



LORD of the RINGS[®]

*Game by Reiner Knizia
with illustrations by John Howe*

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BOX contents

1 Master board, 2 double-sided Scenario boards with 4 adventures (Moria, Helm's Deep, Shelob's Lair, Mordor), 1 Sauron figure, 5 Hobbit figures, 6 markers, 60 Hobbit cards, 5 Character cards, 5 Gandalf cards, 35 Feature cards, 23 square Event tiles, 11 round Life tokens, 32 shields, 1 Ring, 1 die, 1 Hall of Fame sheet

The first time you play:

Carefully remove all cardboard parts from the frame and discard the waste.

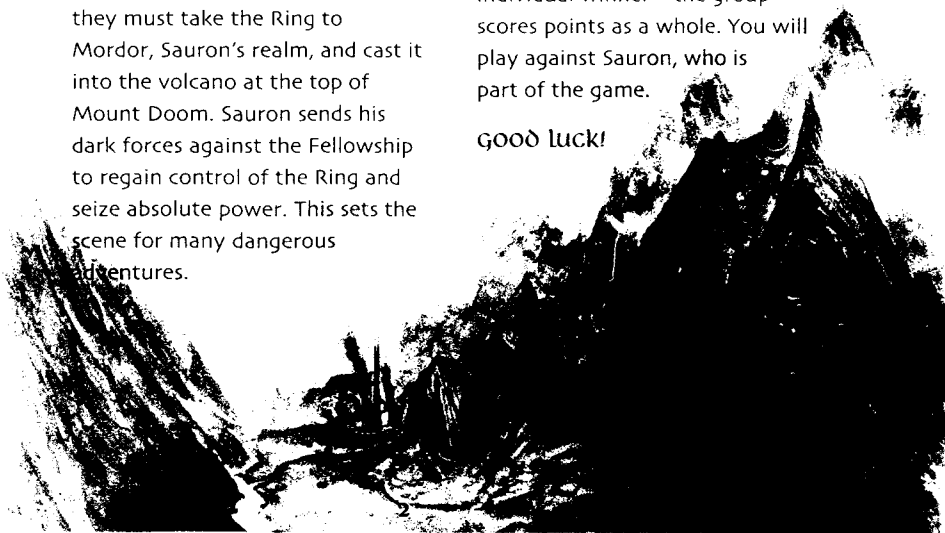


J. R. R. Tolkien's famous novel is a story of personal growth and the fight of good versus evil. Sauron, the Dark Lord, creates a powerful magic ring to gain control over Middle Earth and the Shire, the home of the Hobbits. When the Hobbits gain possession of the Ring, some of them – Frodo, Sam, Pippin and Merry – embark on an epic journey full of perilous challenges. They are joined by representatives of the good peoples of Middle Earth: Aragorn, the rightful King of Gondor, Gandalf the wizard, Legolas the elf, Gimli the dwarf, and Boromir. Together, they form the Fellowship, whose mission it is to destroy the Ring. To achieve this, they must take the Ring to Mordor, Sauron's realm, and cast it into the volcano at the top of Mount Doom. Sauron sends his dark forces against the Fellowship to regain control of the Ring and seize absolute power. This sets the scene for many dangerous adventures.



In this game you become a member of the Fellowship by playing one of the characters. This is your chance to prove that you are worthy to save Middle Earth. It is the collective aim of the players to destroy the Ring and gather as many shields as possible. The shields symbolise each player's contribution to driving back the dark forces, but they will count only if the Fellowship sticks together and is successful as a whole. Without co-operation there can be no success. There is no individual winner – the group scores points as a whole. You will play against Sauron, who is part of the game.

GOOD LUCK!



set-up

Lay out the Master board on the table and place Sauron on step 12 of the Corruption line (if playing for the first time, it is best to place Sauron on step 15 – see Game Variants, on page 12).

The Master board remains on the table and in use throughout the entire game, while the Scenario boards change as described below.

1. Place one marker on Bag End.

2. Connect the Moria Scenario board to the lower, long edge of the Master board. The Scenario boards are played through one after the other (you will not need the Shelob's Lair / Mordor Scenario board until later).

3. Place one marker on the first space (in front of the Scenario headline), above the Event boxes on the Scenario board.

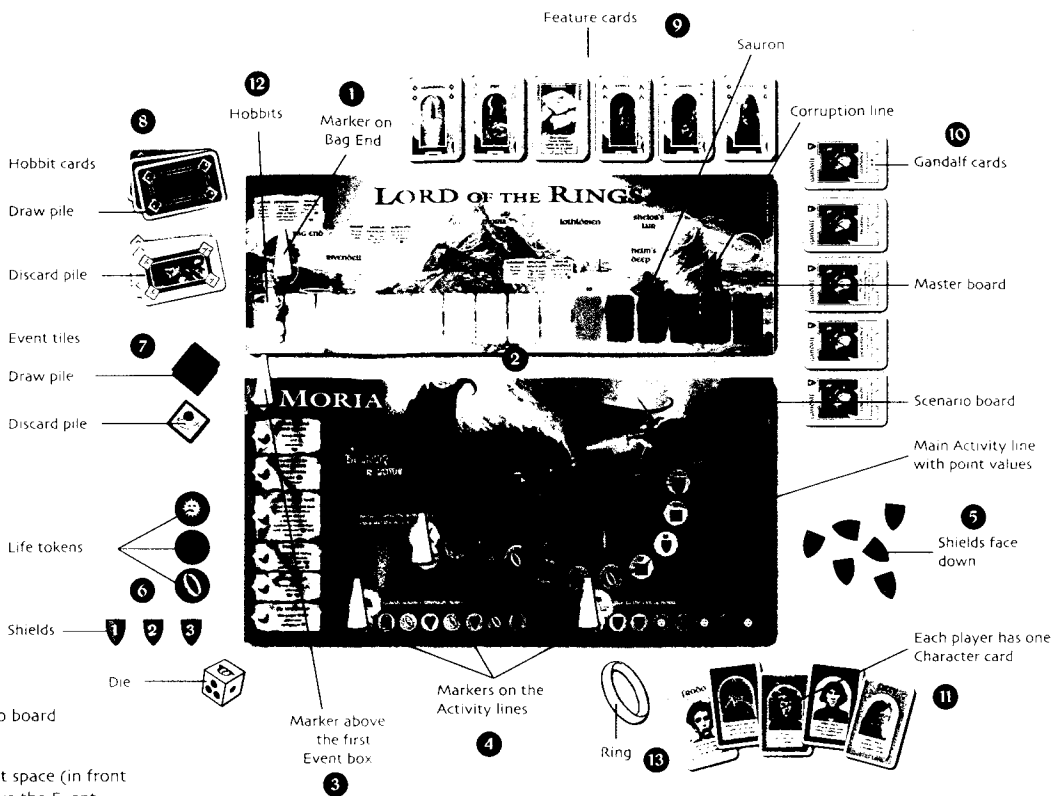
4. Place one marker on the first space of each Activity line on the Scenario board (in Moria there are only the three Travelling, Hiding and Fighting Activity lines; in later adventures there is also Friendship, so one marker is initially left over).

