

# CALLINGS

*He found himself wondering at times, especially in the autumn, about the wild lands, and strange visions of mountains that he had never seen came into his dreams.*

Leaving home and setting off on the road is a courageous choice, often considered reckless by a hero's family and folk. Adventurers leave behind all they know and love, so what is it that motivates and pushes them towards danger and the unknown?

Whatever it is that motivates the Player-heroes, it must be something that for them is worth the risk of crossing swords with the curved blades of Orcs. In *The One Ring*, this motivation is represented by an adventurer's Calling.

Choosing a Calling provides a player with a starting drive, the reason that pushed their character to become an adventurer. It is not meant to represent a profession or trade, but the sum of the ambitions and aspirations that eventually set them on the road.

There are six Callings for a hero to answer:

- |                    |         |
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| 1. Captain         | page 44 |
| 2. Champion        | page 44 |
| 3. Messenger       | page 45 |
| 4. Scholar         | page 45 |
| 5. Treasure Hunter | page 45 |
| 6. Warden          | page 46 |

Each player should select the Calling that best adheres to their character concept, keeping in mind that coupling each Calling to a Heroic Culture results in 36 combinations — a Hobbit Treasure Hunter has very different reasons to go adventuring than a Hobbit Scholar, but this is probably even more true if that Treasure Hunter is a Dwarf, or an Elf.

Callings follow a standard presentation:

- ◆ **FAVoured SKILLS.** Each Calling lists three Skills. When you select a Calling, you choose two Skills among those listed and mark them as *Favoured Skills*.
- ◆ **ADDITIONAL DISTINCTIVE FEATURE.** Those who answer the same Calling share a peculiar ability, in the form of a unique Distinctive Trait.
- ◆ **SHADOW PATH.** An adventurer's Shadow Path suggests the individual fate a Calling typically leads to if they fail to resist the Shadow's influence.

## CAPTAIN

*He stood up, and seemed suddenly to grow taller. In his eyes gleamed a light, keen and commanding.*

When the world is on the brink of ruin, it is the duty of all individuals of worth to rise and take the lead, whatever the risk. You have chosen to put your judgement to the service of others, to guide them in this dark hour. But you don't want others to heed your commands out of fear or obedience — you want them to follow you because they trust you.

### FAVoured SKILLS

Choose two Skills among **BATTLE**, **ENHEARTEN**, and **PER-SUADE** and mark them as *Favoured*.

### ADDITIONAL DISTINCTIVE FEATURE: LEADERSHIP

You possess the ability to direct others to action. When under pressure, other people naturally turn to you for guidance.

### SHADOW PATH: LURE OF POWER

When individuals are given a position of authority, either by rank, lineage, or stature, they may end up mistaking their own aggrandisement for the greater good of the people they should be guiding or keeping safe. Power is the quintessential temptation, and provides the Shadow with an easy way to win the hearts of those who desire it.

## CHAMPION

*"War must be, while we defend our lives against a destroyer who would devour all..."*

You deem that there is but one way to oppose the return of the Shadow, and that it is to conquer it by strength of arms. You are recognised as a warrior among your folk, a valiant fighter, onward into battle. For you, the road to adventure leads straight to wherever your foes prowl or hide.

### FAVoured SKILLS

Choose two Skills among **ATHLETICS**, **AWE**, and **HUNTING** and mark them as *Favoured*.

### ADDITIONAL DISTINCTIVE FEATURE: ENEMY-LORE

Enemy-lore is not a single Distinctive Feature; you must select the type of enemies it applies to, choosing from Evil Men, Orcs, Spiders, Trolls, Wargs, and Undead. This Distinctive Feature gives you knowledge of the characteristics, habits, strengths, and weaknesses of your chosen enemy.

### SHADOW PATH: CURSE OF VENGEANCE

Individuals who live by the sword are ever tempted to draw it, either literally or figuratively, when their will is thwarted or when they deem their honour to have been impugned by an insult. As corruption spreads in their spirit, their behaviour worsens, leading to more extreme violent reactions.

## MESSENGER

*"Elrond is sending Elves, and they will get in touch with the Rangers, and maybe with Thranduil's folk in Mirkwood."*

The Wise hold that evil days lie ahead, and that to keep hope, all who fight the Enemy must be as one. Yet, many miles and centuries of isolation separate the Free Peoples, and estrangement breeds mistrust. You have decided that it is your duty to travel to distant lands, carrying tidings and warning people of the coming danger.

### FAVOURED SKILLS

Choose two Skills among **COURTESY**, **SONG**, and **TRAVEL** and mark them as *Favoured*.

### ADDITIONAL DISTINCTIVE FEATURE: FOLK-LORE

You possess some knowledge of the many traditional customs, beliefs, and stories of the various communities that compose the Free Peoples. Likely the result of your wanderings, this information may help you when dealing with strangers, allowing you to come up with some useful facts regarding their folk or a smattering of the appropriate language.

### SHADOW PATH: WANDERING-MADNESS

Travelling afar might be the duty chosen by a messenger, but it carries the risk of never finding a place to fight for. The Road goes ever on and on, it's true, but whither then?

