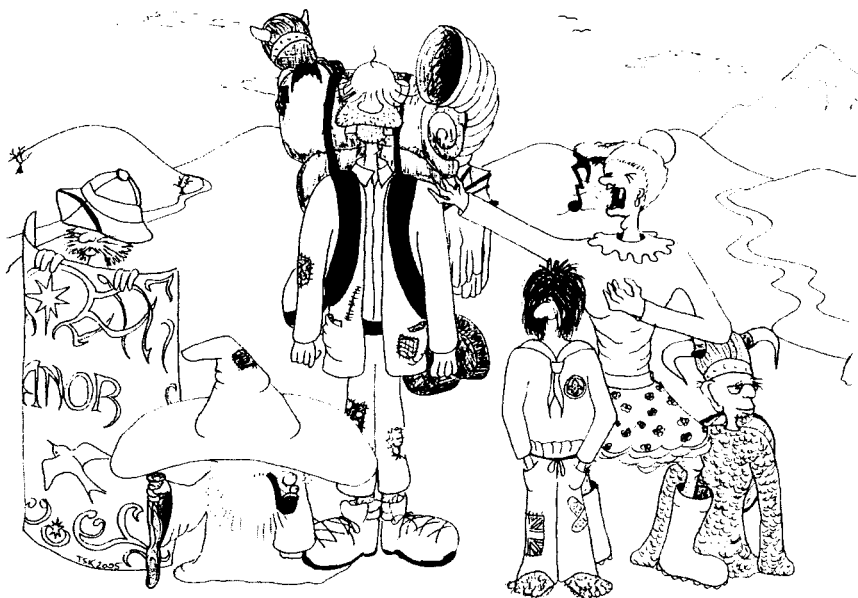


# ANOR



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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, Angmar<sup>1</sup> 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'<sup>2</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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

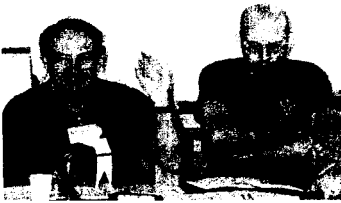
This was it; the day that had been, indirectly, two years in the planning. We had all our copyright permissions (including the miraculously provided one from Michael Bakewell only 72 hours before), and our dedicated cast. We had chosen a collection of scenes to fill a two-hour slot that morning, including 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 recordings<sup>1</sup>. 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 villain<sup>2</sup> – 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 Whitfurrovia, 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 Merripin'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, errrrrr...

*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!!!!!!  
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!!!!!!

*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~~ ~~conferencemeeting~~ 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

kind of large, tatty grey rag). The armies of Mordor nonetheless try to resist – with the help of Shelob.

But in the meantime, Aragorn is plotting with Elrond and the Anti-Gandalf, Anti-Sauron coalition. Elrond has recruited the hobbits to his cause, and so sends them out as spies. They catch up with Legolas and the two Dwarves in Lothlórien, where they discover that Celeborn is really Galadriel's lap dog and she is definitely the one wearing the trousers in Lórien. The hobbits manage – somehow – to convert Legolas and Gimli to their noble cause, and so a plan is formed with the help of Aragorn, who arrives shortly after.

Gimli and the hobbits act as bait to lure the goblins out of the Misty Mountains towards the Gap of Rohan, to prevent Gandalf's army from retreating back into Eriador. Galadriel then engineers the deadly Pipeweed Mosaic Virus, a virulent pest of pipeweed crops everywhere, and deploys Gwaihir to begin deploying it over Gandalf's fields – the entire pipeweed crop is decimated!

Gandalf soon hears about this, and accuses Galadriel of possessing Weapons of Mass Destruction and being a megalomaniac bent on domination of Middle-earth.

Sauron is gathering his forces, however, and soon Gandalf has greater worries – Sauron and his armies of Orcs and Cave Trolls, and, of course, Shelob, descend on him once more. Sauron is able to create great belches of smoke which blot out the sun and cast darkness over the land.

The Valar are watching this all with great interest, so soon Manwë and Varda feel the need to sit down and discuss the situation. They get in touch with the Blue Wizards, who upgrade to Cyan and are told to help out here.

So Círdan finds two Cyan Wizards turn up in the Havens. He is finding the whole situation very bizarre, having seen the pipeweed, heard about the hobbit slavery and then the Pipeweed Mosaic Virus. Of course, he just assumes it is all Galadriel's fault.