5. Take six shields (two each of values 1, 2 and 3), shuffle these and place them face down next to the play area.

6. Place the remaining shields, the die and the Heart, Sun, and Ring Life tokens face up next to the Scenario board.

7. Shuffle the square Event tiles into a deck. Place them face down.

8. Shuffle the Hobbit cards and place them in a deck, face down.



Set-up of boards and cards as they appear at the start of the game

9. Sort the Feature cards to match their locations on the Master board. The number of cards varies from location to location. Stack them face up next to the locations of the Master board.

10. Place the Gandalf cards face up, side by side next to the play area, so all players can see them.

11. Deal out the Character cards face up, one to each player, according to the number of players:

2-player game: Frodo and Sam
 3-player game: Frodo, Sam, Pippin
 4-player game: Frodo, Sam, Pippin, Merry
 5-player game: Frodo, Sam, Pippin, Merry, Fatty

Place your Character card face up in front of you. Each character has his own special quality, which will help you in your quest. Put any unused Character cards back in the game box as they will not be needed in the game.

12. Take the Hobbit figure matching the colour of your Character card and place it on the light step "O" of the Corruption line. Put any remaining Hobbits back in the game box.

13. Frodo is the bearer of the Ring. If you are playing Frodo, take the Ring and place it in front of you.

14. Frodo always begins the game. Play continues in a clockwise direction.

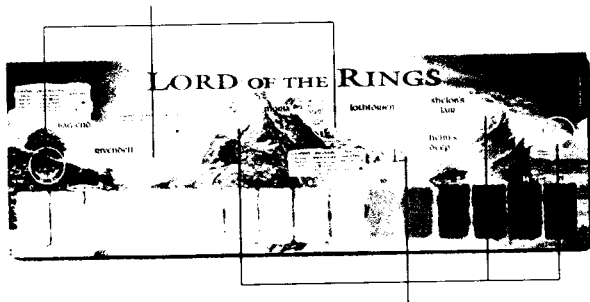
aim of the game

Your task is to stop the Dark Lord Sauron from winning back the magic Ring, which Frodo has inherited, and which Sauron would use to forever enslave the land. Taking the part of an individual Hobbit, you must cooperate with the other players as a Fellowship, during a sequence of

adventures. Journey through Middle Earth, taking on the challenges of four of the most hazardous regions, Moria, Helm's Deep, Shelob's Lair and Mordor, to destroy the Ring in the volcanic fires of Mount Doom before Sauron reaches you on the Corruption line.

play

Follow the text on the Master board



Play on the appropriate Scenario board

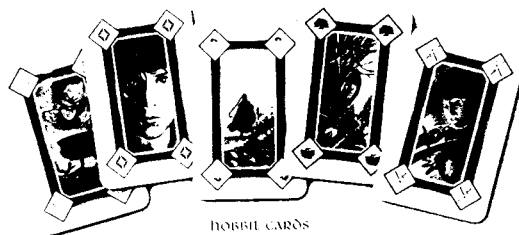
GAME CARDS

There are 60 Hobbit cards, each displaying either an Activity symbol or a star (Joker card). Some of the Hobbit cards are white, others are grey. In addition, 35 Feature cards are assigned to the locations on the Master board. These Feature cards show one or more Activity symbols, either on white or grey cards; there are also Yellow Feature cards, which can be played at any time. Finally, there are 5 Character cards and 5 Gandalf cards. For more details on the cards involved in the game, see pages 10/11.

BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

BAG END

The game starts at Bag End, on the Master board and the actions indicated for Bag End take place here. (In the first game, ignore the text in italics on the Master board, as it is only applicable in later games.)



gandalf

Take the Hobbit cards and deal six Hobbit cards to each player's hand. Replace the deck, face down. The cards show four different activities:



Friendship



Travelling



Hiding



Fighting



Cards with stars are Joker cards and can stand for any of the four possible activities.

preparations

This is a game variant. When playing for the first time, this action does not apply. See Game Variants on page 12.

nazgûl appears

One of the players must discard two Hiding (tree) card symbols and place the cards face up on a discard pile next to the face down Hobbit card deck. Jokers (star symbol) may of course be used instead. If no player can or wants to give up the required cards, Sauron moves one step towards the Hobbits on the Corruption line.

Rivendell

The Fellowship now reaches Rivendell, which is a safe haven. On the Master board, place the marker on Rivendell. The text asks you to perform the following actions:

Elrond

Take the 12 Rivendell Feature cards and shuffle them. Deal them face down to each player. In a two-player game, both receive four cards. Put the remaining four cards back into the game box without revealing them. In a three-player game,

each player gets four cards, and with four players each gets three. If five are playing, the Ring-bearer and the person to their left both receive three cards, and the others receive two each. Add these to your hand.

Council

If you are the Ring-bearer, choose one of the cards in your hand and pass it, face down, to the player on your left, who adds it to their hand. This player then chooses one of the cards in their hand and passes it, face down, to the player on their left. Continue in this manner until you also receive a card.

fellowship

Rivendell is the place where the companions form the Fellowship and embark on their mission to destroy the Ring. Each player in turn (starting with the Ring-bearer, in a clockwise direction) places a card with a Friendship symbol (or a star symbol) face up onto the discard pile. Any player not playing one of these cards must roll the die and accept any negative consequences that occur (see The Die on page 7).

hints for the fellowship

As members of the Fellowship, you should all discuss and co-ordinate your actions. Keep a close eye on any dangers ahead (particularly on the Event boxes on the Scenario board) and talk about the cards you hold, in particular the Yellow cards. This is vitally important for a successful journey. Accept that players will contribute at different times and in different ways during the game. Do whatever you must to prevent Sauron from reaching you on the Corruption line.

