

WHISPERS OF THE WOOD



**GAME
SYSTEMS
INC.**

PO BOX 160129 MIAMI, FL 33116-0129

forwarding & address correction requested



POSTAGE
APR 1
1993
401



WORDS FROM THE WOOD

When you think of April first you usually think of fools, tricksters, joy-buzzers concealed in friendly hands, custard pies in the kisser, seltzer down the pants, things like that. But have you ever thought about anniversaries? About twelve years of PBM excellence? How about a decade of wood whisperings? Well, if you haven't turned your thoughts in that direction, we think you should, because this Fools' Day brings it all to pass! It's GSI's birthday! Another year older, wiser, and bigger and better. The past year has been nothing but a blast for us here in the Wood, bringing you what we believe to be the finest in postal entertainment, and there's no slow down in sight! Did you know that we're up to our eightieth game of Middle-earth PBM already?! Amazing. And we owe it all to you. You are the guests of honour at this little clam-bake, so give yourselves a hand and grab a slice o' cake. Thanks for making this a banner anniversary!

You should all be receiving a newly updated **House Rules** and **Procedures** sheet with your turns this month. Take some time and read it over. Two rather important changes that we want to be sure that you're all aware of concern service pricing: Effective as of March first, the cost for FAXING IN a turn has been *lowered* from the previous \$3.00 charge to a \$2.00 charge. The cost for PHONING IN a turn has NOT changed. The charge for READING turns less than a week old over the phone has been *increased* from the previous \$3.00 to \$5.00. READING turns more than a week old is still at NO charge.

And while we're on the topic of money, the men who count the beans want me to remind you NOT to send cash through the mail (very risky) and as much as possible, to consolidate all your game account funding in a single check. That is to say, if you are playing in three games, instead of mailing off three separate checks for \$15.00, just send one for \$45.00 with a note on how to divvy it up. This streamlines our accounting and, no doubt, your own as well.

One area not discussed on the House Rules sheet is WOTW publication compensation, so let's just focus on it now, shall we? It has long been our policy to reward PUBLISHED fiction or poetry authors a free turn and PUBLISHED strategy article authors a free set-up in a new game. This policy will of course continue, but let me stress that the freebies are granted solely on publication of your material, not just on submission. Secondly, the forms of compensation are not negotiable (stories or poems get free turns ONLY, articles get free set-ups ONLY) and they are not transferrable. A certificate for a free set-up does not have to be used right away - you can hold it 'til you're ready to use it, just don't lose it 'cos you won't get another.

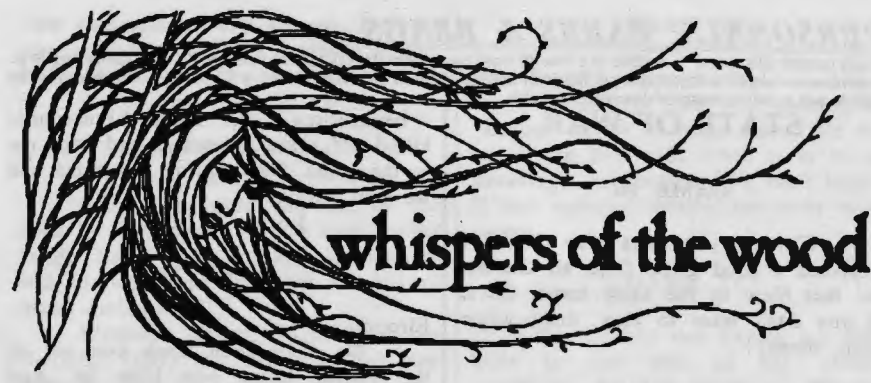
Some fast reminders - June's issue will be dedicated to the Free Peoples. This could be a good way to net yourself some of the freebies we just talked about! The submission deadline will be May 15th, so get scribbling.

Two three-week games are currently pending: in one an Evil team is waiting for a courageous band of Good souls to take on, the other is a single-player game. If you've been finding regular mail service too unreliable (and who hasn't), give these three-week games a try!

A final note - Our apologies to Nathan J. Hellmers, author of last month's poem "The Gift", for the handful of typo's that somehow got by us. As the proverb goes - To err is human, but to really screw things up, you need a computer!

That's it for this one, gang. See ya' in 30!

Dennis



ALONG THE PATHWAYS

Words From the Wood	Inside Cover
EDITOR'S COLUMN	
Personals	1
COMMUNICATIONS.	
Hall of Heroes	9
THE VICTORS.	
The Oracle Speaks.....	11
SPECIAL COMPENDIUM	

WHISPERS OF THE WOOD is a monthly publication primarily for the use and enjoyment of GSI players of STATE OF WAR and ME-PBM™. Subscription rates: \$15.00 for one year (12 issues) or \$25.00 for two years (24 issues). Individual issues cost \$1.75. GSI reserves the right to change these prices without prior notice of any type.

