

A motley band of Games Workshop staffers in America combine to present a hobby feast representing one of the most tension filled scenes from *The Lord of The Rings: The Fellowship of The Ring*.

There are some action scenes in *The Lord of The Rings* movie that simply scream out to be turned into tabletop gaming scenarios. The Watcher in the Water is just such a dynamic moment - with horrible tentacles bursting forth from the darksome water and entangling Frodo. The rest of the Fellowship rush to free the Hobbit, with Aragorn and Boromir striding into the foul waters and severing the slimy appendages with mighty sword strokes while Legolas' bow provides

covering fire. Can the Fellowship fight off this loathsome creature and escape through the hidden doors into the Mines of Moria?

Turning all this action into a fun and playable scenario has been a backburner mini-project for a small group of people for quite some time, but through sheer force of will at last the labour of love is done. The scenario was written by Matthew Ward, the special terrain built by Jason Buyaki and Jeremy Vetock, and the Watcher model and its many tentacles were converted by Dave

Taylor. In addition to giving you the full scenario to try yourself, we have put together in this article some quick descriptions of how the terrain and conversions were done, and a quick report of a game fought on the table. If you are looking to game out the entire movie trilogy or just try a new fast-playing and brilliant scenario then you are in for a treat.

SCENARIO - THE WATCHER IN THE WATER

Defeated by the weather on Caradhras, the Fellowship have decided to journey through Moria, but the way into the fabled Dwarven realm is not without a guardian. As the Fellowship attempt to open the Hollin Gate of Moria, something evil stirs in the waters nearby. With the bulk of the Fellowship's attention on the door and what may lie inside, the be-tentacled Watcher awakes and attacks Frodo. Can the rest of the Fellowship rescue Frodo and escape into Moria?

Converting your own Watcher and building elaborate terrain is fantastic, but will involve no small degree of time and effort. We admit that we here at Games Workshop are pretty crazy and looked at the whole project as more of a labour of love than work, so the time went by very quickly. But keep in mind that the upcoming *Shadow and Flame* gaming supplement for *The Lord of The Rings* will be revisiting Moria. Having built the Hollin Gates for the Watcher in the Water scenario you will have even more use for your terrain recreating Balin, the Lord of Moria, and his ill-fated attempt to wrest the ancient Dwarven Kingdom from the forces of Evil. Just think about doughty well-armoured Dwarves pitting their axes against the tentacles of the Watcher! It's another reason for *The Lord of The Rings* gaming fans to stay tuned and keep checking to see if your sword is glowing blue - there could be Goblins near...

DON'T DISTURB THE WATER...

A new scenario and terrain building ideas



Thwarted in its attempt to capture the Ring, the Watcher vents its fury on the ancient entrance to the Mines of Moria.

PARTICIPANTS

The Good side consists of Frodo, Gandalf, Aragorn, Boromir, Gimli, Legolas, Sam, Merry and Pippin.

The Evil side has the Watcher in the Water, consisting of the Watcher's body and eight tentacles.

If you want to play this game with other forces, choose 700 points of Heroes for the Good side. The Evil side should always consist of the Watcher in the Water.

LAYOUT

The scenario is played on a board 24"/60cm by 48"/120cm. The main section of the board is dominated by the Watcher's pool, which is divided into shallow and deep areas (see map). The Hollin Gate is located 12"/28cm in from one board edge and stairs lead up from this to the board edge.

Outside, around the pool, there should be scattered dead and twisted trees, along with rubble and scree at various points. Inside the Gate and on the stairs there should be a small amount of rubble and numerous Dwarf and Goblin corpses.

STARTING POSITIONS

The Good player deploys Sam, Merry, and Pippin between 18"/42cm and 24"/60cm from the Moria board edge. He then deploys Aragorn, Boromir, Legolas, Gimli, and Gandalf inside Moria, at least 3"/7cm away from the Hollin Gate.

The Evil player may then deploy one tentacle and Frodo (Frodo begins the game enveloped – see below), anywhere on the shore of the pool (ie, not in the water), up to 24"/60cm in from the Moria table edge. He may then deploy the Watcher and the remaining tentacles anywhere in the area of deep water.

OBJECTIVES

The Good side wins if five members of the Fellowship escape the board through the Hollin Gate and up the stairway. One of these members must be Frodo.

The Evil side will win if five members of the Fellowship are slain, or if Frodo is slain.

