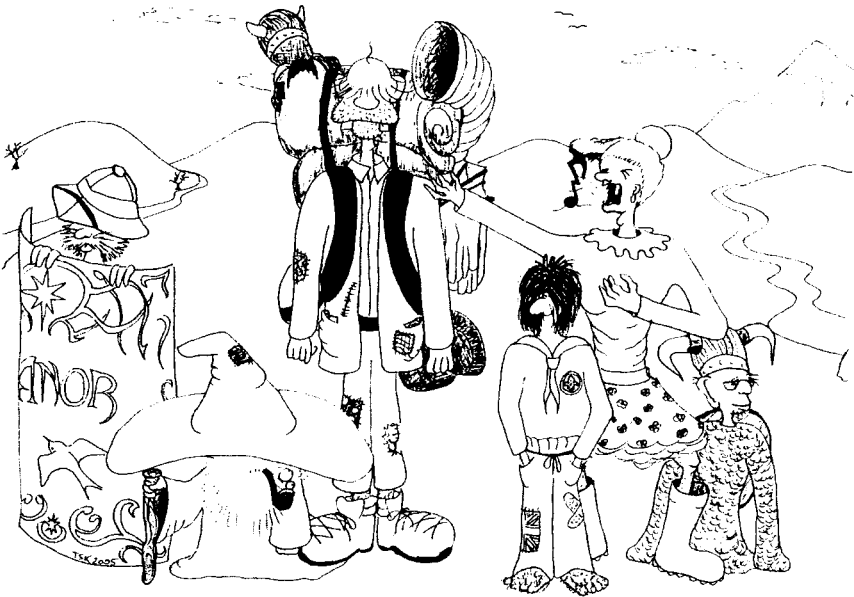


ANOR



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Editorial

The Editor speaks

Welcome, one and all, to the first Anor of a new year. If this is your first Anor, a particularly warm welcome to this, the journal of the Cambridge Tolkien Society. Within these pages, you will find more creativity, silliness, humour, insanity, wit and insight than you could shake a stick at, if it was a metaphorical stick that you could shake at abstract concepts without looking silly.

Before I do anything else, I'd like to thank the previous Anor editor, Anna Slack, for her two years at the helm. I hope I can continue to produce Anor with the same regularity and dictatorial insistence on deadlines.

Needless to say, there will be changes – not least on the front cover. Whilst the previous artwork has served Anor well for the past six issues, I intend to have a different cover art each term. If enough people send me their art, I might even be able to hold a cover-art competition, with the lucky two winners getting their work published on the front cover of an upcoming issue of Anor.

This term's cover art, which I drew myself, features the characters of *the Lord of the Goons*, which brings me nicely around to what's in this term's Anor. *Lord of the Goons* was performed at the Tolkien 2005 Convention in Birmingham earlier this year, and we have a report on the convention written by Anna Slack. There's also the first parts of two serialisations – not only do we have the beginning of two-part humorous hobbit horror *Dark Times*, by Pip Steele, but also the first instalment of my own saga of ringwraiths and Orcish revolutionaries, *The People's Flag is Deepest Black*. There are also reports on the eagle debate and this term's *What If?*, a review of a book composed entirely of footnotes, and a short story by fresher Emma Caird, entitled *A Light Renewed*. Many thanks to everyone who's contributed something to this term's Anor. And to everyone else – there's always next term.

Signed,
Tim Kelby,
Your friendly Anor editor.

One Smial to Rule Them All

How the CTS ran rings around Tolkien 2005 – by Anna Slack

Pictures by Anna Slack, Esther Miller and Richard Smith

It started off in June, 2004. The CTS performed a marathon rendition of the BBC Radio Adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings* for charity in Borders. 12 hours we stood there and garnered many an odd look from the passers-by. Brian Sibley himself came to see us. Midway through the day, he approached me while Samwise was off. "You know," he said, "I think this is just the kind of thing that they would like at Tolkien 2005." I had to query him at that; I had seen the cunningly placed leaflets that Chris Kreuzer had been dispensing during the morning, but knew no more than that. Mr Sibley, however, was more than happy to explain: "It's the 50-year anniversary of the publication of *The Lord of the Rings*." Tolkien 2005, to take place in August, was an international conference to mark the event. Smiling, I said "That would be lovely." And I promised to look into getting the CTS involved.



Editor and author feel the pressure of the conference...

August, 2005. Sitting quietly on a bench in Palermo airport, waiting for my flight to London Stansted, thence my train to Birmingham New Street. My light reading for the flight was a script for the Reading, a lecture, and a script for the immortal *Lord of the Goons*. But, that wasn't to be all that the CTS masterminded over the next three days.

Friday night: Silly-Marillions



I arrived in time to catch Matthew, Matthew, Matthew and Mark in the critically acclaimed performance of their award-winning 'Reduced Silmarillion Company'. Ne'er has the Silmarillion been more effectively (and lovingly) lampooned. The rather-too-small hall was packed with Tolkien fans from all over the world, who were rolling around on the floor with laughter, but not quite as much as the actors. Various inflatable objects and carefully crafted verse were hurled about with an agility wrought quite literally with sweat, tears, and blood (well, bruises, anyway, which

I'm sure still counts as blood). And that was before we got to indulging in meaningless acts of genocide. Real highlights were Ulmo, the penguin, and Ungoliant (who, as her name may imply, was none other than a rather large inflatable *hymenoptera formicidae*). The cast leapt their way to the very zenith of hilarity (no, really; I had no idea that Matthew Woodcraft could jump that high). It was a fine end to a long day.

Except it wasn't the end. It was only on returning to the hotel that night that I was to learn that in my very careful cutting of the script for the Reading I had not been

quite so clever as I thought... Luckily, brilliant physics graduate Frodo Baggins was there to rectify my mathematical ineptitudes. The man in the moon had definitely gone to bed long before we had!



Saturday: Lectures at Tiffany's

Breakfast was early in the hotel. I was staying with Messrs. Davison, Woollgar, Angmar¹ and Baggins. My first mistake was probably eating the cooked breakfast. Well, there's a bit of hobbit in us all. My second was undoubtedly the large cup of coffee. Why? Because this, by the time I reached Aston to give my lecture, had translated into caffeine-induced shakes. Not good when you intend to stand before a medium-sized audience and

deliver your first tentative step into the academic world. Yet, lecture I did, presenting my dissertation 'Slow Kindled Courage'² to the world at large. This being the dissertation that the University of Cambridge did its utmost to stop me finishing, yet awarded me a 1st for, in the end. We do like to take the establishment down from the inside, you know. An Oxford Professor approached me afterwards and congratulated me on it. He said that it could very easily be expanded to create an innovative PhD. So, watch this space...