Sauron and Gandalf's respective armies dig trenches in Mordor, and Sauron starts to make big guns; this enables him to break out and blow large chunks out of Minas Tirith. He also sends out his Fell Beasts – loaded with napalm – to further his efforts.

Gandalf's response is to keep sending out more and more cavalry charges, gradually inching his way further into Mordor. And as he grows impatient with his progress – or lack thereof – he calls on the...Eight Riders.

These Nazgûl are immune to Sauron's arrows; but Sauron is cunning and drops a pipeweed bomb on them. The bomb is huge and as the mushroom-cloud of aromatic smoke spreads over the land, everyone once more gets stoned.

(Unbeknownst to Gandalf, two of the hobbits have managed to sneak their way into his armies.)

The Cyan Wizards turn up at Lórien (where the other two hobbits remained, as they can then enjoy the hot baths and better room service). Talking to Galadriel and Aragorn, they realise their mistake and hold a long, boring council in Lórien (and fix a dripping tap that has been bothering Celeborn for months). Galadriel decides to try and appeal to Gandalf's better nature and manages to persuade him to come to Lothlórien for a chat.

### **The Ring has a Trifling Experience**

She and Gandalf have a long meeting in a secluded *talan*, and Galadriel waits for an opportunity to pickpocket the Ring from Gandalf. The hobbits, naturally, are eavesdropping on the while meeting, and are appalled at how bad Galadriel is at chatting up Gandalf. Nonetheless, it seems to be working.

Frodo decides to be helpful, and manages to filch the ring himself, but accidentally drops it in the trifle Sam was scoffing as he watched. And so it comes to pass that Sam accidentally eats the One Ring.

Galadriel realises after Gandalf's report of the pipeweed bomb that Mordor must also have its own plantations, so sends out Meneldur with more Pipeweed Mosaic Virus to destroy that crop too. Oh, and while he is at it, asks if Meneldur could kindly drop Sam in the Crack of Doom (not least because Sam kept eating her Thornton's).

However, Frodo, ever loyal to Sam, stows away on another Eagle in Meneldur's escort.

Gandalf, realising his Ring has been stolen, becomes increasingly Gollum-like and goes crazy, hopping around the land and screeching. He manages to commandeer and Eagle and gets into a dogfight with Meneldur somewhere over the trenches that criss cross Gorgoroth and Gondor. The Fell Beasts, never one to miss such a jolly event, gladly join in, and Meneldur only barely breaks through. Frodo's Eagle, unfortunately, is not so lucky; it is shot down and crash-lands in Mordor, dying in the process.

Meanwhile, there is yet another Eagle with Gollum riding it. Gollum is a slippery fellow and was prudent enough to pack a parachute, so when he sees Meneldur approach Orodruin and drop Sam into the fiery chasm, he throws himself after the plummeting hobbit. Coincidentally, Frodo's crash site was close by, so he joins them in a matter of minutes.

Sam, feeling quite nauseated from the rapid descent, throws up – Ring along with everything else. Which naturally leaves the three of them fishing around for the elusive item in second-hand trifle. Sam manages to bash Gollum and retrieve the Ring, holding it up proudly.

Then Gandalf makes an appearance, leading to a chase across Gorgoroth – Gandalf manages to use Gollum as a sniffer dog to track Frodo and Sam as the hobbits flee in fear.

(And Gondor is still a pipeweed party – Éowyn has opened up a Priory for the Orcs who have found themselves hooked on the stuff, and has offered to take Gollum and treat his Ring addiction if he agrees to it.)

Sauron is now hugely annoyed, but with no Nazgûl still loyal to him and no Ring, and

all his Orcs still stoned, he is powerless to do much about this. The Fell Beasts have fallen asleep, exhausted from the dogfight, and the remaining Nazgûl are beating their way slowly through Mordor.

Eventually, the hobbits think they can slip safely into the Crack of Doom and dispose of the Ring – but Gandalf is waiting for them as at they make their way along that narrow walkway over the chasm, he shouts in a booming voice,

“YOU SHALL NOT PASS!”

### **The End of All Things**

And so a great struggle ensues, in which all our heroes fall into the flaming depths of the Crack of Doom – except Sam, who just looks sort of confused until the mountain erupts and he dies as well. The Ringwraiths vanish and fade in a cloud of odd-smelling smoke, whilst the Orcs fall back and have a football match with the Wildmen.

One of the Oliphants escapes from the Haradrim army and goes on the rampage, eventually turning up in Lothlórien. Galadriel decides it is cute, calls it Fin and takes it into the West with her when she sails.

