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Game: **THE LORD OF THE RINGS  
LIVING CARD GAME**  
Pub: **Fantasy Flight Games (2011)**

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Print on card (ensure you are printing at 100% scale) laminate and trim to size.

# THE LORD OF THE RINGS

## THE CARD GAME

### SETUP

Each player shuffles his **player deck** (keeping his hero cards separate) and places it facedown in front of him.

He then places his **heroes** faceup in front of him, adds up their **threat cost**, and sets his **threat tracker** to this starting level. Choose or randomly determine a **first player** to take the first player token.

Each player draws **6 cards** from the top of his player deck as his setup hand. A player may take a single *mulligan*, by shuffling these cards back into his deck and drawing 6 new cards (he must keep his second hand).

Choose a **quest**, and arrange the **quest cards** in sequential order with *Stage 1A* on top and the numbers increasing in sequence under it.

Remove cards from the **encounter deck** that do not relate to the current quest, and shuffle the deck. Place it facedown next to the quest deck, in the center of the play area. Place **damage**, **progress**, and **resource** tokens in piles next to these decks.

Follow any other setup instructions on the first quest card, then flip it. Then begin the game with the first round.

Whenever a card is discarded, it goes to the discard pile belonging to the card's originating deck.

### ROUND SEQUENCE

#### 1. Resource

Each player simultaneously adds **1 resource token** to each of his heroes' **resource pools** (each hero has one pool).

Each player then draws **1 card** from his player deck and adds it to his hand.

#### 2. Planning

In this phase only, players (starting with the first player and going clockwise) may play **ally** and **attachment** cards from their hand.

To play a card or activate certain card effects, spend **resource tokens** from the resource pool of a hero who has a resource icon that matches the card's sphere of influence (this is called a **resource match**).

**An exhausted hero may still spend resources.**

Cards with zero cost still require at least one hero under that player's control to have a matching resource icon.

Played ally or attachment cards are placed faceup and ready in the player's play area. Attachment cards are placed partially overlapping the card they attach.

A player with multiple heroes with similar resource icons may use resources from multiple pools of the same sphere to pay for a single card or effect.

**Neutral cards** (no sphere of influence) require no resource match and can be paid for with any hero's resources. You may also combine resources from heroes with different resource icons.

Triggering a card ability from a card already in play requires no resource match (unless specified).

Characters and attachment cards enter the game **ready** (faceup in front of their controller). A used card is turned 90° and **exhausted**. It cannot exhaust again until readied.

#### 3. Quest

Players may take **actions** and play **event cards** at the end of each of the following steps.

##### Step 1: Commit Characters

Each player may **commit** as many characters as desired to the current quest card, *exhausting* them. Do this as a team, starting with the first player and going clockwise.

##### Step 2: Staging

**Reveal 1 card per player from the encounter deck**; one at a time, with any '*when revealed*' effects resolved before the next is revealed. Enemy and location cards revealed are placed in the **staging area**, treachery cards are resolved and (unless indicated) discarded.

If the encounter deck is empty during this phase, shuffle its discard pile to form a new encounter deck.

##### Step 3: Quest Resolution

Players compare the combined **willpower** ♣ of all *committed* characters against the combined **threat** ♠ of all cards in the staging area.

♣ **is higher**: a number of progress tokens equal to the amount by which ♣ **overcame** ♠ are placed on the current quest card. If there is an **active location**, tokens are placed on that location until it is explored, with the remainder placed on the current quest.

♠ **is higher**: each player must raise his threat dial by the amount by which ♠ was higher than ♣.

♣ **is equal to** ♠: nothing happens.

Characters remain committed to the end of this phase, unless removed from the quest by a card effect. They remain *exhausted* after this step.

#### 4. Travel

Players may **travel** as a group to any one location in the staging area by moving it alongside the current quest card, making it the **active location**. The players can only travel to one location at a time, and cannot travel to a new location if another location is active. The first player makes the final decision on whether and where to travel.

In the staging area, location cards add to the encounter deck's ♠. Once a location is active, it no longer contributes its ♠, but acts as a buffer for the currently revealed quest card. Any progress tokens that would be placed on a quest card are instead placed on it.

If a location ever has as many progress tokens as it has quest points, it is **explored** and discarded from play.

