



B

eing a chess player myself, I noted with interest the following passage:

"The board is set, and the pieces are moving. One piece that I greatly desire to find is Faramir, now the heir of Denethor. I do not think that he is in the city; but I have had no time to gather news. I must go, Pippin. I must go to this lords' council and learn what I can. But the enemy has the move, and he is about to open his full game. And pawns are likely to see as much of it as any, Peregrin son of Paladin, soldier of Gondor. Sharpen your blade!"

(*The Return of the King*, page 32.)

Pippin may be a pawn in this battle, but what of middle-earth as a whole? I believe a direct parallel could be drawn, although there will be problems which I will outline later.

My arrangement would be as follows:

The *knights*, those pieces constantly probing the defences, I would say were the two great warriors and brothers, Boromir and Faramir.

The *rooks*, those corner-stones of middle-earth, the turrets of hidden majesty, must be the Eldar, Elrond Half-elven and Círdan the Shipwright.

The *pawns*, warriors, always in the thick of it, must be people like Brand, Elrohir, Elladan, Éomer, Erkenbrand, Dáin Ironfoot, Gimli and Legolas.

The *bishops*, those elegant pieces cutting a dash across middle-earth, ready to bring aid to all parts of the board, must be those fellow-Númenoreans Prince Imrahil and the Elessar Telcontar, Aragorn.

The *queen*? Obviously a character having a great influence on the strategy and very much involved with the scheme of things: undoubtedly Galadriel.

Finally, the *king*. The piece often in the battle and always influencing it. The piece which above all others is the target of attack: Gandalf.

There are, of course, problems with this. For instance, there would be many 'sides' led by independent leaders: Brand, Dáin Ironfoot, Treebeard, Thranduil and Ghân-buri-Ghân would tend to go their own way even though they have the same aim. And no doubt you will all have your own scheme of things, depending on what place and time you pick. I chose a general approach (hence the absence of Saruman: pieces are not yet allowed to change sides in a game

of chess!). Indeed, separate pieces and strategies could be found for each battle, where the people I mentioned might not appear, but others take their place.

But what of the black pieces? A parallel is difficult here. Undoubtedly Sauron and the Lord of the Nazgûl must be the witch king and queen. The Lieutenant of the Tower may be one bishop; the Balrog could be the other (I note "The Balrog" by Kevin Young, *Amon Hen* 23). The eight other ringwraiths could be the pawns. Finally the knights could be the platoons of Minas Morgul, and the rooks the bastions of Cirith Ungol and Barad-dûr.

Prof. Tolkien was a very subtle writer, and I have no doubt that when he wrote the passage quoted above, he fully meant us to ask the question, "Who is moving the pieces?"



Solution to 'MORGOTHWORD':

ACROSS

1. Gwaith-i-Mirdain: "People of the Jewel-smiths" — Noldor of Eregion under Celebrimbor (QS 286).
9. Rivendell: See QS 295.
10. Aerin: [aer- = 'holy': cf. Allan's Sindarin dictionary, p.71]; the 'dark lady', of course, is Morwen — cf. QS 198.
11. Loa: Cf. III.385.
12. Grişnákh: Cf. II.50.
14. udûnen: -en is a Sindarin adjectival ending, like English -ish: see Allan's Sind. dict., p.77. Thus if udûn = 'hell', then udûnen = 'hellish' (?perhaps).
17. Marroc: See Brandybuck family tree, LotR Appendix C.
19. A Far-Seer.
22. lomelinde: 'a nightingale', singular of lomelindi, indexed in QS. Cf. Allan, p.15.
24. eleni: "stars", that "tremble in the song of her voice, holy and queenly": lines 6-7 of Galadriel's Lament.
25. Amras: twin brother of Amrod — together known as 'the Hunters' (e.g. QS 153); one of the seven sons of Fëanor.
26. Palantiri.
27. Ent in Tasarinan: Cf. Song of Treebeard [Fangorn], II.72.

DOWN

1. Girdle of Melian: Cf. QS 97.
3. Arveleg: [Ar + beleg, 'king mighty': see relevant entries in QS appendix, p.356]; cf. III.320.
2. Tintallëo: Genitive of Tintallë, on the pattern of lassëo — cf. Allan, p.15 again.
4. Isengrim [II]: See Took family tree, LotR Appendix C. ('Orc-router', of course, = Bandobras Took.)
5. imlaid: Plural of imlad on the pattern of perian/periaim ('halfling/-s'); cf. Allan p.62ff.
- 8 + 13-across: Death of Gelmir: Cf. QS 191.
7. Jarwain [Ben-adar], ancient name of Tom Bombadil (I.278).
8. in the Narsilion: Cf. QS 99.
15. Dor-Aegnor: 'Land of Aegnor' [whose name means 'Fell Fire': cf. QS index, p.341]. Aegnor held the northern slopes of Dorthonion during the Dagor Bragollach ('Battle of the Sudden Flame'): QS 120.
16. of Aeglos [spelling as in QS rather than LotR]: Aeglos = 'Snow-point' (QS 313).
18. ramaron: Genitive of ramar, 'wings', on the pattern of aldar/aldaron ('of trees') [Allan, p.15]
20. Eregion.
21. in a pit: cf. QS 171; the 'Friend of Men', of course, = Finrod Felagund.
23. lassi: 'leaves' (cf. line 1 of Galadriel's Lament). [Apologies for the ghastly pun!]