



ANOR

Issue

53

Michaelmas

2018

EDITORIAL

Sing and rejoice, ye people of the Tower of Guard: after a term's hiatus, *Anor* is back!

As this is Michaelmas term, a warm welcome to any newcomers perusing this issue. May each of you find something to enjoy, here and in every issue to come.¹

We have – as ever – a wide range of material, including a thrilling account of CTS' labours and eventual glory at last year's Varsity Quiz (not to mention the death-defying journey home). For some light relief, there's an exploration of the similarities between Tolkien's legendarium and Monty Python; for some dark relief, try *Tom's Song*.

I may be far from you all geographically, but be assured that my thoughts are always with you.

Happy reading!

Daeron (Eleanor Smith)

¹ And hopefully not run screaming from *Consequences*, which I promise is a favourite Society paper game, and not the results of a very strange neural network.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <i>Climbing the Pass of Caradhras</i> by Samuel Cook | 5 |
| <i>A Question of Colour</i> by Samuel Cook | 20 |
| <i>A (nearly) complete History of Arda, as told in Monty Python quotes</i> by Avigail Ben-Gad | 24 |
| <i>Practical Hyperbole</i> by Samuel Cook | 28 |
| <i>Tom's Song</i> by Thea Fennell | 34 |
| <i>Consequences</i> by various members of the Society | 37 |

CLIMBING THE PASS OF CARADHRAS

The Tolkien Varsity Quiz 2018

Samuel Cook

Last term, on Saturday 3rd March, was held the 21st iteration of the Tolkien Varsity Quiz, in which our brave champions did battle with our Oxonian cousins for the title of Nerdiest Tolkien Society¹. This year, the quiz was in Oxford, so our first challenge was to get there. Rather than the interminable trek through a lesser circle of Angband that is the day-return trip on the X5, we decided to hire a car this year, as there were only five of us going. The unseasonably wintry weather meant we were fairly certain the X5 would take even longer than usual, or might even be unexpectedly cancelled, so we also all felt a lot safer having control of our own transport.

So, with yours truly driving² and having slipped and dripped my way across town to pick up the car that morning³, 10:00 found me, Mark, Eleanor, Avigail and

¹ A title for which there is surprisingly little contention. It's almost as if most people aren't that bothered about being massive Tolkien nerds.

² As Only Competent Driver Aged 25 Or Older.

³ The week's snow had largely turned to slush, which was melted enough that it was treacherous, but not melted enough

Hannah on our way to Oxford. The roads were actually pretty clear and we arrived at the Park and Ride without incident, finding ourselves in the town centre by 12:15. There we were met by some of Taruithorn, who proceeded to show us round the town centre for an hour or so, as the table for lunch hadn't been booked until 13:15. We saw all the usual Tolkien sights and various other pleasant bits of Oxford, which not all of us had previously seen, so that was a good start to the day, even if the omnipresent slush was just as annoying as it had been earlier that morning.

We then gathered for lunch in Thaikhun, where more of Taruithorn showed up, and we all passed an enjoyable lunch. It was then time to head to the traditional venue of Lecture Room 2 in Christ Church, via the market cookie stall⁴, to begin the day's real business: The Quiz. We assembled on one side in our matching cloaks and t-shirts, facing our less-co-ordinated opponents. The Audience filed in. The Quizmaster arrived. The coin toss to decide who went first was conducted – Taruithorn

that it had disappeared. Any colder or warmer would have been better, but it was, instead, the perfect temperature and conditions to make you nearly fall over every five minutes.

⁴ Ben's Cookies, in the Covered Market. Well worth visiting if you find yourself in Oxford with a sudden need for cookies. To be honest, even if you don't think you need cookies, you do need cookies.

won. We were all set to begin. It was 15:15. It was the deep breath before the plunge. The clouds had gathered. Now they burst⁵.