There are very few things you cannot do:

- You may not show the cards in your hand to other players, but you may talk about them as much as you like.
- You may not exchange any playing items unless specifically indicated in the rules.



play on the SCENARIO BOARDS

After Rivendell, advance the marker to Moria on the Master board. Moria is played on a Scenario board.

Each scenario has Activity lines for some or all of four activities: Friendship, Travelling, Hiding and Fighting.



Friendship



Travelling

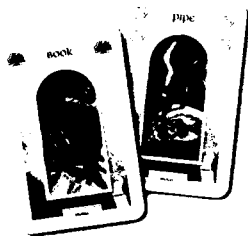


Hiding



Fighting

In addition, there are Event boxes on the left-hand side of the board. At the start of each Scenario, shuffle the Event tiles and place them, face down, in a deck next to the Scenario board. You must reshuffle all the Event tiles before each new Scenario.



Display the Feature cards belonging to this Scenario, face up next to the play area (for Moria there are only two).

The Ring-bearer starts, and the game then continues clockwise. The player whose turn it is is called the 'active player'.

taking turns on the SCENARIO BOARDS

On your turn, act in the following order:

1. REVEALING EVENT TILES

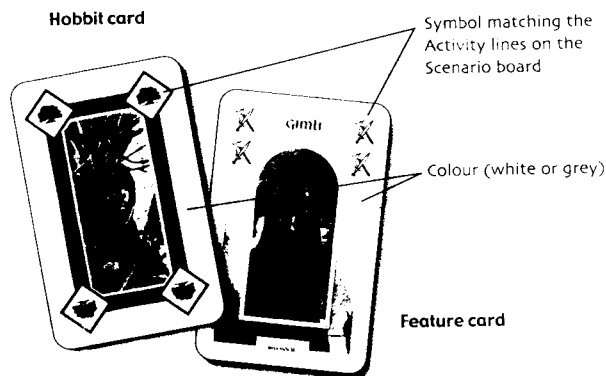
Start your turn by revealing the top Event tile and placing it face up in front of you. An Event tile gives one of the following instructions:

- Progress the marker to the next Event box down. (Sometimes players can discard cards, Life tokens or shields to prevent this).
- Move Sauron or the Hobbits on the Corruption line.
- Advance the marker on the Activity line that matches the Activity symbol shown.

Keep revealing Event tiles and carrying out the instructions until a tile showing one of the Activity symbols appears (see Event Tiles and Events on page 7), or until the Scenario ends.

2A. PLAYING ONE OR TWO CARDS

You can decide to play either one or two cards from your hand, face up in front of you. Each card is acted on separately, before the next card is played. Select which cards to play and in what order; if you wish to play two cards, one must be white, the other grey. For each of the Activity symbols (Friendship, Travelling, Hiding and Fighting), you must advance the appropriate marker onto the next Activity space, and carry it out (see Activity Lines on page 8).



For example, you play a card with a tree symbol, and advance the marker on the Hiding Activity line (tree symbol) by one space.

When you play a Joker card with more than one star symbol, you may only advance along one Activity line. For example, it is not possible to play a card with two star symbols and advance the marker on the Hiding Activity line and on the Travelling Activity line.

Cards with a symbol not shown on the Scenario board have no effect in that particular Scenario. Equally, cards with a symbol for an Activity line whose marker is already on the last space have no effect. (Note: Event tiles are different - they allow the marker to be advanced on any Activity line - see Event Tiles and Events on page 7.)

2B. not playing a card

You may choose not to play any cards. In this case you can either draw two Hobbit cards from the face down deck or move your Hobbit on the Corruption line backwards by one step, towards the light. This gives you valuable tactical choices.

3. concluding your turn

Your turn is completed by placing the revealed Event tiles face up on an open pile and any used cards face up on to the discard pile. On both piles only the top tile or card should be visible. Subsequent browsing through these piles is not permitted.


You may discard unwanted cards from your hand onto the discard pile at any time during the game.

(A more detailed description of the Event tiles, the Event boxes, the Activity lines and the cards can be found below.)

the die the fight of good versus evil



Sauron starts on the dark side, and attempts to gain control over Middle Earth by advancing towards the Hobbits on the Corruption line. The Hobbits start on the light side but are increasingly drawn into the darkness.

Whenever you encounter this symbol  (either through Events or Activities), you must roll the die. This can have the following results:



Sauron moves one step towards the Hobbits on the Corruption line.



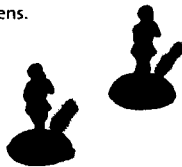
Move your Hobbit 1, 2 or 3 steps into the darkness on the Corruption line.



Place any 2 of the cards in your hand face up onto the discard pile.



Nothing happens.



event tiles and events

On your turn, reveal one or more Event tiles (as instructed) until you can advance a marker on an Activity line by one space. There are two different types of Event tiles:

type 1:

If you reveal one of the following Event tiles, you must act as detailed below:



The Ring-bearer's Hobbit must move one step towards the darkness on the Corruption line. If you are the active player, reveal another Event tile and place it in front of you.



One player must either advance their Hobbit by two steps into the darkness on the Corruption line, or else Sauron moves one step towards the Hobbits. The active player must then reveal another Event tile.



The next Event on the Scenario board now occurs. When that Event is concluded, the active player must reveal another Event tile.







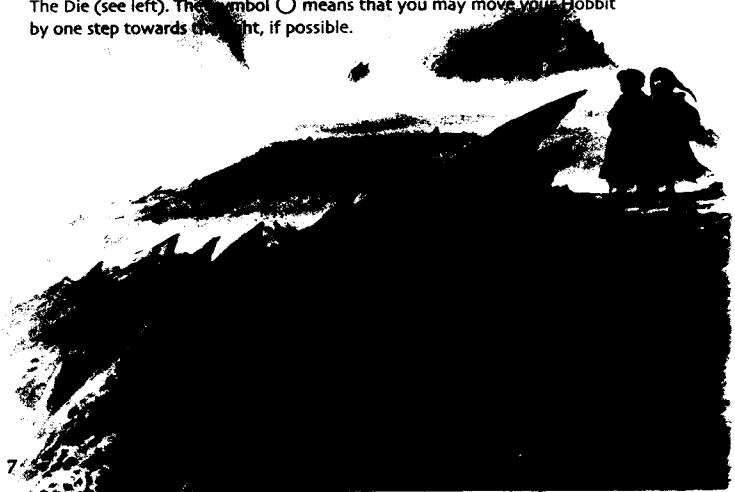
If you join together with the other players to discard 3 cards of any type between you, then nothing happens. If not, the next Event occurs. In both cases the active player must then reveal another Event tile.