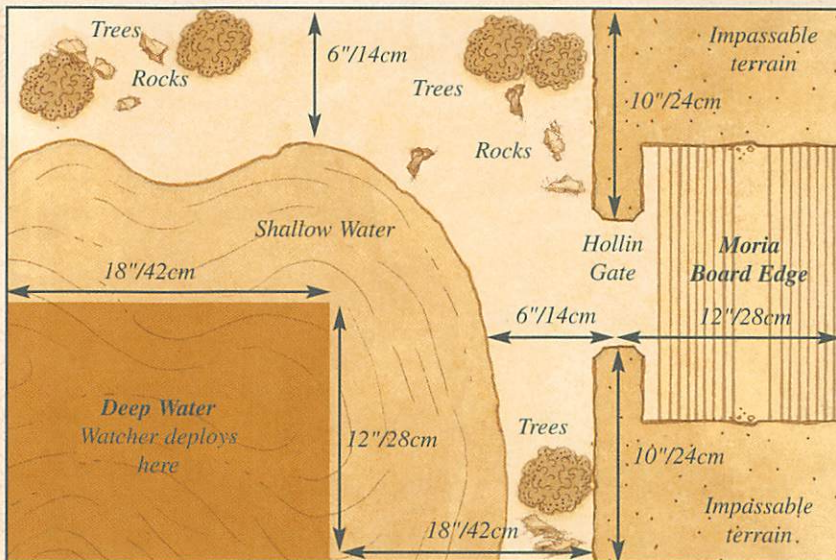
SPECIAL RULES

Shallow and Deep water: Whenever a Good model starts its movement in the pool (even a heroic move or as part of a heroic combat), it must test to see whether or not it is hindered. Make a single roll for shallow water, and two rolls for deep water and choose the lowest. Legolas gets a +1 modifier to this roll.

1 The model loses its footing and falls down. The model may not move this turn.

2-5 The footing is unsteady but navigable. The model may move at half speed as if in difficult terrain.

6 The model is unhindered by the water and may move at full rate this turn.



THE WATCHER IN THE WATER

The tentacles are mounted on 40mm round bases.

Tentacle	F	S	D	A	W	C
	4/-	5	5	1	-	8

The tentacles may move 6"/14cm per turn as if they were independent models and always ignore terrain. They can fight in combat normally. Should a tentacle win its combat, it will not try and deal any damage. Rather, it will envelope a single defeated model and instantly drag it D6" in a direction nominated by the Evil player. If there are multiple tentacles engaged in a single fight, the Evil player may choose which tentacle envelopes the loser. Represent which tentacle has enveloped which model by placing the enveloped model on its side on the base of the tentacle.

In successive Movement phases the Evil player may drag the Good model an additional D6". The enveloped model may not make any actions while enveloped. An enveloped model will only be freed if the tentacle is charged or is wounded by a ranged attack (see below). If an enveloped model is freed, the Evil player places it, knocked to the ground, within 1" of its former captor.

Tentacles may be charged as normal. If a tentacle is charged while it is enveloping a model, that model is instantly released as discussed above. If a tentacle is wounded, the tentacle drops any enveloped model and then is instantly moved to within base-to-base contact with the main body of the Watcher.

Tentacles that have enveloped a model may be targeted with ranged attacks without the enveloped model (or in fact any Good model) being considered to be 'in the way'. This is to represent the fact that the tentacles are actually flailing about high above the ground. *Sorcerous Blasts* aimed at tentacles with an enveloped model will not cause any damage to the enveloped model, although they will be moved back with the tentacle. Tentacles are never knocked to the ground.

Watcher body	F	S	D	A	W	C	Might	2
	0/-	8	6	0	-	6	Will	3 per turn
							Fate	0

The Watcher may move 3"/7cm per turn, but may not move out of the water for any reason whatsoever. Should the Watcher be engaged in combat it will be hit automatically unless any tentacles are fighting with it. If an enveloped model is in base-to-base contact with the Watcher at the end of the Fight phase, it will take D6 automatic Strength 8 hits as the Watcher tries to eat it.

The Watcher may use Might on behalf of any one of its tentacles (they are, after all, part of it).

If the body of the Watcher is wounded, it must immediately take a Courage test. If it fails, all tentacles drop any burdens they may have and are instantly moved into base-to-base contact with the main body. Tentacles are not affected by any magical power except *Sorcerous Blast*. If the main body is the target of a successfully cast *Immobilise* or *Command* spell, the effects of the magical power affect not only the main body, but the tentacles as well.

BUILDING THE WALLS OF MORIA

THE TABLE

When it came to turning Matt's scenario into a table, Jason Buyaki and Jeremy Vetock thought it may be more useful to build the main playing area as a display piece, saving the interior of Moria for another project later in the year. Although the finished table does not exactly reflect the scenario map on the previous page, the set-up areas can be easily replicated.

The first step was to build the base of the table. Pink insulation foam was glued to a base frame 3' wide and 2' deep. The varying levels of terrain (cliff face, shoreline, shallow water and deep water) were traced out and then carefully carved with a sharp knife.

