

# WARGS AND WORSE

## A MINI-ADVENTURE FOR THE LORD OF THE RINGS RPG

by **Matthew Colville**

### Introduction

“Wargs And Worse” is a mini adventure for *The Lord of the Rings Role-playing Game* by Decipher. It is designed for a group of four characters of between three and seven advancements. All a Narrator (referee) needs to use this adventure is a forested area and a small town that lies nearby. This adventure could easily be played in an hour or two, or expanded to take up a whole session's worth of play. The information in this adventure is for Narrators only; if you're a player, stop reading now!

### Synopsis

This adventure takes place near the human village of Haver. What kind of men dwell there depends on where your chronicle is set. Haver is small enough to occur almost anywhere: near Dale, Eregion, Rhudaur, or anywhere men dwell that might reasonably have a small forest nearby.

The road the characters are following takes them through a small forest in which they must camp for the night. They are attacked by three wargs that evening. The next day, the group reaches the Haver and meets the local residents. The people are welcoming, but worried. In the past several weeks, many trading caravans have been attacked by wargs; some were turned back or killed, and the town's meager economy has suffered. If nothing is done to stop the wargs, the townsfolk will be forced to leave their happy homes and journey to a larger city.

Unbeknownst to the townsfolk, one of their own is responsible for the attacks. Harthol, the trapper and ranger, was bitten by a werewolf two months ago and succumbed to its horrible curse. Since then, Harthol has commanded the wargs and acted as their pack leader. His wargs attack anyone who enters the forest, and once the traders stop coming to Haver, he'll have his wargs begin attacking the townsfolk.

Being heroes, the characters should offer to help the townspeople. Harthol, knowing the heroes will want to investigate, offers to help them. He knows the woods and can help the heroes find the wargs' lair. He plans to lead the heroes to the wargs' lair as promised, then change form and attack the heroes in concert with the wargs. He will then return to the town and report the death of the noble heroes who laid down their lives in vain.

It's the heroes' job to stop Harthol. They'll get the opportunity to do so, of course, when he reveals himself. But that opportunity comes with a price — Harthol has the ability to infect the heroes and turn them into werewolves as well, leading to further adventure as the heroes search for a cure.

### Rewards

Characters in the *LotR* RPG are rewarded for accomplishing the primary and secondary goals of the adventure. They also receive story-based awards for fulfilling the specific goals of a scene, as well as smaller rewards for succeeding at skill tests.

The primary goal of this adventure is to thwart Harthol, the werewolf. There are no sec-

ondary goals. If the players succeed in defeating the werewolf, the group receives 1,000 points to be divided evenly amongst the characters. If, in the second act, they guess that Harthol is not what he seems, they gain another 500 points to split amongst themselves. These rewards presume there will be a great deal of combat against the wargs. As a result, experience should not be rewarded for successful attack tests. But any non-physical skill tests (involving Wits, Bearing, or Intellect) the characters succeed at that help move the story forward or make things more dramatic should be rewarded as per the rules on page 277 of the *Lord of the Rings RPG Core Book*.

### Act I: On the road to Haver

For this adventure to work, you need a reason for your players to be traveling through Middle-earth. Once you've set that up, the forest patrolled by the wargs can loom before the characters one afternoon. You may want to give the heroes a reason for journeying to Haver, perhaps something they have to deliver or acquire. Perhaps a journeyman encountered the wargs on the way to Haver and turned around. The heroes hear his tale in a tavern and set out to make things right. Perhaps one of the characters knows someone in Haver and they're journeying to meet him or her. Whichever method you use, it's important that the heroes' journey requires them to travel through the forest to the town — not simply enter the forest, kill the wargs, and leave.

Begin by reading the following to the players:

As your journey continues and the afternoon wears on, you see a small forest on the horizon. The road seems to disappear within the thick wood.

The question here is: do the players continue through the forest, camping there for the night? Do they camp well outside the forest and wait to cross during the following day? Do they skirt the forest entirely and journey to Haver without ever entering the forest?

Players are a wily bunch and the heroes will likely suspect that something interesting is going to happen in the forest. But this is Middle-earth, and their characters are weaving a great legend. Heroes are courageous and valiant and think nothing of plunging into a waiting wood to see what fell beasts lurk within! If the players decide to avoid the forest and the challenges it brings, lower the experience total from 1,000 for this adventure to 900 to reflect the characters' unheroic behavior.