Arwen gets eaten by Shelob whilst on her honeymoon.

The Cyan Wizards head into the East and the South to become parking attendants. They eventually settle down in a nice suburban semi and have a small cyan family.

Aragorn marries Éowyn instead, becomes King of what is left of Gondor and has lots of children and advertises a vacancy for the Steward of Gondor (Denethor and his sons all having died somewhere in the fray).

Merry and Pippin get stoned and become wandering Italian chefs.

Everyone eventually ends up in Éowyn's Priory, and it appears that excessive exposure to pipeweed makes hobbits stop breeding (hooray).

So Merry and Pippin clone themselves...but that is another story!

Middle-earth is covered in poppy fields and everyone lives happily(-ish) ever after!

### **Epilogue**

Legolas and Gimli go off on their tourist sightseeing adventure, and then go West.

THE END

## **A Review of *The Lord of the Rings: A Reader's Companion***

*By Matthew Woodcraft*

*The Lord of the Rings: A Reader's Companion* is the new book from Wayne Hammond and Christina Scull (not to be confused with *The J.R.R. Tolkien Companion and Guide* by the same authors, due out sometime in 2006).

The book has just under a thousand pages in small type, and is made up almost entirely of footnotes. These cover the complete text of *The Lord of the Rings* from the Foreword to the Appendices, including the dust-jacket and the maps (the authors drew the line at footnoting the index, but included a decent index of their own). It might fairly be described as thorough.

Opening it at a random page, I find: half a dozen paragraphs about the fellowship setting out from Rivendell on December the 25<sup>th</sup> (with a quote from Tolkien saying that this date came up strictly by accident, and another quote where he says he chose it deliberately); a paragraph about Boromir's horn (essentially a list of all the places in *The Lord of the Rings* where it's mentioned); a note referring forward to when Boromir's dire need is going to appear; a paragraph on the uses of Gandalf's staff (with a long quotation from *Beyond Bree*); and a reference back to *The Hobbit* for the history of Glamdring and Orcrist.

That selection is probably a bit more meaty than most: many entries just tell you the date, or the phase of the moon, or give the meanings of unusual words (these seem a bit oddly-chosen: if 'mace' and 'thicket' need explaining, surely many hundreds of other words must).

In practice, as with any of the best reference books, I found it all too easy to catch my eye on an interesting-looking paragraph and get carried away on an unintended path. I don't think the book suffers from being a separate volume rather than an annotated edition: the entries begin with all the context they need.

I'm sure I would have loved this book as a schoolboy. Opening it, you might find a passage from *The Silmarillion* or *The History of Middle-earth*, or a fragment of medieval story or legend, or an account of the siege of Vienna. There are descriptions of the various kinds of tree and flower which Tolkien assumes his readers will know by name. There are quotations from Homer, Macaulay, and *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*. Compared to books like Foster's 'guide' or Tyler's 'companion' (which often seem no more than the appendices rearranged in alphabetical order), this is much richer, though also more pedantic. But the most pedantic entries can be entertaining in their own way; I laughed aloud when they explained that the OED says that 'common-room' should be hyphenated in a school or college, but not in an inn.

When it comes to matters of interpretation, or criticism as literature, Hammond and Scull are rather restrained in their own comments, though perhaps they show their views by their choice of other authors to quote. If Tom Shippey has written about a particular passage, his comments are very likely to be given. There are also extracts from books by authors like Brian Rosebury and Verlyn Flieger, as well as many

quotations from periodicals which might be harder to find. For example, there is a piece discussing similarities between Galadriel and H Rider Haggard's *She*, taken from an article written by a certain Steve Linley and published in a 1991 edition of *Anor*<sup>1</sup>.

Hammond and Scull pay exhaustive attention to variations between different editions of *The Lord of the Rings*, describing not only the changes Tolkien made in the second edition, but also printing errors in many British and US editions. An appendix gives a complete list of the changes made in their own definitive fiftieth-anniversary edition of 2004 (down to the level of - > -, to better indicate pause). This is followed by the changes for the even more definitive 2005 reprinting. And then an addendum with the changes they've spotted so far for next time. I think this information is mostly for the sake of collectors: it's effectively an update to Hammond and Anderson's 1993 *Descriptive Bibliography*.

A fair amount of space is given to the time-scheme of *The Lord of the Rings*. This includes some new information from the papers used in *Unfinished Tales* as the basis for *The Hunt for the Ring*, but for me the main effect of repeated notes about changes he made in draft to the time of sunset or the shape of the moon is to give a very strong impression of Tolkien the Niggler.

