, (including flamewall, fire arrow, fireball, flameblade, pyrotechnics, etc.) are affected in the following way: They must attempt to flee, as per the bard *fear* spell. They lose one point of armor per 30 seconds until they either find a significant source of natural water (rivers, creeks, etc are appropriate, and located at GM's discretion, individual water flasks are not considered large enough to extinguish an Ent, but a bucket brigade may be at GM's discretion), until they are extinguished by an iceball or wind spell, or until they are dead.

**Entangle Immunity:** An Ent has the supreme respect of all living plants in the forest, which renders them immune to *entangle* spells, and they may dispel any entangle spell by saying: "No, little ones, that's not very nice, let him/her go." x3 They may also dispel *thornwall* spells by saying: "No, little ones, that's not very nice, run along and play." x3

**Nature Control:** An Ent may give orders to any Huorns or any other plant creature within 50 feet of itself. Those creatures must comply with those orders to the best of their ability.

**Tree Trap:** An Ent may delineate an area of up to 50' diameter with a green strip of cloth, to act as a *killing grounds* spell. Any in this area when the Ent activates the ability are killed by being bludgeoned to death by a number of very angry trees. The activation is: "Now friends, show them the fury of the forest!" Unlike the *killing grounds* spell, the Ent is not killed when it takes effect.

**Nature Heal:** One point of their invulnerability armor is repaired by any of the following spells: *Mend*, *Barkskin* (heals 2 points), *Heal*, *Harden*.

**Description:** Ents are a race of giant tree-like people that protect, pacify, and shepherd the forests of the world. They have good relations with those Elves who share

their love of nature, but distrust all other races, especially those with which they are not familiar. They have a particular hatred of orcs and all creatures who seek to destroy the forest with fire and with axes. They are slow of speech, slow of action, and slow to anger, but once they have dedicated themselves they are constant and unwavering, and a force to be reckoned with. They are the epitome of the natural world, having been created by the nature goddess Yavanna, and so usually have the undying respect and protection of druids and other champions of nature. They also have a long-standing friendship with the elves, stemming back to the beginnings of the world when the elves taught them how to speak.

**Roleplaying:** Ents are very slow to speak, usually verbose and act slower than most would prefer they would. Their purpose in life is as tree-herders, helping the forests of the world to grow, and are dedicated to anything that helps things grow and flourish, rather than the forces of destruction and chaos. However, their natural inclination is to let the world pass them by, as most things seem to work out okay in the long run. One of the deepest causes of concern for Ents is the “loss” of female Ents, called Entwives. It is unclear whether or not the Entwives are truly extinct or have simply become lost, but the Ents cannot bring themselves to leave their forests to go looking for them.

**Garb:** The more tree-like, the better. Branches, leaves, bark, etc.

**Lives:** 1

*Entwife*

(EHNT-wife)

By: Courynn Syl’vil’naius (Crystal Groves)

Type/Ratio: Plant Creature/6:1 (Quest Only)

**Armor:** 4 points natural sectional invulnerability- special strengths and weaknesses (see below)

**Shield:** none

**Attacks:** Two unhinged one-handed weapons, boulders.

**Traits:**

**Very Strong**

**Siege Boulders**

**Natural Weapons**



## Blend

**Giant:** Entwives, as living trees, can range anywhere from 30 feet tall to upwards of 100 feet tall. Anyone in any situation (role-play or combat) with an Entwive must do so on their knees (unless medically unable to) and attempt to recognize the gargantuan size difference between the player and the creature. If fighting an Entwive, any melee hits delivered to the Entwive count as leg hits of the appropriate side until such time as the Entwive has a leg wound- then and only then can arm or torso shots be delivered. Non-touch spells and missile weapons count as normal.