The road continues through the trees. The forest itself doesn't seem remotely threatening. The trees are healthy, the occasional squirrel can be seen scampering among the branches, and the song of birds can be heard. Characters with Beast Speech may want to talk to the creatures of the wood. If so, the creatures are forthcoming and interested in talking to the heroes. They can tell the characters that wargs now dwell within the forest, but they can't lead the heroes to the wargs' lair. Characters forewarned against the presence of the wargs will not be surprised when battle comes!

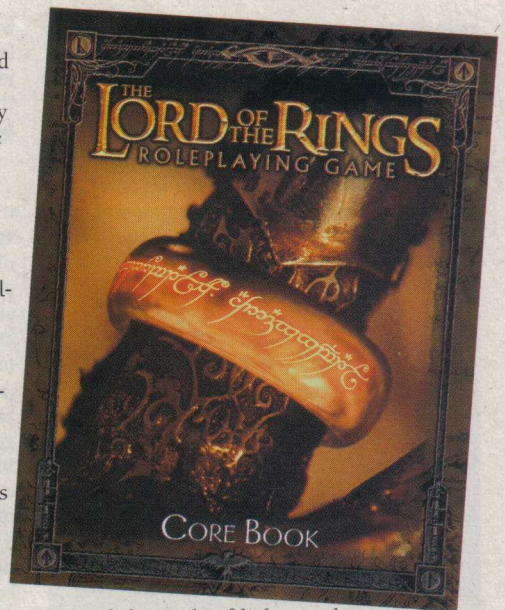
**Attacked by the wargs.** Most groups of

heroes will need to camp for the night. Elves do not suffer from weariness the way men and dwarves do. If the party consists entirely of Elves, then the attack happens while the party is traveling through the woods at night. If the party skirts the forest, modify the text below to suit the circumstance. Otherwise, if the party camps in the woods, read the following to them:

The forest is warm and the trees provide welcome shelter from the elements as you make camp and prepare dinner. The creatures of the forest slowly cease their chatter, midnight approaches, and sleep beckons you. Do you prepare watches for the night?

If they don't, the wargs will easily get the drop on them. If the heroes talked to the beasts of the wood and know the wargs are about, then they're not surprised when the wargs attack, and initiative tests are made as though everyone were awake and ready. If they all sleep and no one takes watch for the night, then the heroes are awakened by the wargs gnawing on them. The wargs get two free rounds of attacks before initiative tests are made. Otherwise, the character or characters on watch must make Observe (Hear) tests against a TN of 15. Success means the characters are not surprised and initiative tests are made as normal. Failure means the characters are surprised and the wargs get one free round of attacks before initiative is made. Use the stats for Harthol's warg minions under "Enemies."

The wargs circle the heroes' camp just



beyond the circle of light cast by their campfire. They attack from three directions, all at once. They fight until reduced to Near Death, then flee. Once the battle is over, the heroes face no more difficulties during the night, and can continue to Haver in the morning.

### Act II: Welcome To Haver

Haver is a small town of roughly two dozen families. The town is exclusively human and relies on trade for most of its dry goods, and hunting for its meat. There's a smith, a tanner, a