Sunday: The CTS Goes to Aston-Wood

This was it; the day that had been, indirectly, two years in the planning. We had all our copyright permissions (including the miraculously provided one from Michael Bakewell only 72 hours before), and our dedicated cast. We had chosen a collection of scenes to fill a two-hour slot that morning, including such favourites as the flight to the ford, "You shall not pass", "Po-tatoes", the Pelennor Fields, and many more (I could write blurb for those awful 10-disc compilation CDs they advertise on TV, you know!). Richard



(playing Faramir) even almost got to do the scene where he got the girl. The small room to which we were allocated was packed with spectators crowded into the corridor outside. They stuck it out through the whole thing, laughing, applauding, and even joining in when we came to some of Stephen Oliver's great songs. We did have to speed over some of the last scenes to the Grey Havens, but, as Naath put it to the audience "You know what happens anyway". As I uttered in my final "Well, I'm back", there was a moment of silence, and then uproarious applause. I had never been in receipt of a standing ovation before that moment, and perhaps never shall be again! I exchanged delighted looks with my partners in crime before being

1 Our nice new editor, in case he has declined to confess to it.

2 Published in full as a valedictory editorial fill-up-the-pages exercise last Anor.



shoved forward with Esther so that Frodo and Sam could be lauded for their long journey. It was magical. The rest of the cast also took their bows, and still the audience applauded. So we bowed a bit more. But they kept going... We did an encore. They applauded some more. Eventually, we were kicked out by the next item! Still, person after person came up to me to congratulate me, in my case for my performance as Sam, which had moved some to tears. I know

that other cast members has the same experience.

High on our success, we went to plan our last-minute rehearsal for *Goons*. We also prepared a beautiful poster, a scheme that back-fired when lots of folk came up and said "Are you doing *Lord of the Goons* tonight?" Apparently we were to be very popular...

That afternoon, Mole and Esther sang 'A! Elbereth!' (another Oliver masterpiece) and 'Bilbo's Last Song'. Again, we were accosted by people wanting to know if we were the crazed masterminds behind *Goons*. We were reliably informed that almost everyone was intending to come to our performance that evening. We decided to investigate getting a larger hall - but not before signing a couple of autographs!

So we had the 'change the notes on all the signs' fiasco, to direct our loving audience to the right place for that evening. Then a large group of us went back to the hotel for supper. I can honestly say that I have spent very few more pleasant evenings. The Witch-King of Angmar was treated to a romantic dinner for two by little hobbit Benedict Baker, who seemed to spend more time torturing Angy than eating his chips. Angy's fate was probably sealed when he agreed to race young Benedict earlier in the evening. I don't remember if the Red Eye was honoured by the outcome or not. The table that evening was a veritable fellowship.



We dashed back after supper to *Goons*, only to find that there was already an *enormous* queue of people lining the corridor. Were it not for our distinctive t-shirts, I dare say that we would have been held back for line-jumping! We spent a manic few minutes setting up and running through the live music arrangements; the backing dancers for 'Hotel of the Healers' was a last minute thing, inspired by madness. At 9pm we opened the doors for the public, and in they came. We were worried that they wouldn't fit, although that fear proved not to be founded. Tim's face was astounded as the waves came in and in. He hadn't been expecting it, I don't think.

The performance was a huge success; there was so much laughing that it took us a

very long time to get through a half-hour script, though it didn't matter as there was nobody booked in the room after us. Again, we were treated to enormous applause as we ended, including requests for copies of the script and recordings¹. Tim very magnanimously gave his script to the first lady that asked him; her face was as though someone had offered her a priceless treasure. Countless people thanked us for staying so close to the spirit of the *Goons* and for entertaining them so much. More than one person said to me: 'The CTS have made this conference worthwhile. Thank you.'

This, of course, is not to boast. There were dozens of lectures and performances at Tolkien 2005 that were good, too. The art exhibition in particular stays in my mind. But the CTS were involved on every level; on strolling past the nervous control centre of the enterprise, one was often confronted with Matthew Woodcraft and Mark Waller pulling convention-al strings. They could also be seen stewarding the shop. What with the RSC, my lecture, the Reading, Mole's lecturing and singing with Unquendor, *Goons* and Mole's victory in the poetry contest, I think it only fair to say that there was one Smial that ruled them all. I guess it just goes to show that one can 'smial, and smial, and be a villain² – if stealing the limelight may be classed as villainous!

I flew back to see *da family* (I was to go to Corleone itself two days later) on Monday afternoon with a deep sense of achievement. The CTS were phenomenal, and it was a real pleasure to do the madness of Tolkien 2005 with everyone that was there. It has been rumoured that we may be asked to partake with *Goons* and the reading at next year's Oxonmoot...

So thanks, CTS, for chapter 81, and here's to the appendices!



The Road goes ever ever on, down from the something scrinson scranson...

-
- 1 Recordings of *Goons* are probably still available from Matt Davison, Master of the works of Isengard, if you ask him nicely.
 - 2 You can place this warped quote in one of two Shakespeare plays which play with the same idea. Prizes to them that can name the two...

Dark Times (Part One)

By Pip Steele

These were dark times in the Shire. In the autumn of the year before, two young Bucklanders in their tweens had gone missing, but that had not caused much controversy: everyone but their families assumed that they had merely got lost while having adventures in the Old Forest. It was when Flambard Proudfoot, an old and well respected gentleman who lived in Frogmorton in the East Farthing, went out to pick some of the mushrooms in his garden one evening and never returned to his house that the whisperings began.

Old Flambard's wife, Petunia, began the whisperings, saying that she had seen some hooded figures, about as tall as men, walking slowly (and in a rather sinister fashion, she had added) down the lane outside their house. But she had been distracted by her grandchildren, who were staying with her, and thought no more of the strange figures at the time. When her husband did not return to the house she had thought that he must have met some old friend and gone to the nearest inn for a drink, and so she had gone to bed. But Flambard never returned, and soon the East Farthing was abuzz with rumours and various dark tales.

Then, in late Foreyule, three children disappeared in Brockenborings in the North Farthing (though some of its inhabitants preferred to call it the East Farthing when they gave their address). More disturbingly, one of them was found a few days later, dead, with strange marks on her neck. A week passed and the terror spread, and riders were sent on ponies to all the villages in the area warning everyone to be vigilant and lock their houses up at night and stay indoors after dark.

