



Sample file



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LEAD WRITER

FRANCESCO NEPITELLO

5E CONVERSION

MICHELE GARBUGGIO

ADDITIONAL RULES DEVELOPMENT

JACOB RODGERS

ADDITIONAL WRITING

JAMES MICHAEL SPAHN, JASON DURALL

CONCEPT ART

ALVARO TAPIA

COVER ART

ANTONIO DE LUCA

OTHER ART

ALVARO TAPIA, MARTIN GRIP, JAN POSPÍŠIL, NIKLAS BRANDT,
HENRIK ROSENBERG, ANTONIO DE LUCA, FEDERICA COSTANTINI, LUCA SOTGIU,
DANIELE SORRENTINO, MELISSA SPANDRI, GIUDITTA BETTI

GRAPHIC DESIGN

CHRISTIAN GRANATH,
DAN ALGSTRAND,
NIKLAS BRANDT,

LAYOUT

MICHELE PAROLI –
MANA PROJECT STUDIO,
DAN ALGSTRAND (2nd print.)

EDITORS

MICHELE GARBUGGIO,
JOHN MARRON,
JACOB RODGERS

PROJECT MANAGERS

FRANCESCO NEPITELLO,
MARTIN TAKAICHI,
TOMAS HÄRENSTAM

MAPS

FRANCESCO MATTIOLI,
NIKLAS BRANDT

BRAND MANAGER

ROBERT HYDE –
SOPHISTICATED GAMES

EVENT MANAGER

ANNA WESTERLING

5E PLAYTESTING

MICHELE GARBUGGIO, EMANUELE BEDIN, FRANCESCO RANIERO,
MATTIA VENTURA, VASCO SBALCHIERO, JACOB RODGERS

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The background is a detailed landscape painting. The upper half shows a dark, jagged mountain peak covered in snow, with bare tree branches reaching across the frame. The lower half shows a bright, hazy valley with green fields and distant hills. A large, semi-transparent red watermark with the word "sample" is oriented diagonally across the entire image.

CHAPTER 1

~ prologue ~

"The Enemy still lacks one thing to give him strength and knowledge to beat down all resistance, break the last defences, and cover all the lands in a second darkness. He lacks the One Ring."

Dear friend,

I am writing this sitting at our usual table at the prancing pony, puffing at my pipe. According to the latest tidings I received, you are many miles away south, riding with the horse-lords. I trust you brought a good supply of Old Toby! If you didn't, you are going to miss your northern Lone-Lands much more bitterly, I assure you.

When I took up the pen, my intention was to elaborate on the reasons why I counseled you not to go to Gondor, yet. You know what troubled me... the Steward is a wise man, and won't waste any time in putting your talents to good use, but his firstborn son is about your age. Denethor is valiant and proud. I feared that this might lead him to ignore your counsel, if not to resent it.

Then, I remembered what I have to tell myself from time to time... the task I chose is to inspire the enemies of Sauron, and to push them to action. I am not here to rob them of their freedom of choice. They say that even the Wise cannot see all ends! So, who am I, certainly not the wisest, to tell you what you should do? Only you can decide what to do with the time that is given you.

Please accept one word of advice though, something that I have learnt in more than one adventure: do not face your challenges alone, and choose your companions wisely. There are many brave souls among the various free peoples of the world who can join you in your struggle: Elves, Dwarves, and men. Even the little folk of the Shire may prove useful. They certainly did prove useful to me! A good friend of mine discovered too late that there is more to those amazing creatures than you would credit them for. I hope you will not commit the same mistake.

Yours in friendship

Gandalf. ✧

*"Wolves were howling round the fences last winter.
And there's dark shapes in the woods, dreadful things
that it makes the blood run cold to think of."*

It is the year 2965 of the Third Age, twenty-some years after one Bilbo Baggins disappeared one Spring morning, only to reappear a year later and interrupt his own estate sale. The extraordinary tale that he told, of travelling with the Wizard Gandalf and Thorin Oakenshield to Wilderland on the other side of the Misty Mountains and somehow defeating a Dragon seemed nothing more than a fairy tale to the other Hobbits.

However, no one can deny that there are more folk on the Great Road these days. Most are Dwarves, coming and going both ways, and sometimes even visiting Hobbiton! Rumours from Bree speak of strangers coming into town, telling stories of the rebuilt Dale and the dragon-slayer King Bard and other unusual names. And Elves too are on the move, and rumoured to be in the Wild and even in the Woody End of the Shire!

It all sounds rather adventurous, but adventures are dangerous, uncomfortable things. They make you late for dinner and might get you killed! Of course, some valiant individuals are seeking to make their mark on the world, to find the long-lost ruins of past kingdoms, to patrol the borders of their lands and keep them safe, to meet others of similar persuasion and unite to strive against the Shadow that lies over Middle-earth. If successful, folk will call them heroes. But if they disappear while in the wild, they will be lost to history and legend.

In *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying*, you become the adventurers exploring Middle-earth. As the game progresses, you will discover new lands and old secrets, take part in the events of the Third Age, and have your own chance to strive against the Enemy.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE THIRD AGE

The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying is set in the time period between the events narrated in *The Hobbit* and those told in *The Lord of the Rings*. Encompassing a span of eight decades, this period is ushered in when Bilbo the Hobbit finds the Ruling Ring, and culminates with the war fought by the Free Peoples against the Dark Lord Sauron, and the destruction of the Ring.

Players of *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying* create a Company of heroes — Hobbits, Dwarves, Elves, and Men, seeking adventure in the Lone-lands of Eriador. It is a desolate country, a vast region that once saw the glory of the North Kingdom of the Dúnedain, the Men of the West. Here, many wars were fought, and countless ruins dot its landscape. Shadows move along its paths, and not all of them belong to the living.