# Card Vault

## Inventory And Deck Building

**Build and validate decks with point-and-click simplicity!**

Deck Name: Sample Warlord Deck    Rule Set: Standard Game

Available Cards							Cards in Deck										
Name	Type	Lvl	Race	Class	ATK	R	SK	HP	Name	#	Type	Lvl	Class	ATK	R	SK	HP
Seltrusk	Char	4	NotHog	Fighter	5	13	6	1	PhalDurn	2	Char	2	Fighter	5	13	2	1
Tahn	Char	1	NotHog	Cleric	1	9	1	1	Galnarat Crew	1	Char	2	Wizard	0	10	1	1
Tadhs Axemen	Char	1	NotHog	Fighter	1	9	0	1	Galnar	1	Char	2	Wizard	0	6	3	1
Tolmarok	Char	1	NotHog	Fighter	na	13	0	1	Pading	1	Char	3	Wizard	3	11	8	1
Utharak	Char	5	NotHog	Fighter	na	15	7	3	Seltrusk	1	Char	4	Fighter	5	13	6	1
Warg	Char	4	NotHog	Fighter	7	15	2	3	Tahn	2	Char	1	Cleric	1	9	1	1
Xhal	Char	2	NotHog	Cleric	2	11	2	1	Tadhs Axemen	4	Char	1	Fighter	1	9	0	1
Amulet of Illusion	Item	6	NotHog	Wizard					Lsara	3	Char	1	Rogue	3	12	1	1
Arandel's Armor	Item	9		Fighter	5				Oroschaff	2	Char	2	Rogue	3	12	2	1
Assassination	Action	5		Rogue					Husuk	1	Char	4	Rogue	6	14	3	2
Armor of Protection	Action	1		Cleric					Amulet of Illusion	1	Item	6	Wizard				
Balestab	Action	2		Rogue					Arandel's Armor	1	Item	9	Fighter	5			
Bag of Holding	Item	4		Rogue					Bar Fight	2	Action	4	Fighter	5			
Bainmar's Potion	Item	5							Battle Axe	1	Item	3	Fighter	2			
Blow the Whistle	Action	3		Cleric					Chain Mail	1	Item	5					
Bar Fight	Action	4		Fighter					Charger	1	Item	2					
Breakfast	Action	1							Critical Strike	1	Action	3	Fighter				
Battle Axe	Item	3		Fighter	2				Cretchard	3	Action	3	Rogue				
Below the Helm	Action	3		Rogue					Dodge	3	Action	3	Rogue				
Best of Heroes	Item	4		Cleric	1				Hiding in Plain Sight	2	Action	2	Rogue				
Blind	Action	1		Cleric													
Blind	Action	2		Cleric													

Inventory of Cards

Available Versions of Card						
Lang	Style	Attd	Description	Own	Exc	Ac
Eng	Std	na	None	6	2	0
Eng	Fol	na	None	1	0	2

Quality	Owned	Excess	Acquire	Sell	B
Total	5	2	0	0	
Unspecified	0	0	0	0	
Poor	0	0	0	0	
Fair	1	0	0	0	1.25
Good	1	1	0	0	1.50
Excellent	0	0	0	0	
Mint	1	1	0	0	3.25

Wanted Cards Can Be:  Bought  Traded  Either

Excess Cards Can Be:  Sold  Traded  Either

Language: English    Style: Standard  
Ready: 10000000  
Card # 17  
Type: Ability Over  
Culture: Over  
Talent: 1

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stable master who tends the six horses owned by the townsfolk, a tavern that doubles as the trade-goods store, and several farms.

The town council is made up of the town's most prosperous and influential men. The smith, Brendamar, is the town's leading elder. After the townsfolk greet the heroes and invite them to eat and drink in the town's tavern, the tanner, Galoth, tells the players about the wargs.

Galoth, Brendamar, and the rest of the townsfolk are gruff, earthy folk: simple, plain-spoken, and hardworking. Each is heavily muscled from long hours of work and many are deeply tanned from working outside all day. The women are fair but hardy, and capable of doing any work that needs be done to help the town prosper.

Galoth describes Haver's problem. Read the following to the players.

"Wargs! They plague our town. Oh, no direct attacks on the townspeople. They're too smart to try and attack us in our homes where we'd swarm them and rid the earth of their foul stench. No, they hide in the forests, waiting for an unsuspecting tradesman or travelers such as yourselves. Then they spring on them unaware and kill them, or drive them away. Either result spells doom for our town. We cannot survive

without trade. If the attacks continue, we'll be forced to uproot ourselves from our homes and journey to a larger, safer place. Leaving everything our people have worked to build these past several generations."

Galoth does not immediately ask the heroes if they will help. He's hoping they'll exhibit valor and compassion and offer to rid the forest of the wargs themselves. Before offering aid, the players may want to ask Galoth some questions about the circumstances surrounding the attack. That opens up the perfect opportunity for Harthol to offer his aid.

Harthol is the town's hunter and trapper. Since the wargs came a month or so ago, all the game animals have been scared away and hunting has been impossible. Further, Harthol is not a hero and does not want to venture out at night to hunt, for fear the wargs will attack. The townspeople share Harthol's concern and don't want him to sacrifice himself for no reason. They're well aware that their hunter isn't strong enough to take on three wargs on his own, and none of them have the skills necessary to aid him. They view Harthol's reluctance to venture into the forest as a reasonable man's reaction to dangerous times. They have no idea that Harthol is, in fact, the leader of the warg pack and bent on the destruction of the town.

