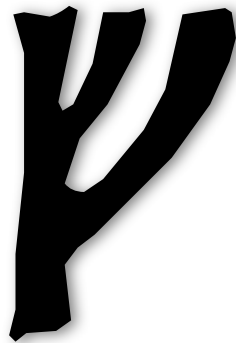


# — Mythic Battles — *Revised*



A Fan-made Supplement  
for ***The One Ring Roleplaying Game***

by James R. Brown and S.W. Hodgman

## – Credits –

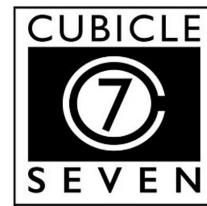
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The One Ring Roleplaying Game designed by **Francesco Nepitello**, with **Marco Maggi**

Dedicated to **Francesco Nepitello & Dominic McDowall-Thomas**

*Thanks to the feedback of many interested players, Mythic Battles Revised was written.  
We hope everyone enjoys this version of the rules.*

The One Ring Roleplaying Game is published by  
Sophisticated Games Ltd, 1 Andersen Court, Newnham Road, Cambridge CB3 9EZ, UK and  
Cubicle 7 Entertainment Ltd, Riverside House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, UK.



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## – Mythic Battles – *Revised*

'I wish Merry was here,' he heard himself saying, and quick thoughts raced through his mind, even as he watched the enemy come charging to the assault...

Battles are unavoidable in Middle-earth, though a hero may wish to avoid them, preferring the laughter of friends around a table of food to the crashing of shields on a body-strewn plain. But as the events of the world unfold, the will of Sauron becomes clearer, and his servants rise in direct opposition to the Will of the West. A hero's call to arms is necessary for peace and the continued good of all the Free Peoples. The Drums of Doom are beating: boom, boom, boom. War is at hand!

### Storytelling Mode

The combat rules found in the *The One Ring Roleplaying Game* have been designed for episode mode, where every detail of a conflict is resolved in a series of rounds. But what if someone wanted a quicker way to tell the story of a battle? After all, there are some battles only meant to be told as an overview. War is a very gloomy business indeed! One or two scenes of close-up action, along with a recounting of the thoughts and feelings of the player-heroes, may be all that is necessary.

With some creative additions to the combat rules, supplemental materials, such as *Tales from Wilderland*, have done an excellent job of providing the feel of being in the thick of massive battles. These additions include great devices such as **Battle Events**, an **Allies in Battle table**, and situational rules that govern engagements and tactics, etc.

But even with the inclusion of these elements, the episode mode of storytelling does not change and the combat rules remain central to the action.

In order to find a quicker way to tell the story of a battle, there needs to be a change in the storytelling mode to narrative time. This, in turn, requires a supplemental set of rules, herein referred to as the **Battle & Siege Resolution Rules**.

### Perspective

As the chief narrator and director of the story, the Loremaster has the privilege of setting perspective. This means that he will decide which parts of a battle are most important to narrate. It could also mean that he hands storytelling initiative to one particular player who then interprets the results of the battle as seen through the eyes of his character. This will give the player a chance to talk about things truly important, such as friends, home, sunlight and green grasses. The Loremaster may also call for multiple perspectives of the same battle which, when woven together, form a larger tale. The exercise of changing perspective can be an unexpected source of enjoyment in the game. It is a simple method for involving players in ways that dice rolling cannot accomplish.

### Battle & Siege Resolution Rules

Battles and sieges are often complex events, involving armies of foot-soldiers, mounted combatants, machines of war, strong defensible positions, and even the late arrival of allies. Managing this type of conflict could easily become overwhelming and time-consuming if handled in episode mode. The **Battle & Siege Resolution Rules** were written to give Loremasters the ability to narrate these aspects without the need for

full stat blocks or getting entangled in endless dice rolling. They are meant for quickly summarising the affects of a battle or siege on the companions in increments called *assault waves*, rather than combat rounds, which are used in episode mode. That being said, the **Battle & Siege Resolution Rules** do include momentary lapses into episode mode in order to provide glimpses of detailed action significant to the outcome of the war.

### Assault Waves

In episode mode, combats are conducted in rounds representing roughly thirty seconds of action. In narrative time mode, battles and sieges are conducted in *assault waves* lasting anywhere from one hour to one day as a suggestion.

A series of assault waves measures the overall performance of the Free Peoples, as well as the perseverance of each companion. This process is similar to the way a journey is managed, but instead of calculating the affects of travelling over a number of days through individual Fatigue tests, the affects of battling over a number of assault waves is calculated through individual Endurance tests. And while a journey can be temporarily interrupted by a Hazard episode, a battle or siege can be interrupted by a Counterstrike—a short episode of great importance.

