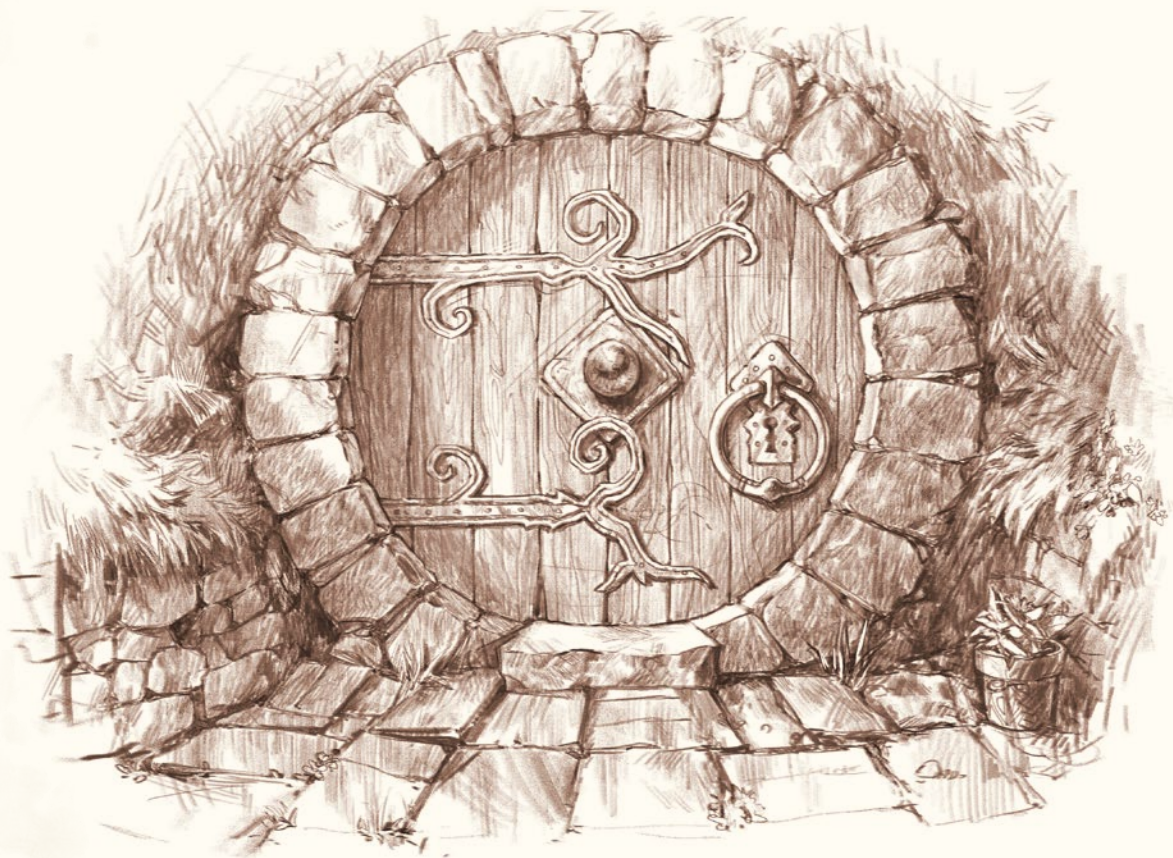


THE ONE RING™



character lifepaths



CHARACTER LIFEPATHS

This booklet lets you flesh out your Player-heroes with a few die rolls, giving them unique backstories based on their choice of Heroic Culture. Additionally, rolling once on the Major Events table on page 9 lets you add an important twist to your character.

HEROIC CULTURE LIFEPATHS

To determine your character's Culture randomly, roll on the Heroic Cultures table, then roll again on the appropriate backstory table. All backstory tables present six entries, each one complete with a suggested character history. An optional choice of Attributes, Favoured Skill and Distinctive Features is also offered, to speed up the process of character creation.