If you join together with the other players to discard 1 card, 1 Life token and 1 shield between you, nothing happens. Otherwise, the next Event occurs. In both cases the active player must then reveal another Event tile.

As soon as an Event occurs, the marker progresses to the next Event box down, and that Event then takes place.

The symbols    have the same effect as described in the section The Die (see left). The symbol  means that you may move your Hobbit by one step towards the light, if possible.



When you come across the EACH PLAYER prompt, the active player starts, followed by the others in a clockwise direction. If the group is instructed to act (e.g. to discard cards), it is up to all of the players to decide between you who contributes which cards to fulfil the commands.



Example: an Event tile is revealed and shows a sundial. The marker progresses to the next Event box down. On the first Event box in Moria, the group as a whole must discard one Friendship card symbol and one star symbol (or, alternatively, two star symbols, either on one or on two cards). If the group fails to do this, Sauron moves one step towards the Hobbits on the Corruption line. Reveal another Event tile.

type 2: Revealing one of the following Event tiles will advance one marker on an Activity line, with no further Event tile being revealed:



Advance the marker on the corresponding Activity line to the next space and perform the action for that space (see Activity Lines, below). If there is no such Activity line on the game board (Moria for example does not have a Friendship Activity line), or if the marker already occupies the last Activity space of that line, advance the marker on another Activity line of your choice by one space. You must advance a marker. After that, no further Event tile is revealed and the active player may now play cards.



Example: an Event tile is revealed and the Event tile shows a tree (the symbol for Hiding). The marker on the Hiding Activity line advances by one space. The player receives a Ring token.

activity lines

The Activity lines of the individual Scenario boards indicate the challenges with which you and your companions are confronted. The markers are advanced by revealing Event tiles, as described above, and by playing cards.

If a card played permits a marker to be advanced by more than one space, every space it moves over must be carried out. If this includes an instruction to roll the die, this is done last, but before playing the next card.

Each Scenario board contains several Activity lines, one of which is the main Activity line. This is the curved line with the scores on it.



The Activity spaces on the Scenario boards have different effects. The images shown cause the following consequences:



Receive a shield with a value of 1 and place it face up in front of you. Shields with higher values may be used to replace the corresponding number of lower-value shields.



Take one of the special shields placed face down at the start of the game, and place it face up in front of you.



Receive a corresponding Life token. Place it in front of you until the end of the Scenario.



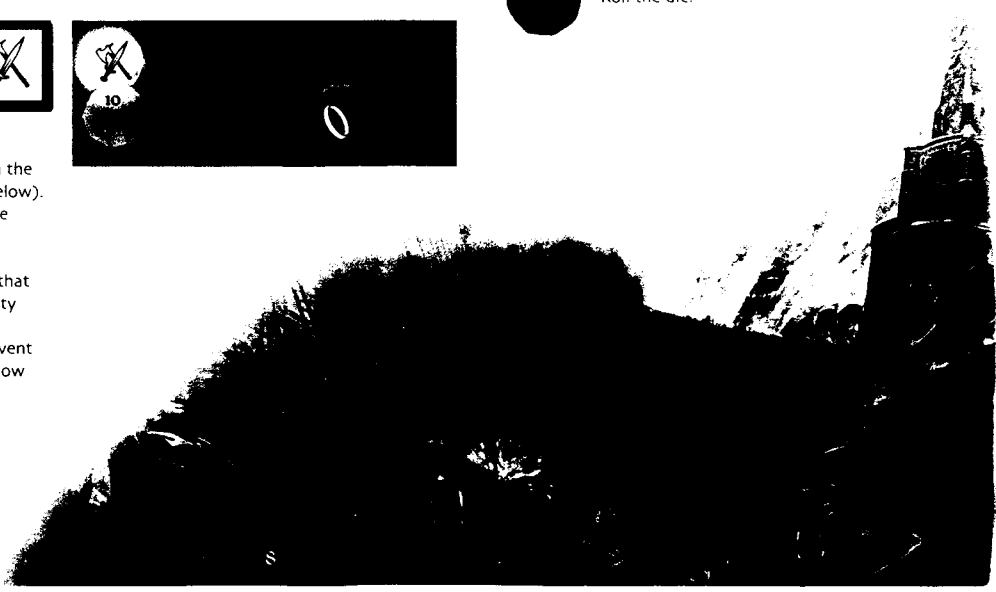
Receive a Feature card (in Moria, for example, the book).



Move your Hobbit one step towards the light on the Corruption line, if possible.



Roll the die.





Example: You play a grey card with 1 Fighting symbol and a white card with 2 Travelling symbols. The marker advances by 1 space on the Fighting main Activity line and by 2 spaces on the Travelling Activity line. You receive 3 shields.

the power of the ring

Once during each Scenario the Ring-bearer may put on the Ring, either after a player has turned over an Event tile, or after the execution of a tile or a card by any of the players. The Ring is then placed over the current Ring-bearer's Hobbit on the Master board. The Ring-bearer rolls the die. Once the result has been acted on,

the Ring-bearer must advance the marker on any one Activity line by a number of spaces, using the following formula:



Four spaces minus the number of symbols on the die.

For example, if the die showed the blank side, advance four spaces; advance three spaces for Sauron's eye, or one space if the die showed three circles. The number of spaces is not influenced by Character cards or Yellow cards (see The Cards, pages 10/11), which limit the damage of the die. Spaces moved over in this way are not carried out. The marker's advancement may stop prematurely if you reach the end of the Activity line.

The Ring remains around the Hobbit until the end of that particular Scenario.

end of a scenario

Play on each Scenario board is completed:

- either when the marker reaches the last space on the main Activity line (which means the Fellowship has completed the main challenge of the Scenario),
- or when the last Event box has been completed (with serious consequences, as you and your companions have been overtaken by Events).

In either case, the turn of the active player ends immediately.