The book is very clearly a *reader's* companion: as far as I can see, references to the recent films, or any other dramatic adaptation, are entirely absent.

As so much of the book consists of text which has previously been published, perhaps this book is less valuable to those whose Tolkien collection is already embarrassingly large. But if nothing else, it acts as a new kind of index to the *Letters* and *The History of Middle-earth*, and it does contain a fair amount of material which is either new or otherwise hard to find. It includes a more detailed history of Tolkien's dealings with Collins and Allen & Unwin when *The Lord of the Rings* was first published than I have seen before, including the portion of the letter to Milton Waldman (summarising *The Lord of the Rings*) which was cut from *Letters*. The *Guide to Names* is republished here as *Nomenclature of The Lord of the Rings* (as well as being quoted where the names appear in the main body of notes). There are also quotes from unpublished letters, lengthy notes taken from Tolkien's unfinished index, tidbits from Bodleian and Marquette papers, and some comments from Christopher Tolkien where he speaks a little more freely of his own views than in *The History of Middle-earth*.

*The Lord of the Rings: A Reader's Companion* is published by HarperCollins in the UK (hardback ISBN: 0-00-720308-X, paperback ISBN: 0-00-720907-X) and by Houghton Mifflin in the USA. The paperback and hardback use the same setting, so the print is more pleasantly sized in the hardback edition.

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1 *Other bits by CTS luminaries include a paragraph on Círdan's age by Iwan Morus published in Anor 1, and something by Julian Bradfield from Quettar about Elvish writing modes. But enough of ancestor-worship.*

## The People's Flag is Deepest Black (Part One)

By Tim Kelby

It was raining on the slopes of the Mountains of Shadow; not a hard rain, but an uncertain one. It wavered between a steady, slanting downpour and a freezing drizzle driven by the gusting wind into a swirl of silver droplets. It was an adolescent rain, moody and obstreperous, unable to decide whether it preferred to fall vertically like all the other rainstorms, or to make its own way, say for example, horizontally. If any rain could be said to slouch, this was it.

It drummed monotonously on the windows of Minas Morgul, but only because it was misunderstood. Inside, apart from the steady beat of raindrops, all was quiet. Silence gathered like dust in the halls of the tower of sorcery, sinking like black water into the stairwells and halls of this once-proud city. Suddenly, a terrible cry rent the shadowed air, echoing through the colonnaded Grand Chamber.

"Boo!"

Khamûl sighed. He'd been so close to beating his high score on Tetris.

"Go away, Adûnaphel," he snapped, without looking up. The other ringwraith sighed, dejectedly.

"But I'm *bored*," he complained in a plaintive hiss.

"Go and find someone to torture," the Black Easterling advised, shortly. The other wraith mumbled something. "Speak up," Khamûl barked, irritably.

"mumblemumblealldeadmumblemumble," the second ringwraith mumbled.

"Don't tell me you've killed them all already!" Khamûl let out another long-suffering sigh. "I've told you before, I'm not going to bring you prisoners if you just break them five minutes after you get them."

"It's not FAIR!" As ringwraiths are wont to do, Adûnaphel turned the last word into a hideous, eldritch screech of pain and disappointment. The echoes resounded loudly for a moment, before realising that everyone was listening and scuttling away to hide in the shadows. There was a moment of silence, broken only by the insistent moody drumming of the rain. Then...

"*Khamûl! KHAMÛL!*" The Witch-King's voice thundered in the dark air. "*Can't you keep that whimpering milksop quiet for FIVE MINUTES?*"

"My Lord..."

"*I am trying to WORK here! I have a very busy schedule!*"

"Yes, my Lord." Khamûl's voice took on a long-suffering tone. "If you'd just tell us what it is you're doing, my Lord, perhaps we could assist, instead of sitting around here..."

"*When I need help from the likes of Adûnaphel, I'll let you know,*" the Witch-King snapped. "*Then you can dust off your snowshoes so that you'll be ready when MOUNT DOOM FREEZES OVER!*" Khamûl sighed again.

"Fine," he muttered. "Fine. Don't worry about me. I'll just sit here and play Tetris when I could be out maiming people...intimidating travellers...burning things..."



His tirade died away into an incoherent mumbling. He glanced around, but Adûnaphel had wandered off, probably to persuade one of the other wraiths to play Top Trumps or Guess the Dismembered Body Part. He shrugged, and sat down. *Blippety blippety blip. Score - 0.* Time for the day's fifty-sixth game of Tetris.