HEROIC CULTURES TABLE

SUCCESS DIE	HEROIC CULTURE
1	Bardings
2	Dwarves of Durin's Folk
3	Elves of Lindon
4	Hobbits of the Shire
5	Men of Bree
6	Rangers of the North

BARDINGS

SUCCESS
DIE

BACKSTORY

1 BY HAMMER AND ANVIL

Your parents paid richly for a Dwarf-smith to take you as an apprentice in his forge, and you worked hard under his severe discipline, to prove that your craft could reach his people's high standards. In the long hours you spent hammering on the anvil under the close scrutiny of your master, you have learnt that it is possible to create amazing things, but it is only by putting your heart into your work that you can succeed in creating a masterpiece.

- ◆ STRENGTH 5, HEART 7, WITS 2
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Athletics
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Proud, Wilful

2 WORDWEAVER

King Bard earned his throne by accomplishing a feat deemed unthinkable by most, setting an example for generations to come. But it is another deed that caught your interest and fired your imagination: that of the witty halfling who crossed words with Smaug the Golden in his lair. While you yourself do not expect to ever see a living Dragon, you look forward to your chance to win renown with your cunning.

- ◆ STRENGTH 4, HEART 6, WITS 4
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Enhearten
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Eager, Fair

3 GIFTED SENSES

You are the first to notice when things are out of place, or just don't smell or sound right. Others have learned to pay attention to your intuition, and invite you to help them, since you may see something they missed. Little did you realise how far from home this would carry you.

- ◆ STRENGTH 5, HEART 5, WITS 4
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Athletics
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Bold, Generous

4 HEALING HANDS

You have long served on a trading boat from Esgaroth, first leaving the Long Lake when you were very young. Once, staying for months in a distant town in Dorwinion, waiting for a caravan from the East to arrive, you fell victim to a foreign sickness, and were succoured by a lady speaking a strange tongue. She saved your life, and taught you how to save others in their time of need.

- ◆ STRENGTH 4, HEART 7, WITS 3
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Enhearten
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Generous, Tall

5 DRAGON STORIES

Your family told many tales of Smaug the Dragon, from its arrival long ago to its death at the hand of your lord, King Bard. After his victory your family reclaimed their ancestral home in Dale. But now, the only dragons in Dale grace the painted signs of inns, and so you have left your home in search of adventure.

- ◆ STRENGTH 5, HEART 6, WITS 3
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Enhearten
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Eager, Proud

6 A PATIENT HUNTER

Faithful to your ancestors' heritage, your family never embraced the ways of the merchants of Esgaroth, and when you were a child, your father spent long days hunting. For a few years after the death of the Dragon, hunting was a dangerous trade, bearing little fruit, as the land was still recovering from the Desolation of Smaug. But now the land is again blooming with every new spring, and birds and animals alike are returning in ever greater numbers.

- ◆ STRENGTH 6, HEART 6, WITS 2
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Athletics
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Bold, Fierce



DWARVES OF DURIN'S FOLK

SUCCESS
DIE

BACKSTORY

1 A LIFE OF TOIL

Your ancestors crafted wondrous things out of shining stones and precious metals, while you have been forced to labour hard in the mines for far less noble ore. Unfortunately, to this day, most ancient Dwarf-holds are no more than Dragon's lairs or Orc-infested pits. You toil patiently, peering into the gloom with eyes hungry for the gleaming of gems and gold.

- ◆ STRENGTH 7, HEART 2, WITS 5
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Craft
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Secretive, Wilful

2 FAR TRADER

By the reckoning of the Dwarves, you were only a stripling when you left your home to follow your kin along the trading roads. You have since seen many places and met different folks eager to trade goods for the product of Dwarven handiwork, and your heart burns with a desire to see more.

- ◆ STRENGTH 6, HEART 2, WITS 6
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Travel
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Cunning, Proud

3 BITTER EXILE

Your ancestors fled their ancestral home in the far North, and you grew up hearing stories of lost Dwarf-halls fallen to Orc-kind or burnt to cinders by Dragons. It is your ambition to return to those mountains and set things right.