Credits

Editor.....	Dennis Edelen
Staff.....	Jason Duerstock, Blais Edelen, Harold Ford, Judith Heath & Michelle Heath
Publishers.....	Pete Stassun & Bill Feild Jr

This Month's Cover: "Dragon Fire"
by Robert Jimenez
Volume X Issue #1
Published by GAME SYSTEMS INC
April 1, 1993
Copyright GSI 1993

PERSONALS: BARBS & BRAGS

Every current GSI player is entitled to a free 40 word personal in this column each issue, for each game they're in. Submissions require a \$2.00 charge for each additional set of 40 words (41-80 is \$2.00 etc.). GSI reserves the right to edit or refuse material deemed unsuitable.

STATE OF WAR

GAME 80

Why do you guys play SOW? I expected a good game from all the hot air that blew in the early turns. Guys, if you don't want to play, don't waste your money!

Well, Bruce,

Turns out that when no one turns their back, you're not successful. Can't play face to face? Did you get crushed or run yellow? Use Whispers, live up to your defeat. Just list your state.

Green Goose

Middle-earth™ PBM

GAME 3

Will Smaug always be a bane to the Khazad? At the battle of Minas Brethil, Smaug the Golden's fiery breath helped Carlon's forces totally defeat my last strong army.

Baaltroc

GAME 7

The Free Peoples' Alliance, reduced to Mirkwood, faces an ever tightening circle of steel. The Misty Mountains no longer a barrier, no direction is safe . . .

Adumir to the Captain's Council

GAME 13

We Dunlendings have had mixed blessings recently. On the verge of

bankruptcy, the Dark Lieutenants killed off some characters and kept me in the game. Now Spring has come and we will survive.

Lothar

GAME 15

Elrond,

We shall soon flush you out of the pitiful holes you hide in. And then? A short trek to Mt. Doom. You'll be chained and live in searing pain forever.

Oberon

GAME 18

Dark Cowards,

Please sign the lies you send to Whispers. I dislike addressing you as the dogs that you are (and know yourselves to be).

If you want Elladan so badly, why did Durkarian refuse Elladan's personal challenge? Admit it, what you really want is a successful assassination (how brave of you).

Wake up from dreamworld, Dark Servants. You'll never get close to Arnor as long as Cardolan keeps torching Mordor single-handedly. Cardolan has more population in Mordor than any of you!! At least you were accurate when you wrote "pay back time, Cardolan." Cardolan is paying you back for the atrocities he suffered turns 5-10.

Speaking of pay-backs . . . I hope you enjoy your brief stay in Gondor. After Gondor is purged, Mr. Ice King is next.

Noldor

Dear Cloud Lord,

On behalf of my navy, I wish to thank you for inviting us to partake of

the pleasures of Dol-Amroth. Not the least of which will be crushing fragile Noldor Elf bones.

Lord Marshall Faltur

Sauron surveyed the list of the dead in Olbarmarl. With a turn of his head, he transfixed his lieutenants with his icy stare. "How can you kill all these emissaries?"

Without pause, his favorites chorused, "Easy. . . You just don't lead them so much."

King Thranduil,

Accept my gracious thanks for returning to my people one of our most treasured artifacts. This will help to settle the bad blood between our peoples. I also consider this to be repayment for the debts owed to my people.

Dain

Free Peoples.

Listen to the Dark Knife and gain knowledge. Though I have for you no good will, I must, for honour's sake, denounce the pustulent drippings of the Dog Lord's pen. His lies are not conscionable to honourable nations.

So speaks the Dark Knife

GAME 19

All hail the might of Sauron. Let the good fall and the strong survive!

The Easterlings

Attention Neutrals:

Let us have a discussion of alignment. If we all chose the same, victory is assured.

The Harad

GAME 20

Free Peoples, stop whining!

Ex-neutrals owe you nothing for "letting" us on to your team. We will attack the Evil side when it is to our advantage, not before. We can't help it if our superior tactics result in better scores.

GAME 21

It's too bad that having ten ritual kills is not one of my victory conditions, for Dendra Dwar, Fitzalan, Gothmog, Kaldurmeir, Ossim Rallah, Pochok, Tonn Varthkur, Urzahil, and Yezmin have all fallen to my blades.

Baaltroc

Tarandor,

Let him who lives to take off his sword boast, not he who puts it on! Maybe you'd better wonder why after suffering the losses you describe - and more - we are still active AND COUNTER ATTACKING!!!

Carlon

GAME 23

The Dwarves, stubborn to the last, fall to assassins' knives. The Elves, on the way West, amuse themselves keel-hauling the Raven. Dark Servants anxiously await word of Sauron's judgment.