When Jason was happy with the carving he hit the foam with blasts of hot air from a heat gun (like a very powerful hairdryer). This gave the surface a more organic feel. At this time he also added a few dead trees to the shallow water, built using a pared down version of the wire trees described later.

The next step was to build the walls of Moria. Although there are many cliff-building techniques, the solution that gave Jason the result closest to the look of the walls in the movie was to mesh together two preformed rock faces purchased from a local model train store. The picture to the right shows two pieces in place before Jason's final detailing.

After texturing the table by gluing down sand and rocks, Jason painted the whole thing black and began the drybrushing. For the ground Jason began with a mix of Chaos Black and Goblin Green, and for each additional layer he added more and more Codex Grey to the original mix.

The walls were heavily drybrushed with Shadow Grey, and a few random areas were drybrushed over this with Bestial Brown or Dark Flesh. The final series of highlights were a drybrush of Codex Grey, then Fortress Grey, and then some areas were hit with a final light drybrush of Rotting Flesh.

When the painting was finished Jason poured the two-part epoxy resin for the water. Because of the depth required Jason poured the resin in three layers, allowing each layer to cure overnight before pouring the next. The deepest layer included a deep green tint, to emphasise the murk of the cold waters. The next two layers were successively lighter. To add more debris to the murky

waters Jason carefully added dark green flock to the middle of each layer by sprinkling the flock on to the surface of the resin and pushing it in with a popsicle stick while the resin is curing.

THE TREES

When the table was finished it was time to move onto the trees. Again, there are many techniques for building trees for gaming tables and Jason chose another technique often used by model train display builders, the Wire Tree.

Jason twisted lengths of thick gauge wire together to form the trunk and branches of the mighty trees that stand beside the Hollin Gate. Once he was happy with the basic shape of the trees, Jason went on to wrap the trees with a fine gauge florists' wire. While time consuming, the results look very good.

The final step in the construction of the trees was to paint three layers of latex rubber (available from most hobby stores) onto the tree. This smoothed out some of the wire ridges and gave an even texture to the trees. Once the trees were constructed Jason painted them (Bestial Brown and Vomit Brown) before adding the clumps of the foliage we've used for so many The Lord of The Rings projects.

THE GATE

Jeremy Vetock, a long-time fan of Middle-earth, was very keen to work on the Hollin Gate. He started with a blank rectangle of plasticard (4" x 5") and the wonderful *Visual Companion to The Lord of The Rings: The Fellowship of The Ring* (published in 2001 by Houghton Mifflin), which contains a fantastic image of the entrance to Moria.

Jeremy traced the image directly from the book and transferred it to the plasticard. With the careful use of a sharp modelling knife and the fine grinding bit on his Dremel rotary tool, Jeremy reproduced the team effort of Narvi and Celebrimbor all those years ago. Jeremy completed the carving and had the door in place before Jason began the painting. After the stone work had been painted Jeremy spent an evening sweating under his painting lamp, painstakingly replicating the script and designs of the Gate. Jeremy's careful use of Shining Gold, Mithril Silver, and Chestnut Ink really brought the ithildin to life.