- ◆ STRENGTH 7, HEART 3, WITS 4
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILLS: Travel
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Fierce, Proud

4 ELOQUENT ORATOR

The hardships endured by your folk during two ages of the world have inspired many songs. But the words that come easier to your lips are those recounting feats of great cunning, not those about deeds of valour. It is by your ingenuity that you seek the fall of your adversaries.

- ◆ STRENGTH 5, HEART 4, WITS 5
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Craft
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Cunning, Lordly

5 THE GRIEF OF AZANULBIZAR

A great war was fought between the Dwarves and the Orcs of the Misty Mountains almost two centuries ago. The parents and grandparents of most Dwarves, including yours, remember the horrors of that war; you have vowed to mete out justice to all Orc-kind.

- ◆ STRENGTH 6, HEART 3, WITS 5
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Travel
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Fierce, Stern

6 A PENETRATING GAZE

Your elder sibling instructed you to judge others by their deeds, not their words, especially when dealing with the fair-spoken Elves. But in time you have come to trust your instincts above all else, as your heart is not easily swayed. Thieves and liars do not dare to meet your eyes, as you seem able to lay bare their plots with only a glance.

- ◆ STRENGTH 6, HEART 4, WITS 4
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Craft
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Wary, Wilful

ELVES OF LINDON

SUCCESS
DIE

BACKSTORY

1 VISITOR TO THE MOUNTAINS

Not content to stay in your homeland, you were drawn to the Blue Mountains and the folk who reside there. Most Dwarves want nothing to do with an overcurious Elf, but a few taught you enough for you to appreciate their skills and love of beautiful objects. You wonder what you could learn in other lands, and now prepare for a longer journey.

- ◆ STRENGTH 5, HEART 2, WITS 7
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Lore
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Fair, Swift

2 SKY-WATCHER

When aboard a ship, you study the skies and predict the weather. With much practice, you became adept at this, and can detect a storm brewing hundreds of miles away. Now, when you are at home in the Havens, you notice strange movements in the air coming from the south-east, where lies Mordor, the Land of Shadows.

- ◆ STRENGTH 4, HEART 3, WITS 7
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Lore
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Keen-eyed, Wary

3 MAKER OF SHIPS

You studied your chosen craft under the expert shipbuilders of Círdan; but though the long firth of Lune stirs your heart, you feel the world is wide, and you have lived your life on its edge. Perhaps it is time to go where no ship can take you...

- ◆ STRENGTH 5, HEART 3, WITS 6
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Song
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Fair, Lordly

4 THE CALL OF THE SEA

No Elf could live by the Sea and not be moved by it. The crashing of waves is a second heartbeat to you; but you do not want to depart Middle-earth yet, for you feel that you have some purpose to fulfil before you sail away. You are not certain what lies in your future, but you are committed to finding out.

- ◆ STRENGTH 4, HEART 4, WITS 6
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Song
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Patient, Subtle

5 TOWER GUARD

Your folk guards the Tower Hills, lest the Enemy benefit from great secrets hidden there. Sometimes, you have been tasked with keeping the boldest of the little folk away from the towers, and by Mithrandir's advice, you keep a secret watch on their border. You know not what destiny these Hobbits have, but a fondness for them grows in your heart.

- ◆ STRENGTH 5, HEART 4, WITS 5
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Lore
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Keen-eyed, Merry

6 A MERCHANT FAMILY

Elven ships still sometimes sail to Dol Amroth and Pelargir to trade with the Men of Gondor. You have traded with mortal folk for years, but the Corsairs of Umbar grow more numerous and the lords of Gondor more cautious. Now ships seldom sail south, and you have decided to travel elsewhere.

- ◆ STRENGTH 6, HEART 2, WITS 6
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Song
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Lordly, Wary

hobbits of the shire

SUCCESS
DIE

BACKSTORY

1 RESTLESS FARMER

You were born into a family of farmers in the Southfarthing, where the best pipe-weed grows. To satisfy your curiosity – and your parents' expectations – you started to work at a very early age, learning a lot from farmhands and traders. From time to time, you feel your closeness to the earth move you, awakening a desire to sleep in the fields, under a canopy of stars.