The Witch-King's inner sanctum was, like all inner sancta, little more than an office with pretensions. It did have gothic pillars around the walls, and strange and disturbing shapes carved around the windows; it had a vaulted ceiling spanned by a tapestry of silver cobwebs, and black candles burning in silver sconces, and arcane symbols carved into the black marble of the floor, but it was still, in function and in purpose, an office. It has a large desk in the middle of the room, which, although its legs were carved with scales and claws like those of a lizard, and its top was inlaid with twisting runes of ebony and polished agate, was still fundamentally a desk. It had a pad of blotting paper and an inkwell on it, and a little executive toy which, on closer inspection, proved to be made from finger bones. The chair behind it was black, but it was also large and upholstered in leather, with an adjustable headrest, a moulded back for lumbar support, and a little lever underneath that made it go up and down.

The chair currently held the hunched form of the Witch-King of Angmar. He was tall and gaunt – or at least the black robes hung in a way that suggested a gaunt body beneath – and the black gloves that rested on the tabletop moved as though they concealed slim, clawlike fingers. A crown of iron thorns sat upon his hooded head, and two pale eyes glittered beneath it. Opposite him, a black-clad orc squirmed a little beneath that sharp, horribly penetrating gaze.

"Your report, Ghadbûrz." The voice was low, cold, and slightly hoarse. The orcish spymaster, for that was Ghadbûrz's position, nodded.

"Our agents in Lugburz say the place is crawling with men, Majesty." Like all orcs, he was blunter than a cheeseknife that had been left in a drawer for six months and then used to carve marble, but unlike most of his brethren, he could at least string together a coherent sentence without lapsing into some incoherent dialect.

"Men?" The Witch-King inquired.

"Men, Majesty," Ghadbûrz spat, contempt clear in his rough voice. "Dark men from the south, hiding in the shadows, watching everything. They wear black, and the mark of the red eye is on their faces. He lets them take orcs to the dungeons and... and make them scream." The Witch-King nodded slowly. These Southrons evidently knew pain – it took a great deal to make an orc scream for any length of time. As a general rule of thumb, almost anything that could make an orc scream would kill it before the echoes could die down.

"A secret police," the Witch-King remarked aloud. Sensibly, Ghadbûrz kept quiet. He knew the Nazgûl's policy – if you can't say something intelligent, better to remain silent, or risk losing the power of speech altogether. "But what would the Great Eye need with spies? Surely," and here his voice took on a sarcastic tone, "Sauron the All-Seeing has about as much use for a secret police as a dwarf has for

factor twenty sunblock."

"Yeah..." Ghadbûrz ventured.

"And why inside Lugburz, of all places?" the Witch-King mused to himself. "Surely the Dark Lord's sight is clearest there, where his power is strongest..." He seemed, abruptly, to recall that his spymaster was still standing and listening. "Get out," he told him, without any real rancour. Ghadbûrz scurried out of sight, and the Witch-King waited for a moment before flicking the little finger-bone desk toy. The clack of metacarpals was strangely soothing as he sat back in his chair and revolved slowly, his mind turning the problem over and over. *Why spies... why Lugburz... why?*

In the Grand Chamber, Khamûl was halfway through his sixtieth game of Tetris when the Witch-King's summons rang out through the shadowed tower.

"*This is a staff announcement,*" came the familiar voice. "*Would Khamûl the Black Easterling please report to the Witch-King's inner sanctum. The Black Easterling to the inner sanctum, please. Now.*" Khamûl sighed. At least his Demoniatic Majesty sounded as though he was in a good mood. Admittedly, that usually meant that he would laugh and make witty comments whilst he tortured you, but it made a change from his customary mien, which tended to waver between morose, sulky viciousness and a barely restrained murderous rage. In a way, Khamûl reflected as he ascended the long, twisting stair that led to the Witch-King's lair, the Lord of Morgul was like a small child – an immensely powerful child with extraordinary cunning and a sadistic intelligence, but still a child. He vaguely remembered, from his corporeal existence, that it was always the clever children that caused the most problems. *I pulled the wings off flies when I was young, Khamûl recalled. I bet he was trying to figure out how to pull the wings off dragons.*

He couldn't help feeling a certain measure of respect for the Witch-King. It was tempered by a healthy mixture of fear and contempt, obviously, as was customary. It certainly wouldn't stop him from annihilating his nominal master in a blast of black sorcery at a moment's notice, should the opportunity arise; but it did instil in him the feeling that, in the interim period before that opportunity presented itself, he should do the best he could to follow his Malevolent Majesty's orders and cooperate in his twisted schemes. It was the least a good henchman could do.