1. The tree starts out as twisted strands of wire.

2. Fine gauge florists' wire bulks out the tree.

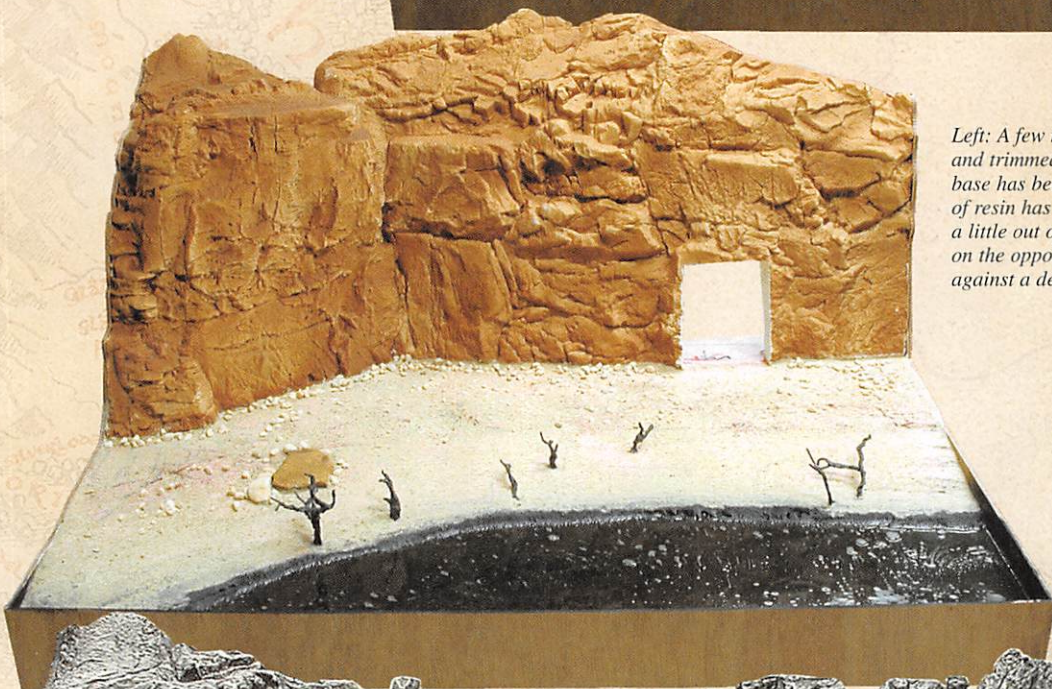


The finished tree in place.

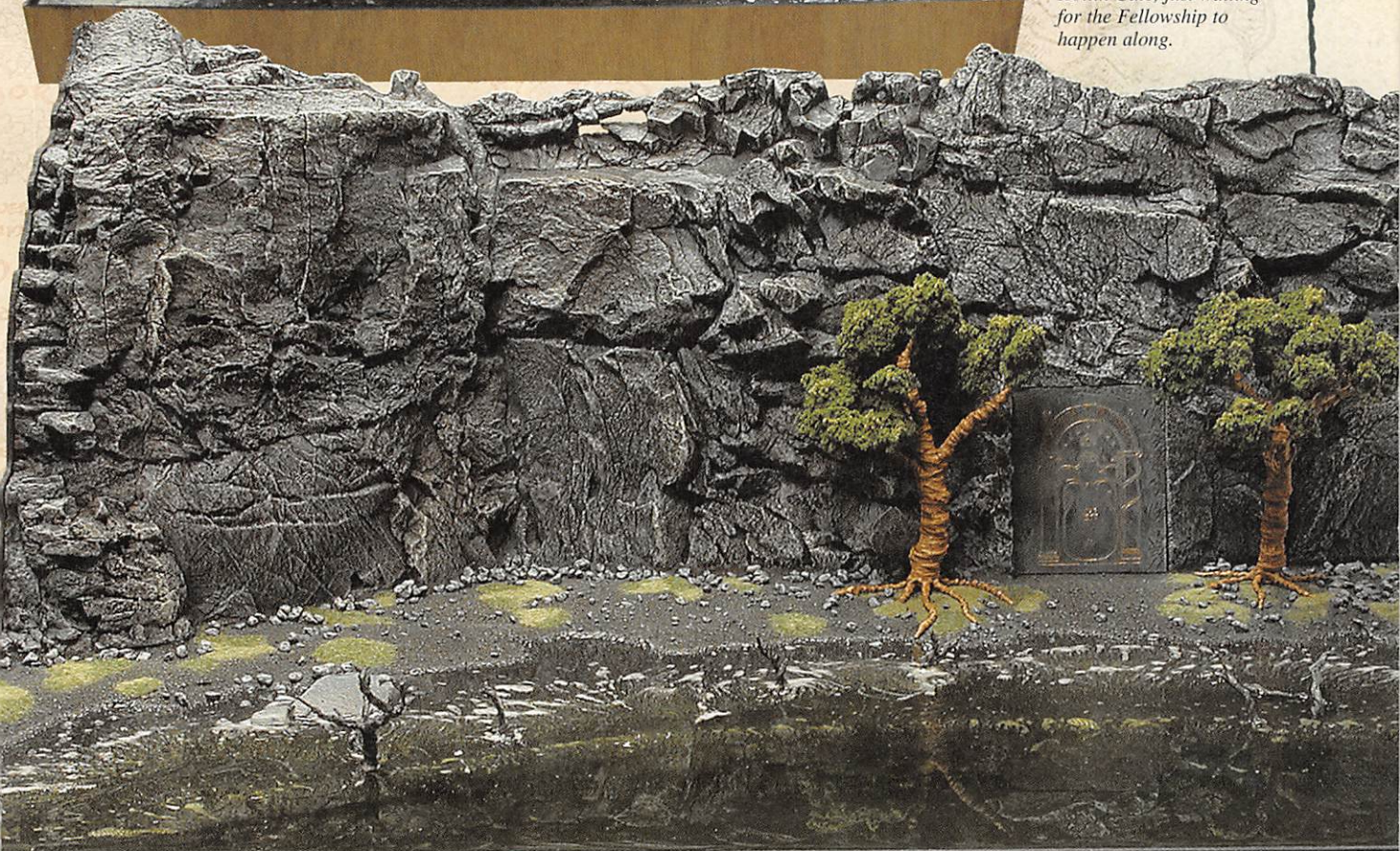
Right: A couple of steps through the process, the foam has been carved and heated, the twisted tree debris is in place, and the plywood around the sides will act as a dam for the resin and the sides of the cliff (once the preformed mountains are in place). Note the Aragorn model used for scale.