Akhorahil

GAME 24

The Blind Sorcerer has fought alone for over three months. One month ago, he lost his capitol and he still fights on. Well played! We salute you! But we will still eliminate you. We attack!

The ghost of Ovatha II

GAME 28

What the . . . ? What do you mean it's not a Long Rider town? I don't care who it belongs to, I'm taking it!

Naurmegil
Emperor of the Iron Hills, Rhun, East Rhovanion, East Mordor, and Khand

Captured/destroyed by the Free People recently in Mordor: Barads Dur, Perras and Ungol, Durthang, Kal Nargil, Minas Ithil and Durkith, Osgiliath, Pelargir, Bar-en-Tinnen, Lug Ghurzun, Tir Ethraid, Lag Majakul. Good job, Eothraim, Noldo, Sinda, Northmen.

Subedei Gondor

GAME 31

The stench from the remains of Pochak's troops dissipated in several days. His mage's body was thrown in the refuse pile. The Cloud Lord's agent met his unmaker in similar fashion. Dol Guldur is next.

GAME 33

Going once, going twice, SOLD!!

Aradhrynd to the Long Rider and Dark Lts. for Tinculin, Fuinrauko, Uvatha's life . . .

The Good nations hold the West.
The Evils hold Mordor.
The Neutrals are undecided.
Turn 22 now!
Let's light this candle!

Vulcan 750

GAME 34

"My lord, it appears the end may be near."

"Tis true, friend, but remember: It is the intent of valour, not the result, that measures bravery."

Oberon

South Gondor and Sinda are raving about victories which I consider petty. They have done nothing decisive to slow me down. They will experience the same fate as Grandis and Belachael. They will die!

Bosimytas Reval

It would appear that Enion and Arfanhil have chosen unwisely. Now we have a target rich environment. The Sinda are no more.

Zarendarger (17)

GAME 35

Emissaries For Hire!

Are enemy population centers getting you down? Never fear! Our well-trained emissaries will take care of those pesky pop centers. Call the Northmen for details. Reasonable rates!

Erigarion

Rhudaaur's armies are crushed, his population centers taken or destroyed, his characters assassinated or killed in combat. So will be the fate of all Evil.

GAME 37

Beware! Take what is not yours and you will die! My powers of subterfuge are stronger than Rhudaaur's.

Southern Whisper

GAME 38

King Bain I,

Feeling any pain? I hear Southern Mirkwood is rather damp in Winter and Spring, perhaps you'll catch a chill . . .

Where will you go now? What will you do? It will be interesting.

The Houndmaster

Despite recent setbacks, we shall fight on! The Dark will prevail!
Sons of the Shadow

GAME 39

Haradrim defeat three Gondorain armies, capture Celdrahil, Camlin, Dol Amroth, Linhir and three towns, kill Argirion, Dunsul, and Baranor. Only real damage was at the hands of my new allies. Ouch, guys . . . the eye icon means I'm on your side.

Jebei

GAME 41

Elatar and Veantur were first
Threlin and Kulverio
Aggression had its cost
Vagaig, an obstacle removed
Moonbiter, I needed that staff
Arthedain interlude, Sarkar was next
Lanaigh and Valguwen,
The Dunadain fell
Bain's awesome artifacts availed him
Not

Ji Indur

GAME 42

Hail Dark Servants,

The Dwarves, Sinda Elves, and Woodsmen have all taken major losses. Great play by the Witch-king with aid from Rhudaaur and others. Means the North will become Evil. I have heard little from other dark Servants and I think we need to work together to crush the rest.

Dragon Lord #12

GAME 43

Famous Last Words
"Nazgul aren't so tough" - Teldumeir
"My wine tastes sour" - Sanganyando

"Maybe the Cloud Lord's got a point" - Emanuel

The Southern Dunadan Alliance scores victories versus the Quiet Avenger. Next: Haradwaith and related slime.

Excerpted from Dol Amroth Swan

Mahrcared, I salute you.

You and your men fight well, indeed. If your allies were half as capable, I'm sure that you would be celebrating in the ruins of our towns by now. Be assured that we will lay your bones to rest in the finest of orc traditions.

Hoarmurath (16)

GAME 45

Anti-Paladin,

Your greatness . . . Know you who I am? Me am Earful, yes me is! Secrets I tell! Yes, many I know! Come one, come all and ask Earful your questions! Me will tell you all! For a price, yes!

Earful

The thieves shall become the thieved; the assassins shall become the slain; the feared shall become the fearful . . . So it is written.

The Wandering Prophet

GAME 47

Dendra: Beware!
Gurthlug: Death Awaits!
Two servants marked for death.
The blows will be swift, I assure you.