On the third day of Afteryule, a meeting was called by some nervous folk in Whitfurrows. They met in a large building that served as a sort of schoolhouse and hall (everyone remembered Sadoc Burrows having to move his birthday party in there when it rained very heavily on the day of his celebrations), and even one of the Shirriffs was called to be present. People had come from far and wide to be at the meeting (the furthest-travelled being Hollyhock Grubb from Nobottle, but she was rather a superstitious old lady and mostly thought to be a little strange), though there was not a great number of them, only twenty-three in all.

Isembard Proudfoot, Flambard's younger brother, who had called and was presiding over the meeting, stood up before the crowd. A silence slowly fell upon the room as various Hobbits nudged each other when they noticed that the official business was about to begin. "My fellow Shirefolk," Isembard began in the most booming, commanding tone he could. He ignored a muffled snigger from the back of the room, which had been occasioned by his pretensions to authority (or so some of the more snooty Hobbits later said amongst themselves, and there was even created a slang term, 'Sbard', which was used chiefly by children to their parents when they wished to deny their authority; this, however, was thought a very crude expression at all times, and was heard only occasionally on the streets). "We are here today because dark times have befallen us," Isembard continued, frowning to lend some gravity to his words. "Dark times indeed."

By now most of the folk in the room thought he was rambling, and a bout

of coughing ensued. Some of them fidgeted and looked as if they might stand and speak, but Isembard realised he had to regain control and so said something astounding. "There is more news. Bingo Bolger is dead."

Now there was a hush. Following came a rush of voices asking questions and making exclamations, but Isembard raised a hand and they fell quiet again, expecting news.

"As you know, riders were sent to all the villages around to warn them of danger. They returned with tales of frightened folk, and some reports of sightings of strange fellows in hoods, 'creatures' some called them. That is, they all returned but one. Bingo Bolger had gone to Scary, but he is still missing. And thought to be dead."

"*Thought to be dead?*" cried one onlooker, who could no longer contain himself. "I thought you said he was dead."

"Er, well, no body has been found, but..." Isembard began to falter.

"He's not dead!" someone shouted.

"Well, he might not be anyway. This is just hysteria!" cried a slightly more sensible Hobbit.

Soon Isembard had lost all control over the meeting, and he did not get to provide the crowd with the witness statements he had prepared, or present eye-witnesses to them, or have a sensible discussion of what should be done. Everyone was shouting now. Some shook fists, disagreeing over whether there was a problem in the first place, and if so what sort of problem it was, and what should be done and who should do it. Some began to panic, fearing a fight would break out and they would be caught in the middle of it. Isembard was almost in tears at his spectacular failure to make this a coherent meeting where something could be planned in a level-headed fashion. He pushed through the crowd and headed despondently for the big door at the back of the hall.

Suddenly the door burst open. Isembard was knocked aside just as he had been reaching for the handle. The noise of the door and Isembard's cry alerted everyone in the room, and they stopped what they were doing, like a crowd playing musical statues, before turning slowly and silently towards the door.

Standing in the doorway was a Hobbit, on the tall side, wearing a brown hat and brown leather breeches with matching jacket, worn in places, and leather gloves. He was holding in one hand the reins of a black pony, which stood behind him, and in the other a whip. A shortsword hung at his left hip. His dark face was stern.

The shocked silence was broken when Isembard staggered out from behind the door with a rather red nose where he had been hit in the face. He stuttered in a flabbergasted fashion, "What... who... what? What...?"

The crowd would have burst into laughter at this, had they not been so startled by the arrival of the stranger. Still they were silent, and soon Isembard realised that silence might well be the best policy and he tried to merge into the throng. The stranger's expression chilled him to the bone.

A few gasps ensued as the stranger tethered his pony expertly to a tree by the hall's entrance and then walked in through the midst of the crowd, heading for the small platform from which Isembard had begun to speak before. He turned to face them. "You are in danger," he said in a loud and clear voice, very level in tone but with a hint of weariness.

For a moment no-one spoke, but then a very young Hobbit from Frogmorton piped up timidly. "Who are you? Are you here to save us?" he asked, wide-eyed. There was only a half-second of hesitation before he received his reply.

"I am Van Halfling. I shall save you if I may."

Apparently unaware of the dark intensity of the moment, a group of onlookers near the back gave a cheer.

"But beware," Van Halfling continued, ignoring the excitable Hobbits as a weary teacher might a group of rebellious children. "There are creatures in this land, dark and soulless creatures. I have only just arrived here, but I would guess there have been disappearances." A collective gasp confirmed his guess. "Perhaps the odd body found, with strange marks on its neck." Another gasp. "And the body, drained of blood." Nobody had gasped that time. Hobbit physicians are not known for their thoroughness, and no report had come to them of the girl's body having been drained of blood. Still, it sounded genuine, and rather frightening, and Hollyhock Grubb gave a loud but belated gasp to make up for the silence.

"How do you know these things?" asked a native Whitfurroviaan, not sceptically but genuinely intrigued.

"For many years I have hunted these beasts. I wage war on them with the sword or the stake, whatever I have available to me."

"Steak?" shouted a misunderstanding Chubby Bracegirdle, a Hobbit well-known for his love of food, even above the rest of his folk.

"Stake," van Halfling corrected him with a sarcastic but weary frown, pulling out a sharpened piece of wood from his belt. Then he continued, ignoring Chubby as he muttered to himself and grew red in embarrassment. "I have devoted my life to killing these creatures, chasing them across many lands, pursuing them until they have nowhere left to hide. I believe there are only a few left now, but the last of them have clearly found a base somewhere in this area, and they are trying to make themselves strong again by feeding on you. And they feed not only on your blood, but also on your fear. Give in to your fear, and they have already won."

At that, Isembard Proudfoot stood up and approached the speaking platform. He might have been disgraced, but he had a noble heart, and he knew that it was his responsibility to speak on behalf of the community he had gathered in that hall. "Clearly, Master Halfling, you do not know the Hobbits of these parts. We are no weaklings, sir, and we shall fight these beasts if we have to." He was well aware that what he was saying was largely untrue, but he was not going to let a stranger know that, and he felt proud that the other folk in the crowd were just going along with what he said and not challenging him. He went on. "You seem to know something of these dark creatures, and if that is so then we shall be glad to accept your help in ridding the land of them. If you lead us, we shall follow."

With that, all the formalities were taken care of. All available aid was promised to Van Halfling, who promptly set up a Headquarters in the hall. A young Hobbit was sent to round up volunteers to go on the dangerous mission to deal with the creatures that were assailing their homeland. Meanwhile, Van Halfling remained in the hall with only Isembard and the Shirriff, whose popular name was Wolf Brandybuck (on account of his being a Shirriff, though he was by no means famed for any special fierceness or even willingness to take action in most situations) and they examined a large map of the whole Shire that they took down from the wall and laid down on the speaking platform, while they stood in front of the platform and mused over where the creatures had their lair.