## SCHOLAR

*"Speak no secrets! Here is a scholar in the Ancient Tongue."*

For you, knowledge makes the wild world a less threatening place. Yellowed maps in lost books replace a fear of the unknown with curiosity and wonder, songs composed in ages past strengthen the weariest of hearts. A love of learning guides your every step, and illuminates the way for you and those who listen to your advice.

### FAVOURED SKILLS

Choose two Skills among **CRAFT**, **LORE**, and **RIDDLE** and mark them as *Favoured*.

### ADDITIONAL DISTINCTIVE FEATURE: RHYMES OF LORE

Rhymes of Lore are short verses created by many Cultures to help them remember significant facts from ancient history which might otherwise be lost. Scholars of Middle-earth credit much of their ancient knowledge to such rhymes.

### SHADOW PATH: LURE OF SECRETS

Inquisitiveness and curiosity are desirable virtues in an individual, but knowledge can be put to malicious use, and learned individuals can look down on others as ignorant fools. Secrets are dangerous, as the very desire of uncovering them may corrupt the heart.

## TREASURE HUNTER

*"Far over the Misty Mountains cold, To dungeons deep and caverns old. We must away ere break of day, To seek the pale enchanted gold."*

The world has seen the passing of the glory of many Dwarf-kings and Elven lords, and their heritage is now buried in Orc-infested dungeons. Hoards of stolen gold and jewels, guarded by fell beasts, beckon all who dare to find them. You seek to recover what is lost, even when it means braving unspeakable dangers.

### FAVOURED SKILLS

Choose two Skills among **EXPLORE**, **SCAN**, and **STEALTH** and mark them as *Favoured*.

### ADDITIONAL DISTINCTIVE FEATURE: BURGLARY

This venerable talent includes pickpocketing, lock picking and, in general, any shadowy way to get hold of the possessions of others or access protected areas.



## SHADOW PATH: DRAGON-SICKNESS

Adventurers who find themselves on the Road to seek lost riches run the risk of catching the age-old disease capable of turning a pile of enchanted gold into bitter ashes. As the Shadow tightens its grip on their hearts, the world shrinks around them and their closely guarded possessions.

## WARDEN

*"Travellers scowl at us, and countrymen give us scornful names."*

In this age of the world, when shadows grow deeper with every passing year, you have sworn to defend all who cannot defend themselves. Often, your choice forces you to forsake civilised areas, to better guard their inhabitants from what lurks right outside their fences. This has made you a stranger in the eyes of the common folk, a threatening figure like those you are protecting them from.

## FAVoured SKILLS

Choose two Skills among **AWARENESS**, **HEALING**, and **INSIGHT** and mark them as *Favoured*.

## ADDITIONAL DISTINCTIVE FEATURE: SHADOW-LORE

You have recognised that there is a hidden thread unifying most of what is malicious, dark, and terrible in Middle-earth, and that the thread is thickening year after year. A quality shared by the wise of the land, the truth behind this knowledge is becoming clearer as time passes.

## SHADOW PATH: PATH OF DESPAIR

Self-doubt is often the way that the Shadow chooses to reach the heart of those who oppose it. For they know that the Enemy is strong and terrible and that those they protect are too naive or weak to fend for themselves. Every day they ask themselves: will my strength be enough to prevail, or will I drag down the innocent in defeat?

# PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

*"...we have had to earn our livings as best we could up and down the lands, often enough sinking as low as blacksmith-work or even coal mining."*

The ability levels of all newly-created Player-heroes can now be raised, to represent their experiences prior to their life as adventurers.

Players have 10 points to spend on raising Skills and Combat Proficiencies. The cost of raising each ability is shown in the two tables to the right. The first table gives the costs for Skill levels, while the second shows the costs for Combat Proficiency levels.

Players are free to raise their abilities as they see fit, as long as they have enough points to buy the desired level. Players can also buy ranks in Skills or Combat Proficiencies that their Player-heroes didn't possess at all, or buy multiple ranks in the same ability, as long as they pay the cost of each level individually.

### EXAMPLE:

A player wanting to go from **LORE** 🗡️ to **LORE** 🗡️🗡️🗡️ would spend a total of 10 points (2 to raise the Skill from 🗡️ to 🗡️🗡️, 3 to go from 🗡️🗡️ to 🗡️🗡️🗡️, and 5 to go from 🗡️🗡️🗡️ to 🗡️🗡️🗡️🗡️).

### SKILL COSTS:

SKILL LEVEL TO ATTAIN	COST
From — to 🗡️	1 point
From 🗡️ to 🗡️🗡️	2 points
From 🗡️🗡️ to 🗡️🗡️🗡️	3 points
From 🗡️🗡️🗡️ to 🗡️🗡️🗡️🗡️	5 points

### COMBAT PROFICIENCY COSTS:

LEVEL TO ATTAIN	COST
From — to 🗡️	2 points
From 🗡️ to 🗡️🗡️	4 points
From 🗡️🗡️ to 🗡️🗡️🗡️	6 points