

The Lord of The Rings: The Return of The King Palantir of Saruman FAQ

by deathslinger

Updated to v1.24 on Jan 25, 2005

This walkthrough was originally written for The Lord of The Rings: The Return of The King on the GC, but the walkthrough is still applicable to the PS2 version of the game.

"Palantir of Saruman FAQ" (version 1.24)

-an in-depth FAQ for the Electronic Arts game "Lord of the Rings: Return of the King" for Nintendo Gamecube

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0. Version Notes

Version 1.24 (25/01/05):

-updated copyright information

Version 1.23 (24/01/05)

-added effect of difficulty settings (see section 8)
-replaced "level" with "stage" where appropriate

Version 1.22 (19/01/05 - 20/01/05)

-tweaked strategy for attacking Trolls
-changed "Backstep" to "Jump Back"

Version 1.2 (17/01/05 - 18/01/05):

-completed General Tips section
-added level 6 Fellowship Upgrades
-changed some minor formatting details in Walkthrough section
-will add Troll starting layouts for Waves 18-20 in a future update

-need to research effects of different difficulty settings

Version 1.1 (15/01/05):

-finished the Palantir of Saruman at 5pm today with Pippin at level one; stats as follows:

481365xp, level 6; 48 perfect, 44 excellent, 83 good, 64 fair

mission experience: 59975xp

mission rating: excellent + 3000xp

-revised all sections

-finished walkthrough

-updated strategies for killing Trolls

Version 1.0 (28/11/04):

-this was a preliminary version; will add game details at a future date

-will add other specifics if there is enough demand

1. Preamble

Currently, this FAQ demands working knowledge of the game Lord of the Rings: Return of the King (herein referred to as "ROTK"). If there is a demand for it, I will include some basic information for the game; but for now, you'll have to find that elsewhere. There are several decent general FAQs available at www.GameFAQs.com.

Note that I have only tested the controls and strategies used in this FAQ on the Nintendo Gamecube system. Although they are generally transferable to other platforms, I have not actually tested them on other consoles.

2. Overview

The Palantir of Saruman is an unlockable stage, available upon completion of the regular game (i.e. the stage "The Crack of Doom"). The stage consists of twenty Waves of enemies, from Dead Archers to Huge Trolls, attacking you in a closed circular battleground with a rock in the middle. This FAQ will tell you how to finish this stage using a level one Hobbit.

To be specific, this FAQ is based on finishing the Palantir of Saruman with Pippin on the "normal" difficulty setting, starting at level one (i.e. Pippin has not yet successfully completed any other stage(s)), with all Fellowship Upgrades, on the Nintendo Gamecube. Though the strategies are transferable to other characters, difficulty settings and consoles, I have not actually tested all of them as such. I will continue to update this FAQ to reflect the knowledge gained from using other characters and settings.

Note that many of the strategies mentioned in this FAQ are applicable in most of the game's other stages. Thus, although written exclusively for the purposes of finishing the Palantir of Saruman with a weak character, this FAQ will provide the reader with strategies for use in other, unspecified sections of ROTK.

3. Action-specific Strategies

Speed Attack: Use to kill Dead, Uruks, Dead Archers, Uruk Archers, Spiders, Big Spiders, Dead Champions, Small Trolls, Trolls, Huge Trolls. Use to finish off Shielded Dead, Shielded Uruks, Uruk Champions.

Physical Attack: Use as part of the Final Judgment combo.

Fierce Attack: Use to break shields/armor for Shielded Dead, Shielded Uruks, Uruk Champions.

Killing Move: Use as part of the Final Judgment combo. Time/space permitting, use to kill Dead, Uruks on the ground.

Parry: Use whenever not moving or attacking. Use especially when surrounded.

Ranged Attack: Use to kill Small Trolls, Trolls, Huge Trolls. Hold the required Ranged Attack buttons for several seconds in order to fire a fully powered missile; a fully powered missile will remove half a Troll's health.

Jump Back: Use to escape from a mob of shielded enemies to a clearer area, where you can see more clearly and plan your next strike more easily.

