



THE
LORD OF THE RINGS
ROLEPLAYING GAME™

ISENGARD

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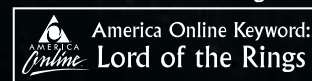
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THE ROAD TO ISENGARD

*'[B]ut mighty works the men of
Westenness had wrought there of
old, and Saruman had dwelt there
long and had not been idle.'*

— *The Two Towers*



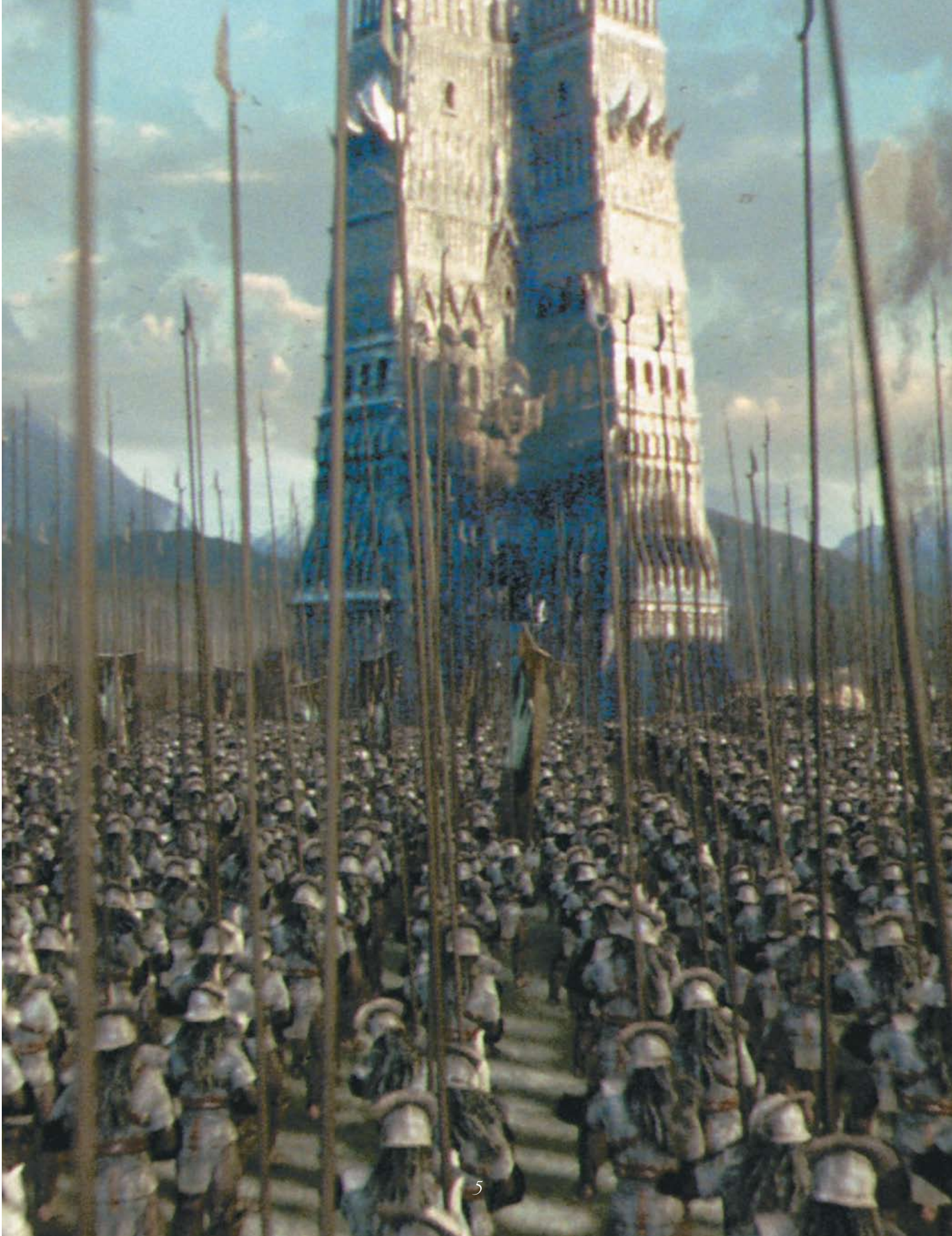
Loftiest of all the peaks in Middle-earth are the Misty Mountains, a chain raised in the early days of the world. So impressive are these summits that anyone who looks upon them cannot imagine a mortal work to rival them. However, south of the Last Peak the race of Men dared to try. Carving four great slabs of rock from the centre of a vast stone Ring, the clever children of Númenor hewed, shaped, and erected a conjoined spike of black granite, the greatest tower of its day. This tower was called *Angrenost* ('The Fortress of Iron'). Due to its proximity to the river Isen, the fortress as a whole came to be known as *Isengard*. This huge spike, thrust upward from the valley floor, dominating its surroundings as a symbol of the might of its builders and a warning to their enemies.



This tower was built to shield the kingdom of Gondor from Orcs and Hill-men, but time can corrupt even the noblest of motives—and places. The fate of Isengard became linked with that of the wizard Saruman, who persuaded the stewards of Gondor to pass custody of the tower into his White Hand. When Saruman became an agent of evil, so too was Isengard transformed into a

citadel of darkness, the perfect staging ground to embark on a campaign of conquest.

Secure within the great stronghold of Nan Curunír, the Wizard's Vale where the river Isen was born from the southern glaciers of the Misty Mountains, Saruman laboured in deep caverns. Fuelled by wood from nearby Fangorn Forest, baleful furnaces belched smoke day and night.