The information brought back by the riders proved very useful at this point. They knew that the folk in Hobbiton and Bywater had not only failed to notice anything strange going on in recent times, but they had even made fun of the rider sent there and pelted him with rotten fruit. They knew that the people of Stock had heard rumours but had not seen anything, though they did take the threat seriously. They knew that Crickhollow and Newbury, and other places in Buckland, were in some state of panic because of the rumours, and rather less because of the two missing tweenagers who had disappeared in the autumn; on the other hand, people in those parts had a greater tendency towards adventurousness and mass hysteria, what with living so close to the Old Forest. They knew that all was well in the south from Tuckborough to Pincup, and in the further north there had been no disturbances in Oatbarton. They knew that the villagers of Frogmorton and Whitfurrows had some reason to worry and were doing so. Most pressingly, they knew that Bingo Bolger, the rider sent to Scary and Brockenborings, had never returned with news.

They spent some time on making deductions from this information, but in the end decided that the creatures could only be in one of two places. They could be in Buckland, maybe even based within the Old Forest. They could be in the vicinity of Scary and Borckenborings. The second was the preferred theory, since it seemed a little implausible that the creatures would have their base in Buckland and yet take victims as far to the north as Brockenborings. With this in mind, Van Halfling called the volunteers into the hall and told them his plan.

Now, there were not very many volunteers. In fact there were only five, and two of those were Isembard and Wolf Brandybuck. Two of the others were Bolgers, cousins of Bingo who rather felt that they should get involved because of the family connection. The fifth was Eloise Proudfoot, Isembard's daughter. Of course, when Isembard realised that his own daughter was volunteering for dangerous business, business of which he would have disapproved heartily in less dark times, he instantly forbade her to go. She, being young and headstrong, shouted that he was being unfair and that she would follow them anyway if they left without her. The decision was made that she would be allowed to go along after all, if only so that they could keep an eye on her.

Van Halfling was not awfully concerned with such family issues, and he made every attempt to speed up and resolve the bickering. Soon, he revealed to all of them that they would form two groups. One group, to be comprised of Wolf Brandybuck and one of the Bolgers, would ride to Buckland and see what they could

find, and if they did find anything they would seek out the others and take them there. The other four would head straight for Scary on the road that led north out of Whitfurrows, and they expected that it would be they who discovered the danger. After only a little squabbling over their roles and whether they were appropriate, Van Halfling silenced them all angrily, ordered that ponies should be commandeered, and led them out of the village. They parted into two companies and headed in their allotted directions.

End of part one - you can read part two in the next issue of Anor.

Eagle Debate

Written up by Richard Smith

STOP YE PREFES AND FILENCE YOUR HOUFEHOLD PETF, YE GREAT Eagle Debate HATH RETURNED!

Ah, the Eagle Debate. A good, old-fashioned exercise in rhetoric and persuasion. A chance for the Tolkien Society to flex its collective intellectual muscles...yeah right. This was an entertaining evening of silliness, weird-cereal-drinks (courtesy of Sarah Arnold) and fake eagle licenses. All will be revealed, dear reader, if you but read on...

You know the score [*Unless you're a fresher and didn't come to the Eagle debate - Ed*]. The Fellowship have hitched a ride over the Misty Mountains from Gwaihir the Windlord, but oh no! The poor bird's feeling the weight of 11 Fellowship members, and the Stuff, and has asked his riders to decide who gets to be thrown off first, and who gets to stay and carry the ring to Mordor...

The Cast

Boromir - Tim Kelby
 Gandalf - Richard Smith
 Sam - Sarah Arnold
 Pippin - Christine, a fresher whose surname I didn't catch
 Legolas - Dave, a fresher whose surname I didn't catch
 Aragorn - Jeremy, a fresher whose surname I didn't catch
 Gimli - MatthewWoodcraft
 Frodo - Amieth, whose surname I have forgotten
 Theoden - Jack Vickeridge
 Arwen - Becky Corlett
 Merry - Alison, whose surname was erased from my memory when I was abducted by aliens

Round 1: Why Shouldn't We Just Throw You Off?

Arwen: Um, I have long hair. I play no role in the books, in the films I appeared strong but I kept on weeping. Um.

Merry: I'm slightly less annoying than the other one. Vote for him - or Arwen, if you like. I'm only little, what's the point of throwing me off?

Gimli: Comrades! The fate of Middle-Earth is in our hands! We must stop this petty in-fighting and destroy the Ring. Oh, and keep the Dwarf. Dwarves aren't interested in taking over the world, we'd just hoard the ring and put it in a pile of gold and sit on it forever.

Boromir: I'm the interesting character. I represent the only semblance of a moral grey area in this book. I bring *depth* to the story. Without me, there's no conflict, no sense of ambiguity.

Sam: For the first time in about three years, I'm not being played by Anna Slack. You can trust me with the Ring, I don't get corrupted in bad ways, just in garden-y type ways.

Aragorn: I kick ass. Without me you'd all have been killed several times over by now. You need me, face it.

Gandalf: Look folks, I ordered this eagle-taxi. Without me you wouldn't be here. If I go off the side, Gwaihir will crash.

Legolas: I look pretty.

Theoden: I have a direct line to Saruman. Use me, for heaven's sake, don't destroy me.

Frodo: The Ring was appointed to me. It's MY task, MY OWN!

Pippin: I'm less annoying than the other one. I'm unfairly represented in the films as a liability.

Stuff: I exclude the Ring – you keep that if I go. But I also contain the Horn of Gondor, some weird broken sword, Sam's cooking pots and Merry's ukulele. You don't need me – you've got no orcs and no food. Throw me off – no! Don't – you never know when a broken sword can come in handy.

In the first round of voting, there was a tie between Arwen and the Stuff. Both were asked to give themselves a second defense:

Arwen: No comment. I don't care.

Stuff: Yeah, well I'm useful but I need to be thrown off really.

The group votes to remove both.

Arwen's last words: At least I have this lovely shampoo and conditioneerrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr!!!!

Round 2: Question Round

Merry:

Aren't you the same as that other hobbit? Errr, I'm not sure.

Are you part of a conspiracy to overthrow the lawful ruler of Middle-Earth? I have never been involved in such an organisation.

Any redeeming features? I'm in *Lost*. [Cue comment: 'So, you're good at getting the fellowship lost, then?']