Special Ability: Use when health is low; use invisibility to pick up health potions without getting hit. Unfortunately, you move really slowly, so you generally only lose it if you're really stuck and desperately need an out.

Action Move: Not Applicable.

4. Enemy-specific Strategies

(Remember that these are all Pippin-specific details. The other Hobbits are not as strong, and take an extra attack or two to kill the enemies.)

Dead: Use 2 Speed Attacks to kill

Uruk: Use 3 Speed Attacks to kill

Dead Archers: Use 2 Speed Attacks to kill

Uruk Archers: Use 2 Speed Attacks to kill

Shielded Dead: Use 1 Fierce Attack to break shield, 2 Speed Attacks to kill

Shielded Uruk: Use 1 Fierce Attack to break shield, 4 Speed Attacks to kill

Spider: Use 4 Speed Attacks to kill

Big Spider: Use 4 Speed Attacks to kill

Dead Champion: Use Speed Attacks to kill

Uruk Champion: Use 3 Fierce Attacks to break armor, Speed Attacks to kill

Small Troll: Use Speed Attacks in Perfect Mode to kill

Troll: Use (2 full powered) Ranged Attacks to kill

Huge Troll: Use (2 full powered) Ranged Attacks to kill

5. Fellowship Upgrades:

There are two reasons for purchasing Fellowship Upgrades while completing the

game, prior to attempting a low-level completion of the Palantir of Saruman:

1) it's the natural thing to do, being more cost effective and helpful in completing the game.

2) having stronger health will help immensely during a low-level completion of the Palantir of Saruman.

(Remember that the following are all Hobbit-specific details; other characters receive different Fellowship Upgrades at different levels.)

Level 2

Orc Bane: Useless, as there are no Orcs in the Palantir of Saruman.

Orc Hewer: Not recommended, as it takes too long to execute the final attack.

Final Judgment: Time/space permitting, use to kill Dead, Uruks, Dead Archers, Uruk Archers, Shielded Dead, Shielded Uruks.

Level 3

Rising Revenge: If you are knocked down, a Speed Attack (or a Fierce Attack) will bring you to your feet by attacking the enemies around you. Not particularly useful, as you shouldn't be knocked down in the first place.

Strength of Stone: Health is always welcome.

Level 4

Balrog's Gambit: Useless, as the Champions fall back too far for the final blow to connect.

Warrior Bane: Useless, as there are no Orcs or Men in the Palantir of Saruman (it does not affect Dead, Uruks, Spiders or Trolls).

Level 5

Strength of Iron: Health is always welcome.

Dark Deliverance: Too difficult to execute to be useful.

Level 6

Shield Cleaver: Too difficult to execute, and gained too late to be useful.

Bane of Sauron: You can use this on the Shielded Uruks in Wave 20 and use the resulting Perfect Mode on the Dead Champions and Archers. That's about it.

----- 6. General Tips -----

First, note: after every Wave, you get one red health potion
after every five Waves, you get one refill of 20 missiles

1) Save potions. In particular, the five potions dropped by the Dead Champions in Wave 16 will refill your health fully, assuming you don't get hit (which I find fairly easy to do now); therefore, don't use the potions sitting on the ground in front of you unless you absolutely need to, since you can

refill your health in Waves 16, 17, 19 and 20 from the potions the Champions drop. Note also that the potions dropped by Champions do not linger indefinitely. Generally, I only use potions when my health meter is red, or when I'm on Wave 20.

2) Save missiles. You don't need to use any missiles on any non-Troll enemies (and indeed, it's hard to use them against the Archers and the Champions without getting hit), so save the missiles for the Trolls in Waves 18-20, where you need them. If you don't spend any missiles, you won't pick up any missiles if you accidentally walk into the refills. Note that the refills increase your missiles either by 20 or to a maximum of 30, whichever is lower. So if you fire one missile and then pick up a refill, you've essentially lost 19 missiles for no good reason.

Now actually, I only use 10 missiles (2 each for five of the Trolls) in the entire Palantir. But I still save them, "just in case."