Round 1 was on dates, times and numbers⁶. Predictably, it was rather calamitous for both sides. Although we knew the time of Pippin's interview with Denethor, we couldn't work out $365 * 144$ quickly enough to get the number of days in a *loa*⁷. Neither did we have much clue how old Boromir was when he died, at what age Smith returned with the Living Flower⁸ or how long it was between the death of the Old Took and the Long-

⁵ I may be being a little melodramatic here. Slightly. This bit best read whilst listening to the film soundtrack for either Helm's Deep or the Pelennor Fields.

⁶ It's probably worth me pointing out that I'm not going to give all the answers to the questions here. You can try to work them out yourself, or look them up, but I don't want to take up too much space or bore everyone by printing them all as part of this. Oh, and a correct answer was worth two points, and, if one team got their question wrong, the other got a chance to answer it for one point, to help you understand the scores.

⁷ We very nearly managed it, but ended up 36 days out, coming up with 52,560 instead of 52,596.

⁸ Despite having read *Smith of Wootton Major* a couple of weeks previously. You had to remember it was 12 years after the second Great Cake mentioned, and also how old Smith was when he received the star. The second bit we had a good idea of, but not the first.

Expected Party⁹. Taruithorn had better luck, managing to give the time at which Treebeard and the Hobbits had to arrive at Derndingle by, and what rule Pippin broke by putting the next day's allowance of wood on the fire at the Shirriff-house at the Brandywine Bridge. Though they failed in their knowledge of the number of Ringwraiths at the Ford of Bruinen, how old Smith was when he gave up the star and what the total number of rulers of Númenor plus the total number of Stewards was, they'd done enough to take a 4-1 lead.

Round 2 was on the surprising topic of colours and fashion¹⁰, where we started to try to repair the damage of Round 1. We batted aside questions on the colour of Nimrodel's shoes, Bombadil's stockings and Dwalin's hair, though failed to remember anything about Princess Mee¹¹ and that diamonds and amethysts were Aulë's

⁹ To be fair to ourselves, we were generally pretty close on all of them, but were undone by what I still think was some unnecessarily harsh marking.

¹⁰ In so far as Middle-earth or any of Tolkien's works can be said to delve into matters of *haute couture* beyond the ever-present barbarian chic school of clothing.

¹¹ The first of four questions on *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*, which might be said to have been a little over-represented this year – there was only one question each on *Roverandom* and *Farmer Giles of Ham*, and none at all on *The Father Christmas Letters*, for comparison. I'm probably more annoyed because *TAoTB* is the one I know least well, but, even

favourite jewels¹². Taruithorn, similarly, imperiously dismissed questions on the colour of Lúthien's eyes and the label attached to Niggle's bicycle, as well as remembering that Fíriel had a smock of russet-brown¹³, and nearly recognising a description of the Wood Elves in *The Hobbit*, though they were completely foxed by trying to work out who owned a red silk handkerchief. At the end of the round, therefore, we'd actually fallen slightly further behind, the score now being 11-7. Not exactly a sterling damage-repair job....

The third round saw us finally starting to claw back some of the disparity in the scoreline, as both teams were confronted with a random selection of Tolkien trivia. We knew that Tolkien's informal Norse reading club were the Coalbiters and nearly managed to remember both kinds of flower said to grow on Amon Rûdh, whilst Eleanor surprised everyone by being able to remember the name of Sir Gawain's horse and thus earning us a bonus point when Taruithorn couldn't remember it. We, did, however misattribute a quote from Celeborn to Gandalf, had no

so, it's not relatively important enough to justify it coming up that often.

¹² A reference I remain unable to track down, so if anyone can find it, I'd be much obliged!

¹³ More *TAoTB*!

idea who had two-day-old cold porridge for breakfast¹⁴, and argued ourselves out of thinking that Bombur asked for salad when at Bag End, thinking this was simply too obviously comedic to be the case, though Taruithorn had no such inhibitions and picked up a bonus point. They did rather less well on their own questions, though, not knowing what part Tolkien played in a TCBS production of *The Rivals*, how wide an average dwarf is based on a series of measurements in *The Hobbit*¹⁵, or how many people are ever stated to actually ride Bill the Pony. We, however, were equally clueless and failed to secure any further bonus points, with Taruithorn managing a further single point by being able to name one of the two things the doctor gave Niggle. Overall, then, the round ended with the scores at 14-11 – we'd got one point back!