At the end of the Scenarios in Moria, Helm's Deep and Shelob's Lair the following happens, in this order:

life tokens



Each player must now have one of each of the 3 Life tokens, as evidence that your heart is in the right place, that darkness is not overtaking you and that you resist the negative influence of the Ring. For each token missing from your collection, you must move your Hobbit one step towards the darkness on the Corruption line. Surplus Life tokens have no effect.

ring



The player with the most Ring tokens becomes the new Ring-bearer. If there is a tie, the Ring goes to the player sitting closest to the current Ring-bearer, in a clockwise direction. If you are the current Ring-bearer, you can only keep the Ring if you have more Ring tokens than any other player. The new Ring-bearer now draws two Hobbit cards from the deck and places the Ring in front of them.

fatty



The player with this character draws two Hobbit cards from the deck.

Place all Heart, Sun and Ring tokens back next to the board. Remove all markers from the Scenario board and turn the board over for the next Scenario, or place a new board on top of it (sequence: Moria, Helm's Deep, Shelob's Lair, Mordor). Then place the markers on the first spaces of the Activity lines and above the first Event box on the new board.

the journey continues

On the Master board, advance the marker from Moria to Lothlórien. This again is a safe haven, similar to Rivendell. Distribute the Feature cards from Lothlórien to the players, as in Rivendell. Follow the instructions under Lothlórien.



hint:

Use the Ring to jump over difficult spaces on an Activity line, or to complete the main Activity line.

Gandalf Cards



At any time during the game, any one player can call Gandalf for help by discarding shields with a total value of 5. The active player then decides which of the Gandalf cards to use and how to apply it:

Healing: One player moves their Hobbit backwards two steps on the Corruption line, towards the light, if this is possible.

Persistence: One player draws 4 Hobbit cards from the deck.

Guidance: The active player uses this card as a double Joker.

Foresight: One player may look at the top three Event tiles and rearrange them before putting them back.

Magic: After moving the event marker onto the next Event box, ignore the Event. If this is the final Event in a Scenario, the Scenario still ends. However, this card cannot prevent the final Event in Mordor when Sauron takes the Ring.

Each Gandalf card can only be used once, and must then be discarded.

Yellow Feature Cards

In addition to the Gandalf cards there are also Yellow Feature cards. They may be played by any player at any time, unless otherwise stated on the cards. The player decides how the card is applied:



Any one player may pass one card to any other player.



Any one player does not roll the die (play this card on any player who is instructed to take one die roll, before the die is rolled).



Any one player ignore the results of one die roll (play this card on any player after they have rolled the die).



If any one player is missing some Life tokens, they do not move their Hobbit on the Corruption line accordingly (play this card on any player at the end of a Scenario or in the corresponding Events in Mordor).



Ignore an Event tile showing a sundial with three items after it has been revealed. The marker is not progressed. This card cannot be applied to a sundial tile that does not show either three cards, or a card, a Life token and a shield.



Play this card on the active player before they reveal the next Event tile. As a consequence, the active player does not reveal any more Event tiles, but continues their turn as usual (playing cards).




Any one player moves their Hobbit back one step on the Corruption line, towards the light, if possible.



Any one player increases their hand to six cards by drawing from the Hobbit card deck. (While drawing, a player may not discard any of his cards.)





Game Variants

Optional Rules

The Preparations section in Bag End is an optional action. If you are the Ring-bearer you can decide at this point whether or not to make additional preparations for your journey. If you decide to do so, roll the die. You must bear any negative consequences that might ensue. Then reveal four cards from the Hobbit card deck. Place these cards face up in front of you. Divide the cards between yourself and your fellow players as you wish.

If, while you are the current Ring-bearer, you are eliminated from the game because you cannot play the required cards or shields, but your Hobbit is nearer to the light than Sauron is on the Corruption line, the player to your left becomes the new Ring-bearer, and the game continues.

In order to even out the number of turns each player gets, you may decide to ignore the rule that the Ring-bearer starts each scenario, and continue playing clockwise instead. Use an extra mover to indicate the active player.

Introductory Game and Expert Game

When you are playing your first game, place Sauron on level 15 of the Corruption line. Once you have successfully completed the introductory game (which isn't easy), play future standard games with Sauron starting from level 12. (Experienced players may decide to start with Sauron on level 12 in their first game, but they should not then be surprised if Sauron is soon upon them.)

If you finally succeed in destroying the Ring in the standard game (to gain the required experience will take many games), advance to the expert game where Sauron starts on level 10. This will test you to the limit, and very few will ever succeed in proving themselves worthy to save Middle Earth on this level.

Competitive Game

With increasing game experience, you may agree to add a competitive element to the game. In this case, keep your shields face down and do not show their values to other players. If the Ring is successfully destroyed, you each score 60 points plus a bonus equal to the number of your own shields, irrespective of whether or not you are still in the game. The Fellowship has been successful and the player with the highest score shall be celebrated in song ever after. This player is considered the winner.

In the competitive game, there is one additional rule. If you are the Ring-bearer and you possess three or more Ring tokens when your Hobbit meets Sauron on the Corruption line, then you are taken over by the powers of the Ring and join Sauron. You alone score the point value of the current space of the marker on the main Activity line, while all the other players score zero.

Remember that the spirit of the Lord of the Rings is the co-operation of the good in fighting the forces of darkness. Even the competitive game needs a lot of co-operation for the Fellowship to succeed. If the Ring is not destroyed, shields do not count and all players score the same number of points as indicated by the marker position on the main Activity line. The higher the score, the better, but there is no winner.



summary

set-up

- Lay out the Master board, and use the Scenario boards, in this order: Moria, Helm's Deep, Shelob's Lair, Mordor.
- Place markers on Bag End and above the Event boxes as well as on the first space of each Activity line of the first Scenario board, Moria.
- Each player takes one Character card: first Frodo and Sam, then Pippin, Merry and Fatty.
- Place the appropriate Hobbits on step 0 and Sauron on step 12 (or 15 in your first game) of the Corruption line.
- Shuffle the Event tiles and place them face down in a pile.
- Sort the Feature cards by location and lay them next to the Master board.
- Display the Gandalf cards face up.
- Shuffle the Hobbit cards and place them face down in a pile.
- Place 6 shields (2 x 1, 2 x 2, 2 x 3), face down next to the playing area.
- Have the remaining shields, the Life tokens and the die ready.
- Frodo is the first Ring-bearer.

play

- Perform actions as directed at Bag End.
- Move the marker to Rivendell and perform the stated actions.
- Move the marker to Moria; the Ring-bearer starts the first adventure Scenario.