**Vulnerability to Flame:** An Entwive that is hit by any flame attack, (including flamewall, fire arrow, fireball, flameblade, pyrotechnics, etc.) are affected in the following way: They must attempt to flee, as per the bard *fear* spell. They lose one point of armor per 30 seconds until they either find a significant source of natural water (rivers, creeks, etc are appropriate, and located at GM's discretion, individual water flasks are not considered large enough to extinguish an Entwive, but a bucket brigade may be at GM's discretion), until they are extinguished by an iceball or wind spell, or until they are dead.

**Entangle Immunity:** An Entwive has the supreme respect of all living plants in the forest, which renders them immune to *entangle* spells, and they may dispel any *entangle* spell by saying: "No, little ones, that's not very nice, let him/her go." x3 They may also dispel *thornwall* spells by saying: "No, little ones, that's not very nice, run along and play." x3

**Healing Fruit:** If during the appropriate season, an Entwive may provide to allies a fruit that, if eaten, provides all of the following effects: *Heal, Cure Disease, Cure Poison, Remove Curse.*

**Nature Heal:** One point of their invulnerability armor is repaired by any of the following spells: *Mend, Barkskin* (heals 2 points), *Heal, Harden.*

**Description:** Entwives are the legendary "lost" female Ents. They are natural compliment to Ents because they are the orderly side of nature, creatures of fertility, of agriculture, and of the nurturing side of nature. Their purpose in life is to tend their gardens, to care for the fruit bearing plants and trees, and it was they who taught men and elves the art of agriculture. They dislike anything that abuses the land or spreads fire, death and destruction.

**Roleplaying:** Like Ents, Entwives are slow to anger, slow to decisions, and slow to action but once dedicated they are a constant force. Entwives are peaceful creatures, preferring to only harm others in the event of extreme self defense. They can generally speak Old Entish and Old Elvish, since it was the elves who taught them to speak long ago.

**Garb:** The more tree-like, the better. Branches, leaves, bark, etc. Entwives should also have “magical” fruit with them, or even on their branches.

**Note for the GM:** In Tolkein’s timeline, during the Second age the Entwives suffered a terrible tragedy where Sauron came in force and destroyed most, if not all the Entwives, hence their “lost” status. It is up to the GM’s discretion whether or not this is a pre-extinction or post-extinction world—whether Entwives are elusive but alive or they are nigh-on extinct, for that definitely influences the character’s feelings should they encounter one.

Lives: 1.

*Huorn*

(HOO-orn)

By: Courynn Syl’vil’naius (Crystal Groves)

Type/Ratio: Plant Creature/1:4 (Quest Only)

**Armor:** 3 points natural sectional armor- special strengths and weaknesses (see below.)

**Shield:** none

**Weapons :** Two unhinged one-handed weapons, boulders.

***Traits & Innate Abilities:***

**Very Strong**

**Natural Weapons**

**Siege Boulders**

**Blend**

**Giant:** Huorns, as living trees, can range anywhere from 30 feet tall to upwards of 100 feet tall. Anyone in any situation (role-play or combat) with a Huorn must do so on their knees (unless medically unable to) and attempt to recognize the gargantuan size difference between the player and the creature. If fighting a Huorn, any melee hits delivered to the Huorn count as leg hits of the appropriate side until such time as the Huorn has a leg wound- then and only then can arm or torso shots be delivered. Non-touch spells and missile weapons count as normal.

**Vulnerability to Fire:** An Huorn that is hit by any fire attack, (including flamewall, fire arrow, fireball, flameblade, pyrotechnics, etc.) are affected in the

following way: They must attempt to flee, as per the bard *fear* spell. They lose one point of armor per 30 seconds until they either find a significant source of natural water (rivers, creeks, etc are appropriate, and located at GM's discretion, individual water flasks are not considered large enough to extinguish a Huorn, but a bucket brigade may be at GM's discretion), until they are extinguished by an iceball or wind spell, or until they are dead.