Khamûl reached the top of the stairs, and entered the antechamber of the Witch-King's domain, where a few badly upholstered black chairs were arranged around a coffee table strewn with copies of *Black Sorcery Weekly*, *Iron Maiden Magazine*, and *Which Thumbscrews?*. He passed underneath the sign which read, in the Common Tongue and three dialects of the Black Speech, 'Please make yourself uncomfortable while you wait,' and entered the Witch-King's office.

"Khamûl – come in, take a seat. Not that one, I haven't had the ash washed off it yet. You don't want to stain your robes." The Black Easterling sat, a hint of anxiety creeping into the back of his mind. *He hasn't been this cheerful for weeks – not since he spent two days torturing that Gollum creature.* "I have some very interesting news for you, Khamûl," the Witch-King said, tapping idly at his finger-

bone desk toy. "I think it might be time to implement our little plan."

"Which little plan, your Majesty?" Khamûl enquired. The Lord of the Nazgûl leaned forwards, portentously lowering his voice.

"Operation Orcish Uprising." He paused for a moment. "We never did think up a proper codename for that one, did we?" Khamûl shook his head, warily.

"What makes you think the time is right?"

"I have received certain information."

"Much better than *uncertain* information, your Majesty." The Witch-King glared at him.

"Very funny," he said, in a voice colder and flatter than the (aptly, if unimaginatively, named) Northern Waste. "No, the information I have received is most interesting," he continued. "It seems that the Dark Lord has taken to employing *men* as spies... within Barad-dûr itself." If Khamûl had had a forehead, he would have wrinkled it in a perplexed frown.

"In Barad-dûr?"

"What does that tell you, Khamûl?" The Lord of the Nazgûl sat back in his chair, and clasped his spectral hands in a satisfied way. He seemed to be gaining inordinate enjoyment from his underling's confusion – had he had a face, and had it been visible beneath the shadow of his hood, Khamûl would have seen a smirk tugging at those thin, cruel lips. His mind raced.

"Tell me about what, my Liege?" he asked, buying himself time. He knew that the Witch-King's good mood could only last for so long, and his amusement at his subordinates' discomfiture could turn ugly faster than an elf taking off his makeup.

"Don't play the fool with me." The Nazgûl-lord's voice had a warning edge of anger in it. Khamûl frantically tried to think of something intelligent to say.

"Why... does he need spies?" he ventured, quickly. "Surely the all-seeing eye of Sauron... sees... all..."

"Precisely." The silence took on an air of menace, the Witch-King's unwavering gaze fixed on his increasingly nervous underling.

"He's distracted," Khamûl blurted. His malevolent overlord nodded, slowly. "Something else is taking all his attention."

"Exactly. It's good to see you're still on your toes, Khamûl," he remarked. "Metaphorically, at least."

"Thank you, your Majesty."

"Now – you see why now is the moment to unleash Operation Orcish Uprising?"

"Yes, your Majesty. With the Dark Lord's eye elsewhere, he won't suspect..."

"Precisely." The Lord of the Nazgûl dismissed the Black Easterling with a negligent wave of one ghostly hand. "You know your job, Khamûl."

"Yes, your Majesty." The ringwraith rose, feeling a certain sense of relief, and made his way to the door.

Although adrenaline and a racing heart were now mere dim memories, the soul hangs on to certain things for longer than the body endures. As the door swung

shut behind him, Khamûl permitted himself a sigh of relief. Descending the black steps of the tower, he ran the details of the plan through his mind. *I shall only make a few alterations*, he decided, restraining a sinister chuckle. *At last, the chance has come. I shall overthrow the Dark Lord and the Witch-King at the same moment and claim the Black Throne for myself. The wheels are already in motion, and neither of my masters know the dark plots I weave around them.* This is how Ringwraiths think – several lifetimes of service to the Dark Lord imparts a certain degree of portentousness to any personality, particularly one bound up with the rings of power. *I shall strike when they least expect it – at the moment that the Witch-King believes his power is assured, I will reveal my true strength and strike him down. Then I shall be the Lord of the Nazgûl... and the master of the Dark Tower.*

*End of part one – you can read part two in next term's Anor.*

POUR HOMME .  
POUR FEMME .  
POUR SMÉAGOL .



A N N E A U  
B Y C E L E B R I M B O R

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