taking turns on the SCENARIO BOARD

1. Reveal Event tiles and act on them (until an Activity symbol turns up).
- Move Hobbits or Sauron on the Corruption line, or

- The Event in the next Event box occurs, unless this is prevented, or
 - Carry out an activity: advance the marker on an Activity line **and**
 - Take a shield, Life token or Feature card, or
 - Move your Hobbit back into the light by one step, or roll the die.
- 2a. Play 1 or 2 cards (white and grey), or
 - 2b. Draw 2 cards or move your Hobbit back one step towards the light.

the die

- Eye: Sauron moves one step towards the Hobbits on the Corruption line.
- Circles: your Hobbit moves 1, 2 or 3 steps into the darkness on the Corruption line.
- Rectangles: discard 2 cards.
- Blank: nothing happens.

any time

- Once per Scenario, put on the Ring: roll the die, act on the result, then advance the marker on an Activity line by 4 minus the number of symbols on the die, without carrying out the indicated activity on the spaces you pass over.
- Play Yellow Feature cards.
- Use a Gandalf card: discard 5 shields and the active player decides how to apply one card right away.

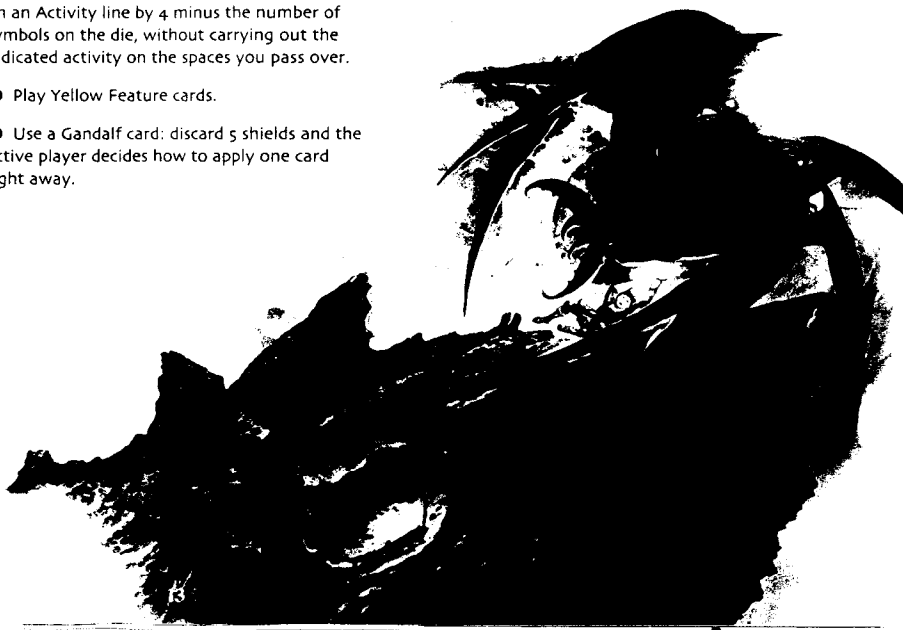
end of a scenario

When the main Activity line is completed or the final Event has been concluded:

- You must each discard 3 different Life tokens, or move your Hobbit towards the darkness on the Corruption line.
- The player with the most Ring tokens becomes the new Ring-bearer, and draws 2 Hobbit cards.
- Fatty draws 2 Hobbit cards.

conclusion

- If the Ring-bearer is eliminated from the game, the game ends and each player receives the number of points indicated by the marker on the main Activity line.
- At Mount Doom (last space on the main Activity line in Mordor), if none of the players manage to destroy the Ring, each player receives 60 points.
- If a player succeeds in destroying the Ring, each player receives 60 points plus the total value of all the shields that all players have collected.



synopsis of the novel by J.R.R. Tolkien

The Lord of the Rings tells an epic tale of good against evil, spanning six books. The story begins at Bag End in the Shire, at the home of Frodo Baggins. Frodo is a Hobbit – a small creature with hairy feet and a large appetite, not normally prone to adventuring. Frodo has a gold Ring given to him by his Uncle Bilbo, who had 'found it' after its loss by a creature called Gollum, in the course of a previous long journey recounted by J.R.R. Tolkien in *The Hobbit*.

BAG END

Gandalf, a wizard, tells Frodo about the magical Elven Rings, and that his is the 'One Ring to rule them all'. The Dark Lord Sauron forged it long ago, but thought it destroyed. Now he has felt its return, and searches for the Ring, seeking to draw it to himself in Mordor. If successful, Sauron will rule all of Middle Earth. Frodo must take the Ring east, to Rivendell, where its fate can be decided. Sauron has sent his nine Black Riders, the Nazgûl, to search Middle Earth for the Ring. He has recently heard of the name 'Baggins', and has directed Nazgûl to the Shire. Frodo must leave quickly and secretly. Sam, his gardener, and two other Hobbit friends, Merry and Pippin, accompany him. Fatty Bolger, a fifth Hobbit, stays behind to cover their tracks.

The Hobbits reach the village of Bree, where they spend the night at the Prancing Pony Inn. Frodo entertains the locals with a song, but inadvertently puts on the Ring and instantly disappears, causing quite a stir. Strider, a Ranger, reveals himself to be Aragorn the rightful King of Gondor, and offers help. Merry, meanwhile, has spotted Black Riders in the village, and the Hobbits decide it is unsafe to sleep in their room. A wise decision, as that night the room is attacked, and the bedding slashed. The Hobbits leave Bree and head towards Weathertop, where they hope to meet Gandalf. They find him gone, but are ambushed by Nazgûl. Frodo feels compelled to put on the Ring, but this only makes him more visible to the enemy. One stabs him with an evil blade, and Frodo is seriously wounded. Aragorn fights off the Nazgûl with fire and they escape, but Frodo's wound worsens and he needs to reach safety quickly. As the party races to cross the ford and enter Rivendell, they are pursued by all nine Nazgûl. Just as Frodo is about to be captured, the river rises and carries the Black Riders away.

RIVENDELL

Frodo awakens in Rivendell at the House of Elrond. Here he is reunited with his Uncle Bilbo, who presents Frodo with his enchanted sword, Sting, and a priceless coat of Mithril-mail. Aragorn's sword that was broken is re-forged and named Anduril. A Council meeting is held to debate the fate of the Ring, and after much discussion all agree that it must be destroyed by being cast into the Cracks of Doom, a volcano in Mordor. Frodo reluctantly volunteers to be the Ring-bearer, saying 'I will take the Ring, though I do not know the way'. Elrond chooses companions to go with him. Together with the Hobbits and Gandalf will be representatives of the Free Peoples; Legolas for the Elves, Gimli for the Dwarves, Aragorn and Boromir for Men. Thus is formed the Fellowship of the Ring, nine in all, to be set against the nine Nazgûl. They set off on their perilous journey to Mordor.