Tips For Torturers

Always flay your victims feet first; that way you get to see the look on their faces.

When interrogating Elves, tie their ears back tightly; while this has little practical benefit, it makes them look really funny.

GAME 49

That smell drifting over the Mountains? Witches burning. Carn Dum is in ruins, Mt. Gundabad under siege, three Witch-king armies feeding crows.

The Darkness has been pushed back east of the Mistys.

Thorondur III, Cardolan

GAME 50

Overheard around the campfires in the army of the Witch-king:

Aw come on and go with us, Grishnack, we only need one more to make a hoard!

GAME 51

Guests of Mordor,

Your safety is not guaranteed in the gates so please book your reservations in advance to avoid that season rush.

Hosts of Sauron

GAME 54

Murazor regrets to inform the Free Peoples that, because of their refusal to submit to their rightful master, the nation of Arthedain has been annihilated. However, he is pleased to announce that he will consider acting mercifully toward those nations that humble themselves before him before his wrathful gaze is turned in full fury upon them.

So speaketh Angulion,
Spokesman of Murazor,
The Witch-king

GAME 55

Dear Evils,

If you wish to win this game, kill the Cloud Lord. He is driving some Neutrals Good!

Why doesn't any one help out the Witch-king? You duds really look out for each other. Look, the Cloud Lord p.o.ed the Harad because he thought the Fire King wasn't busy enough. Dweebs.

.58 cal

GAME 56

No one dictates to me. Mahrcaed and Eoder, you shall pay for your slander. The wrath of the Easterling peoples are directed against you. First step, Gaerandil's army is destroyed.

Zarendarger (25)

Obituary for Telumehtar

The Regent Telumehtar fell quickly to the savage attacks from the Warlord Gothmog. Gothmog's army feasted well on the fleeing troops of the dead Gondorian commander.

As the dark hoards pillage the fallen city of Northern Gondor, the Darkness of the storm begins to move further West and to the North. Where next shall darkness grow? Who now will fall before the feet of

Stormbringer

GAME 57

The Dun and Rhudaur decided to attack Good. Why? The Dun felt that Cardolan was stealing his gold. Hmm, when did GSI allow 20 level agents to steal gold? The Neutrals (except Haradwaith) will die first!

Rockbitter the Dwarf

GAME 59

To Whomever Dares Use My Name,

Your ruse was weak. I am enraged. None use my name, I am only "The Mouth of Sauron". I will find you and bring you to the Halls of Lamentation where your soul will shrivel before my Dark Master's Gaze.

Urzahil

Free People, Witch-king, Dragon Lord, Dark Lieutenants, Corsairs, Haradwaith, Dunlendings, Rhudaur versus Dog Lord, Cloud Lord, Blind Sorcerer, Ice King, Quiet Avenger, Fire King, Long Rider. Adunaphel sold out by her own kind!!! I smell a rat(s).

The Rat Catcher

GAME 60

It is a sad day for Arthedain and Southern Gondor. It seems their commanders are dropping like flies. Celdrahil, you have been unwise in leaving your "back door" open. I shall punish you for your mistake.

So speaks the Quiet One

Durthang - N. - Former capital of Ice King. See Ruins. - ADJ. - Smashed, trashed, or wasted. I.E. After that twelve pack, I was totally durthanged!

!!!NOTICE!!!

Help Save the Witch-king

All Good nations are encouraged to dig deeply into their vaults and give generously. Special thanks this month to Eothraim and Southern Gondor for their much needed contributions.

Here, in full, is the "brilliant" plan that the dark Servants are following:

1. Everyone throw everything at the Woodmen

2. (There is no #2.)

Naurmegil

Northmen (II)

P.S. And yet the Woodmen survive and the Free grow stronger every turn.

GAME 61

Why didn't the Long Rider cross the road?

Commander Hargrog and his 1800 Long Riders died there.

See ya' in my dreams!

Mahrcaed

GAME 62

The messenger finished.

"Nothing else?" Hellas asked.

Silently, the messenger bowed.

"You may go." Hellas said.

The messenger departed, the clicks of his heels echoing into the distance of the near empty chamber.

A shadowy figure emerged from the drapes . . .

Murazor lies dead, slain by the mighty Argeleb. Yet the head of Arthedain's king lies atop a pike outside the gates of Carn Dum, whilst its army feeds the crows near Weathertop. Angmarim raze the countryside unopposed, destroying all they touch.

I ask you, was Murazor not worth the price of victory? Sauron says yes!

Angulion of Angmar

GAME 63

Well . . .

I guess you "good guys" have all the allies that you need. After the

Noldo/Cardolan called me, I advised them that I wished to stay Neutral and planned a nonaggressive growth in common area. So they attacked me!! Hmm, I guess I'm not Neutral any more.