Round 4 dawned, and with it our hopes rose – it was on the First Age; collectively, our strongest subject. As such, we had no trouble naming where Fëanor burnt the ships of the Teleri, which Vala Gandalf was a student of, how many times Húrin shouted his battle cry in the Nirnaeth

¹⁴ It was the Man in the Moon, in another appearance of *TAoTB* that Taruithorn picked up a bonus point on.

¹⁵ I managed to argue Avigail out of giving the correct answer of one foot here for a bonus point by insisting that Dwarves were quite broad, and saying it should be two feet. Well done me.

Arnoediad¹⁶, and where Fingon's host before that same battle was located. We also named the three characters that we could remember being fathers of Gil-galad as Tolkien kept changing his mind on the matter, though we gave a different three to the ones on the answersheet. Turns out whoever wrote that question hadn't read *The Shibboleth of Fëanor* (*HoME XII*) closely enough, so we successfully argued ourselves to full marks there. We also picked up a swot bonus point on one of Taruithorn's questions, being able to give the exact fate of both Anglachel and Anguirel, though they had already got the marks for naming both the swords, also being successful in naming the river that passed in front of Menegroth, the handmaid of Varda and quoting the demand Ungoliant made of Morgoth once they had escaped Valinor. They were less successful at naming all of Finwë's great-grandchildren, though, only getting part of the way there, such that, at the end of the round, the scores were level at 23-23. The comeback was well-and-truly on!

Both teams carried on strongly into Round 5, on the Second and Third Ages, another area we felt was a strength for us. We knew who saved a fruit of the White

¹⁶ And what he shouted, in both Quenya and Westron, earning ourselves a bonus point for being swots.

Tree of Númenor, who invaded Arnor¹⁷, who the first Thain of the Shire was, what colour Ar-Pharazôn's banners were, and which King of Númenor was the first to cling to life¹⁸. Unfortunately, Taruithorn also knew their stuff here equally well, and had no problems coming up with what the White Council were doing in T.A. 2941, which battle Théodred was slain at, how long Elros lived for, what the name of Eorl's oldest son was, and which King of Númenor was the first to take the throne with an Adûnaic name. So, we ended the round still tied at 33 all.

Battered by an hour of mental torture, both teams limped into Round 6, the final standard round, which was on the broad topic of other works and media. We started strongly, knowing who the initial director of *The Hobbit* films was supposed to be and which part the actor that voiced Treebeard also played, but the wheels then rather fell off our quiz juggernaut, as we didn't know what the dwarves' beard hair in *The Hobbit* films was made from, though Taruithorn did for the bonus point, who narrated the 2005 audiobooks, which Taruithorn also knew, or what year Tolkien actually wrote his translation of *Beowulf*, though at least Taruithorn didn't either. We did get a bonus point there, though, for all being able to shout

¹⁷ Despite me very nearly arguing myself out of giving the obvious, and correct, answer of the Witch-King, on the basis of 'It can't be that obvious, right?'.

¹⁸ Hannah being particularly strong on these last two.

'Hwæt!' in unison. Taruithorn, meanwhile, knew who composed the film scores, what weapon Giles uses to scare the giant away, who voiced Aragorn in the animated films and, in the fourth and, thankfully, final appearance of *TAoTB*, what the alternative title of *The Seabell* was, and for a bonus point, could exactly quote the last line. They did, however, fail to name the cat in *Roverandom*, where we managed to get a bonus point of our own, such that we had again surrendered the lead, falling behind by five points, leaving the scores at 44-39. Things could have been worse, but we had some work to do in the lists and Taboo rounds if we were going to win.