- ◆ STRENGTH 3, HEART 6, WITS 5
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Stealth
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Faithful, Rustic

2 TOO MANY PATHS TO TREAD

Your father was a tradesman and you were supposed to take his place in his workshop in Hardbottle at the age of 33. But before that time, a mysterious wanderlust took you away from your home for months. When you came back, you renounced your position, to the outrage of your whole neighbourhood. But you know that secretly your father approves; he always dreamed of leaving the Shire to 'go and see Elves'!

- ◆ STRENGTH 4, HEART 5, WITS 5
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Courtesy
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Eager, Merry

3 ON PATROL

Your aunt was a Shirriff, and often brought you along with her when she went 'beating the bounds', that is, when she was appointed to watch the Shire's borders for Outsiders. More often than not, her watch included a visit to The Ivy Bush, a small inn on the Bywater Road. There, you heard the best stories over deep mugs of excellent beer.

- ◆ STRENGTH 3, HEART 7, WITS 4
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Courtesy
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Inquisitive, Keen-eyed

4 WITTY GENTLEHOBBIT

You come from a well-to-do family of landed Westfarthing gentry, living in a Hobbit-hole in Michel Delving. It is rumoured that your great-grandfather once vanished, only to show up three days later at the local inn, talking of a giant Tree-man he had seen on the North Moors. Some believe your family's fortune came from a giant's hoard your ancestor discovered, but you have been able to dispel such rumours with your humorous remarks.

- ◆ STRENGTH 2, HEART 6, WITS 6
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Courtesy
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Fair-spoken, Merry

5 BUCKLANDER

Your parents belong to the folk of Buckland, and you were brought up on the 'wrong side of the Brandywine River', as they say. If half the tales be true, members of your family have always displayed a certain queerness of character, and an unusual fighting spirit, a strangeness you seem to possess yourself.

- ◆ STRENGTH 4, HEART 6, WITS 4
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Stealth
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Keen-eyed, Rustic

6 TOOKISH BLOOD

Yours is an honourable family of potters and masons from the Marish, Eastfarthing. One day, something Tookish stirred in your blood and overcame your respectability. It first happened on your way home one night, when you spotted some outlandish folk around a bright campfire. When you described them to your grandmother, she told you they were Dwarves, on their way to the Blue Mountains. From that night on you started to shun well-trodden paths, hoping to meet other wayfarers secretly crossing the Shire.

- ◆ STRENGTH 2, HEART 7, WITS 5
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Stealth
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Eager, Honourable

MEN OF BREE

SUCCESS
DIE

BACKSTORY

1 CROSSROADS OF THE NORTH

Your family has run a business in Bree since forever, serving the needs of Bree-landers and wanderers alike. Your grandfather even says he once had Elves on his doorstep — and indeed, their coin was as good as anyone else's. You worked in the family business when you were younger, until a great desire came upon you to follow the Road and see where all those strangers and their gold come from.

- ◆ STRENGTH 2, HEART 5, WITS 7
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Insight
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Faithful, Generous

2 OFF WITH DWARVES

Once, Dwarven travellers passing through Bree on their way to the Blue Mountains took you with them to care for their ponies. You became friends, if that is a word that can describe the grudging respect you earned from that stern folk. When you returned home to Bree you realised that you had developed a wanderlust that would never allow you to remain idle for long.

- ◆ STRENGTH 3, HEART 4, WITS 7
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Riddle
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Fair-spoken, Faithful

3 UP THE GREENWAY

Your grandfather was not born in the Bree-land. He made a long journey up from the South, across the Gap of Rohan from beyond the Isen. He crossed the river at Tharbad with his wife and children and settled here by Bree-hill. The North is cold and wild compared to the southern lands, but the tales your grandfather used to tell about the fierce kings of the South never made you doubt his choice.