When a card effect *removes* progress tokens from a quest card, the effect applies specifically to the quest card, and never to the active location.

#### 5. Encounter

##### Step 1: Player Engagement

Each player has the option to **engage one enemy** by moving it from the staging area to in front of the engaging player. An enemy's engagement cost has no effect.

##### Step 2: Engagement Checks

The first player makes an **engagement check** by comparing his **threat level** against the **engagement cost** of each of the enemy cards remaining in the staging area.

The enemy with the highest engagement cost that is *equal to or lower* than this threat level engages this player, moving to the space in front of him.

The player to his left then makes his own engagement check against each of the remaining enemy cards.

Continue this process with all players in clockwise order. Starting again with the first player, players continue making engagement checks until there are no enemies remaining in the staging area that can engage any players.

#### 6. Combat

All enemies engaged with players attack first each round, and the players resolve those attacks one at a time.

Deal **1 shadow card** (the top card of the encounter deck) facedown to each engaged enemy.

Cards are first dealt to the enemies attacking the first player, and then proceed clockwise all enemies have a card. When dealing to a single player's enemies, deal to the enemy with the highest engagement cost first.

If the encounter deck runs out, any enemies that have not been dealt shadow cards are not dealt them this round.

##### Resolving Enemy Attacks

Follow these steps in order. Players may play event cards and take actions at the end of each step:

**1. Choose an enemy.** The first player chooses which attack (among enemies to which he is engaged) to resolve first.

**2. Declare defender.** Only one character can be declared as a **defender** against each attacking enemy, and must *exhaust* to do so. An attack may also go **undefended**, with no defenders declared for that attack.

Unless an effect specifies otherwise, you can only declare defenders against enemies with whom you are engaged.

**3. Shadow effect.** The active player flips that enemy's shadow card faceup and resolves any shadow effect.

**4. Determine damage.** Subtract the defending character's **defense strength** ♠ from the attacking enemy's **attack strength** ♣ to find the damage immediately dealt to the defending character. If a character is destroyed, additional damage is wasted. If the result is 0 or negative, no damage is dealt.

All damage from an *undefended* attack must be assigned to a single hero (*not* an ally) controlled by the active player. If a defending character leaves play or combat before damage is assigned, the attack is *undefended*.

♠ does not absorb damage from undefended attacks or card effects.

If you use card effects to declare multiple defenders against a single attack, the defending player must assign all damage from that attack to a single defender.

The first player repeats these steps for each enemy he is engaged with. Then proceed clockwise around the table with each player resolving all of his enemies' attacks.

Once an attack has resolved, characters are no longer considered 'defenders', but they remain *exhausted*.

## Attacking Enemies

Starting with the first player and going clockwise, each player may declare one attack against each enemy with which he is engaged once each round.

Follow these steps in order. Players may play event cards and take actions at the end of each step:

### 1. Declare target of attack, and declare attackers.

Choose one enemy with whom you are currently engaged, and *exhaust* any number of characters as **attackers**.

### 2. Determine attack strength.

Add up the total **attack strength** of the attacking characters that have been declared against that target.

### 3. Determine combat damage.

Subtract the target enemy's **defense strength** from the total of all attacking characters to find the damage immediately dealt to the target. If the result is 0 or negative, no damage is dealt.

After your first attack is resolved, you can declare another attack against any eligible enemy target that you have not yet attacked this round (if you have the ready attackers). Once your attacks resolve, proceed clockwise around the table with each player resolving all of his attacks.

Once an attack is resolved, characters are no longer considered 'attackers', but they remain *exhausted*.

For each point of damage dealt to a character or enemy, 1 **damage token** is placed on its card, reducing its hit points by 1. These remain until another effect heals or moves them off of the card, or until the card leaves play.

A card with 0 hit points is immediately **defeated**. Characters are placed in their owner's discard pile; enemies are placed in the encounter discard pile. When resolving effects that move cards from a player's discard pile to his hand or deck, hero cards are ignored, as hero cards cannot move to a player's hand or deck.

Any enemy cards not defeated remain engaged with a player until they are defeated or removed by a card effect, or until that player is eliminated from the game.

**Shadow cards** remain in place throughout this phase. If that enemy leaves play, discard its shadow card. At the end of the phase, discard all shadow cards dealt this round.