Harthol eagerly welcomes the heroes' presence and gives every indication that he wants to help. He views the heroes' presence as the opportunity the townspeople have been waiting for to rid themselves of the danger plaguing their village. Harthol is very convincing — he's ready to go and he knows the area better than anyone. He tells the characters that the wargs must have a den and if they have a den, he can help them find it.

### Act III: Werewolf in sheep's clothing

Harthol offers to help the characters and, once they're ready, he leads them into the forest. This is the last part of the adventure and presents the heroes with their greatest challenge: defeating three wargs and a surprise attack from a werewolf.

Harthol is cunning and intelligent. He wants to leave during the day because wargs hunt at night. He gives every indication that he's on the heroes' side and is going to help fight the wargs. He knows exactly where the wargs' den is, and uses that knowledge to convincingly pretend he's following the wargs' trail back to their den. He claims to lose the trail at least once. The characters might have sufficient ranks in Track to follow the wargs themselves. Finding traces of the wargs requires a Track (Warg or Wolf) test against a TN of 15. Success

## ENEMIES

There's only one intelligent enemy in this adventure: Harthol the werewolf. He used to be Harthol the trapper, but since he was bitten by a werewolf two months ago, he has been corrupted by Shadow. Now he willingly hunts other humans and delivers them to his warg minions.

### Harthol the werewolf

**Description:** Harthol is a tall, thin human male. He wears brown and red hunter's garb with a long cloak and longsword strapped to his side. His face is lean and rugged, covered in a thick brown beard that matches his long brown hair. He looks gruff and gives the impression he might be harsh and unkind. Once he starts speaking, however, he's surprisingly outgoing and friendly.

**Attributes:** Bearing 9 (+1), Nimbleness 9 (+1), Perception 9 (+1), Strength 11 (+2), Vitality 11 (+2), Wits 6 (±0)

**Reactions:** Stamina +4, Swiftiness +4, Willpower +2, Wisdom +1

**Size:** Large

**Health:** 14 (2 levels Healthy)

**Skills:** Armed Combat: Natural Weapons (Fangs) +8, Armed Combat: Blades (longsword) +6, Intimidate (Fear) +6, Jump +6, Language: Warg-Speak +4, Observe (Smell) +7, Run +7, Stealth (Sneak) +9, Survival (Mountains) +6, Track (Scent) +5

**Animal Kinship:** Any attempts a werewolf makes to befriend animals — including any attempt to ride a horse or other beast of burden — suffer a -4 test result penalty unless the beast is a warg. In that instance,

the werewolf gains a +4 test result bonus instead.

**Cursed Infection:** If a Werewolf draws blood from a target with tooth or claw, the victim may become infected by the werewolf's curse. A TN 12 Stamina reaction test is required to stave off the initial infection. If this fails, the victim becomes feverish and takes 2d6 points of damage. At the end of each subsequent hour, the target must make a TN 12 Willpower reaction test to resist the curse itself. Those who fail suffer another 2d6 points of damage.

If the victim reaches zero Health in this manner, he or she becomes a werewolf. At that point, he regains full Health and the fever abates. He also automatically gains one point of Corruption.

A cursed victim involuntarily transforms into its beast-shape each time the full moon rises and must remain in that form until the moon sets. During this time, the victim is not in control of his actions. Each time the victim becomes a beast, he must make a TN 12 Willpower test to resist Corruption.

A victim can be cured of the curse, but this requires a successful TN 30 Healing test.

**Dissolution of Death:** The body of a slain werewolf dissolves into mist.

**Fangs:** A Werewolf does 2d6+2 damage with its fangs.

**Skinchanging:** A Werewolf can change shape between person-form and wolf-form, just like the spell *Mastery of Shapes*. As a person, he often has wolf-like characteristics: a lupine face or manner, grey hair, or the like.

### Harthol's warg minions

Harthol has three wargs he's befriended using his Animal Kinship ability. They don't serve him out of fear or because he's supernaturally controlling their minds. He has simply convinced them it is in their best interest to work with him. So far, the arrangement has been extremely beneficial to the wargs, who've received a steady diet of man-flesh to feast on since Harthol began leading traders and unsuspecting visitors into the village.

The characters have two encounters with the wargs, one in the forest leading to Haver and one in the warg's den itself. In each case, the heroes face exactly three wargs. If the heroes kill all the wargs in the first encounter, they face three more wargs in the second encounter. If the heroes fail to kill the wargs in the first encounter, they still face three wargs in the second encounter.