When one assault wave ends, a new one begins and the relative strength of numbers between the Free Peoples and the Shadow forces rises and falls. This leads to the end of the engagement where the companions may participate in a Last Stand episode to simply finish the narrative or to improve their results.

To accomplish all of this, the following four steps should be applied:

## Step 1. The Onset

The start of every assault wave is known as the onset. During this step, the Loremaster holds storytelling initiative and sets the scene by describing various elements, such as the relative strength of numbers of the engaged forces, the threat level of the Shadow, the engagement mood, and the core tactics of the Free Peoples. Player-heroes may be given a chance to affect these details through creative roleplaying and clever application of their abilities (see the sidebar ‘Player-hero Intervention’).

### Strength of Numbers

The term company or great company may be used as a default description for most forces in Middle-earth; but when several houses are mustered or alliances are formed, it may be more appropriate to use the terms army, host, or great host, especially for very large forces. On the opposite end of the spectrum, smaller groups are commonly referred to as bands or warbands.

In addition to these general descriptions, the Loremaster should also establish the starting *relative* strength of numbers of the Free Peoples and the Shadow forces by choosing one of the statements found on the **Relative Strength of Numbers table**. It should be noted that the advantage usually belongs to the Shadow in these dark times, but any scenario is possible.

## Relative Strength of Numbers table:

|  |
|--|
| <b>The Shadow has Prevailed.</b>   |
| The Free Peoples are <b>overwhelmed in numbers</b> by the Shadow         |
| The Shadow significantly <b>outnumbers</b> the Free Peoples.             |
| Both sides are near enough <b>evenly sized</b> .                         |
| The Free Peoples are <b>greater</b> than the Shadow forces.              |
| The Shadow remnant is <b>overpowered in numbers</b> by the Free Peoples. |
| <b>The Free Peoples are Victorious!</b>                                  |

Over the course of several assault waves, the statements for relative strength of numbers will shift up and down toward a victory for the Free Peoples or a victory for the Shadow.

*For example, if ‘The Shadow significantly **outnumbers** the Free Peoples’ to start and a Drums of Doom result is rolled on the **Assault table** (see ‘Step 2: Tides of War’), the statement will shift two steps up to ‘**The Shadow has Prevailed**’ and the engagement will conclude decisively at the end of Step 4: End of Battle, unless a Counterstrike hinders it.*

As the narrator, it is up to the Loremaster to interpret the actual sizes of the forces remaining after each assault wave and when it is appropriate for the Shadow forces to give up and turn back, even if they haven’t been defeated through strength of numbers.

*After several assault waves, the Free Peoples and Shadow forces are near enough **evenly sized**. What began as a clash between great hosts has now dwindled to a battle between hundreds, both sides suffering heavy losses due to their wrath*

*kindled to madness. If the Free Peoples hold the line or achieve any more objectives, the Shadow forces will turn back.*

## Threat Level of the Shadow

Puny and weak Goblins, led by low-ranking Orc-chieftains, may present very little threat to the Free Peoples, but when they are accompanied by fearsome Hill-trolls or other monsters, the danger of the battle or siege increases significantly. For the player-heroes, this means an even greater challenge to their Endurance points.

The **Shadow Threat table** provides several ranges of attribute ratings along with corresponding descriptions of the Shadow forces. When determining the level of Shadow threat, the Loremaster may simply add up the attribute ratings of the major types of enemies involved in the conflict and calculate their average rating, or he can simply use the descriptions listed as a guide.

Once an average rating or description has been selected, this determines the number of Endurance tests that each hero will be making during Step 3: Blood & Tears.

**Shadow Threat table:**

| Average enemy attribute rating | Description                       | Number of Endurance tests per assault wave |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1–2                            | <i>weak (puny Goblins)</i>        | 1  |
| 3–4                            | <i>tormenting (Orcs, Spiders)</i> | 2  |
| 5–6                            | <i>worthy (Wolves, Vampires)</i>  | 3  |
| 7–8                            | <i>fearsome (Trolls)</i>          | 4  |
| 9–10                           | <i>lethal (Mountain Trolls)</i>   | 5  |
| 11–12                          | <i>otherworldly (Dragons)</i>     | 6  |

**Engagement Mood**

As part of the onset, the Loremaster determines the general temperament of both sides entering the assault. This decision directly affects the lethality of all failed Endurance tests on the companions during Step 3: Blood & Tears. Moods can be very fluid and wax or wane. Therefore, the Loremaster should feel free to change the rating between assault waves accordingly (perhaps with a roll of a Success die). There is no right or wrong method of setting the engagement mood, nor are there any restrictions on how much it can shift, only that it can never rise above 6 or fall below 1.