Warlord of Rhudaur

To Frosty the Snowman,
Big mistake! Big, big, big mistake! HUGE MISTAKE! Now you've gone and made me mad! Stay tuned for the results.

King Tarondor

GAME 64

In the Gondorian and Eothraim camps there was a feeling of jubilation as the dark forces were dealt another defeat. The festive mood was interrupted by the arrival of a lone scout, pale and haggard, riding into camp on a foam-flecked horse. Prince Cedrahil stepped past his captains to hear what his lone scout had to say. The scout, seeing his leader, struggled up to report.

"We were ambushed and taken," he said weakly. "They tortured the others right before my eyes and slowly cut them to pieces. HE said I would give you a message, although I know not . . ." At this point, the scout gurgled deep in his throat and died in the noble prince's arms. Suddenly, writing began to appear on the scout's body - raw, bloody weals.

Although there was an attempt to keep the message from reaching the men of the army, scuttlebutt soon had everyone knowing by the evening. Some men wept at the cruelty of the enemy. Some shook their fists with impotent rage. The majority, however, stood silently, with the seed of fear in their hearts. All knew what fate awaited them if they were not triumphant, for they now knew that the Storm King, at the head of the Army of the Southern Dragon, was on

the march. The Fifth of the Nazgul, the Blind Sorcerer, Akhorahil had come.

Excerpt from "Blind Sorcerer"
by Evlan the Black

With the Witch-king and the Dragon Lord on their knees and Free People armies flooding into Mordor, this game might not even make it to double-digit turns (it's only turn #4). Are we that good, or are they that bad?

Naurmegil
Sinda Elves

GAME 66

Hail freedom loving Neutrals!

Cargash, Angsul, Goblin gate and many other dark towns have been destroyed by the cleansing flames of hope! As the Dragon Lord, Witch-king, and Long Rider are forever vanquished by the Light, decision time approaches. Choose well!

Whitefire

GAME 67

Haradwaith,

Your arrogant attitude will surely take you to an early grave.

Free Peoples - Never underestimate your opponents or overestimate your bloated egos. We laugh at the suggestion that you will win by turn 15. It will never happen.

Ji Indur

Rumor has it that in 15 turns, the Dark Ones will be purged from Middle-earth. Ha! By turn 15, there'll be Elvish slaves serving the tables of Dendra Dwar!

May your days in Seattle always be overcast!

GAME 69

Come on people,

Let's make Game 69 a fun one. Start sending in personals. I'd love to hear what the Dark Servants have to say. 'Specially you, Witch-king.
Zarendarger (10)

Rhudaur welcomes all counsel in this world of Arda. Rhudaur declares neutrality for now. Any hostility will be in turn an act of war.

From the Lords of Rhudaur

GAME 70

An invitation and a warning. Any who choose the path of righteousness will be welcomed with open arms. But any who serve the darkness shall be destroyed, and quickly if they dare to enter my domain.

Taurgon, the Forest Commander

The fire returns as Evil this time. This time, Evil shall reign!

Erigarion

My dear Inner Circle,

I hope you're not counting on the Neutrals for a surprise edge. It's amazing how loyal they get when enough gold, mithril, and artifacts appear at their doorstep.

See you in combat!
Scaramouche

P.S. Thptph!!!

GAME 72

Dark Servants,

Some of you apparently have decided to "force" me to join Evil. This tactic will only drive me into the arms of your enemies. While you waste time

with me, Gondor grows stronger. Give up your foolishness.

Harad

I am become Death . . .
Naurmegil
Cloud Lord

GAME 73

Uvatha at important Dilgul, Another Rider at Elgaer. The battles darken my soul, Pulling wildly at my hair.

Everyone left me here,
To fight all alone.

Hired a worthy Seer,
Eothraim coming, not alone.

Dark Soul of the Northmen
Sauron's Bane

GAME 74

Like a black tide bursting forth from the Gates of Morannon come the hordes of Mordor. The Shadow of the Dark Lord rises again and spreads like a plague across the lands of the Free People . . .

GAME 75

Murazor stood and looked over the plains of Arnor with his commanders behind him. He shouts out, "The time has come, let my armies be unleashed and let the gates of Mordor open and let the armies of the Nazguls pour forth. Once again let the Free People fear the Nine Nazgul and Gothmog."

Sauron will compensate greatly for your souls. But beware, his wrath will strike down all who oppose.