The first list was announced: we had to come up with as many parents of members of the Fellowship as we could. This was deceptively simple – it's pretty straightforward for most of the fathers, but a lot of the mothers are really quite obscure. However, it got to 5-5 and Taruithorn were unable to name any more, whilst we had clearly paid more attention to Appendix C, meaning I was able to name Sam's mother and Avigail managed to drag up the name of Merry's mother from somewhere. Though no one could remember the name of Pippin's mother, it meant we had triumphed 9-5, closing the gap to a single point, with Taruithorn ahead 49-48.

Then came the second list round. In what might be charitably described as an unwise move¹⁹, someone had decided the challenge was to list as many rivers ever mentioned as being in Arda at any point, anywhere. Now, if there's one thing I really do know, it's the geography of Middle-earth²⁰. A complete massacre was only avoided by a ruling that you could only give the names of things you'd actually written down, which hadn't been the case in previous years and which we weren't told about beforehand, so, as I can only write so fast, we only took the round 19-13. Had that judgement not been made, I could have most likely trotted off another 20 rivers or so without having to think too hard. I really do know my rivers²¹. So, after the dust cleared, we

¹⁹ And, if one were feeling uncharitable, as borderline suicidally insane.

²⁰ You might have thought someone would have remembered last time there was an open-ended map-based round and I outscored the entirety of the Taruithorn team by myself. This had seemingly been forgotten.

²¹ Based on the score in the quiz, we came up with 31 rivers between us. At the time, I was fairly confident I could name another 20 easily enough. A bit more thought has pushed that up to 29, giving a total of 60, of which I reckon I could have ad-libbed 40-50, so my initial estimate of my own knowledge was probably about right. There may be a few I've forgotten and not included in that 60 as well, but there can't be many.

were now ahead for the first time, 62-67. We were riding the crest of the riverine wave to victory, we hoped.

Our soaring hopes were brought back down to earth with a resounding bump, though, after the first Taboo round. We went first, and managed to get all ten things on the list, but it took us over two-and-a-half minutes to do so, not helped by me failing to spot the obvious answer a few times, and instead shouting out increasingly obscure and tangential things²². I was pretty certain we'd taken too long, and my fears were confirmed when Taruithorn managed the same feat in just over 90 seconds. Suddenly, the score was 78-77 and we had to really pull a fast one, literally, in the final round to claim our rightful title as Nerdiest Tolkien Society. At this point, I wrote FUCKIN' TENSE in caps on the sheet of paper I was using. Last year, I'd only written TENSE, so the situation had definitely escalated. For the first time, I seriously considered the possibility of losing this year. It was slightly like the bit where Frodo puts on the Ring in the Sammath Naur and Sauron realises the magnitude of his folly, combined with Thrain's reaction to the death of

²² This is an unfortunate and entirely characteristic tendency I have in all areas of life, not just the Tolkien Varsity Quiz. I think my problem is definitely one of not being able to see the Ents for the Huorns, sometimes.

Thror. Except several orders of magnitude less important and consequential.

So, the final round started. This time, we were going second, so we all dutifully stood outside in the corridor whilst Taruithorn had their go. After what seemed an improbably short time²³, we were called back in. We only had to get one point more than them, but that seemed as if it were going to be difficult. But, glancing at the board, it showed that Taruithorn had only actually managed to get three of the ten items on this list; either passing or fouling on the other seven. So, if we could get most of the items in a decent time, we should win. Victory was within our grasp and, much like Carcharoth's attitude to Beren's hand, we intended to seize it and run off with it²⁴. Ninety seconds later, Hannah had held her nerve as describer, I'd stopped being wilfully obscurantist, and we'd rattled off nine of the items, passing the last one when it was clear we weren't going to get it quickly and were just giving Taruithorn time points as we struggled²⁵. Thus, we took

²³ It was, it emerged, about 70 seconds. So it really was improbably short; it wasn't just a stress-induced distortion of time perception.

²⁴ Though, perhaps, with less actual bodily harm and devastation of large parts of Beleriand.