3) Parry as if your life depends on it; because it does. Parrying will deflect every enemy attack (except a Troll's) at you from Archers' arrows to Shielded Uruks' long pikes to Uruk Champions' huge spikey clubs, even if you're surrounded. If you're hit, it's because you either let up slightly while Parrying, or were still finishing another action when you pressed the Parry button, and thus didn't Parry as soon as you thought/hoped you would. As a bonus, sometimes a successful Parry will register as a successful Attack on the enemy you Parried.

Parry also helps fill up your Perfect Meter. You can use this strategically to get into Perfect Mode by deflecting several volleys of arrows or Parrying some attacks amidst your own Speed Attacks. Note that if you are hit, your Perfect Meter resets, so Parrying is pretty much a good thing in all respects.

4) Have patience. Particularly when you're surrounded by shielded enemies and Archers, you want to be very careful when you attempt to break a shield/armour. Whenever I try to rush through a Wave, I inevitably get hit more than I normally do. Be patient, and eventually there will be a time when the Archers have finished with their volley and the melee foes have spent their attacks harmlessly, and you have lots of time to execute that Fierce Attack. Remember: you can Parry everything (except Trolls).

5) Vs. Archers: keep moving. If you don't move, you will get hit by arrows. If you Parry, you won't move much. The solution is to keep moving, dodging as appropriate whenever a volley of arrows is released. I try to head straight for the nearest Archer, then veer to the side briefly when the Archer fires (they fire consistently in rhythm).

Also, try not to get frustrated with how far the Dead Archers float away as you approach. Just be patient.

6) Vs. shielded/armoured enemies: beware, for they cooperate. It's more obvious with the Uruk Champions, but still noticeable with the Shielded Uruks Dead. Basically, avoid the instinct to use a Fierce Attack on the enemy that just finished attacking you (unsuccessfully, due to your Parries), because his "friend" nearby will notice and attack you in the middle of your Fierce Attack. When a few Uruks/Champions have finished attacking you, use a Fierce Attack on the one that didn't attack you moments ago.

If there's only one enemy near you, then you can safely break his shield/armour immediately after he attacks you. Beware, however; those Uruk Champions can cover a lot of distance in a short while. Understanding how the Uruk Champions cooperate is essential to finishing Wave 17.

7) Vs. Trolls: charge your missiles. Charging a missile to full power will take several seconds, but will cause a Troll to lose half its health (if you're Pippin at level five). Therefore, two missiles will kill a Troll. Alternately, several Speed Attacks while in Perfect Mode will dispatch a Troll, but you must be careful: all your attacks must hit the Troll, or he will have enough time to give your character a good smashing.

8) Jump Back. This is something I don't use enough, as I'm usually thinking about the enemies on the screen and simply forget that I can Jump Back. If you're surrounded by shielded enemies and just can't seem to find an opening to execute a Fierce Attack, turn to face the enemies, and hit the Jump Back button. You'll move back several paces, and then you can either turn and run, or Jump Back again. Use this ability to give yourself time and space to set up your next attack.

7. Walkthrough

Symbols: O - the rock in the middle of the battleground
x - an enemy
d - Dead or Dead Archer
u - Uruk or Uruk Archer
D - Shielded Dead or Dead

Wave 1: 14 Dead

```

      x x
     xx  xx
    x      x
   x  O   x
    x      x
     x     x

```

Run up the middle, wait for the first attack (parrying if necessary), then use Speed Attacks to the right. When you get near the end of the line of Dead, go left. Parry sparingly. You can also do this in the opposite direction, if you prefer. If done correctly, you should be in Perfect Mode rather quickly, and should gain enough experience to get to level two by the end of the Wave.

Wave 2: 14 Uruks

(same formation as in Wave 1)

Use the same strategy as in Wave 1. In general, when Dead or Uruks are approaching you in a line, try to attack them "almost head-on"; move to a position beside where the line will pass, and attack them as they pass you, moving in the opposite direction to where they are moving.

Use Final Judgment at will (just because you can...and you'll be stuck with one less "fair" kill), when you're not in danger of being attacked soon.

Wave 3: 7 Dead, 7 Uruks

```
-----  
      d u  
     dd  uu  
    d      u  
   d  O   u  
  d      u  
 d      u  
-----
```

Use the same strategy as in Wave 1. I prefer to take out the Uruks first, as they don't float/glide/fall away as readily as the Dead do, making it easier to get into Perfect Mode faster. You should gain enough experience to get to level three by the end of the Wave.