Rockbitter the Blind

The Hall Of Heroes

Middle-earth Play By Mail

Game #9 - The Dark Servants (plus one): #20, #14, & #10

The Day of Darkness has come! Evil swallows the land at last, engulfing all light, all hope, all life. Final standings are as follows:

#20 Dark Lieutenants - 2400
#14 The Cloud Lord - 2300
#10 The Noldor - 1442

Top Free People: #8 Dwarves - 1017

Interesting notes:

Highest Challenge Rank - Ji Indur/Cloud Lord: 260
Highest Net Commander Rank - Gothmog/Dark Lts.: 205
Highest Net Mage Rank - Ji Indur/Cloud Lord: 191
Highest Net Emissary Rank - Dar-Zamport/Cloud Lord: 125
Highest Net Agent Rank - Night Hawk/Cloud Lord: 131
Most Mithril - Haradwaith: 738
Most Artifacts - Cloud Lord: 29
Most Kills - Cloud Lord: 38

Congratulations to the Dark Servants!

Game #23 - The Dark Servants: #25, #14, & #15

A double-dose of Foul triumph! The minions of the night cast wide their dark cloak, sealing the world's fate in only 27 turns! Final standings are as follows:

#25 Easterlings - 2400
#14 Cloud Lord - 2200
#15 Blind Sorcerer - 2034

Top Free People: #10 Noldor - 725

The Hall Of Heroes

Interesting notes:

Highest Challenge Rank - Asburgnul/Dog Lord: 222
Highest Net Commander Rank - Bulrakur/Dog Lord: 169
Highest Net Mage Rank - Gorovod/Easterlings: 184
Highest Net Emissary Rank - Go-Goman/Cloud Lord: 93
Highest Net Agent Rank - Ji Indur/Cloud Lord: 130
Most Mithril - Cloud Lord: 1129
Most Artifacts - Dog Lord & Easterlings (tie): 19
Most Kills - Cloud Lord: 17

Congratulations to the Dark Servants!

Earthwood - Original

Game #218 - The French Connection: #'s 1, 8, 13, 18, & 23

Vive le France! Or more accurately, le French Canadians! The Connection clicks into place as the undisputed rulers of the realm in 43 turns! Well done, Great White North!

State of War

Game #79 - The Nuclear Nomads: #'s 8, 12, & 10

19 turns sees the Governor of Florida leading the New Confederation to victory! Victory Points are as follows:

#8 - 164
#12 - 143
#10 - 111

The Oracle Speaks

A compendium of MIDDLE-EARTH PBM Questions

Q: Are the 'Suggested Readings' - both I.C.E.TM and Tolkien's works - necessary parts of the game or simply supplemental?

A: Many of the 'Suggested Readings' can be extremely helpful, but they are all purely supplemental.

Q: The rulebook states "artifacts must be used by issuing the appropriate order, in the turn ..." - But order #205 indicates a combat artifact remains in use until something happens to change the situation. Which is the case?

A: An artifact will remain 'in use' once it has become 'in use'. If a character obtains an artifact, and does not currently have one 'in use', then one (the most powerful) will be selected. If a character obtains a new artifact, and one is currently 'in use', then no change will occur. If the new artifact, or any other is desired to be the one 'in use', then #205 must be given. If a character loses an artifact, but another is still in their possession, then one (again the most powerful) will be selected.

Q: How does the "Combat Bonus" for artifacts and spells affect Personal Combat? Naval Combat?

A: The "Combat Bonus" value is translated into values for:
Personal Combat = value / 50 (i.e. a 500 bonus becomes 10)
Naval Combat = value / 100 (i.e. a 1000 bonus becomes 10)

Q: At what tax rate does the loyalty rank become affected, either adversely or to our benefit?

A: The exact range of values is NOT revealed. However, at certain tax rates the loyalty rank is assured of going down or up by a fixed amount. However, the intermediate tax rates can result in either a slight decrease, or a slight increase, or no change at all in the loyalty rate.

Q: My nation spends more money than it makes in income. How can I fix it? Is this fair?

A: Third Age, circa 1650 is a period of recovery and bold plans. This means that some nations have been suffering and are trying to return to a position of power. Others have grand plans to acquire new holdings and strength. In either case, this expansion takes wealth. Thus, it will be up to the nation's leaders to continue these grand schemes/recovery or curtail their nation's growth. Many nations face this dilemma. Suggestions for methods of increasing wealth can be found in the Rulebook.

Q: My nation has a special ability that allows me to create new (Commanders, Agents, Emissaries, or Mages) at a rank of up to 40. What order can I use to gain this advantage?

A: The only way to take advantage of this ability is to use the "Name New Character As (Commander, Agent, Emissary, or Mage)" order (#728, 731, 734, or 737) and with a (Commander, Agent, Emissary, Mage) that already has a rank of 40+. The "Name New Character" order (#725) can not be issued to take advantage of this ability.

Q: My nation has a special ability that allows me to create new (Commanders, Agents, Emissaries, or Mages) at a rank of up to 40, but all my (Commanders, Agents, Emissaries, or Mages) have a skill rank of 10. What can I do to still gain this advantage? Is this a problem?