These furnaces powered factories that constructed engines of destruction, and assisted the Wizard in even darker designs. Saruman proudly called it 'progress.'

Such thirst for power led Saruman to commit his greatest blasphemy: cross-breeding Men with Orcs and perfecting Sauron's Uruk-hai. These monstrous hybrids became the vanguard of his armies, which at the end of the Third Age were bent on overthrowing the kingdom of Rohan. Agents of his White Hand travelled throughout western Middle-earth, from Gondor to the Shire, spying on their defences, establishing themselves (by coercion or bullying) in positions of authority as Saruman vied to become sovereign over all of Western Middle-earth.

Saruman's army was bolstered by the Hill-men of the neighbouring region of Dunland, who, besotted by the words of the Wizard, had rekindled their ancestral hatred of Rohan and unthinkingly marched side-by-side with the Uruk-hai on a crusade into glory. This alliance nearly toppled the Rohirrim and plunged the world into an age of Shadow, but thanks to the efforts of many heroes—some celebrated, some unheralded—it failed and ultimately took them into darkness. The Orc-wrought destruction of Isengard's nearby forests angered his neighbours, the Ents of Fangorn,

who finally rose against the Circle of Isengard and tore it apart, slaying all upon which they laid their hands. Simultaneously, the armies of Rohan won a great, unexpected victory at Helm's Deep, slaughtering Saruman's Half-orcs and putting the Hill-men to flight. Lastly, Gandalf the White came forth, and with the Power of the West he ended Saruman's authority and broke his staff. Thus Saruman's ambitions came to nought. At the end of the Third Age, Isengard was nothing but a flooded ruin.

GUIDE TO THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE VALE

Isengard rests in the shadow of Methedras, the Last Peak of the Misty Mountain chain, which lies due north of the fortress. On its west, it is bordered by the foothills of Dol Baran, while on the east by the foothills of Fangorn, which form the Isen Vale. Beyond the eastern hills is Fangorn Forest, home to the Ents, the Shepherds of the Trees. To the south are the grassy plains of Calenardhon, now called Rohan.

The River Isen, which is formed by melting snows from the Last Peak, flows from the western hills of the valley, south from Orthanc, and crosses

the Great West Road at the Fords of Isen, located approximately thirty miles south of the Circle of Isengard. Before Saruman was corrupted, this vale—Nan Curunír, the Valley of the Wizard—was a green and pleasant place whose light woods were nurtured by mountain rains. Prior to the War of the Ring, these forests were razed and the valley became a more desolate place.

A mile from the steep southern face of Methedras stands the Ring of Isengard. Even if Orthanc did not exist, this would itself be a marvel; a defensive ring nearly six and a half miles in circumference, whose eighty foot high walls are nearly sixty feet thick. A single tunnel was drilled into the southern face of the wall, providing one (heavily guarded) route of access for visitors, which was secured by a network of guardrooms and storehouses.

From the edge of the Ring, eight pillar-lined avenues converge on the central tower of Orthanc. The tower,

FURTHER ADVENTURES IN ISENGARD

In the course of producing this *Isengard* sourcebook, more material was written and developed than could be fit within this book's covers! An adventure entitled 'The Eagles are Missing,' along with a number of other adventure and chronicle seeds, were omitted due to space constraints. These materials, however, are available in PDF format on Decipher's *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* web site. Just point your browser at www.decipher.com and download these supplemental materials for free.

made from polished black granite and sandstone, rose over five hundred feet tall, crowned with four great stone horns at its peak. At the bottom, a long stair lead up to a heavy stone door, the only visible entrance into the tower. Saruman addressed his people from a balcony high above door level, and well above the balcony was the chamber of the *palantír*, the ancient Gondorian seeing-stone that was the tower's greatest treasure. At the summit of the tower was a flat rooftop of polished stone, on which Saruman inscribed magical runes. It was here that he imprisoned Gandalf the Grey.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Isengard is a complete guide to one of the greatest fortresses of Middle-earth. Most of the descrip-

tions in this book details Isengard and the Wizard's Vale as they were near the end of the Third Age, just before Gandalf's imprisonment in the first half of TA 3018. Of course, historical information is also plentiful and some suggestions about the state of Isengard after the War of the Ring are also provided.

CHAPTER ONE: THE HISTORY AND LIFE OF ISENGARD recounts the tale of Isengard's creation and development, and tells the story of its people at the end of the Third Age and beginning of the Fourth. Isengard has stood as a great monument since the early Third Age, and has weathered many battles; its historical importance needs to be understood by those who roleplay characters from the region, as well as any who are interested in the ancient lore of Middle-earth.

CHAPTER TWO: THE FORTRESS OF IRON details the chambers and passages of this great fortress,

including the great stone Circle of Isengard, the tunnels beneath it, and the proud fortress of Orthanc itself, including its magical treasures such as the *palantír*.

CHAPTER THREE: NAN CURUNÍR describes the Valley of Saruman beyond the Ring of Isengard including the Fords of Isen; Dol Baran the last hill; the work camps of Saruman's Orcs, Half-orcs, and Uruk-hai; and more. Isengard entails much more than the tower Orthanc, and the magic of Saruman is both subtle and far-reaching.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE WHITE HAND describes Saruman's minions. Saruman's evil is not composed only of vast armies and fell creatures: his agents and spies are numerous, and they spread Saruman's corruption through a diverse host of faces.