Left: A few more stages on, Jason has cut and trimmed the preformed mountains, the base has been textured, and the first layer of resin has been poured. This last step is a little out of sequence with the description on the opposite page, but we were racing against a deadline.



Below: The finished table, including the excellent Hollin Gate, just waiting for the Fellowship to happen along.



BUILDING THE WATCHER IN THE WATER

THE BODY

Inspired and directed by the fantastic bonus features on the extended DVDs for *The Lord of The Rings: The Fellowship of The Ring*, Dave Taylor spent hours in front of his TV, a large image of the Watcher maquette frozen on the screen. Dave quickly realized, as he started to build the body of the fearsome beast, it would be more effective to build a skeleton first. This shell, built from curved strips of plasticard, provided a great structure for him to add texture to.

Building slowly, from the outside in, Dave began with the 'hair' found in between the expanding ridges of bone and cartilage. He followed this with the bumpy texture on the ridges. Due to the size of the beast Dave had to sculpt it over several sessions, allowing plenty of time for the putty to dry.

After slowly building the layers, Dave spent a bit more time on the toothy maw (the teeth were cut from small slivers of plasticard) and the eyes, attempting to imbue them with a vicious malevolence.

When the final putty had dried, he trimmed the plasticard base and primed the entire model.

THE TENTACLES

A good deal easier to build, the tentacles started out as armatures of twisted brass rod. Dave added an initial form around the wire and, when dry, he added the smooth layer on the back of the tentacle. The ribbed texture on the underside of each tentacle was created by pressing a carefully trimmed piece of plasticard into the almost-cured Green Stuff.

From the start, Dave knew he wanted to convert a dangling Frodo suspended from one of the tentacles. The prone Pippin (from the blister with Merry and Grishnakh) was ideal. A bit of trimming and some more putty work, and the Ringbearer was ready to hang from one of the tentacles.

The final step was to build the fingers at the end of the tentacles and fine rolls of Green Stuff did the job. A little bit of putty to add the webbing and the tentacles were ready to paint.

Both the Watcher and the tentacles were primed black and then drybrushed with a mix of Chaos Black and Bubonic Brown (70/30 mix). More Bubonic Brown was added to the mix for the final drybrush. The underside of the tentacles and the mouth of the Watcher were basecoated with the same original mix of Chaos Black and Bubonic Brown. Successive highlights were wetbrushed on adding small amounts of Dwarf Flesh and Elf Flesh to the mix.

From Top to Bottom:

1. The wire armatures.
2. The converted Frodo dangles precariously.
3. The tentacles' textured underside.
4. The finished Frodo enveloped by a tentacle.



Dave's finished Watcher bursts forth from the murky waters.



Moonlight reveals the Doors of Durin to the Fellowship, and Gandalf tries to remember the secret of opening the ancient doors.

THE WATCHER IN THE WATER BATTLE REPORT

For this battle report, we asked Jeremy Vetock, Head of the US Studio, and Jason Buyaki, US Hobby Team Manager, to battle it out. Jeremy would play as the Watcher in the Water, and Jason would play as the Fellowship.

THE LONG DARK

Thoughts of the Fellowship: I originally read this scenario months ago and formulated in my head how to build the table but couldn't remember quite how the scenario worked. Then I was asked to participate in the battle and chose not to read the scenario until right before the game, ensuring a surprise element that the Fellowship faces as they try to enter Moria. The one thought that kept repeating itself in my mind was Gandalf saying: "There are older and fouler things than Orcs in the deep places of the world."

FRESH MEAT

Thoughts of the Watcher: My part was to play the multi-tentacled horror known only as the Watcher in the Water. With the release of The Two Towers movie and game most of our recent battles have been between Uruk-hai and the Riders of Rohan, or perhaps the scattered remnants of the Fellowship. It was a nice change to go back and play a scenario from The Fellowship of The Ring and I always jump at any chance I have to visit Moria.

But now onto the matters at hand. I had read the new scenario from Matt and I had a pretty good idea about just how powerful those writhing tentacles were going to be in a scrap. The Hobbits, the most vulnerable members of the Fellowship, started out far from the rest of the party and so my initial plan was to grab many of the little hairfoots and drag them into the deep waters.