The basic engagement moods, in decreasing threat and ferocity, are listed on the **Engagement Mood table**.

**Core Tactics of the Free Peoples**

After the relative strength of numbers has been described, the threat of the Shadow has been calculated, and the engagement mood of the conflict has been determined, the Loremaster and the players will settle what the core tactics of the Free Peoples will be for the current assault wave.

**Engagement Mood table:**

| Battle can be described as...   | Endurance loss per failed test |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>wrath kindled to madness</i> | 6                              |
| <i>grim determination</i>       | 5                              |
| <i>a bold assault</i>           | 4                              |
| <i>a war of cunning tactics</i> | 3                              |
| <i>wary and elusive</i>         | 2                              |
| <i>a war of attrition</i>       | 1                              |

Core tactics include two basic elements fundamental to every battle and siege: command objectives and areas of engagement.

- **Command objectives** are the stated goals of the Free Peoples. Narrating the command objectives kickstarts the action and lays out possible endings for the

engagement. Players can be allowed to spend as little or as much time on command objectives as the Loremaster wishes, possibly roleplaying important speeches and directives. The type of engagement and whether or not the Free Peoples are defending or attacking are key factors for stating command objectives.

- **Areas of engagement** signify where the captains and lords have strategically deployed their troops on the battlefield. Every battle or siege is unique and will include specific formations different from other engagements. For the player-heroes, areas of engagement become the locations where they choose to stand and fight. The decision where a player-hero fights during an assault is one of the most important decisions he can make. Ideally, this choice should reflect to some extent his proficiency and competency in certain Weapon and Common skills. For example, a player-hero proficient in Bows might take up position in the *Rear Guard* where other archers stand. Or, a player-

hero with a high **Inspire** skill might fight *At the Centre* of a battlefield or stand *At the Gates* during a siege. If at least one hero is also a commander (see 'Player-hero Commanders'), he will decide what areas are active to deploy forces; otherwise, the Loremaster decides.

The **Areas of Engagement table** lists all the possible positions on a battlefield or in a siege. Notice that every position lists its own optional Endurance test TN. This is because players will be making a number of Endurance rolls each assault wave to test their character's Endurance (see 'Step 3: Blood & Tears').

The most dangerous positions (suggested) are *Amidst the Vanguard* and *The Main Assault*. Player-heroes may wish to avoid these areas, but the more dangerous the position chosen, the greater the opportunity to earn special honours, which can translate into gifts of Treasure, Standing, Title, or even an additional Experience point later on (see 'Awards & Honours').

**Areas of Engagement table:**

| Battlefield-positions | Siege-positions       | Endurance Test TN |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| In Reserve            | In Reserve            | 10                |
| Rear Guard            | Engines of War        | 12                |
| On the Flank          | On the Wall           | <b>14</b>         |
| Among the Skirmishers | Among the Skirmishers | <b>14</b>         |
| At the Centre         | At the Gates          | 16                |
| Amidst the Vanguard   | The Main Assault      | 18                |

### Player-hero Intervention

While the Loremaster is busy storytelling, players may also have an opportunity to influence the narrative throughout a battle or siege. Building on the idea of ‘Player-hero Intervention’ (page 200 of *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*), a player may attempt to make a case for directly or indirectly altering decisions that have been made concerning the relative strength of numbers, command objectives, engagement mood, areas of engagement, or anything else he can plausibly think of using his abilities and resources. If the Loremaster accepts the player’s tale, then he can “propose a task roll summarising his possible intervention. Upon a successful roll, he briefly describes an alternative course of events describing the presence of his character or the effect of his influence.”

## Step 2. Tides of War

When the details of the onset have been established, the battle or siege begins (or continues) with a new assault wave. The action starts with either the Loremaster or the players making a Feat die roll on the **Assault table** (referred to as an Assault roll). The results of this roll will affect the progress of the Free Peoples and have ramifications on each companion’s ability to endure.

Every result on the table has been given a name to quickly identify the effects of the Assault roll and to assist in narrating the outcomes of the battle or siege. If appropriate, the relative strength of numbers statement will need to be changed immediately by one or two steps up or down in favour of the Shadow or the Free Peoples. Additionally, the *Drums of Doom* and *Shattered Shields* results double the amount of Endurance that each companion will lose

for every failed Endurance test during Step 3: Blood & Tears.

(Important: Even if the statement shifts to a victory during this step, all four steps should be completed before ending the war.)

### Strong Defences

The Loremaster may determine that due to conditions and circumstances, a battle or siege will take more than one assault wave to resolve. A stronghold or natural defence is normally the cause of this. However, it could also be the late arrival of forces during the first wave.