**Attributes:** Bearing 8 (+1), Nimbleness 8 (+1), Perception 9 (+1), Strength 10 (+2), Vitality 10 (+2), Wits 4 (±0)

**Reactions:** Stamina +4, Swiftiness +3, Willpower +1, Wisdom +0

**Size:** Medium

**Health:** 12

**Skills:** Armed Combat: Natural Weapons (Fangs) +6, Intimidate (Fear) +5, Jump +5, Language: Warg-speak +4, Observe (Smell) +6, Run +9, Stealth (Sneak) +9, Survival (Forest) +5, Track (Scent) +4

**Walk:** 12 yards

**Fangs:** A Warg does 2d6+2 points of damage with its fangs.

means the heroes can find the wargs' den without Harthol's help (who will still show up later in the wargs' den).

The den is a small cave set into an outcropping of rock in the forest. There are bones and other evidence of the wargs' presence, as they are not subtle animals and take no care to hide their existence. The cave has one entrance, a tunnel roughly 10 feet across, which runs for 15 feet before opening into a roughly circular room 30 feet in diameter. Harthol is reluctant to enter the cave, but is willing to face his fear because of the presence of the heroes. In fact, he mentions that they are mighty warriors, and he is but a simple hunter and may likely be killed in the coming battle (but dying in their company would be a fine end to his tale). Of course, he's hoping they'll say "No, no! You stay here — leading us to these foul creatures is duty enough." If the heroes suggest Harthol stay behind, he gladly does, entering the fray on the wargs' side in the third round of combat. If the heroes want Harthol with them, he'll come.

Inside, the three wargs are sleeping. The heroes hear the wuffling and snuffling sounds of sleeping wargs. But wargs are wild beasts and, unlike men and dwarves, wake easily when their den is disturbed. Once the heroes enter the den proper, the wargs wake and attack!

Neither side has the opportunity to surprise the other. The wargs recognize Harthol and will not attack him. He, however, will feign attacking the wargs, appearing to miss (as a poor hunter might do against mighty wargs) until

the third round of combat, when he reveals himself as a werewolf, and attacks the heroes! Read the following to the players.

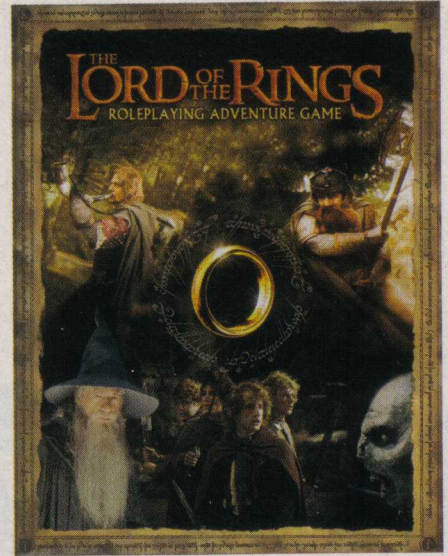
Harthol stops his attempts on the wargs and sheds his cloak. His features change, assume a wolfen aspect, and his eyes narrow and flash red. "You make things too easy," the werewolf says. "You are so typically trusting. And now my minions will feast on your flesh, and your tale ends. And the weak, craven people of Haver are none the wiser!"

Harthol attacks the heroes, hoping to scratch them with his claws or fangs and transmit his Cursed Infection. When Harthol is killed, he leaves no body behind; rather, his corpse dissolves into mist (thanks to Dissolution of Death). Once the combat has ended, presumably with the heroes victorious, they must return to Haver and tell the townsfolk that though the wargs were killed, their friend Harthol had become a werewolf and had to be slain. The Heroes have no real understanding of why or how Harthol became a werewolf, but the townsfolk can put it together: Two months ago, Harthol returned wounded from a hunt and, from that point forward, he stopped hunting. Shortly thereafter the wargs came.

The death of Harthol and the return of the heroes to Haver marks the end of the adventure. If any of the heroes were infected with Harthol's cursed infection, they need healing — more healing than anyone in Haver can provide, and thus this short adventure leads to

others, as the characters must seek out a healer to banish the influence of the werewolf from their comrade's body. Of course, the healer won't do such a thing for free — he'll want something in return.

The adventure continues ...



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