**Rooted:** A Huorn will never move its feet unless it is commanded to move by an Ent.

**Entangle Immunity:** An Huorn has the supreme respect of all living plants in the forest, which renders them immune to *entangle* spells.

**Ent Respect:** If a Huorn hears a command from an Ent, they will immediately comply to the best of their ability. A Huorn will never attack or harm an Ent for any reason.

**Nature Heal:** One point of their invulnerability armor is repaired by any of the following spells: *Mend*, *Barkskin* (heals 2 points), *Heal*, *Harden*.

**Description:** Huorns are the semi-sentient cousins of Ents. It is unclear whether or not Huorns are a race of semi-intelligent trees all of their own or if they are just ancient Ents that have, in the words of the Ents, become “treeish”.

**Roleplaying:** Huorns have moods and personalities, but have the intelligence of essentially a dog or sheep when compared to an Ent. They can only speak Old Entish, and only choose to speak to Ents or Entwives. Without the supervision and care of an Ent or Entwife, Huorns grow wild and dangerous. They may attack intruders in their forests, grow uncontrollably, or cut off any light into the forest below.

**Garb:** The more tree-like, the better. Branches, leaves, bark, etc.

**Lives:** 2

## *Kraken*

(AKA Watcher in the Water)

(KRAH-ken)

**Description:** There is a Kraken already in the *Dor Un Avathar*, v.8 which I feel is sufficiently appropriate for use in a Tolkien setting. Please see that for its stats, traits and abilities.

The Kraken is one of the horrible sea monsters created by the dark powers. It is a beast that can live in either salt or fresh water, and prefers to lay low in dark pools and stealthily snatch and devour its victims before returning to its watery lair. It looks, in essence, like a horrible giant octopus with eight forked tentacles.

**Roleplaying:** The Kraken is not a particularly intelligent beast, but it is incredibly territorial. It will kill and try to eat anything that disturbs it within its territory, whether it be fish, shark, orc, or dwarf. If the Kraken is horribly wounded, it prefers to submerge itself, lick its wounds, and fight another day.

**Garb:** Think Octopus, then go bigger, uglier, nastier, and with big pointy teeth.

**Lives:** 1

*Lesser Orc*

Type: Standard Creature

Q/M Ratio: 1:3

**Armour:** May wear up to 1 point of armour.

**Weapons:** Any non-hinged melee weapon under 4', shortbow.

**Shields:** May carry small shields.

**Immunities:** Poison

**Natural Lives:** 5

*Traits & Innate Abilities*

**Weak**

**Weak shields:** their shields will be destroyed by three solid blows from any weapon, and any red or magical weapon destroys them in one blow.

**Poison arrows:** Any arrows they shoot does no actual damage, but has a highly potent poison on it that will kill in a 50 count if not treated.

**Mindless assault:** They will attack constantly and with no regard for their own safety unless outnumbered 5 to 1 or confronted with a magic user holding a charged spell.

**Fear of light:** Any spellcaster holding a charged fireball or lightning bolt will cause the orcs to flee for a 10 count. Orcs will only be active at night except in extremely dire circumstances or motivated by an outside force.

**Garb:** Crude clothing, random leather/hide armour. Greenish grey make-up, animal fangs.

**Description:** These hideous creatures are members of a race descended from Elves who were twisted and perverted by the great evil in the past. They are so perverted to evil that they are no longer rational reasonable beings, but simply a force of destruction and death. Their strength is not individual, but lies in their often overwhelming numbers. They speak no language other than the black speech of Mordor, and are usually not a force to be reckoned with unless an outside force can organize them effectively. They are chaotic and live only to eat (resorting to cannibalism at the drop of a hat), or to destroy the world of creatures of the light. They are terrified of bright lights and will not operate in the light of day. Lesser Orcs are also occasionally referred to as Goblins.