*For example, if the result of the Assault roll would normally shift the battle to a Shadow victory, the relative strength of numbers remains at ‘The Free Peoples are overwhelmed in numbers by the Shadow’ instead, and the war continues.*



### Turning the Tide

An Assault roll cannot be influenced by the player-heroes. The **Battle & Siege Resolution Rules** have been designed purposefully to display the role of fate and predestination in such important battles and to focus the player-heroes on the task of perseverance instead.

If, however, the player-heroes do not like the result of the Assault roll and wish to influence the tide of fate, they will need to roll a **Y** during Step 3: Blood & Tears. This will open the opportunity for a Counterstrike episode — which carries heavy consequences for failure, but wondrous gains for victory (see ‘A Counterstrike’).



**Assault table:**

| Feat die  | Result            | Description  |
|---|-------------------|--|
|    | Drums of Doom     | The Free Peoples are decimated and complete no command objectives. Change the relative strength of numbers by two steps in favour of the Shadow forces. All player-heroes double the amount of losses they take on each failed Endurance test this assault wave.                                   |
| 1, 2, 3, or 4   | Shattered Shields | Battle is fierce and casualties run deep among the Free Peoples; they achieve only a minor objective. All player-heroes double the amount of losses they take on each failed Endurance test this assault wave. Change the relative strength of numbers by one step in favour of the Shadow forces. |
| 5, 6, 7, or 8   | The Line is Held  | The Free Peoples hold their line and keep fighting, winning one or two command objectives.   |
| 9 or 10   | Night is Ending   | A glimmer of hope arises as the Free Peoples push back their enemies and achieve several command objectives. Change the relative strength of numbers by one step in favour of the Free Peoples.  |
|  | Will of the West  | The bodies of Shadow creatures are strewn everywhere across the battlefield as a major command objective is completed. Change the relative strength of numbers by two steps in favour of the Free Peoples.   |

## Step 3. Blood & Tears

After the companions have completed the Assault roll, the assault wave continues with each player-hero making a number of Endurance tests as determined by the level of Shadow threat (see the **Shadow Threat table**). These tests are a measure of the heroes' perseverance.

### Endurance Tests

The **Battle & Siege Resolution Rules** add yet another type of test to those found on page 145 of *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*: the Endurance test. Whereas failed Fatigue tests lead to an increased Fatigue score and Weariness, failed Endurance tests lead to a loss of Endurance points, Weariness, unconsciousness and death.

An Endurance test is accomplished by rolling the Feat die and a number of Success dice equal to a player-hero's **Battle** skill rating.


The default Target Number for all Endurance tests is 14. (The Loremaster may instead use the **Areas of Engagement table** to set the TN for each player-hero, which is a better representation of the danger posed.)

Endurance tests are related to the Heart Attribute (through the use of the **Battle** skill) and can profit from a Heart Attribute bonus.

For each instance that a player-hero fails an Endurance test, he loses a number of Endurance points set by the current engagement mood (see the **Engagement**

**Mood table**) and doubled by an Assault roll result favouring the Shadow (see the **Assault table**). These losses are applied immediately.

### Piercing Blows

In addition to losing Endurance, anytime a player-hero fails an Endurance test and the Feat die shows an  result, he has also suffered a Piercing blow. He must then make a Protection test (TN 14) to check whether his armour has protected him from taking a Wound. The Loremaster may adjust the TN of the Protection test (typically by one or two levels higher) if the weapons of the enemy are particularly sharp or lethal.

### Protect Companion Action

Before a hero makes a Protection test, the Loremaster may allow a companion to intervene on his behalf by declaring a special 'Protect Companion' action. This works much like the special combat task found on page 180 of *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*, but without the requirement of a combat stance. A hero may spend a point of Hope to take the Piercing blow himself. He must then make a Protection test to keep from taking a Wound.

It is important to note that the hero taking this action should be stationed in the same area of engagement as the one he is trying to protect.

### States of Health

Players should follow all the normal rules of 'Life and Death' beginning on page 127 of *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*, such as the rules for Weariness, unconsciousness, and killing blows. Unconscious heroes are especially vulnerable to a coup de grâce on the battlefield. It is up to the Loremaster to decide the fate of an unconscious player-hero or he can roll a Success die. On a roll

of 1, 2, or 3, an enemy delivers a killing blow. Otherwise, the hero survives until the next assault wave.

### Player-hero Commanders

The forces of the Free Peoples are led by brave commanders often called Lords, High-kings, Kings, Heralds, High-captains, Captains, Chiefs, or Chieftains. Most of the time these are Loremaster characters, but if a player-hero has a high enough standing (4, 5, or 6), he might be called upon to lead his company into battle.