Wave 4: 8 Dead Archers

```
-----  
      x  x  
     x    x  
    x  O  x  
     x  x  
-----
```

Run towards the closest Archer; you should be able to kill him before the first volley of arrows is released. Parry the volley. Kill the other Archers one by one with Speed Attacks. Try to keep moving rather than stopping at periodic intervals to parry. Run directly towards the closest Archer, then move perpendicular to that direction (sidestep, essentially) to avoid the volley of arrows when you sense them coming (note that they fire at regular intervals, unless they're hit, or you get close to them).

Wave 5: 7 Uruk Archers

```
-----  
      x  x  
     x    x  
  
    x  O  x  
     x  
-----
```

Use the same strategy as in Wave 4. Uruk Archers are actually easier to take out, as they don't float away as drastically when you approach them.

Wave 6: 5 Dead Archers, 5 Uruk Archers

```
-----  
      u      u  
     d      d  
      O  
     ddd  uuu  
-----
```

Use the same strategy as in Wave 4. If you wish, stand where you are at the beginning and parry until you reach Perfect Mode, then start killing Archers. I prefer to kill the three Dead Archers near the front first.

Wave 7: 6 Shielded Dead

```
-----  
      O  
    xxx  xxx  
-----
```

Run to one side as far as you can, then parry the blows. Use Fierce Attacks on the two Dead that just attacked you to break their shields. Use Speed Attacks on the latter and Parry all blows. Use Fierce Attacks on the Shielded Dead when an opening appears (e.g. all enemies surrounding you have just attacked you, so you know they won't attack you quite yet).

Wave 8: 6 Shielded Uruks

```
-----  
(same formation as in Wave 7)  
-----
```

Use the same strategy as in Wave 7.

Wave 9: 4 Shielded Dead, 4 Shielded Uruks

```
-----  
      O  
    uuu  dddd  
-----
```

Use the same strategy as in Wave 7.

Wave 10: 6 Dead, 6 Uruk Archers

```
-----  
    uu      uu  
      O  
    ddd  ddd  
-----
```

Kill the Dead, then go after the Archers, being careful to Parry the arrows and use Speed Attacks when not being attacked. If you wish, run quickly to one side, until you are between the two groups of Archers (though closer to one). Parry the arrows until you get close/into Perfect Mode, then kill the Dead.

Wave 11: 3 Big Spiders, 30 Spiders

```
-----  
(There's a lot of Spiders.)  
-----
```

Run to one side, until you pass the bulk of the Spiders. Then turn around and start killing. Seldom Parry, but don't be afraid to, as most Spiders don't get knocked down completely, springing back to attack a little too quickly.

You should be able to get into Perfect Mode at least three times. Also, you should gain enough experience to get to level four by the end of the Wave.

Wave 12: 6 Shielded Dead, 5 Uruk Archers

```
-----  
    u u u  
  u   O   u  
  ddd  ddd  
-----
```

Use the same strategy as in Wave 7. Don't use a potion unless absolutely necessary.

Wave 13: 6 Shielded Uruks, 5 Dead Archers

```
-----  
dd      dd  
  d  
  O  
uuu  uuu  
-----
```

Use the same strategy as in Wave 7. Don't use a potion unless absolutely necessary.

Wave 14: 4 Shielded Dead, 4 Uruks, 4 Dead Archers

```
-----  
  d  d  
d      d  
  O  
uDDu  uDDu  
-----
```

Use the same strategy as in Wave 7. Don't use a potion unless absolutely necessary.

Wave 15: 6 Shielded Uruks, 4 Dead, 3 Dead Archers

```
-----  
  d  d  d  
  O  
DDuuu  uuuDD  
-----
```

Use the same strategy as in Wave 7. Don't use a potion unless absolutely necessary.

Wave 16: 5 Dead Champions

```
-----  
xx  O  xx  
  x  
-----
```

Use (exclusively) Speed Attacks. Try to kill one Champion and pick up the health potion he drops before hacking at the others. When you see a Champion swinging his swords quickly about his head, get ready to parry; your Speed Attacks will not be enough to parry his attacks. Parry judiciously.