## 7. Refresh

All *exhausted* cards *ready*, each player increases his **threat** by 1, and the first player passes the first player token to the next player clockwise.

## QUEST ADVANCEMENT

Players immediately advance to the next stage of a quest when they place **progress tokens** equal to or greater than the number of **quest points** the current quest card has. Additional progress tokens *do not* carry over; all tokens on the quest are returned to the token bank when players advance to the next stage. Follow any instructions on the newly revealed quest card. The state of other cards does not change, and the round sequence is not interrupted.

## ENDING THE GAME

Players win or lose as a team. Players lose if all are eliminated before the completion of the final stage of the scenario deck. Players win if at least one player survives through the completion of the final stage of the scenario.

A player is eliminated if all his heroes are killed, his **threat level reaches 50**, or a card effect forces his elimination. His hand, all of the cards he controls, and his deck are placed in their owners' discard piles. Any encounter cards with which that player was engaged are returned to the staging area, retaining any wound tokens on them. The remaining players continue to play the game.

Note that after a player is eliminated, one less encounter card is revealed during the quest phase.

## CARD EFFECTS

If two or more conflicting effects occur simultaneously, the first player decides the order in which they resolve.

If an encounter or quest effect targets a single player or card, and there are multiple eligible targets, the first player selects the target from among the eligible options.

**Constant Effects** continually affect the game state as long as the card is in play and any other specified conditions are met. These effects have no bold trigger, as they are always active.

**Actions** are denoted by a bold **Action:** trigger. They are optional, and can be triggered by their controller during any action window in the game sequence. The card with the action must be in play, unless the action specifies it can be triggered from an out of play state. **Event card** actions are played directly from your hand.

Action triggers preceded by a specific game phase mean the action can only be triggered during that phase.

**Responses** are denoted by a bold **Response:** trigger. They are optional, and can be triggered by their controller immediately after a specified occurrence. The card with the response must be in play, unless the response specifies it can be triggered from an out of play state. **Event card** responses are played directly from your hand.

**Forced Effects** are denoted by a bold **Forced:** trigger. They are initiated and immediately resolved by specific occurrences, and occur automatically whether the card's controller wants them to or not.

**When Revealed Effects** are denoted by a bold **When Revealed:** trigger. They occur automatically as soon as the encounter card is revealed (but do not resolve when the card is revealed as a shadow effect).

**Shadow Effects** are offset from a card's other effects by a 'halberds and skull' graphic, in italic type, and denoted by a bold italic **Shadow:** trigger. They only resolve when the card is dealt to an attacking enemy during combat.

**Travel Effects** are denoted by a bold **Travel:** trigger. They are costs or restrictions that some or all players must pay or meet in order to travel to that location. If they cannot do so, they cannot travel to that location.

## OTHER RULES

### Lasting Effects

Effects that last for longer than a single action are **lasting effects**.

Multiple lasting effects may affect the same card at the same time. The order in which they take place is irrelevant, since the net sum of all lasting effects is applied to the card.

If one of a hero's, ally's, enemy's, or location's statistics is ever lower than 0 after all effects are applied, that statistic is rounded up to 0. Any time a new effect is applied to a card, the net sum of all active effects should be recalculated.

### Paying Costs

When confronted with a '*pay or exhaust X to do Y*' construct, everything before the 'to' is considered the **cost**, and everything after the 'to' is considered an **effect**.

Costs can only be paid with cards or resources that a player controls. If an effect is canceled, the cost is still considered to have been paid.

### Control and Ownership

A player 'owns' his heroes and the cards he has chosen for the player deck he is playing. A player 'controls' all cards that he owns, unless another player or the encounter deck takes control of the card through a game effect. Any time a card leaves play, it reverts to its owner's hand, deck, or discard pile (as directed by the effect forcing it out of play).

When a player plays an ally card, it comes into play under his control and is placed in his play area. If another player takes control of that ally, it is moved to the controlling player's play area. Ally cards cannot be played under the control of another player, they can only change control through card effects.

When a player plays an attachment card, he has the option of giving control of that card to another player by attaching the card to one of that player's characters. Players always assume control of attachments that have been played on their characters. If control of that character changes, so does the control of any attachments on that character.