Due to the protection of his unit, a player-hero commander is not required to make Endurance tests during Step 3: Blood & Tears. He is required, however, to give orders and to assign his troops to specific areas of engagement, including himself. This is important because he can also make one of the following choices every assault wave:

1. Make a single roll of **Inspire** (TN 14) before any Endurance tests are made. A success means you have inspired the other player-heroes in the same area of engagement, lowering the difficulty of their Endurance tests by one level; a great or extraordinary success lowers the difficulty by two levels (to a minimum TN 10). This effect lasts for the current assault wave only.
2. Make a single roll of **Awe** (TN 14) before any Endurance tests are made. A success means you have lowered the threat level of the enemies in the same area of engagement, reducing the number of Endurance tests required of each player-hero stationed there by one level; a great or extraordinary success lowers it by two levels (to a minimum of 'weak'). This effect lasts for the current assault wave only.

3. Make the proper number of Endurance tests yourself. This signifies that you are not relying on the protection of your unit, but putting yourself in danger along with them. If you choose this option, you are trying to increase the odds of triggering a Counterstrike (see 'A Counterstrike').

If more than one player-hero is commanding the Free Peoples in the same area of engagement, they can each choose a different option to gain the benefits of success for those activities. However, if two or more player-hero commanders all choose options 1 or 2 at the same time, keep only the best result among them.




*Two of the companions are commanding the Free Peoples among the main assault. For the current assault wave, both of them choose to intimidate the enemy with their grim faces of wrath. The first one barely passes his roll of **Awe** with a normal success; but the other succeeds with a great success. The great success is used to lower the TN of all Endurance tests by two levels for all companions in the area.*

## A Counterstrike

'Begone, foul dwimmerlaik, lord of carrion! Leave the dead in peace!'

A cold voice answered: 'Come not between the Nazgûl and his prey! Or he will not slay thee in thy turn. He will bear thee away to the houses of lamentation, beyond all darkness, where thy flesh shall be devoured, and thy shrivelled mind be left naked to the Lidless Eye.'


A sword rang as it was drawn. 'Do what you will; but I will hinder it, if I may.'


The only way for the player-heroes to change the tide of fate is to trigger and enter a Counterstrike episode. This happens anytime a  is rolled when making an Endurance test. After all Endurance tests are complete, a Counterstrike may be chosen for each  that was rolled. This scene takes place in the same area of engagement as the one who rolled the .

A Counterstrike is a short episode that temporarily interrupts the broader narrative to highlight a pivotal moment in the battle or siege. When successfully completed, a Counterstrike shifts the statement on the **Relative Strength of Numbers table** by one step in favour of the Free Peoples.

The hope of impeding the will of the Enemy, however, is opposed by the risk and consequences of failure. Player-heroes will need to make very difficult choices that could not only increase personal danger, but could also cause a bitter wound to the Free Peoples in the form of defeat.

## Select a Goal

Usually a Counterstrike episode requires one or more player-heroes to overcome a test, treated as a prolonged action (see page 149 of *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*). The default difficulty for this test is TN 14 requiring 3-4 successes and 'inconvenience' for failing on the first roll, such as losing a Success die of Endurance points or gaining that amount in Fatigue. Failing with an  means failing the entire Counterstrike outright, normally.

The Loremaster chooses the goal and the skill that will be used in the challenge by rolling a Feat die and consulting the **Counterstrike Goals table**. If an  is rolled, the Loremaster should roll again but increase the difficulty of the eventual action

by one or more steps. This is accomplished by increasing the TN, the required number of successes, or by changing the result of failure on the first roll from 'inconvenience' to 'Complete failure,' meaning that the action cannot continue after the first roll.

### Counterstrike Goals table:

| Feat die | Counterstrike Goal                      | Must pass a prolonged action using... |
|----------|---|---------------------------------------|
| ♣        | Players' Choice                         |                                       |
| 1–2      | Dominate or Break                       | Athletics                             |
| 3–4      | Out-wit or Flank                        | Battle                                |
| 5–6      | Reinforce or Repair                     | Craft                                 |
| 7–8      | Ambush or Spoil                         | Stealth or Awareness                  |
| 9–10     | Defeat or Defend                        | Weapon                                |
| 👁        | Roll Again and increase the difficulty. |                                       |

### Determine the Consequences of Failure

The Loremaster determines what the consequences of failure will be if the Counterstrike episode is lost by the player-heroes. This is done by rolling a Feat die and finding the result on the **Counterstrike table**.