Gimli:

Are you a member of the Orcish People's Revolutionary Council? My fathers, grandfathers and ancestors were slain and burned by Orcs in battle, dying for the freedom of my people. How dare you make such an insinuation!?

How will you cope without natural shampoo? My beard has a natural curl.

What will you do about Legolas? He can hide in my beard. [not sure I've got this right, my note-writing is nearly indecipherable]

Boromir:

Are you the Witch-King of Angmar? Does it look like it?! Do I look like a wraith in a long flowing black cloak with a wrought-iron crown?!? My voice is far nicer than his.

Could you imitate him, please? No.

Would you take the Ring from Frodo? [long pause; unconvincingly:] No, of course not.

Is it true you used to portray the Witch-King of Angmar in plays? OK, you've made your point, it's irrelevant.

Sam:

What would you do with your garden? Po-ta-to-po-ta-to-po-ta-to-po-ta-to-po-ta-to-po-ta-to-po-ta-to ~boil 'em, mash 'em, stick 'em in a stew, boil 'em, mash 'em, stick 'em in a stew, boil 'em, mash 'em, stick 'em in a stew~

Are you Nice-But-Dim? Yeah. Well, I'm slow but clever.

What would you do if Frodo were thrown off? I'd jump too.

Is it true that your character perpetuates class divisions in our society, reinforcing the hideous notion that a gardener is subservient to his master? Eh?

Would you say you are a co-dependent? Yes.

Aragorn:

Is it true that you plan to overthrow the government of Gondor? Well, it is legally mine.

Do you have any scrap of evidence for this? Well, no – you just threw my sword off the side!

If you really are the heir to the throne of Gondor, then why did you spend the first 80 years of

your life sleeping under a hedge? It was a character-building experience, it helped me to develop a common touch.

Gandalf:

I have it on good authority that if we throw you off, you will float like a leaf to the ground. So why shouldn't we just throw you off? Your point being?

If we need you so much, why aren't you on some mysterious quest? Um, errrrrr, well, you see it's important for Tolkien that a hobbit does it, errrrr...

You're ducking the question, aren't you? Errrrrrr...

Is it your intention to bring this usurper to Gondor to supplant The Steward? Well,

the evidence is on the ground, so if you throw me off then...NO! Don't throw me off, erm...

Legolas

What would you do if we took away your shampoo? I'd let my hair go to its natural colour – a nice shade of brown.

Are you a hippy tree-lover? I do like trees. But I like shooting my bow better.

What if we threw Gimli off? I'd think about jumping off too, but in the end I'd stay.

Theoden:

Are you a member of the Orcish People's Revolutionary Council? No, I, Saruma- I mean, Theoden, have never been part of it. But Orcs are people too.

Let's face it, you're a bit of an old codger. How would you manage to throw the ring off? Well, in case you hadn't noticed, I've just become thirty years younger. If this carries on at the same rate, when we get to Mordor I'll have eyes like a hawk.

What about your niece? If all your male heirs died, would she still be expected to sit at home making the tea? Look, I'm a feminist for crying out loud!

Frodo:

What would you do if we threw Sam off? I'd laugh, and then eat his share of the food.

Will you claim the Ring as your own? Nah, not really.

Doesn't your relationship with Sam reinforce class stereotypes? No. Look, he loves me, he wants to serve me, and I'm helping him. [At this point, several unrepeatable things were said. They have been struck from the record]

Pippin: *D'you like apples?* Yes.

Are you actually useful to this quest, at all? Well, I'm Scottish – if you need someone to impersonate a Scottish [Glaswegian? -RS] orc, I'm your hobbit.

What's the difference between you and the other one? Hang on, aren't you the other one? Look, I'm the SCOTTISH one for crying out loud!

In this round, the two characters with the most votes were thrown off. These were Theoden and Gandalf.

Gandalf's last words: I've told Gwaihir to go back to the Shire. Your quest is over.

Theoden's last words: I miss all my counsellors.

Boromir heroically takes Gwaihir's reins, being the only remaining Fellowship member in possession of a clean eagle license (grades A-E, excluding C4 [speckled varieties]).

Round 3: Five-word round

Gimli: That's after four, right?

Boromir: Sean Bean; eagle license; yeah.

Sam: Need to look after Frodo.

Aragorn: Goatee. Don't need anything else.

Legolas: I can walk on snow.

Frodo: My task. Can't stand Sam.

Pippin: I make great second breakfasts.

Merry: Not as annoying as Pippin.

Legolas is voted off.

Legolas' last words: [looks deeply and meaningfully into camera lens before jumping].

Round 4 – The Slag-Off Round

Each member of the Fellowship picks another member, out of whom s/he shall proceed to extract the Michael.

Boromir: Aragorn – You know, while I and my father have been striving to run a country and protect your Shire from these Orcs, you've been a lazy layabout. You sit drinking in pubs, hiding under hedges – you're worthless.

Sam: I'm worried about Mr. Frodo. He's mistaken the eagle for a parrot, and now he's teaching it to swear! I say throw him off so I can carry the Ring – it's in his best interests really.

Aragorn: Boromir – You say your father's sent you off on this errand, and you're just doing his will. But I've seen you looking at that Ring. You want it, don't you? You crave its power! C'mon, let's have it out, let's have a sword-fight! [Notices that the Stuff's not there] Oh damn. We can still have a slap-fight though!

Frodo: Just a quick retort to Boromir: you're not the only interesting character. Take Pippin for instance – you don't see him stabbing the Witch-King of Angmar or 42 orcs, do you? He's a coward. And moreover, he's a bastard. Think about it for a second: I'm almost exactly 21 years older than him. I'll let you figure out the rest.

Pippin: [adopts Scots accent] It has to be Merry – I'm frankly appalled. My best friend has undertaken some bizarre vendetta against me. Have you forgotten about all the second breakfasts I've made you in your life??? And Frodo – I simply don't understand. I've helped you, protected you, and you have the gall to accuse me of being a bastard!

Merry: Pippin, 'cause he's always just tagging along. He does absolutely nothing useful – could he really take out Angy? Naaaaaaah, we don't need him. Wouldn't miss him either.

Gimli: Years ago, my daddy used to tell me stories about old Bilbo Baggins. What fine, respectable fellows the Bagginses were – always ready for adventure, heroic honorable people they were. I do find myself wondering whether this young whippersnapper here [points at Frodo] can really be part of this same family. Hes an utter disgrace to the name of Baggins! Would Frodo honestly be claiming that Paladin Took did the -ahem, hm hm hooom-? You, my friend, are no Baggins at all, but a Sackville-Baggins! And look! [Lunges forward and removes life mask] It is Lobelia herself!!!! I noticed that silver spoon in your pocket!