### *Orc*

(Ohrk)

Type: Standard Creature

Q/M Ratio 1:1

**Armour:** May wear up to 4 points of armour.

**Weapons:** Any non-hinged melee weapon, shortbow.

**Shields:** May carry small or medium shields.

**Immunities:** Poison

**Natural Lives:** 5

#### *Traits & Innate Abilities:*

**Weak shields:** their shields will be destroyed by three solid blows from any weapon, and any red or magical weapon destroys them in one blow.

**Poison arrows:** Any arrows they shoot does no actual damage, but has a highly potent poison on it that will kill in a 50 count if not treated.

**Mindless assault:** They will attack constantly and with no regard for their own safety unless outnumbered 5 to 1 or confronted with a magic user holding a charged spell.

**Fear of light:** any spellcaster holding a charged fireball or lightning bolt will cause the orcs to flee for a 10 count.

**Garb:** Crude clothing, random leather/steel armor. Greenish grey make-up, animal fangs.

**Description:** These are orcs who have been pressed into service by the dark powers. They have been organized and beaten into subservience, which makes them a much more effective fighting force than standard orcs. They still retain their dislike for light, but they will operate during the daytime if motivated to do so. They also are better equipped than most orcs, sporting bits of metal armor and crude, but effective, polearms. For further description, see the entry for “lesser orc”.

### *Olog-Hai*

(OH-log High)

By: Courynn Syl’vil’naius (Crystal Groves)

Type/Q:M ratio: Normal Monster/(Quest Only)

**Armour:** 6 points natural sectional armor. Special advantages, vulnerabilities. Able to wear up to 6 points of additional armor.

**Shield:** Any Shield

**Attacks:** Single handed war hammer.

**Natural Lives:** 2

#### *Traits and Innate Abilities*

**Very Strong**

**Tough**

**Giant:** Olog-Hai are huge creatures, typically around 25 feet tall. Anyone in any situation (role-play or combat) with an Olog-Hai must do so on their knees (unless medically unable to) and attempt to recognize the gargantuan size difference between the player and the creature. If fighting an Olog-Hai, any melee hits delivered to the Olog-Hai count as leg hits of the appropriate side until such time as the troll has a leg wound- then and only then can arm or torso shots be delivered. Non-touch spells and missile weapons count as normal.

**Stone creature:** A *stone to flesh* spell will nullify an olog-hai's armor completely. A *stoneskin* spell will repair two points of an olog-hai's armor. A *petrify* spell will completely heal an olog-hai and restore all points of armor.

**Description:** Olog-Hai are stone trolls that have been manipulated by the dark powers to make them even larger, more intelligent, and far more dangerous. Unlike their stone troll brethren, they do not fear the sunlight, they can speak and understand the Black Speech of Mordor- allowing them to understand orders, and wield huge war

hammers and shields. Because of these advantages, they are the dark powers' most feared melee fighter.

**Roleplaying:** Olog-Hai are vicious creatures that wade into combat, sweeping aside any and all opposition with a swipe of their vicious hammers. Though they can speak and understand the black speech, the only sound their enemies will hear is the ferocious roar as they wade into combat. Trolls are not subtle or clever; they but they are excellent foot soldiers.

**Garb:** Crudest of clothing with armor crafted by the dark power they serve.

*Uruk-Hai*

(OO-roo-k High)

By: Courynn Syl'vil'naius (Crystal Groves)

Type/Q:M ratio: Normal Monster/(Quest Only)

**Armor:** Up to 6 points of armor. No armor allowed on back or back of legs.

**Shield:** Any.

**Weapons:** Any single handed sword, crossbow, polearm.

**Natural Lives:** 5

**Traits & Innate Abilities:**

**Tracking:** Tracking as per scout (2/life)

**Description:** Uruk-Hai are the black-skinned black blooded orcish creations of the dark powers. Uruk-Hai are orcs that have been twisted and "improved", so they are as tall and strong as humans, with no fear of the sun and with incredibly sensitive noses which allow them to track down their prey. They are usually used as fast scouts and foot soldiers of the dark powers. When Uruk-Hai are in an army with orcs, they typically sieze control over groups of orcs and lead them into battle. Uruks are not given back armor to prevent them from retreating and allowing them better movement.