### Describe the Counterstrike

Once the goal, the skill, and the difficulty are decided, and the consequence of failure is determined, the Loremaster improvises a brief scenario using all the information available. His goal should be to give the players a clear picture of the situation at

hand and the opportunity they have to change the tide of fate.

### Counterstrikes table:

| Feat die | Effect      | Consequences for Failing   |
|----------|-------------|--|
| ♣        | Roll again  |  |
| 1–3      | Malevolence | Increase Shadow threat by one level.   |
| 4–6      | Ferocity    | Set engagement mood to 6 during the next assault wave.                               |
| 7–8      | Setback     | Make two Assault rolls during the next assault wave and keep the worst result.       |
| 9–10     | Sorrow      | Cannot spend Hope for the remainder of the battle.                                   |
| 👁        | Devastation | Immediately shift the relative strength of numbers one step in favour of the Shadow. |

### Sample Counterstrikes

The following scenarios are provided as an example of how to present a Counterstrike opportunity to the player-heroes. Each sample includes a title, the goal and the consequence for failure (in parenthesis), and a general description of the situation at hand. The Loremaster should customise the Counterstrike to fit the current battle or siege.

#### Cut Off the Head (Defeat — Malevolence)

An enemy captain or prominent leader, such as an Orc-Chieftain or a Hill-Troll Chief, is going berserk, attacking ferociously all who stand in his way. You have a chance to stop him and eliminate such a grievous threat.

You defeat the leader if you complete this Counterstrike.

### **Secret Strike (Spoil — Ferocity)**

The enemy has launched a deadly plot against your company, hoping to fell many with one stroke. If they succeed, their ranks will swell with blood lust. You can spoil this attack, but you must notice the threat in time before the ambush is complete.

### **Shield Wall (Dominate — Setback)**

Surging upon you is a massive wave of enemies intent on breaking through your ranks. You have the chance to stand as a barrier against the onslaught, but you must lock shields and arms together and use all your might to hold them back and dominate their will. If you should fail, it may be impossible to stop their fury.

### **Rescue the Commander (Out-wit — Sorrow)**

A prominent Free Peoples commander is under heavy attack and needs to be rescued immediately before he is slain. You must use clever tactics to provide a distraction and gain control of the situation. If you cannot do it swiftly enough, the leader will fall and a deep sorrow will overtake you.

### **Builders of Stone and Wood (Reinforce — Devastation)**

The Free Peoples have recently experienced heavy damage to their walls, gates, or towers. You must desperately try to fortify the defences, repair the machines of war, or some other project to turn the tide in your favour. If you cannot, the losses will continue beyond imagination.

## **Step 4. End of Battle**

After the heroes have resolved all their Endurance tests and completed any Counterstrikes, the Loremaster determines if

the conflict has come to an end. Here are a couple of default indicators that a battle or siege has concluded (see also 'The Rule of Two' sidebar):

- The relative strength of numbers statement has shifted up to 'The Shadow has Prevailed' or down to 'The Free Peoples are Victorious!' This is a decisive victory for the winning side.
- One side has chosen to take their losses and retreat (see 'Retreat' below).

When either of these conditions are present, the Loremaster should be ready to narrate the end of the battle or move into an optional Last Stand episode in which the player-heroes have a chance to improve their results.

If none of these conditions are present, Steps 1 to 4 should be repeated until the war comes to an end.

### **Retreat**



After several assault waves, it is possible that the player-heroes have lost a dangerous amount of Endurance points or they have suffered a Wound. Personal retreat may be the only option to avoid further harm. In addition, if at least one of the companions is a commander, he can order all of the Free Peoples to fall back, retreating to safety. Retreating in narrative time mode requires no dice rolling: it automatically succeeds.

Depending on the circumstances of the story, the Shadow may retreat under any conditions that the Loremaster decides. Considerations can include factors such as the actual sizes of the forces remaining (as interpreted by the Loremaster), the number of assault waves that have already taken place, or the current relative strength of numbers. These factors reflect the Shadow's

morale, endurance, and even strategy during the war, which can be all part of the narrative.

### The Rule of Two

In addition to one side reaching victory through relative strength of numbers or the retreat of their enemies, you may optionally declare the following conditions for victory:

- The Free Peoples have routed the Shadow forces when a total of two  icons have been rolled on the **Assault table**.
- The Shadow forces have defeated the Free Peoples when a total of two  icons have been rolled on the **Assault table**.

When the battle or siege ends in one of these ways, it should be treated essentially like a retreat scenario, but you are also encouraged to find a ‘magical’ reason for the sudden break in fighting.