- ◆ STRENGTH 3, HEART 5, WITS 6
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Insight
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Fair-spoken, True-hearted

4 NO LONGER FREE FROM CARE AND FEAR

Many years ago you discovered that the Bree-land is far from being safe, but is rather a small island surrounded by unseen foes. You haven't told anyone as they won't believe you. But you know for sure, because you have listened to the stories that the Rangers tell when they trust somebody. Now you know that a Shadow is returning, and the day when you will go out and seek the Rangers is near.

- ◆ STRENGTH 4, HEART 4, WITS 6
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Riddle
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Inquisitive, Rustic

5 FOREST-DWELLER

Your kin dwell in the Chetwood, east of Bree. Most of the forest is wholesome, but parts of it — especially near the Midgewater Marshes — have their own perils. As a child you learned to find food that was safe to eat near certain old trees that whispered to one another in the night. It was worth creeping out of Archet-village and risking the dangers of the wood, though, because on some nights, you could hear Elves singing in the wind.

- ◆ STRENGTH 4, HEART 5, WITS 5
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Riddle
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Cunning, Rustic

6 GATE-WARDEN

Great care is kept in the Bree-land to keep out of its borders anyone, or anything, that would make trouble. In addition to your ordinary job you served as one of the gate-wardens, and spent many cold, lonely nights on watch, with only the stars and hooting owls for company.

- ◆ STRENGTH 2, HEART 6, WITS 6
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Insight
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Inquisitive, Patient



RANGERS OF THE NORTH

SUCCESS
DIE

BACKSTORY

1 HUNTER OF ORCS

Orcs raid the lone-lands of Eriador from their lairs in the mountains, causing great destruction. You protect the isolated farmsteads and communities, forcing the Orcs back into their holes. Then the cycle begins anew. Your heart cries for vengeance, but your mind fears there will be no end to this war.

- ◆ STRENGTH 7, HEART 5, WITS 2
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Hunting
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Bold, Stern

2 KEEPER OF LORE

The history of your people is long and often obscure, and recorded only in Rivendell, away from the eyes of most of your kin. You've taken on the responsibility of telling tales of lost Arnor to whoever you meet, to spread the memory of the bitter struggle of your folk. Fortunately, Elrond has noticed and appreciated your efforts, and allowed you to visit the Last Homely House to learn.

- ◆ STRENGTH 7, HEART 4, WITS 3
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Lore
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Honourable, True-hearted

3 WATCHER ON THE BORDER

Interested in the edges of things, especially maps, you were often sent to the borders of the land of your folk to keep watch on the servants of the Enemy or the simple people who live there. You've learned that the reach of the Shadow has grown, but that some simple people will not falter, though the days may grow dark.

- ◆ STRENGTH 6, HEART 5, WITS 3
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Hunting
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Secretive, Tall

4 FAR-REACHING HERALD

You wandered the far corners of the Northern Realm and travelled to places unknown to most before you reached 14 years of age. Many miles and many years spent in the Wild have made you strong and fit. Your talents have been noticed, and you have become a carrier of tidings, at the service of the many Rangers spread across one of the most dangerous realms of the world.

- ◆ STRENGTH 6, HEART 4, WITS 4
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Hunting
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Swift, True-hearted

5 COUNSELLOR

You have been taught that the Enemy thrives upon secrecy and deception. For the plans of his servants to be laid bare, their honey-tongued lies must be exposed and their twisted words unravelled. Fortunately, you can see through their tricks quite well, and you can recognise honesty in all Men, Elves, or Dwarves.

- ◆ STRENGTH 5, HEART 5, WITS 4
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Lore
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Secretive, Subtle

6 PROTECTOR OF THE LAND

Your people did not always live scattered across the lone-lands. Long ago, they were rulers, nobles and artisans of great kingdoms that existed here. Those realms failed and now you've only the land itself. Keep it safe, and it will do the same for you.