A: At this time in the Third Age, many nations are suffering, or just recovering from the Great Plague. This means that many former heroes have perished. Therefore, although your nation may have the historical ability to create such skilled characters, you will have to train your current characters to a skill rank of 40+ to gain use of this advantage. Many nations may find themselves in this situation.

Q: My nation has no (Commanders, Agents, Emissaries, or Mages). How can I create any?

A: The "Name New Character" order (#725) can be issued by any character at the capital with Command skill (they need not have the same skills as the character being created) and can be used to create a character with any skill type (or combination thereof). Of course, the cost for this order is twice as much as the other "Name New Character" orders.

Q: What information do I have to provide on the turnsheet for my character orders?

A: Careful attention to the character orders and the additional information required will make for fewer errors and more enjoyment. There is space on the turnsheet for you to indicate the order number and/or order code for each of the orders you wish your characters to perform. Note that you do not have to give both the order number and order code, but it frequently enables both you and GSI to avoid making costly errors when the order instructions are entered. The order type is also optional, but again it also frequently enables you to avoid issuing two skill orders of the same type to the same character.

Following the order number or code, there is space for you to indicate any and all additional information specified for that order. The additional information should be entered in the sequence listed in the rulebook for that order, ensuring that the type of additional information is carefully adhered to.

Q: Does it make any difference in what sequence I list my character orders on the turnsheet?

A: Yes and no. All character orders, regardless of the sequence they are listed on your turnsheet, are randomly shuffled and sequenced by order number for purposes of order execution (Bid orders are then sequenced by the amount of the bid as well).

However, the sequence that character orders are listed on the turnsheet can make a difference. If you instruct your character to perform two skill orders (which is not permitted!) in the same turn, the second character order listed will be considered the 'duplicate' and thus ignored. This is because, in most cases, players list their most important character orders first, regardless of the actual sequence in which they will be executed.

Q: I am confused about the turn sequence. Can you move a character and then have him perform an action? Or vice versa?

A: All orders are executed in the sequence determined by the order number. Thus, you could have a Commander train his army (#435), and then move (#850). Or, you could have an Agent move (#810), and then perform a scout hex mission (#915). However, if a character was in one of your own population centers, then you could not have that character move (#810) and then influence (#525) - the #525 goes before the #810. The character could move and then on the next turn issue orders to attempt to influence.

Q: If a navy is at a harbor/port, and the harbor/port is removed or destroyed, what happens to the navy?

A: The navy is not directly affected by the lost harbor/port. The navy can remain in the hex as long as it wishes. It can even, if the terrain is 'shore', anchor ships and go ashore. However, if the navy moves away from the hex, and the terrain is not 'shore', then the navy can not return to the hex. Only an army would be able to enter the hex until the harbor is restored.

Q: When can a navy give army orders?

A: A navy can issue 'army' orders as long as the navy COULD anchor its ships and go ashore. The navy does not do so, but it must be able to do so to be able to issue the 'army' orders. In this way, a navy that is 'offshore' of a land hex (not in 'coastal waters' or 'open seas') could put troops on maneuvers or recon the area. Normally, only in cases of actual combat (#230 - #260) or movement (#850 - #860) will the ships actually become anchored as a result of another order.

Q: Why can't we build roads?

A: The roads found in Middle-earth around 1650 T.A. are the legacy of the earlier efforts and the mighty skills of the High Men and Eldar races. Many of these roads date back to the First or Second Ages. Neither the desire, nor the skill, still remains to build and maintain these fabulous constructions.

Q: My nation has a special ability that allows me to hire Men-at-Arms at no cost. What does this mean?

A: Normally, the first time an army is created, or 'Hired', there is an initial gold cost of 5000. Some nations, if they 'Hire Army' with Men-at-Arms, can do so at no cost.

Q: Is the 'force' needed to threaten a population center based upon numbers of troops or strength points?

A: The 'force' is based upon the quantity of troops, not the type or quality.

Q: Can a Mage use any two Mage skill orders, or is it just spells that can be used twice per turn?

A: A Mage can not normally use two Mage skill orders, except for casting two spells (using different orders) and that can be dangerous!! However, a Mage can 'Prentice Magery' and 'Cast' a spell in the same turn.

Q: Can a new character do actions on the turn s/he is created?

A: No, the only order that is likely to allow a character to be involved in an action on the turn s/he is created is #780. Since no space is provided yet on the turnsheet for the new character, no orders can be given nor will be accepted.

Q: What is the difference between a 'Transfer Command' and a 'Transfer Troops' involving all your troops?