MORIA

The only way to cross the mountains is through the mines of Moria, a network of caverns and tunnels originally carved out by the dwarves. When the Fellowship reaches the entrance by a still lake they find the dwarf-doors magically closed. On them is written 'Speak friend and enter'. The Fellowship fails to find an answer to the puzzle, until Gandalf suddenly leaps to his feet saying the elvish word for 'friend'. As the doors swing open, a writhing tentacle from the Watcher in the Water seizes Frodo. Sam hacks it off and they leap inside. Behind them the doors

are smashed shut, blocking their exit. Gandalf lights the way with his staff through the dark silent winding caverns, with his sword Glamdring held ready.

While the Fellowship rests during their first night in Moria, Pippin impulsively drops a stone into the well. Then, from far below comes sounds of tapping, signalling. The party spends the following night in the Chamber of Records where they find and read the Book of Mazarbul, telling how the dwarves living and working in Moria had been trapped and killed. Then 'doom! doom!' comes the sound of drums from the depths. The Fellowship is trapped and orcs attack, smashing through the doors. The Fellowship fights a rearguard action, and races to escape. They reach a chasm, crossed only by a narrow bridge, pursued by a Balrog – a fearful creature of fire and shadow. Gandalf orders the others over the bridge, but half-way across turns to face the Balrog, saying 'You cannot pass'. The huge figure steps forward, wrapped in flame. Gandalf lifts his staff and smashes it onto the bridge, which breaks, and the two plunge into the depths. 'Fly, you fools!' are Gandalf's last words.

LOTHLÓRIEN

Mourning the loss of Gandalf, the Fellowship reaches Lothlórien, home of the Elven Queen Galadriel. Here they are able to recover. Galadriel gives them many precious gifts, including a magical phial that she presents to Frodo, then tests their hearts to judge whether they are worthy of carrying the Ring. Reluctantly the Fellowship leaves to continue their journey in boats, along the river Anduin. As they travel, Gollum follows, drawn by the power of the Ring.

Disembarking at the Falls of Rauros, the company debates which way to go. Frodo decides to continue to Mordor, but Boromir wishes to use the Ring against Sauron, rather than destroy it. Overcome by desire for the Ring he attempts to wrest it from Frodo, who puts it on, disappears and makes his escape. Accompanied only by Sam, and followed by Gollum, Frodo continues on his journey to Mordor.

Orcs from the army of the evil wizard Saruman attack Merry and Pippin. Boromir is killed trying to save them, and the Hobbits are captured. Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas pursue the orc band, hoping to rescue the Hobbits. The Riders of Rohan, led by Éomer, are patrolling the area and attack the orcs, enabling Merry and Pippin to escape into Fangorn Forest where they enlist the help of giant tree-like creatures called Ents. Together they tear down the walls of Isengard, the fortress home of Saruman.

HELM'S DEEP

Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas continue to search for the Hobbits and are amazed to meet Gandalf, whom they had thought dead, clad all in white. He tells them how he fought and destroyed the Balrog. They visit Théoden, King of Rohan to release him from the influence of his advisor Grima, also known as Wormtongue. Raising his wizard's staff, Gandalf unmasks Wormtongue as an agent of Saruman and casts him out. A grateful Théoden gives Gandalf his legendary horse Shadowfax. Éomer, his nephew, offers the king his sword, Théoden lifts the blade and cries 'Arise now, arise, Riders of Théoden. Forth Eorlingas!' With a thunder of hooves the Riders of Rohan ride out to battle.

Gandalf advises them to go to the defence of Helm's Deep, a Rohan stronghold which is being besieged by Saruman's forces. He will ride to Isengard and meet them later. The Riders of Rohan arrive at Helm's Deep just ahead of the hosts of Isengard. From within the walls they see the enemy surge forward. Lightning flashes, and storms of arrows rain down on the orcs and wild men. Still the enemy comes on. Using trees as battering rams the orcs attack the gates. Éomer and Aragorn beat them back, but are themselves ambushed. Gimli leaps to their aid, swinging his axe and leads them back inside.

Again and again the orcs attack, throwing themselves at the walls, until a breach is blown with the fire of Orthanc. The orcs storm forward forcing the defenders to retreat into the citadel. Aragorn warns the attackers that they should depart, or none will be spared, but the host laughs as it appears certain that the orcs will conquer Helm's Deep. Then from the tower a horn rings out. Théoden, Aragorn and the Riders charge out to battle, sweeping through the hosts of Isengard, as Gandalf arrives with reinforcements. The enemy flee in terror, straight into an army of trees that has suddenly appeared on the plain, and are never seen again.

shelob's lair

In the meantime Frodo and Sam, continuing their long journey, have captured Gollum, tying him with the elven rope and making him swear to serve the master of his 'Precious' (the Ring). They then release Gollum and command him to lead them to Mordor. Travelling at night and hiding by day, they first pass through the foul Dead Marshes, where Gollum had previously hidden from orcs. There is little to eat other than the strength-giving lembas, a present from the elves. Strange lights try to tempt them from the path and Frodo and Sam see faces of dead warriors looking up at them from beneath the dark water. Warning them to look only at him, Gollum leads them through the treacherous mire. As they struggle on, a Nazgûl riding a fell beast flies overhead, its cries piercing the sky as it searches the land below, hunting the bearer of the Ring.

On the fifth day they come to the desolate plains of ash. Foul fumes choke them as they wearily stagger on towards the mountain range that bars their way. Gollum is desperate to own the Ring, but is bound by his promise to serve its master. Realising that if he can become the master he could then do as he wished, Gollum decides to guide them by a route that will cause the death of the Hobbits. He will take them through the Pass of Cirith Ungol, the lair of the giant spider Shelob!