Moved by Gimli's impassioned speech and his startling revelation, the audience votes to throw Frodo off the Eagle.

Frodo's last words: Well, Sam's got the Ring now, you're all doomed, he'll turn the world into a massive garden.

The Ring goes to Sam.

Round 5: the Miming Round

Sam: [grabs a plant from the shelf, spreads the leaves around the room]

Boromir cries 'Nooo! He has come to cover the world in a Second Greenness!'

Aragorn: [Macho fighting pose, thrusting his broken sword into imaginary Orcs. Ends by stroking his goatee]

Pippin: [Devil horns, pointing at Merry]

Merry: [Makes to kill Boromir]

Gimli: [Hacks at imaginary Orcs while on his knees. Mimes putting Ring under a pile of gold and sitting on it as if he doesn't care]

Boromir: [Does Matrix-style kung-fu moves, albeit with a sword]

The audience vote is tied between Merry and Boromir. Both are asked to defend themselves again:

Merry: He weighs more, what's the point of throwing me off?

Boromir: I'm the northern British ethnic interest. If you get rid of me, you're bigoted racists.

Boromir is quickly voted off.

Boromir's last words: I'm taking my Horn with me.

Round 6: Defend Another Character

Aragorn: Gimli, because he's an ace with that axe – he can hack through Orcs like no man's business. And if you're tired, you can lean on him. Yeah, and he's just a good laugh.

Pippin: Sam – he's loyal, unlike that backstabbing git over there [points at the other interchangeable hobbit]

Merry: Gimli's excellent. He's much more use than a Ranger with a broken sword!

Gimli: Aragorn – well, he's kind of a King. He's pretty cool about the Ring, he knows it's bad. I know that when we get to the Cracks of Doom, he'll throw the thing in.

Sam: Pippin, 'cause he does some useful stuff.

The audience votes to remove Sam.

Sam's last words: I will turn the world into a giant potato field!!!!
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!!!!

Gimli quickly snatches the Ring from his grasp before Sam is able to carry out this dastardly scheme.

Round 7: normal round, defend yourselves.

Pippin: I do good stuff in Gondor. I sing a little song for Denethor. I contribute to the ethnic diversity of the group, being Scottish as I am. And I make the best second breakfasts in the world!

Merry: Hobbits are good for decoys. And who's going to keep Pippin in line, if you throw me off?

Gimli: We may land in Mordor. And if that be the case, we shall have to get to the Mountain, possibly using some cunning disguise like Orc battle-dress. Personally I don't trust hobbits with that kind of task. Aragorn's too tall and noble to pass for a twisted child of Darkness. I, however, could dress in an Orc-uniform – so there, you see, I'm useful too.

Aragorn: I'm a nice guy. Erm. I'll lead the armies of the West to victory against Mordor! And I have better body hygiene than any of you.

The audience votes to keep Pippin, Gimli and Aragorn (the latter with only 1 vote!).

Merry is thrown off the side.

Merry's last words: You'll regret this when you see how useless he is!

Round 8 – Popularity contest

Gimli: Here we see Miss Ered Luin, sporting the latest in fashionable Dwarf Mail. To add to the startling effect, we have added a Ring Of Power to the chest area.

Aragorn: Miss Wilds of the North has gone for the rugged handsome look, wearing the best of Gondor's Summer Fashions range. He's quite noble, and he scrubs up nice. He's the tallest of all the contenders, with the longest legs and the softest beard.

Pippin: Well, I come from a little hobbit-hole, there's little I can do to make a big difference to the world. Except get rid of the Ring and cook breakfast.

The audience votes, finally, to keep Gimli.

Aragorn's last words: S*** happens.

Pippin's last words: Breakfast, anyone?

Gimli then offers the following victory speech:-

Right, well, I've got the Ring of Power. I'll find me a nice pile of gold in a big ole mountain cave, and sit on it forever. Thanks!

The audience wonders whether it's made the right decision. They don't dwell on this, though, as it's nearly time for last orders in the college bar.

A Light Renewed

By Emma Caird

The moon sat high within the deep sapphire shroud of the night sky. Beneath its numinous light, the Tower of Ecthelion seemed to glow with a pure radiance of its own. The city of Minas Tirith was peaceful and still; save the quiet pacing of the guards upon the walls. Within the upper level, by the wall that bordered the private garden of the royal family, a single figure stood observing the Pelennor Fields, stretching into the distance beneath a star-filled sky. The grey eyes that observed the tranquil scene were ancient and unfathomable, though set in a face still fair despite its solemn expression. Such deep grief dwelt within his soul that it seemed to steal the very light of the stars from his eyes.

So stood Elrond, son of Elwing and Eärendil, viewing the field where victory had but recently been won, with a heaviness of heart that he would always bear. For his daughter had forsaken the gift of her kin and embraced mortality, from which there could be no escape. She had made her decision, and through her uniting with Elessar that day, had been lost to her people forever; and all for the sake of a Man, a child of that inconstant and fickle race that could not check its own decline.

Finding no solace within the serenity before him, Elrond left the garden and walked to a point upon the wall from which a large perspective of the surrounding landscape could be seen. In the city below most of the dwellings stood in darkness, although a few isolated dots of light revealed some were yet awake.

The sound of steps drew him from his reverie, and he turned to perceive the figure of a warrior approaching. Elrond was able to discern the confident stride of a soldier, but also noticed a tension to the shoulders that surprised the elven-lord.

As the man drew nearer, Elrond recognised the Steward of Gondor and the only remaining son of the late Denethor. The warrior approached him and bowed respectfully, though with a little uncertainty and hesitation.

"My Lord Elrond," he began, as the elven-lord returned his greeting with an inclination of the head. "I thought myself alone this evening. I was told by the duty captain that none but the sentries walked the walls."

"I expect that the majority of the population are exhausted from the strenuous festivities of the day. I understand that there was much dancing and merriment after the wedding," Elrond replied. "Men are renowned for the rowdiness of their celebration ... although, I must admit that, at times, a change of scene can be somewhat of a relief from the monotony of every-day life. I find the ways of men confusing at times in comparison to that of my kin, but I have found this variation surprisingly enjoyable."

Faramir nodded and turned his gaze to the extraordinary view; a quick glance at the Steward revealed to Elrond the awe that dwelt upon his features as he spoke.

"It is a simply magnificent night, and this fair land does full justice to it," Faramir commented.