### Optional Last Stand Episode

The player-heroes must decide whether or not to enter a Last Stand episode at the conclusion of the battle or siege, bearing in mind that it would need to be played out using the regular combat rules in episode mode. A Last Stand can be thought of like the first episode at the end of a long journey. The Endurance of the player-heroes has been tested and now a final scene of combat can improve their success by allowing them to complete an additional command objective.

The recommended conditions for a Last Stand episode are listed on the **Last Stand table** and are set according to whatever the last result on the **Assault table** was.

### To Stand or Not to Stand?

The condition of the player-heroes at the conclusion of a battle or siege will largely determine whether or not they are ready for a Last Stand episode. If they have suffered too much Endurance loss, they risk unconsciousness or death and a Last Stand episode may not be the wisest choice. Instead, the companions can accept the outcome of the battle and simply narrate their escape or their satisfaction as they watch the Shadow remnants flee. If the Loremaster feels that it enhances the narrative, he can decide to run a Last Stand episode regardless of the players’ decision, but he should be warned — he might not be popular in the end, depending on the results. On the other hand — it could turn out to be an epic finish and the decision will be heralded!

The following guidelines are given for each recommended condition:


- ***Worst possible conditions*** are where the heroes are outnumbered 8 to 1 or the Attribute levels of their adversaries add up to 25-32 per player-hero.
- ***Horrid conditions*** are where the heroes are outnumbered 6 to 1 or the Attribute levels of their adversaries add up to 17-24 per player-hero.
- ***Bad conditions*** are where the heroes are outnumbered 4 to 1 or the Attribute levels of their adversaries add up to 9-16 per player-hero.
- ***Fair conditions*** are where the heroes are outnumbered 2 to 1 or the Attribute levels of their adversaries add up to 5-8 per player-hero.

- **Good conditions** are where the heroes are evenly matched or the Attribute levels

of their adversaries add up to 2-4 per player-hero.

### Last Stand table:

| Last result on the Assault table | Suggested conditions for a Last Stand episode...                        |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Drums of Doom                    | Enter a Last Stand episode under the <b>worst possible conditions</b> . |
| Shattered Shields                | Enter a Last Stand episode under <b>horrid conditions</b> .             |
| The Line is Held                 | Enter a Last Stand episode under <b>bad conditions</b> .                |
| Night is Ending                  | Enter a Last Stand episode under <b>fair conditions</b> .               |
| Will of the West                 | Enter a Last Stand episode under <b>good conditions</b> .               |


Three player-heroes have joined the Free Peoples in an intense siege against an Orc infested stronghold. They have managed to survive two assault waves when one of the players rolls an  on the **Assault table**, shifting the relative strength of numbers from 'Both sides are near enough evenly sized' to 'The Free Peoples are overwhelmed in numbers by the Shadow.' This automatically forces every player-hero to double their Endurance loss for each failed Endurance test this assault wave. After making those rolls and performing any Counterstrikes, they consider falling back from the siege to spare lives. However, on their way out of the Orc stronghold, they would like to strike one final blow to improve their results. They will need to enter a Last Stand episode under worst possible conditions, meaning they will face up to eight enemies (Attribute level 4) each! If they are victorious, the Loremaster allows them to complete their objective in dramatic fashion during their escape. In this case, they topple a tower, killing a very important lieutenant in the process.

### Fear & Corruption Tests

*'There is more in you of good than you know, child of the kindly West. Some courage and some wisdom, blended in measure. If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world.'*

The Shadow grows stronger in numbers while the Free Folk of Middle-earth remain largely unaware. With each passing day, the odds increase against the world of Men. Sauron's plan of domination slowly unfolds and the Free Peoples find themselves outnumbered and overwhelmed by their enemies. They must cling to hope and persevere through the darkness, for the Will of the West shall prevail and all will not be lost.

Perseverance is the virtue that allows heroes to keep pressing on even when they would rather surrender, escape, hide, or brood over their failures. In Middle-earth, perseverance is tied closely to valour and wisdom.

Therefore, in the game, the Free Peoples demonstrate perseverance through successful Fear tests and Corruption tests. Within the context of a battle or siege, any hero that fails one of these tests showing the  flees the battlefield.

## Fear Tests

Fear tests are normally triggered during an episode by a Special ability that a Shadow creature possesses (namely the *Strike Fear* and *Thing of Terror* abilities). In narrative time mode, the Loremaster can call for a Fear test whenever the situation warrants it, but especially when the companions are facing an overwhelming number of enemies and extremely bad conditions, particularly during Step 2: Tides of War.