I noted that except for my meagre allotment of 2 Might points, everything else I had, tentacles, Wounds, and Will were basically unlimited. I immediately

realised that the longer the game went on, the more the beast would wear down even the most powerful of the Fellowship's fighters! Hence my plan to drag the Hobbits into the depths sounded more malignant as even if they were freed from the looming coils of slimy tentacles, they (or anyone coming to rescue them) would be slowed by the water! Truly I thought that was the plan of a tabletop wargaming maestro. My sound tactical thinking combined with cunning evil and a vast armada of tentacles... how could I go wrong?



Jason Buyaki (the Fellowship) and Jeremy Vetock (the Watcher) study their deployment.

TURN 1

With Frodo already enveloped by the Watcher, it was vitally important that the Hobbits attacked the tentacle. Seeing their dear friend in mortal danger, Merry and Pippin waded through the shallows to hack at the sinuous appendage. Sam used the terrain to his advantage and ran over the large rock on the shoreline, avoiding the roll for the effects of Shallow Water. As the tentacle enveloping Frodo was in combat it was forced to drop the Ringbearer.

The remainder of the Fellowship rushed out from the Hollin Gate determined to rescue the Hobbits from a watery grave. Jeremy chuckled evilly as he moved a few

more tentacles into combat with the Hobbits and sent three tentacles to delay the great warriors of the Fellowship.

Before the Hobbits had a chance to fight the grasping tentacles Legolas threaded two shots through the dead trees in the water to hit the body of the Watcher. One of them miraculously wounded the beast and Jason cheered as Jeremy rolled snake eyes for his Courage roll. All the tentacles were immediately drawn back to the body of the Watcher.

TURN 2

Jason won the Priority roll and immediately edged the Hobbits towards the Gate, with Merry, Sam, and Pippin

forming a protective screen around Frodo. The rest of the Fellowship continued their moves towards the terrified halflings.

Keeping up the pressure, Jeremy moved the Watcher and tentacles toward the Hobbits, engaging Merry and Sam in combat. Jason attempted to wound the Watcher's body again but Gandalf's *Sorcerous Blast* and Legolas' bowfire failed to damage the mighty beast.

In a flurry of desperate blows (aided by some poor dice rolling by Jeremy) Sam hacked down the tentacle he was facing and Merry pushed back the tentacle in combat with him.

TURN 3

The Fellowship won Priority again, and Jason continued to bring the two groups closer. Jeremy again concentrated his attack on the Hobbits and five tentacles entered combat with Sam, Merry, and Pippin. Gandalf was unable to hit the beast with his *Sorcerous Blast*, and Legolas hit the Watcher with two shots but was unable to wound with either.

Pippin was able to hack through the tentacle he was facing, but the other two Hobbits were enveloped. Sam was dragged back to the mouth of the beast and Jeremy groaned as he rolled three 1s to wound!

TURN 4

Again Jason won Priority, much to Jeremy's annoyance. The Fellowship joined up and tried to form a protective screen in front of the Ringbearer. Unfortunately Jason left a gap in his screen and Jeremy threw all of his available tentacles into combat. The enveloped Merry was pulled into contact with the body of the beast.

Boromir used one of his Might points to hack down the tentacle he faced. Pippin managed to push back the tentacle he faced, as did Frodo (who used 1 Might point to win the combat). Aragorn managed to fight off the three tentacles he faced, but failed to cut through any of them.

With a big smile on his face, Jeremy picked up the dice to see if the Watcher could eat Sam and Merry. In a classic set of extremes Merry was still enveloped but had escaped the maw, while Sam was quickly torn apart by the beast's cruel teeth.

TURN 5

For the fifth turn in a row Jason won Priority. Gimli and Aragorn charged the same tentacle, and Boromir engaged the tentacle enveloping Merry. In a cunningly evil move Jeremy placed the prone Merry further out into deeper water. He then went on to attack Merry again with a free tentacle.

Gandalf and Legolas were unable to wound the Watcher's body with their ranged



Held high above the water, Frodo is rescued by his brave friends.

attacks. Wading through the shallow water with great fury, Boromir slashed through the tentacle and then, by expending a Might point, called a Heroic Combat and wounded the Watcher. Jeremy passed his Courage test and the battle continued.

The embattled Aragorn needed to use 3 Might points to win his combat and then failed to hack through the tentacles, while Gimli slashed through the two appendages he was facing. Obviously still floundering in the deep water, Merry was unable to defend himself and was again enveloped by the Watcher.

TURN 6

For the first time in the battle Jeremy won the Priority (he and Jason tied for the roll, but as Jason had won last time...) and there was much rejoicing by the Evil side. Five tentacles lashed out at Legolas, Boromir, Aragorn, Gimli, and Frodo. Gandalf summoned his power and managed to successfully cast *Immobilise* on the Watcher, rolling a 3. Jeremy rolled 2, 1 and 1, so added 1 Might point to keep his tentacles in the fight.