A: The difference is that the 'Transfer Command' will automatically transfer all baggage and ships. The 'Transfer Troops' ONLY transfers the troops indicated. Furthermore, the "Transfer Command" also allows for the former Commander to join the new army without additional orders. The "Transfer Command" should also be used when you are trying to combine two armies into one.

Q: Why do some of my population centers appear on my turn map but not others? Is this a problem?

A: The turn map represents the general reports and feedback that your nation receives from its indigenous populace in its historical realm/region. These reports are NOT generated by any single character. This is why the turn map is fixed the entire game, even if you move your capital or base of operations. However, there are several orders (#905, #925, #935, #940(w/#415)) that can provide as many 7-hex reports as you can handle. These orders generate text reports and a smaller version of the turn map.

This 'blind-spot' problem is shared, to a greater or lesser degree, by many nations and is part of the difficulties faced when your nation expands beyond its borders or when your nation is scattered about - more orders must be expended in order to keep close tabs on your realm.

Fortunately, these distant population centers will report when they have been approached or invaded or attacked or taken away.....

Q: Can armies of different nations combine to attack?

A: Yes, but the armies are NOT joined. They simply can meet at the same place and attack on the same turn.

Q: I am supposed to kill a certain character - How do I find out who and where they are? How about artifacts - who owns them and where they are?

A: There are several ways to locate both characters and artifacts. There are several Lore spells that can reveal the characters (#420, #430) and locate information about the artifacts (#412, #418, #428). Actually catching up with the target character, or obtaining the specific artifact can be a bit more of a challenge...

Also, much of the supplemental reading contains details about characters, population centers, nations, artifacts, NPC's, and other special activities that can be encountered in ME-PBM.

Q: Will the 'Reveal Production' spell provide the production capacities of production centers you already own, within the radius of the spell?

A: Yes, the hexes are chosen at random within the radius and care not if there is a population center there already.

Q: If some of your own characters are in one of your own population centers, will they encounter any foreign character that enters that hex, even if the natural 'sighting' capabilities of the population center don't spot the foreign character?

A: Characters will not 'encounter' other player characters unless ordered to do so (scouting, challenges, double agents, etc...). Being aware of their presence does allow you (or them) to initiate some interaction. Characters can 'encounter' non-player characters (NPC's) in a hex without getting any report of their presence. Furthermore, characters can choose to interact with NPC's in a hex, even if no 'encounter' is indicated, if there is some report of their presence.

Q: When attempting to threaten a population center, do war machines help out other than counting as 25 troops?

A: No, they count as just 'more troops' to help the threaten.

Q: Does army morale go up when an army commander increases in rank?

A: No, not as a result of the commander's rank increase. Morale is normally increased only as indicated in the rules.

Q: When attacking an enemy army (not the population center) at one of their fortified population centers, will they receive a constitution bonus from their fortifications? Does the attacking army have to overcome the fortification?

A: The answer to the first question is 'Yes'. The answer to the second question is 'No' - because the enemy army would be gaining a defensive bonus because of certain available defenses associated with the fortifications - not the actual fortifications themselves.

Q: When defending against an enemy attacking army that is at their own population center (i.e. when you are planning to siege their

population center and they attack you), does the attacking enemy receive the constitution bonus from their own fortifications?

A: Yes, if combat occurs in a hex with fortifications which are owned by one of the involved armies, then they will receive the bonus because they are still using the available defenses associated with the fortifications, even though they might also be attacking.

Q: Is there a way to capture/destroy a fortified population center without war machines (and without sieging, threatening, using emissary orders, etc...)?

A: Yes, you can capture/destroy a population center using an army without war machines. The war machines are a BIG help, but not absolutely necessary.

Q: Can evasive movement prevent non-friendly/tolerant armies/navies from having to stop when running across each others paths?

A: Yes, besides sneaking up on population centers, this is the primary purpose for moving evasively.

Q: Does the casting proficiency for a spell already learned increase when a mage's skill rank increases?

A: No, once a spell is learned, the only way to improve the casting rank, besides acquiring certain artifacts, is to 'cast' the spell. However, the mage rank is one of the factors for determining the original spell casting proficiency.

Q: When an agent attempts to assassinate a character, what skill ranks of the target character matter, or matter most?

A: The highest one of the four skill ranks.

Q: Can an army, or specific troops, be put on maneuvers more than once in a turn (by different commanders)?

A: Yes, and by reviewing the discussion in the rulebook about 'characters with an army' you can determine how this can be done.

Q: Do ships, war machines, or fortifications matter at all in calculating victory points?

A: No, they are of tactical and/or strategic importance only. Other than the section in the rulebook, the actual method and details of tallying victory points is information withheld from the players.

Q: Can a navy move directly from 2927 to 2926?

A: No, nor can one move from 2236 to 2235 nor from 1118 to 1218 nor from 1119 to 1219.