If you're skilled, you may be able to get into Perfect Mode. Regardless, you should gain enough experience to get to level five by the end of the Wave.

Wave 17: 4 Uruk Champions

```
-----  
x  O  x  
  x  x  
-----
```

You will need to use 3 Fierce Attacks in order to break the armour on any given Champion. Again, try to take out one before taking on the others. This is more difficult than in Wave 17, so at least try to break the armour of one Champion before moving on to the next. Even better, break his armour and reduce his health until his health meter is yellow (so you can distinguish him from the others) before moving on to the others.

When a Champion finishes attacking you, try to break the armour of the other Champion near you. They tend to cooperate, so if you attack the Champion that

just attacked you, another Champion will tend to run at you and attack while you're delivering that Fierce Attack.

Wave 18: 3 Trolls, 1 Small Troll, ~20 Spiders

Carefully kill the Spiders, bit by bit, while running around, avoiding the Trolls. Kill the Trolls at the end with two missiles each.

If you wish, you can use the Spiders to get into Perfect Mode, then kill a Troll (or two) with your uber-Speed Attacks.

Wave 19: 1 Huge Troll, ~2 Spiders, 2 Champion Dead, 4 Shielded Uruks

Carefully kill everything but the Troll, while running around avoiding the Troll. Break shields when you get a chance, and if the Troll moves in your direction, run, taking care to parry any attacks from the Uruks and the Dead. As soon as you see the Troll turn around, you can stop running and start attacking, but don't move too far in the Troll's direction, or he'll make another about-face and head towards you again.

Wave 20: 2 Huge Trolls, ~? Spiders, ~4 Dead Champions, ~6 Shielded Uruks, ~6 Dead Archers

Kamikaze the Trolls. Basically, it's too difficult to run around avoiding the Trolls, because there's so much stuff (i.e. lesser enemies) around to slow you down, and the two Trolls tend to move in opposite directions, giving you less time to kill the other enemies while running away from the Trolls. So, let them come towards you at the beginning, and attack them (with Speed Attacks) outright. They won't move or swing too much, as they are also limited by all the lesser enemies running amok in addition to each other (both Trolls head toward you, but bump into each other as a result). Meanwhile, whenever you get hit, you'll pick up one of those health potions you've been saving.

Try not to get confused or aggravated by the apparent glitches in Wave 20. The Trolls will sometimes disappear and reappear several steps away from where they were, without warning and for no apparent reason. Don't let it bother you.

Take out the two Trolls, and the rest is easy. Congratulations! You've just beaten the Palantir of Saruman with a level one Hobbit!

8. Statistics for different characters and settings

Difficulty: It appears that the level of difficulty only affects the amount of health lost by the character. The Normal setting causes 50% more damage than the Easy setting, and the Hard setting causes twice the damage caused under the Easy setting. (E.g. Pippin's health meter (starting at 100%) will turn yellow after 8 hits by a Dead under the Easy setting, 6 hits under the Normal setting, and 4 hits under the Hard setting.)

Sam, Frodo, Merry: It appears that in general, the non-Pippin Hobbits require 50% more attacks against an enemy to kill it than Pippin does. It may be that they require less than 50% more attacks, but it is true that anything killed by 2 of Pippin's Speed Attacks will need 3 of another Hobbit's Speed Attacks.

9. Postscript

If you have found this FAQ helpful, informative or interesting at all, please feel free to e-mail me at deathslinger@yahoo.com.

If you have any comments, questions, concerns, requests, criticisms, suggestions, etc., please feel free to e-mail me.

If you would like to contribute information for this FAQ, please feel free to e-mail me. You will be credited accordingly.

Thanks to EAGames for creating The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King, Nintendo for creating the Gamecube and GameFAQs for hosting this FAQ.

Thanks to M. Molnar for saying, "It can't be done!" in response to my proposal to finish the Palantir of Saruman with a level one Hobbit, thus motivating me to take up the challenge, which in turn motivated me to write this FAQ.

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