

Talisman: Middle-Earth

Copyright 2002 by Christopher Hammock

This is a set of rules for adapting Talisman to play out the quest of the War of the Ring from J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. The quest structure of Talisman suits the story of the Lord of the Rings very well, with just a few modifications as laid out below. Alignment and corruption are important themes in the story, and this is reflected in new rules for this adaptation. Victory conditions also differ by Alignment: Evil and Neutral characters may win by defeating Sauron with the One Ring, while Good and Neutral characters may win by destroying the One Ring in Mount Doom. It is also possible for there to be no victor if the One Ring is captured by Sauron's forces, or for several characters to share victory by destroying the One Ring together.

Regions

The game is played on the Talisman: Middle-Earth board instead of the regular board. This board consists of three Regions analogous to those on the regular board. The Regions are made up of four Realms: Eriador, Rhovanion, Rohan and Mordor. Realms have no effect on the game rules and are only used for illustration.

The Region of the Free Peoples (equivalent to the Outer Region) consists of the realms of Eriador, Rhovanion and Rohan, as well as the spaces connecting Eriador to Rhovanion and those connecting Eriador to Rohan.

The Region of the Shadow (equivalent to the Middle Region) consists of the realm of Mordor (the axis from Minas Morgul to Morannon to Dagorlad) as well as the spaces connecting Mordor to Rhovanion and those connecting Mordor to Rohan.

The Region of Doom (equivalent to the Inner Region) consists of Udun, Isenmouthe, Barad-Dur, Shelob's Lair and Mount Doom.

Alignment

Alignment changing in Talisman: Middle-Earth doesn't occur in absolutes as "become Evil" or "become Good", but in relative changes. A character's Alignment "moves towards the shadow" or "moves towards the light". When moving towards the shadow, a Good character becomes Neutral or a Neutral character becomes Evil. When moving towards the light, an Evil character becomes Neutral or a Neutral character becomes Good. Treat any instruction to "become Evil" as to "move towards the shadow", and any instruction to "become Good" as to "move towards the light".

Corruption Checks

In specific moments of crisis, characters will be forced to make a Corruption Check. The character rolls two dice. If the result is equal to or less than the character's Craft, then the character has overcome temptation. If the result is greater than the character's Craft, the character is corrupted and moves towards the shadow.

New Cards

Enemy - Nazgul: These are a new type of Enemy card. All Nazgul have both Strength and Craft and they always fight in their opponent's weaker attribute. Any character defeated by a Nazgul loses one Life as normal and must make a Corruption Check. If a Nazgul defeats a character carrying the One Ring, the game ends in a loss for all players.

The One Ring: This card is the focus of the entire game. Only a character bearing this card can win. It confers these benefits: +2 Strength; +2 Craft; the ability to become invisible and Evade any Enemy except Nazgul. However, any time the One Ring's abilities are used, the Character must make a Corruption Check. Theoretically, you could use the One Ring to boost your Craft for such a Corruption Check, but doing so would then require another Corruption Check, so it is not advised. If you have a separate deck for each Region, put the One Ring in the Region of the Free Peoples deck.

Equivalent Spaces

To determine the starting spaces of characters and resolve game effects, use this table:

Talisman: The Magical Quest Game space

City
Crag
Chapel
Graveyard
Village
Forest
Ruins
Tavern
Warlock's Cave
Chasm
Cursed Glade
Portal of Power
Castle
Temple
Oasis

Talisman: Middle-Earth space

Edoras
Moria
Rivendell
Dol Guldur
The Shire
Mirkwood
Enedwaith
Esgaroth
Isengard
Dagorlad
Fangorn
Morannon
Minas Tirith
Lorien
Minas Morgul

A character is considered to have "crossed water" when he enters a River space. Talismans and any cards pertaining to the Storm River (Rafts, Water Walking...) should be removed from the game. Axes should be treated and priced just like swords.

The Misty Mountains

The Misty Mountains may only be crossed at the pass between Rivendell and Mirkwood. Movement through those spaces does not occur as normal. Instead, when crossing the Mountains spaces, a character must stop in and encounter the first one he crosses. When leaving a Mountains space, a character must either move directly into the adjacent Mountains space or move in the opposite direction as normal.

Winning the Game

There are two ways to win the game: either by carrying the One Ring into Barad-Dur and defeating Sauron with it, or by carrying the One Ring into Mount Doom and destroying it. Evil characters may only win by defeating Sauron. Good characters may only win by destroying the One Ring. Neutral characters may win by either method.

If a character in Isenmouthe or Barad-Dur becomes Good, he must move backwards on his Turn. Similarly, if a character in Shelob's Lair or Mount Doom becomes Evil he must move backwards on his Turn. Spaces moved into backwards must be encountered as normal. All the standard rules for encounters and spells in the Inner Region apply to the Region of Doom (characters may only encounter each other in Udun and Barad-Dur).

Sauron has a Strength and Craft of 12 and begins with 5 Lives. Every Turn, a character who is alone in Barad-Dur must challenge him by fighting a Combat and then a Psychic Combat while wearing the One Ring. If two or more characters are in Barad-Dur, then each must choose to encounter one of the others on his Turn; none can challenge Sauron until he has the One Ring and the other characters have retreated. If ever all characters retreat from Barad-Dur, Sauron's Lives are healed back up to 5. If a character wearing the One Ring kills Sauron, that character wins. If Sauron kills the character then he claims the One Ring and no one wins the game.

To cast the One Ring into the flames of Mount Doom, a character must roll equal to or less than his Craft on three dice. A Good character may add 1 to his Craft for this purpose; for every other Good or Neutral character present in Mount Doom, he may add another 1 to his Craft. If he succeeds, the game is won by all characters present in Mount Doom. If he fails, he loses one Life and must make a Corruption Check. He may then try again next Turn. Instead of trying to destroy the One Ring, a character may make a Corruption Check to give the One Ring to another character who has a better chance of destroying it. If this Corruption Check is failed, the One Ring is not given over, in addition to the other consequences.