As they cross the land of Ithilien, Frodo and Sam are helped by Boromir's brother Faramir, who is harrying the forces of Sauron. Faramir takes them to his hideout, where they tell him of their mission. Gollum, who had been hiding from the men, is discovered at the Forbidden Pool. Faramir warns Frodo against attempting to pass through Cirith Ungol, believing Gollum is hiding something, but Frodo has no choice. Frodo, Sam and Gollum continue their journey, after two more days coming to Minas Morgul, the city of the Nazgûl. Frodo feels the Ring drawing him towards the city, but Sam pulls him away. They climb the valley side as thunder crashes and lightning flashes around them, but dive for cover as the Lord of the Nazgûl, leading a great army from Minas Morgul, searches for the Ringbearer. Frodo's hand moves against his will toward the Ring, but instead touches the phial of Galadriel. The Lord of the Nazgûl and his army ride on. And on go the Hobbits, climbing up and up until, exhausted, they pause to rest for the night in a dark crevice. Gollum sneaks off to warn Shelob that she is about to have visitors.

The next morning Gollum leads them into a dark tunnel where they find themselves trapped in a dead end. Frodo holds up the phial of Galadriel, which gives out a radiant light, in the glow of which Shelob appears. They frighten her off with the light from the phial, but as they leave the tunnels Shelob attacks. Sam fights off Gollum, but then sees Frodo wrapped in a web, being dragged away by Shelob. Filled with fury Sam reaches for the fallen Sting, and attacks Shelob. As she is poised above him for a final spring Sam grabs the phial and sends light streaming from it into the huge eyes of the spider, which crawls away in agony. Thinking Frodo dead, Sam decides he must continue the quest alone and reluctantly takes the Ring. Hearing a band of orcs approaching Sam puts on the Ring, becomes invisible,

and follows them as they discover Frodo's body. He is not dead, but merely paralysed by Shelob's poison. The orcs carry Frodo into the tower of Cirith Ungol.

MORDOR

Sneaking into the tower, Sam saves Frodo, who has been stripped of his Mithril-mail and elven cloak, as the orcs quarrel amongst themselves. The Hobbits disguise themselves as orcs to avoid detection as they travel on towards Mount Doom, Gollum following behind.

Meanwhile the rest of the Fellowship seeks aid in the struggle against Sauron. Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas travel through the Paths of the Dead to raise the Army of the Dead. Gandalf and Pippin go to Gondor's capital, Minas Tirith, where Pippin swears to serve Denethor, Lord of Gondor, father of Boromir and Faramir. Denethor, realising Minas Tirith is about to be besieged by Sauron's armies sends a messenger to Théoden, asking the Riders of Rohan to aid Gondor with all their strength and speed. Éomer's sister, Éowyn, travels with the Riders disguised as a man, and carries Merry on her horse with her. Théoden needs to move quickly, but without being seen by the dark forces. A Wild Man, Ghân-buri-Ghân guides the Riders by hidden ways through the forests, avoiding the enemy's outposts.

The Riders arrive to find a great army led by the Lord of the Nazgûl, assaulting Minas Tirith. Théoden leads a charge against the enemy, taking them by surprise. The Lord of the Nazgûl attacks Théoden, confident that he cannot be killed by men. He swoops from the sky on his fell beast, but is killed by Éowyn, a woman, with Merry's help. The Battle of the Pelennor Fields rages around the walls of Minas Tirith, and all seems lost as enemy ships are sighted approaching along the River Anduin. As Éomer rallies his men to face the end, an elven standard wrought by Arwen, daughter of Elrond, is unfurled on the leading ship. Aragorn, wearing the Star of Elendil leaps ashore, accompanied by Gimli and Legolas. They stride forward, leading reinforcements from the Free People, driving the enemy before them. And so the battle is won, but still the Ring must be destroyed.

To distract attention from the Ring-bearer, Aragorn leads an army from Minas Tirith to challenge Sauron. After days of marching they reach the Morannon Gate to Mordor. Aragorn, Gandalf and the other Captains ride up to the gates and issue a challenge. The gate is thrown open, and the Mouth of Sauron rides to meet them as an emissary. He laughs at the Army, showing them Frodo's Mithril-mail and cloak, threatening that Frodo will be tortured unless the allies withdraw. Gandalf refuses, seizes the items, and drives back the Messenger of Mordor. Drums roll, a great host of orcs pours from the gates, and men and trolls march down from the hills until the allied army is surrounded by dark forces.

All the while Frodo and Sam have been struggling on towards the foothills of Mount Doom, crawling from hollow to hollow, Gollum tracking them. Mordor is in permanent darkness, and the Ring is becoming an increasingly heavy burden. When Frodo becomes too weary to go on, Sam carries him on his back. As they approach the summit, the way becomes too steep and rocky, so Frodo drags himself to the lip of the volcano. Standing at the edge of the Cracks of Doom, Frodo is finally overcome by the Ring. Claiming it for himself Frodo places it on his finger and disappears, alerting Sauron to the whereabouts of the Ring. Suddenly Gollum leaps on him, bites off Frodo's finger and with it the Ring. Crying 'my Precious!' Gollum loses his balance and falls with the Ring into the heart of the volcano. The earth shakes, fire belches and the power of Sauron is destroyed.

The destruction of the Ring spells defeat for Sauron's armies. Gandalf sends eagles to pluck Sam and Frodo from the erupting volcano and return them to their comrades. Together they begin the long journey back to the Shire, but they find on the way that there are still remnants of corruption that must be rooted out and destroyed. Saruman himself is discovered cowering in Bag End. With new-found maturity, Frodo spares his enemy, who is finally murdered by his old advisor, Wormtongue. While the Hobbits begin to resume and repair their interrupted lives, Frodo, accompanied by Gandalf, sets sail for the west, and the peace and serenity of the Grey Havens.

about the designer

Reiner Knizia is one of the world's leading game designers with more than 100 published games to his name in various countries and languages. Among his many awards Reiner won the German Game Prize 1998 for *Euphrates & Tigris*, Children's Game of the Year in Finland 1998 for *Kurre*, Golden Quill of Essen 1994 for the book *New Games in Old Rome* and the German Game Prize 1993 for *Modern Art*.

about the illustrator

John Howe, Canadian by birth, is acclaimed as one of the foremost illustrators of Tolkien's work. He has worked in every aspect of the European illustrated books industry, creating graphics for fantasy, historical and children's books. Outside Europe he is best known for his contributions to a wide range of Tolkien projects such as calendars, posters and jacket illustrations. Before working on the boardgame he developed the concept art for Peter Jackson's film version of *The Lord of The Rings*.

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one ring to rule them all
one ring to find them,
one ring to bring them all
and in the darkness bind them