Gimli, Aragorn, Legolas, and Boromir all successfully cut through the tentacles they faced, but the bedraggled Ringbearer was unable to resist the searching tendril, and was again drawn towards the beast. With a cry of anguish, Pippin could only look on as the Watcher dragged Merry in and dropped him whole into its gaping maw.



With two of the Fellowship already eaten, Boromir and Gimli go on the attack.

TURN 7

Recovering Priority, Jason charged Aragorn into contact with the tentacle holding Frodo, forcing it to drop its burden. Gimli and Boromir also charged the slimy appendages nearby. The rest of the Fellowship fell back towards the Gate. The Watcher and its remaining tentacles headed towards the gateway as well, in an effort to head the Fellowship off.

Although Gandalf failed to *Immobilise* the Watcher, Legolas wounded the monster with a finely placed shot. With a concerned look, Jeremy rolled for his Courage test, and passed.

In the following combats both Aragorn and Boromir cut through a tentacle each, but Gimli only managed to keep them at bay.

TURN 8

Jeremy groaned as the Fellowship took the Priority again, cursing his luck and muttered something about the power of the Dark Lord.

All of the Fellowship on land ran for the Hollin Gate, while Boromir and Gimli, knee-deep in the shallows, charged two tentacles rising up before them. Other tentacles surged forth and engaged Aragorn and Legolas. Gimli narrowly managed to push back the tentacle but his two-handed axe could not cut through it. Both Legolas

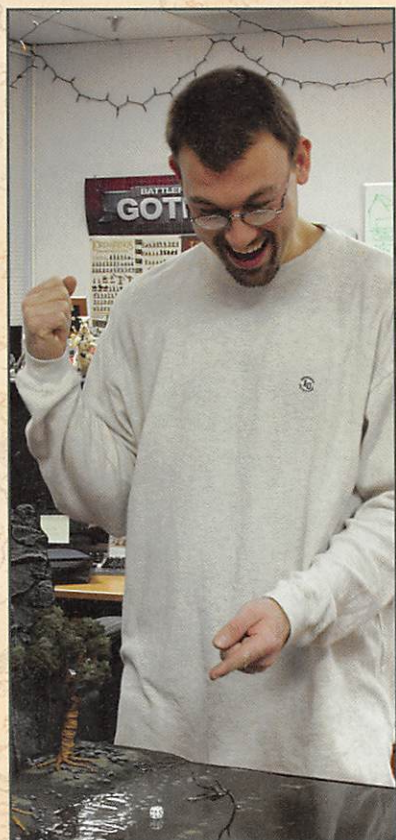
and Aragorn sliced the tentacles engaging them; Jason had to spend one of Boromir's dwindling Might points to hack off the tentacle he was fighting.

TURN 9

For only the second time in the game the Watcher won Priority, but Jason very quickly spent a Might point for Aragorn to call for a Heroic Move. All of the Fellowship moved towards the Hollin Gate, but Boromir was finally slowed by the brackish water. He had previously rolled a 6 each time he was required to roll on the Shallow and Deep Water chart.

The tentacles surged forward again and tried to capture Boromir, Gimli, Legolas, and Pippin. Using a Might point to help himself, Gandalf fired a *Sorcerous Blast* at the body of the Watcher, pushing the beast away another 5" (Jeremy rolled 1, 1 and 2 to stop him).

Aragorn and Pippin beat back the tentacles they were fighting. Gimli's mighty swings finally hacked through his opponent, but Boromir was forced to use his last Might point to tie his combat. Jeremy's evil grin returned as he used the Watcher's last Might point to win the fight and enveloped the first son of Denethor. The mighty Man of Gondor was dragged towards the Watcher, but was too far away to be eaten this turn.



Jason wins another Priority roll!



Trapped so near their goal, the Fellowship fight on.

TURN 10

Again Jeremy won Priority, and again the Good side called an Heroic Move, this time it was Gimli expending a Might point.

The two remaining Hobbits raced behind Legolas towards the gateway to Moria as Aragorn and Legolas then moved to cover them. Caught in a tough spot Jason had to commit Gandalf and Gimli to combat in strategic locations. The tentacles were able to engage Aragorn and, in an incredibly clever move, Jeremy placed a tentacle directly in front of the Hollin Gate.

Legolas fired another cluster of shots at the body of the Watcher and amazingly managed to wound twice! Jeremy was determined not to make it too easy for Jason, and proceeded to pass both Courage tests (with perhaps his best rolling in the game).

Aragorn and Gandalf both hacked through the tentacles they faced, and Gimli again struggled to wound the sinuous arm of the Watcher.