**Roleplaying:** Garb: Black and grey military uniforms of the dark powers. They also typically bear insignia of the dark power they serve on their shield, their chest, or even their face.

*Winged Beast*

(AKA Fellbeast)

By: Courynn Syl'vil'naius (Crystal Groves)

Type/Ratio: Beast Creature/4:1 (Quest Only)

**Armour:** 4 points natural sectional armor.

**Shield:** none

**Weapons:** The winged beast is played by three people. The central person has a stabbing-only spear, portraying the head and jaws. There are two people next to the central person, each playing a wing and a single short sword as a claw.

**Natural Lives:** 4

***Traits & Innate Abilities:***

**Armor Piercing Maw:** Any successful stabbing attack by the head of the winged beast ignores all non-invulnerability armor.

**Natural Flight**

**Flying grab:** The winged beast may make a subdual attack while flying, saying "grab". After a vocal 20 count, the winged beast may say "drop", delivering a siege hit to their victim. If the victim is dropped before a full 20 count, no damage is delivered. A winged beast may only grab one victim at a time. A winged beast may not grab large creatures, giants, creatures immune to normal attacks, or creatures in flight.

**Mount**

**Description:** Winged beasts are the fetid, black creatures raised by Sauron as flying mounts for his Ringwraiths. They are naked and featherless reptiles, with wings of hide like a bat a long, sinuous neck and two sets of razor sharp clawed feet. They are like small dragons, but able to be ridden and with a razor sharp beak and only a basic animal intelligence.

**Garb:** Black reptilian garb, with two leathery bat-like wings.

*Warg*

(WAH-rg)

By: Courynn Syl'vil'naius (Crystal Groves)

Type/Ratio: Beast Creature/1:2 (Quest Only)

**Armour:** 2 points natural sectional armor.

**Shield:** none



**Weapons :** Two Short Swords, as claws

***Traits & Natural Abilities:***

**Natural Weapons**

**Strong**

**Flame Vulnerability:** Any flame attack will ignore a Warg's natural armor.

**Flame Fear:** A warg must stay outside 50' of any remain-active *Fireballs*, *Flamewalls* or anything that is said to be actively on fire.

**Mount**

**Unreliable Mount:** Wargs are vicious, evil, creatures. If, in the course of a battle, their rider dismounts or is killed, the Warg gains the **Neutral** trait, and has no qualms about who in particular they kill and feast upon.

**Description:** Wargs are large, intelligent wolves that have been bred as mounts for the dark powers, though some of them roam in packs in the wild. They have their own language and can communicate amongst themselves, though not usually with anyone else, and live to spread fear, chaos, and feed upon the weak.

In the wild, they will occasionally ally themselves with evil creatures like Orcs and Goblins and allow themselves to be used as mounts in battle.

**Tracking:** 2x/life

**Garb:** Anything to make you look more like a big, nasty wolf.

**Lives:** 4

*Werewolf*

By: Courynn Syl'vil'naius (Crystal Groves)

Type/Ratio: Beast Creature/5:1 (Quest Only)

**Armour:** 4 points natural sectional armor.

**Shield:** none

**Weapons :** Two Short Swords, as claws

**Natural Lives:** 2

***Traits & Innate Abilities:***

**Natural Weapons**

**Strong**

**Flame Vulnerability:** Any flame attack will ignore a Werewolf's natural armor.

**Tracking:** 2x/life

**Description:** Tolkien does make brief mention of Werewolves in *The Silmarillion*, but they seem to show little semblance to the traditional version of Werewolves in Eastern European Mythology. In Tolkien's world, Werewolves are simply huge wolf-like creatures that were one of the evil creations of Morgoth. Sauron is particularly associated with Werewolves, as he took the shape of a Werewolf at one time.