*An Assault roll yields a 'Shattered Shields' result, forcing the relative strength of numbers to shift to "The Shadow significantly outnumbers the Free Peoples." The Loremaster narrates the scene, describing the companions as they stand ready at the main gate with their spears pointed toward whatever may come through the doors. A few moments later, a giant battering ram crashes through, followed by four massive trolls and a swarm of goblins. The Loremaster decides that each player-hero is required to make a Fear test (TN 14) due to the sight of the trolls. Anyone failing the test cannot spend Hope for the remainder of the assault wave (or until the trolls are killed in a Counterstrike).*

## Corruption Tests

The core rules call for Corruption tests when the companions face something that could taint their spirit (see page 145 of *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*). These situations include moments of anguish, lingering in a blighted place, committing a misdeed, or even taking possession of a cursed item.

The Special ability, *Dreadful Spells*, can also force companions to make Corruption tests (page 233). It will be up to the imagination of the Loremaster to weave these elements into the story, especially when operating in narrative time mode. Step 3: Blood & Tears provides the ideal spot to narrate scenes of corruption.

*One of the player-heroes suffers a killing blow when making his Endurance rolls. The Loremaster narrates that a swift Orc arrow suddenly buries itself in the hero's neck. The hero slowly drops his sword, falls to his knees, and grabs at the black-feathered shaft, hesitating to pull it out. He tries to speak his final words, but he chokes on his own blood, slumping lifelessly to the side. Everyone looks away in anguish. The Loremaster calls for the remaining player-heroes to each make a Corruption test (TN 12) to keep from gaining a Shadow point.*

## Awards & Honours

*And there were brought before him many to receive his praise and reward for their valour[.]*

In the aftermath of a battle or siege, the Free Peoples may celebrate their victory with a feast or a ceremony. During this time, the heroes who performed valiantly can be recognised and given awards for their courage. Celebrations are not always in order, but when they are, the awards are usually in the form of Treasure. An increase in Standing, the receiving of Title and a supplemental Experience point are also appropriate awards for a deserving player-hero.

## Awarding Treasure

A great way for the Free Peoples to honour their heroes is to award them with gifts of Treasure. The amount of Treasure that can



be awarded will vary based on the resources of the awarding culture and the tale being told. The Loremaster can decide on the specific amounts any way he would like, but the following is a more definitive suggestion for awarding Treasure:

Begin by recording every instance a player rolls a  $\Psi$  on an Endurance test, during a Counterstrike episode, and during a Last Stand episode. In addition, write down the number of  $\mathcal{G}^c$  he rolls with each  $\Psi$  (maximum of 2) and the area of engagement where he was deployed at the time. Every  $\Psi$  represents a notable accomplishment or an act of valour performed by the hero on the battlefield and each  $\mathcal{G}^c$  attached indicates a greater display of battle prowess. The higher the TN — as determined by the area of engagement — the greater the valiance.

*Therefore, the highest honour any hero can earn is accomplished by rolling a  $\Psi$ ,  $\mathcal{G}^c$ ,  $\mathcal{G}^c$  while Amidst the Vanguard on the battlefield or in The Main Assault during a siege.*

Award 1 point of Treasure per  $\Psi$  rolled, 2 points of Treasure per  $\Psi + \mathcal{G}^c$ , and 3 points of Treasure per  $\Psi + \mathcal{G}^c + \mathcal{G}^c$ . If the TN for any roll was higher than 14, increase the award by 1 Treasure point per level of increase.

*A hero stationed 'Amidst the Vanguard' (TN 18) rolls a  $\Psi + \mathcal{G}^c + \mathcal{G}^c$  on an Endurance test. This indicates a highly valorous act and will earn him 5 Treasure points if he can survive the battle!*

## Standing & Title

Normally, player-heroes must give Treasure to the members of their culture when using the 'Raise Standing' undertaking during a Fellowship phase. Battles and sieges can provide them the opportunity to raise their Standing *without* spending Treasure, simply

because they are risking their lives to protect their culture and the peace of Middle-earth.

If a hero has performed valiantly enough to earn the honour of an increase in Standing, the Loremaster can decide how much to raise it. As a guideline, however, if the amount of Treasure earned during the battle or siege is equal to the hero's current Standing or greater, then he increases his Standing by one point.

Additionally, any hero fighting alongside members of a different culture may also be granted a free use of the 'Receive Title' undertaking (page 199 of *The One Ring Roleplaying Game*).

## Supplemental Experience Points

The core rules give instructions for awarding Experience points after each session of play as well as at the conclusion of an Adventuring phase (page 212). Any player-hero taking part in a large battle or siege is granted 1 supplementary Experience point at the end of a gaming session. In this way, participants could earn a possible 3 points for that session. If they do very well overall, performing acts of valour and heroism, another supplemental Experience point may be awarded at the conclusion of the Adventuring phase.