TURN 11

Returning to form, Jason won the roll for Priority and moved Gandalf and Pippin to the doorway. Aragorn and Frodo charged the tentacle blocking the Gate, while Gimli and Legolas moved into blocking positions. The remaining tentacles closed

in and the blockers found themselves fighting two of the whip-like appendages each. In a flurry of blows the Fellowship managed to fight off the tentacles with

Legolas and Gimli slicing through all four of the monster's lashing arms. Aragorn and Frodo only succeeded in pushing back the tentacle that blocked their way.

TURN 12

Jeremy's look of surprise turned to an ironic smirk as Jason usurped the Watcher's Priority with yet another well-timed use of the Heroic Move rule, this time called by Aragorn.

Frodo and Aragorn again charged the tentacle before them, while Gandalf dragged Pippin through the doorway with him. Legolas and Gimli again played the blocking role, as the Watcher's slimy appendages lashed out at them. Frodo and Aragorn were able to slice through the snake-like thing they faced, as was the hardy Dwarf, but Legolas was enveloped by one of the three tentacles he fought, and dragged out into the water.

The coiled arm carrying Boromir finally reached the body of the Watcher. The armoured man proved to be a tough bite but the beast caused 2 Wounds regardless.

TURN 13

With perhaps the most important Priority roll in the game hanging over his head, Jeremy called on all the deities even remotely associated with luck. They obviously didn't hear as Jason won the roll (for the tenth time in the game) and hustled Frodo, Aragorn, and Gimli through the Hollin Gate and up the stairs into Moria, leaving Legolas and Boromir to their watery fate.



Jeremy slides his slimy tentacles into contact with the Fellowship.



Jeremy congratulates Jason on a close game well played.

A NARROW ESCAPE

Victory for the Fellowship: Alas the Fellowship is broken. While I was able to achieve the victory conditions of the scenario, it is indeed a very hollow victory. Four members of the Fellowship were lost.

It was a tense, exciting game all the way through. After freeing Frodo on Turn 1, it took every bit of strategy to ensure he wasn't engaged too often, reducing the opportunities for the Watcher to eat him whole! All moves, for most of the Fellowship, had to be towards the doorway and safety. Most importantly for Frodo. I almost forgot that early on and started moving a majority of the Fellowship into combat. Then it dawned on me that the Watcher cannot be killed, only slowed and held in check. If the tentacles could win a combat, they could snatch up anyone they wanted without wounding and drag them off to the gaping, ravenous mouth of the Watcher and I'd have to chase them down. Boromir and Legolas forced the Watcher to drop Merry early on but they couldn't sustain the assault to save him. Eventually, Boromir used up his Might, lost a combat and was ensnared. I wanted to save him because he's such a great fighter, but I couldn't think how to do it without leaving the rest of the Fellowship in jeopardy and so I let him go and proceeded to the objective. Turn 12 saw the Watcher taking huge bites out of Boromir and on 13, the remaining members escaped. I really did hesitate during the Movement phase of Turn 13 and thought of trying to save Legolas but escaping into Moria with a partial victory was better than defeat. What happened to Boromir, no one knows, but perhaps there's a chance that he and Legolas escaped the Watcher and proceeded south to the Gap of Rohan.

HOW VICTORY SLIPPED RIGHT OUT OF MY TENTACLES!

Loss for the Watcher: What a great little scenario! By this I mean it is small and compact, but deeply strategic and fully taxing on your tactical powers. The battle was topsy-turvy and could easily have gone either way for almost every turn. Just when things were going against me, I

always managed to get a tentacle through someone's defence and snatched them up. Then again, just when I had Frodo entwined and heading towards my tooth-filled maw, Aragorn or some other character would stride into the surf and hack down my tentacle. Still, despite some simply appalling dice rolling it was a near run thing, with just five of the Fellowship slipping past the Hollin doors and entering the Mines of Moria. It is a bit of harsh irony that they escape the Watcher for we all know what still waits within the ancient Dwarven Halls.

I should complain more about the seemingly voodoo-cursed dice I was rolling, but really I wouldn't change a thing about the game. It was just that fun. Jason played a tough match and it was exciting from start to finish. What I thought would be a quick one-off simple game turned into a slugfest of wits that lasted an enjoyable hour and a half. And lastly I just have to say that the only thing that topped the excellent scenario and brilliant scenery that Jason had created was the truly loathsome Watcher model. Dave Taylor's foul concoction really captured a slice of the movie's brilliance and brought the scene to life. Play the scenario yourself, and if you have half the fun we had, you'll be thinking about how to convert your own swarm of tentacles.



Outdone, the Watcher in the Water prepares to tear the Doors of Durin apart