"But do you not grow tired of having seen the same sight since childhood? Men are prone to growing restless within the tedium of an unchanging scene."

"Nay, my lord, I find that it grows daily dearer to me with each passage of

time spent away, and on a night such as this...there is nothing I know of to compare."

Suppressing a sigh that threatened to escape his lips, Elrond stared upon the dark plain, lost within memory. In his mind's eye, he saw the gardens of Rivendell bathed in starlight, heard the falling of the Bruinen over the rock, and the felt caress of the wind upon his face. For a moment, he pictured an elven-woman by his side, regarding him with clear blue eyes, lovelier than any he had ever espied. But he banished this image before he had time to dwell upon it.

"Do you find it a comfort to think that one day soon you shall be able to remain here with a loyal woman forever by your side?"

Faramir smiled and continued to survey the scene with a countenance of contentment.

"I do, my lord, I cannot think of a future that I would rather possess."

"Despite the diminished influence of your position?"

To the elven-lord's surprise, the young captain glanced down in what could only be described as embarrassment.

"I confess, it was never a title to which I aspired; I never felt envy toward my brother for his promised legacy."

"You have not wished for power as so many of your kin have done?"

"So many, my lord? I am aware that my Father was somewhat covetous over the authority surrounding the role of Steward, but I do not believe that my brother ever sought power. He simply accepted it, and in preference sought the loyalty of his men and honour within the field of battle. He took after our Father in his love of warfare and the recognition earned therein, but what drove him most was the ambition to increase his prowess in the arts of war. I have heard rumours concerning his death, and though they grieve me, I can assure you that if he did succumb to the temptation of the Ring, it was not in accordance with his real character. My brother was brave and noble, his courage was great in comparison to mine; I have long known that our father loved him more than I, it was clear in his eyes every time that Boromir bested me in the practice yard. But I was content, I knew that I was not my brother, and I long ago accepted that I would always be second to him ..."

"The love between you was very great," Elrond stated. He had seen the pain that had crossed the man's features at the recollection of his brother's death, and the favouritism of his father.

"Our fellowship was great, in many ways. I can recollect several times when he aided me in times of foolishness ... Boromir had a strength and certainty of who he was that I lacked within myself. Our relationship was close and we looked upon each other as comrades. I understood him, and he me. I had never found an equal to him ... until Eowyn. She possesses that same unwavering assurance; I saw that its potential dwelt within her, even in her most vulnerable hour."

"When did you first come to love the White Lady?"

"When I first beheld her, I knew that I had never perceived a woman of greater beauty or was likely to in the remainder of my life. But I saw the barrier that she had erected, the hardness and stubbornness. At first, I admired her courage and obvious strength; but I also pitied her, for she hoped for that which could never come to pass, and that obstacle stopped her from seeing the possibility of life

beyond battle and the glory that arises there from. After having spent some time in her company, I could not help but accept that the depth of my feeling surpassed that of mere admiration or pity, and I found that I had come to love her deeply."

"And yet you loved her still, despite the uncertainty of her ever returning your love?"

"I did, my lord, for I found that I could not help but love her, she so much resembled that brother who I had lost, and seemed to fill the gap that had appeared with his death. Her companionship was very like his had been, and of the sort I had never experienced before with a woman. I know that I would have still loved her, had she never accepted me. I have found companionship and fulfilment with her that I would never have felt possible. I remember the moment when she accepted my proposal and confessed her own love. I have never felt a joy like it, or am like to again, other than upon the day when we are forever united."

Heedless for a moment of the spectacular view before him, Lord Elrond of Rivendell, Master of Imladris and all the wisdom gathered therein, for the first time in uncounted centuries considered and examined his judgement of the race of Men, and there beheld the bias and pride of long years.

He finally turned to the man, who stood regarding him with mild curiosity and replied with a grave solemnity.

"Against all probability, you were willing to support a hope that seemed impossible, and you remained steadfast in your love, against all opposition."

"I did, my lord."

"So have I been blind and prejudiced within my thinking. I thank you, Lord Faramir, for the insight your words have given to me. I wish you much joy within your future marriage and hope that Eru may bless you and your wife. May you have a long and prosperous life."

Bowing with a new-found respect, Elrond turned and left the Captain, still pondering the implications of the Steward's words.

He had been too fixed in his ways to consider what good yet remained within the race of Men. To be sure, they had dwindled since the downfall of Arthedain to the Witch-king and the disappearance of the last Numenorean kingdom, but his disdain had been unjust. There was still here much of worth, and though it rent his heart, he began to comprehend his daughter's choice. Faramir's words had recalled to him the depth of his own love for Celebrian, and the loss of wholeness and fulfilment he had carried since her departure to the West. Though he would be reunited with her ere long, the agony that now lingered within his heart at the loss of his daughter would never truly abate, and yet, at last, he thought he understood. He could no longer blame her, and a kind of certainty and acceptance came to his features as he paused before entering the citadel.

As the figure passed into the home of the King, he was regarded by the silent figure of a warrior. Sighing gently, Faramir turned and leant upon the parapet, observing the ethereal beauty of the stars as they cast their soft light upon his city, all at peace and still.

The What If Debate – What if Gandalf succumbed to the power of the Ring?

Written up by Eni (Sarah Arnold)

"You are wise and powerful," Frodo said to Gandalf, after learning what his uncle's ring really was. "Will you not take the Ring?"

Well...what if Gandalf, instead of telling Frodo off and refusing the offer, had instead accepted, giving in to the Ring's power? The following tale is the result of the debate we had on the matter...

The Ring Sets Out

So...now Gandalf has the One Ring. Frodo is relieved of the burden and gets to stay at home and enjoy his pipeweed, and Sam gets extra time to work on the topiary.

Just as before, Gandalf leaves on his "very important mission" - but now he has the Ring. Meeting up with Radagast, he learns that Saruman has been asking to see him, so he heads off to Isengard to see Saruman.

To his horror and amazement, he finds that Saruman is no longer the White Wizard but Saruman of Many Colours, now a minion of Sauron and very much set on world domination. Even as they speak, fighting Uruk-Hai are being assembled around Orthanc, armies and great battle machines. Gandalf is appalled, but Saruman thinks he will get rid of the Grey Wizard with ease. But haha! Gandalf has the One Ring now...

A great and dramatic battle occurs between the two wizards, with fire and lightening, and strange flashes and bangs can be heard coming from within Isengard for a long time. Trees burst into flames, burning into nothing more than charcoal, and Uruks perish in the explosions and fire thrown around by the two wizards. As far away as Meduseld, the Rohirrim see the light and wonder if it is some kind of beacon.