If an encounter card becomes an attachment and attaches to a character, that character's controller does not gain control of the attachment.

When a player claims an objective card, he gains control of that card unless otherwise directed by a card effect.

### In Play and Out of Play

*In play* refers to cards that have been played or put into play (in a player's play area), to cards that are waiting in the staging area, to the currently revealed quest card, and to encounter cards that are engaged with that player.

*Out of play* states are 'in a player's hand', 'in a deck', or 'in a discard pile'. Card effects do not interact with cards in an out of play state unless the effect specifically refers to that state.

### Running Out of Cards

If a player runs out of cards in his play area, he continues to play the game with the cards he has in play and in his hand. He does not reshuffle his discard pile.

If the encounter deck is ever out of cards during the quest phase, the encounter discard pile is shuffled and reset back into the encounter deck.

### Table Talk

Players may talk to one another during play, and work as a team to plan and execute the best course of action. They may discuss anything, but cannot name or read out loud directly from cards in their hand, or from cards they have seen but the rest of the players have not.

# THE LORD OF THE RINGS

THE CARD GAME

## 1. RESOURCE PHASE

Each player adds 1 resource to each of his heroes' resource pools, and draws 1 card.

Actions may be taken by any player.

## 2. PLANNING PHASE

First player plays **ally** and **attachment** cards.

Actions may be taken by any player.

Next player clockwise plays ally and attachment cards, etc.

Actions may be taken by any player.

## 3. QUEST PHASE

Players commit characters to quest.

**Encounter deck reveals 1 card per player.**

Actions may be taken by any player.

Resolve questing.

Actions may be taken by any player.

## 4. TRAVEL PHASE

Players may travel to 1 location if there is no currently active location.

Actions may be taken by any player.

## 5. ENCOUNTER PHASE

Each player may choose and engage 1 enemy from the staging area.

Actions may be taken by any player.

Make engagement checks.

Actions may be taken by any player.

## 6. COMBAT PHASE

Deal 1 shadow card to each enemy.

Actions may be taken by any player.

First player resolves attacks made by enemies against him, then next player clockwise, etc.

First player declares and resolves attacks against his enemies, then next player clockwise, etc.

Actions may be taken by any player.

## 7. REFRESH PHASE

Each player refreshes all cards he controls and raises his threat by 1. First player token passes to the next player clockwise.

Actions may be taken by any player.

**BOLD** = cannot be interrupted with actions.

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THE CARD GAME


## KEYWORDS

### Doomed X

When revealed any time (including setup), *each player* must raise his threat level by the specified value.

### Guarded

When revealed any time (including setup), reveal and attach the next card of the encounter deck to the objective card when it enters the staging area, and place them *both* in the staging area. The objective cannot be claimed as long as any encounter card is attached. Once that encounter is dealt with, the objective remains in the staging area until claimed. If another objective card comes up while attaching a card for the guarded keyword, place the second objective in the staging area, and use the *next* card of the encounter deck to fulfill the original keyword effect.

Enemy and location cards attached to guarded objectives *do* still count their  while they are in the staging area. An encounter card attached to a guarded objective is dealt with as follows:

An **enemy** card leaves play, either by being defeated or as the result of a card effect.

A **location card** leaves play, either by being fully explored or as the result of a card effect.

A **treachery** card has its effects resolved, or canceled.

Once all encounter cards attached to a guarded objective are dealt with, players can claim the objective in the manner specified by its text.

### Ranged

This character can be declared by its controller as an **attacker** against enemies engaged with other players. This can be declared when its owner is declaring attacks, or it can participate in attacks declared by other players. The character must *exhaust* and meet any other necessary requirements.

### Restricted

A character can never have more than 2 restricted attachments. If a third is ever attached, one must immediately be moved to its owner's discard pile.

### Sentinel

The character can be declared by its controller as a **defender** during enemy attacks made against other players. Sentinel defense can be declared after the engaged player declares 'no defenders'. The character must *exhaust* and meet any other necessary requirements.

### Surge

When revealed any time (including setup), reveal one additional card from the encounter deck. Do this immediately after resolving *when revealed* card effects.

### Victory X

When this card leaves play, one player places it near his threat dial to remind the players of the VPs applied to the score of the entire group at game end.

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