Unlike the Eastern-European Werewolves, Tolkien's Werewolves are not shape-shifters, nor do they suffer from any sort of disease that is communicable in any way. Many people are attacked by the Werewolf-host in *The Silmarillion*, and it is never stated or implied that they then became Werewolves themselves.

Having been created by the dark powers, these creatures are vessels of evil, with the "dreadful spirits that he [Sauron] had imprisoned in their bodies."<sup>11</sup> They are not intended to be played as player-characters, and have no class abilities.

Garb: Anything to make you look more like a big, nasty wolf.

### *Vampire*

Vampires, in Tolkien's world, are creatures shrouded in mystery. There is only one Vampire ever named in Tolkien's world, and that is Sauron's servant Thuringwethil (as far as I am aware). No one ever is recorded to have done battle with her, but it is apparent that she dies in the destruction of Sauron's stronghold of the Isle of Werewolves in Luthien and Beren's quest for the Silmaril. She are described vaguely as a creature that looks like a human but who had bat wings and iron claws, so it can be implied that she is sufficiently different from the traditional Magyar interpretation of the Vampire myth. However I don't feel at this time that I have enough evidence to be able to deduce any sort of statistics or abilities for use of these creatures in Amtgard. And on top of that, since there only ever was one vampire in Tolkien's world, it seems inappropriate to have them as part of an adventure set in his world anyway.

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<sup>11</sup> *The Silmarillion*, pg. 193

## *Further Resources*

This guide is meant only to be a first resource, a scratching of the surface. The world of Tolkien's creation is far deeper, more interesting and more full of possibilities than I could possibly write here. Herein I have included a list of resources for exploring Tolkien's world more thoroughly.

### *Works of J.R.R. Tolkien*

The Hobbit

### *The Lord of the Rings Trilogy:*

The Fellowship of the Ring

The Two Towers

The Return of the King

### *J.R.R. Tolkien's Books published Posthumously*

The Silmarillion

Unfinished Tales

The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien

Bilbo's Last Song

*The History of Middle Earth Series (written by J.R.R. Tolkien, edited by Christopher Tolkien)*

The Book of Lost Tales Part I

The Book of Lost Tales Part II

The Lays of Beleriand

The Shaping of Middle Earth

The Lost Road and Other Writings

The Return of the Shadow

The Treason of Isengard

The War of the Ring

Sauron Defeated

Morgoth's Ring

The War of the Jewels

The Peoples of Middle Earth

### *Other Useful Books*

Day, David. *Tolkien: The Illustrated Encyclopedia*. Fireside Books, 1996.

Dickerson, Matthew T. *Following Gandalf: Epic Battles and Moral Victory in the Lord of the Rings*. Brazos Press, 2003.

Noel, Ruth S. and Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Languages of Tolkien's Middle Earth*. Houghton Mifflin, 1980.

Tyler, J.E.A. *The Complete Tolkien Companion*. Thomas Dunne Books, 2004.

### *Other Resources*

#### *Film:*

*The Hobbit (animated version)*. Warner Home Video, 1977.

*The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*. Dir. Peter Jackson. New Line Cinema, 2001.

*The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*. Dir. Peter Jackson. New Line Cinema, 2002.

*The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*. Dir. Peter Jackson. New Line Cinema, 2003.

#### *Online:*

The Online Encyclopedia of Arda: <http://www.glyphweb.com/arda/>

The Tolkien Language List: <http://tolklang.quettar.org/>

Online Quenya (Classical Elvish) Course: <http://www.uib.no/People/hnohf/qcourse.htm>

Hisweloke: The Sindarin (Contemporary Elvish) Dictionary:  
<http://www.jrvf.com/hisweloke/sindar/>

I hope you have found my little guide to using Tolkien's world within Amtgard enjoyable, or at least useful to your game.

*Live Tolkien's Dream.*