Gríma, slowly taking over Rohan according to Saruman's instructions, realises he can no longer contact his master and becomes confused and worried.

The Wild Men also see the fire in the sky and the terrifying (albeit pretty) display. They are awed and confused and wonder what this portends. Meanwhile the Ents look upon the destruction and wonder what is happening to their forest. An Entmoot is (very slowly) called.

Finally Gandalf emerges victorious and makes Saruman his prisoner at the top of the Tower of Orthanc.

The Entmoot finally reaches a conclusion: this destruction of their forest must not continue! They grow hasty and angry and attack the tower in their numbers, tearing the stones apart. Finding Gandalf has taken control of the tower, they reach the conclusion that all of this is Gandalf's fault.

However, Gandalf is a cunning wizard - and has the Ring! He gives a great, moving speech to the Ents, persuading them that all of the destruction is the work of Saruman. They easily fall for his promises to make things better (perhaps Gandalf should go into European politics...). The Ents disband and head home to do whatever

Ents do on a Saturday night.

Meanwhile, in the Shire...

Saruman, of course, is now unable to take control of the Shire, but Gandalf, wielder of the One Ring, is more than happy to do so instead! He turns the Shire into a giant pipeweed plantation, tended by armies of Hobbits in shackles. As the lives of the Hobbits become increasingly inhumane and unpleasant, a small group of freedom fighters starts to assemble. These are led by four young Hobbits with good hearts, and their names are:

Frodo, Sam, Merry and Pippin!

Gandalf comes to the conclusion that the world will be far better without the evil Saruman and Sauron. He dreams of having all the Free Peoples flock under his banner, so he travels to Rivendell and persuades Elrond to call a great Council. Elrond had sensed that the Ring was being used because of his own Elven-Ring, and has already taken Vilya off, advising Gandalf and Galadriel to do the same with their Elven-Rings. Gandalf has already handed over Narya to Radagast, ostensibly to keep it safe, but mostly because now he has the One Ring he really couldn't give two hoots about lesser rings.

Meanwhile, fell rumours are reaching Minas Tirith – and, of course, Sauron. The Dark Lord sends out the Nine Riders towards Orthanc. Gandalf is not at home by now, of course, so they immediately return home, telling their master that Orthanc was shut to them. Saruman is not there either, having been freed by help from Radagast, giant moths and perhaps an Eagle or two.

The Council of Elrond soon turns into the Festival of Pipeweed, and Elrond dopily speculates on eyebrows as Legolas waxes lyrical about Timotei and Pippin just looks confused.

Gollum has made his way into Mordor again, and once more is captured and tortured by Sauron's minions. From the moment Gandalf put the Ring on, Sauron knew that Gollum's previous information about "Shire" and "Baggins" was no longer relevant, so now he wants something new. Eventually, he admits defeat, and the Nine head to the Shire, in the hope of finding out *something* about the fate of the Ring.

Of course, the Shire is still a pipeweed plantation, and the Nine decide to do the touristy thing and try the local fare. Thus the Witch Stoner of Angmar finds himself lying on his back in the middle of Farmer Maggot's field, speculating about how high the sky is, and how he feels so insubstantial now, despite having not had a body before that...

Many interesting people attend the Council of Elrond, including Legolas of Mirkwood – who brings the news that Gollum has escaped from them, and four Hobbit Freedom Fighters. Galadriel sends her apologies, but offers her input via ~~video-conferencing~~ the Mirror of Galadriel.

Gandalf elaborates at length about the necessity of overthrowing the Dark Lord and Saruman, explaining how Saruman has been corrupted by the Palantir. Elrond starts to grow suspicious of Gandalf and declares to the others that he thinks Gandalf is being corrupted by the Dark Lord. However, the power of the One Ring has given Gandalf great powers of charisma and eloquence, and he gives a great speech,

talking of freedom and prosperity and the destruction of Sauron by the Free Peoples. Boromir rather likes this, of course, and the Council gathers enthusiasm for the plan. Then, of course, a little hobbit – Frodo – pipes up. He points out that Gandalf has become a slave driver, forcing hobbits in chains to work on his pipeweed plantations. So Gandalf gives *another* rousing speech, this time about the importance of freedom far surpassing hobbits and pipeweed plantations and all those trivial matters. Legolas and Gimli, swayed by the powerful words, buy this easily.

Elrond frowns and gives them all the Eyebrow, and goes off with Galdor for another ~~video~~ ~~conference~~ meeting with Galadriel, leaving the Council unsupervised.

So Gandalf takes the convenient opportunity to give another speech. "Are you with me or against me?" he demands finally of his dumbstruck audience.

The hobbits flee and hide under the chairs, but Legolas and Gimli swear allegiance to Gandalf. However, in the next room Elrond is secretly forming an anti-Gandalf, anti-Sauron coalition to oppose all these plans.

The Ring Goes South (again)

A large army leaves Rivendell, heading south for the Isengard and ultimately Rohan, to meet up with King Théoden's armies. Gimli, Gloin and Legolas, however, decide to take the scenic route, via Moria, in order to gather Dwarves and the Elves of Mirkwood to add to Gandalf's great host. Oh, and probably summon the Balrog to join them while they are at it.

At this point, the Witchking and his cronies are wandering somewhere in the Shire, heading vaguely southwards as well. They are coming down off their pipeweed high, and they feel like death, which one might suppose in many ways they are... And the Witchking demands in a great, evil voice,

"How can I have this headache? I don't even have a head!"

They give up on this plan and trot back to Sauron with excuses about Investment Bankers and some sort of conspiracy.

So everyone ends up heading towards the Gap of Rohan – there are also Wildmen in the area, who naturally flock to the banner of this great leader, Gandalf. The armies of Rivendell finally find themselves facing the Ringwraiths. Gandalf looks upon them, eyes blazing, and orders them, "Bow down and be my minions!"

The first four Ringwraiths happily say, "Okey dokey!" Those are, coincidentally, the ones who decided to sample more pipeweed on the way south. Then the remaining five come forward, and slowly, one by one, they bow down and swear fealty as well – except the last.

Gandalf looks upon the defiant Witchking, who is still nursing a sore head. And lo! There was a great duel in the Gap of Rohan. But of course, Gandalf wields the One Ring, which enables him to magically metamorphosise into Gandalf the White, and so defeats the Witchking in short order. The Witchking crumbles uselessly into dust (which apparently makes very good compost).

Gandalf's host sweeps onwards, through Rohan and into Gondor, and then onwards, unstoppable, into Mordor, where he proudly raises the banner of Gandalf (which is a