It is in Eriador that the One Ring lies dormant, a seed of the past that will one day bring the end of this age of the world.

THE ONE RING FOR 5E

The present volume converts the best-selling *The One Ring* roleplaying game to 5E, bringing the world created by J.R.R. Tolkien to the players of the most popular set of rules for fantasy gaming. This is not a stand-alone game: to play *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying* you must be familiar with the rules for 5E.

To preserve consistency with the sources, the game master of *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying* is called the 'Loremaster', and the characters 'Player-heroes'. Likewise, races/species have been renamed 'cultures', and classes are here referred to as 'callings'.

ADVENTURING IN THE THIRD AGE

*Tales and adventures sprouted up all over the place
wherever he went, in the most extraordinary fashion.*

Adventurers are often simply common individuals born in exceptional times. They have most likely led an ordinary life until the day something happened and changed the way they looked at their world and the people they knew. For some reason, the place they grew up in didn't look as interesting and boundless as before, or they started to realise that they weren't doing enough for the safekeeping of their loved ones by staying at home in idleness, pretending shadows weren't growing nearer and nearer every year.

Adventurers are not soldiers or mercenaries following the commands of a lord, nor are they subtle Wizards trying to weave the threads spun by fate — they are bold souls putting themselves in peril of their own free will, sometimes simply for the love of adventure itself.

THE FOLK OF ERIADOR

West of Wilderland, between the Misty Mountains and the Sea, is the region of Eriador. Right in its middle is found the Shire of the Hobbits, a quiet land whose folk enjoy a secluded life

behind guarded borders. Across the river Brandywine, east of the Shire, lies the Bree-land, a small inhabited region, rising like an island in the midst of the Lone-lands about it.

The Bree-land is traversed by the East-West Road, and in its chief village of Bree is The Prancing Pony, a resort for all weary travellers. These are mainly Dwarves of the Folk of Durin, going east to their far Kingdom Under the Mountain, in Wilderland, or west, on their way to the Blue Mountains. Sometimes, they travel in the company of Northmen from distant Dale, subjects of King Bard the Dragonslayer.

According to ancient stories, the region of Eriador was once the realm of Arnor, a great kingdom of the North, brought to ruin long ago by bitter strife and the machinations of the Enemy. Much of its past is now forgotten, for the memory of mortals is short, and the days of the king are celebrated only in songs and proverbs devoid of their original meaning.

But some remember — the mysterious Rangers of the North, lonely hunters of the servants of the Enemy who guard all boundaries against Wights and Trolls, as do the long-lived Elves of Lindon, that at times leave their land along the western coasts to wander across Eriador, to witness with their immortal eyes the fading of the glories of the past.

The land of the Lost Realm of Arnor is described in detail in *Chapter 9: The World*, starting on page 177.



The shadow of the past

The last twenty years or so have seen the resurgence of hope in the lands of the Free Peoples, and then its slow but steady decline, as the world darkens once again.

YEAR 2941: The Wizard Gandalf, Thorin Oakenshield, and twelve Dwarves visit Bilbo the Hobbit in the Shire: they set upon a quest to recover the treasure of Durin's Folk and free the North from the threat of the Dragon of Erebor.

A series of unlikely events leads to the death of Smaug and to the destruction of Lake-town. Dáin of the Iron Hills becomes King of Erebor, while Dwarves, Men, and Elves collaborate in rebuilding new cities in Dale and upon the Long Lake.

YEAR 2942: Bilbo returns to his peaceful life in the Shire. He carries the One Ring with him, not suspecting its true nature. News of the great events that have come to pass spread across the land as he travels home.

YEAR 2949: Gandalf and Balin journey to the Shire to visit Bilbo Baggins. They arrive at Bag End on one autumn evening. They spend some time together, talking of their adventuring times and about how things are going in Wilderland. Balin doesn't hide his disquiet from his good friend, and tries to convince Bilbo to join him in a new adventure. Bilbo is reluctant, and in the end declines the invitation.

YEAR 2951: The Dark Lord Sauron unveils his presence in the black land of Mordor. He is ready to spread his power far and wide, and begins to rebuild his Dark Tower. His will is bent on gathering a vast army in the black land, and his summons are answered by all sorts of wicked creatures. Gollum is among them, and his path slowly turns in the direction of Mordor.

Sauron sends the Nazgûl to reclaim his stronghold in southern Mirkwood, and the forest darkens. Rumours of a new Shadow in the South start to be whispered by many folks in the North. Orcs and Goblins are found bearing the symbol of a lidless Eye.

YEAR 2953: The White Council, a gathering of the Wise, meets to discuss the fate of the Rings of Power. Saruman the White, the head of the Council, declares that the One Ring, the Ruling Ring that Sauron himself made, is lost forever, having been carried by the River Anduin to the Sea.

Saruman claims the impregnable fortress of Isengard as his own abode and begins to restore its defences.

YEAR 2955: Adventurers out of Rivendell signal the presence in Eriador of a new breed of Troll: the Olog-hai. They seem to come from Mordor and directly serve the Dark Lord.

YEAR 2956: Aragorn, son of Arathorn, captain of the Rangers of the North and heir of Isildur, meets Gandalf the Grey, and their friendship begins.

YEARS 2957–65: Rumours of turmoil and strife in Wilderland become more and more common in this decade. Traffic intensifies over the High Pass as more and more travellers from the East cross into the Westlands bringing news of threats to the fragile peace between Men, Elves, and Dwarves.