- ◆ STRENGTH 6, HEART 6, WITS 2
- ◆ FAVOURED SKILL: Lore
- ◆ DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: Bold, Honourable

MAJOR EVENTS

Roll on the table below to further flesh out a Player-hero's backstory, adding a twist to their fundamental characteristics.

MAJOR EVENTS TABLE

FEAT DIE ROLL	GROWING UP, YOU BECAME...	EFFECT
	...hounded by the Shadow	You have suffered a grievous loss, a tragic event that shook your spirit but strengthened your resolve. You start the game with a Shadow Scar and 10 additional points of previous experience. <i>"...he went out boating on the Brandywine River; and he and his wife were drowned, and poor Mr. Frodo only a child and all."</i>
1	...destitute	Your family was impoverished by great misfortune, forcing you to toil harder than most. Lower your Standard of Living by one tier. You start the game with 5 additional points of previous experience. <i>"...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 coalmining."</i>
2	...half-wise	You may not possess the cunning of the wise, but what you lack in intelligence, you make up for in other ways. Raise your Wits TN by 1, and lower another Attribute TN of your choice by 1. <i>"There must be someone with intelligence in the party." "Then you certainly will not be chosen, Peregrin Took!" said Gandalf...</i>
3	...grim	A hard life experience has made you cold and detached, but it has sharpened other talents. Raise your Heart TN by 1, and lower another Attribute TN of your choice by 1. <i>Their captain was Bard, grim-voiced and grim-faced, whose friends had accused him of prophesying floods and poisoned fish, though they knew his worth and courage.</i>
4	...clumsy	Your lack of grace sometimes hinders your physical activities, so much so that you grew up preferring to concentrate on loftier matters. Raise your Strength TN by 1, and lower another Attribute TN of your choice by 1. <i>They were still standing over him, cursing their ill luck, and Bombur's clumsiness, and lamenting the loss of the boat...</i>
5	...reclusive	You are a loner by nature, used to relying only on your own resources rather than teamwork. Reduce your Company's Fellowship rating by 1 point, and mark an additional Skill of your choice as Favoured. <i>"I once saw him sitting all alone on the top of the Carrock at night watching the moon sinking towards the Misty Mountains..."</i>
6	...mirthful	You love a good party and the company of others, possibly even a little too much. Increase your Company's Fellowship rating by 1 point, and choose one of your Favoured Skills: it is no longer Favoured. <i>The four younger hobbits were, however, in high spirits, and the party soon became very cheerful in spite of Gandalf's absence.</i>
7	...slender	Your agile build makes you nimbler than most, but less vigorous than others. Lower your Endurance by 2, and increase your Parry rating by 1. <i>Slender and tall she was in her white robe girl with silver...</i>
8	...simple	Your innocence has protected you from fear and doubt, but it also made you blind to the necessity of getting ready for what is coming. Increase your Hope by 2 points. Choose two of your Favoured Skills: they are no longer Favoured. <i>"If simple folk are free from care and fear, simple they will be, and we must be secret to keep them so."</i>

FEAT DIE ROLL	GROWING UP, YOU BECAME...	EFFECT
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9	...vigorous	A strong constitution (and maybe a passion for food...) made you bigger and sturdier, but less graceful in your movements. Increase your Endurance by 2, and lower your Parry by 1. <i>Gimli rose and planted his feet firmly apart: his hand gripped the handle of his axe, and his dark eyes flashed.</i>
10	...blessed	Your family was favoured by an unusual good fortune, allowing you to live among many comforts, but making you more idle at the same time. Raise your Standard of Living by one. You start the game with 5 less points of previous experience. <i>"...in addition I believe they found a good deal of gold and a great many jewels too."</i>
11	...favoured by the Grey Wizard	Gandalf the Grey has developed an interest in you, for reasons known only to him. Whenever you make a roll, treat any 1 rolled on the Feat die as an 11. Raise the Eye Awareness of your Company by 2. <i>He would not discuss his own business and journeys, and seemed chiefly interested in small news about Frodo's health and doings.</i>



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