²⁵ It turned out to be 'Mr Bliss', which is, to be fair, woefully obscure. We might have got there eventually, but it would have taken longer than it was worth. This fact also suggests we really need to change the scoring system for Taboo rounds

the round 9-5, making the final score 83-86, and securing the title for another year.

Phew.

That was close.

I can only speak for myself, but it took me a good hour in the pub to which we repaired post-quiz to really calm down and relax; I'd got so worked up in the latter stages of the quiz. Possibly, if I hadn't been driving and had therefore been able to have some alcohol, this process might have occurred somewhat quicker, but dinner was a good substitute for making me feel more human again. It was also helped by generally having some very good company, as a sizable chunk of Taruithorn had accompanied us, so the time passed merrily. But, after I'd calmed down, I also realised quite how tired I was, so I was fairly keen to get going, such that we got back to Cambridge before I wasn't fit to drive any more.

Consequently, at 19:15 we were back on the bus to the park and ride site, meaning we set off in the car about 19:30. However, it's not over until it's over, and there was one surprise left in store. The Gods of Oxford, evidently angered by the defeat of their champions, called down a

to penalise passing or fouling more, beyond just losing the point for getting it. We'll have to think about that before the next one.

sudden flurry of snow that plainly had not been expected, such that the roads hadn't been re-gritted. Therefore, our progress became ever slower, forcing us to complete the Bicester-to-Buckingham leg of the journey at about 20 mph in second gear, as we slipped and slithered around on an increasingly-treacherous road surface. It brought to mind both the Fellowship's attempt to climb the Redhorn Gate, as there was a lot of snow, and the journey through Moria, as it was also entirely dark and a little difficult to know where we were going at times. Despite running one red light and nearly losing control on at least three separate occasions, we made it through the snow and, by the time we reached Milton Keynes, the gods had relented and the second half of the journey was trouble-free²⁶, such that we were back in Cambridge about 21:30, where I, for one, was very happy to go to bed after a long, trying, but ultimately successful campaign!

To finish: congratulations and thanks to our team for braving my driving and the ordeal, and eventually emerging victorious. The same to Taruithorn for being great hosts and opponents, making the whole thing worthwhile, and, most importantly, thanks to the question writers on both sides, and the quizmasters, without whom the whole thing wouldn't have been

²⁶ This introduced me to a new experience: that of being glad to see Milton Keynes. Not something I can say has ever happened to me before.

possible. Minas Tirith now lead the series 11-9 and we look forward to the fixture next year, which I'm sure will be just as nail-biting, but I at least won't have to drive anywhere.

A QUESTION OF COLOUR

Or: Teleri Gentlemen Prefer...?

Samuel Cook

Rewatching the *LOTR* films recently, a thought struck me as the Fellowship entered Lórien. Picture the scene: Gimli has just averred that he has the eyes of a hawk and the ears of a fox when, suddenly, the Fellowship are surrounded by a load of blond Elves led by Haldir. And, of course, Legolas is also blindingly blond¹. But, how likely is it that all these Elves would actually be blond?

The hair colour of the Elves is one of those odd details that seems insignificant, but that Tolkien himself cared greatly about. The Vanyar, canonically, all had golden hair as their chief distinguishing characteristic (see the index to *The Silmarillion*, as well as several references in the text), whilst the Noldor were all dark-haired, except for Finarfin and his children², who inherited the golden hair of Finarfin's mother, Indis, a Vanya (see practically every reference to Finarfin and his children in *The*

¹ In more ways than one, it might be argued.

² And also Glorfindel's house. But, as with much to do with Glorfindel, this isn't really explained and is another example of him being the exception that proves the rule. The safest assumption is that him and his house also had a Vanyarin forebear lurking in the attic, as it were.

Silmarillion). There were also, apparently, a very few red-brown-haired Noldor, including Nerdanel, Mahtan, Maedhros, Amrod and Amras (*HoME XII: The Peoples of Middle-earth*, p.353). But, of the Teleri, and therefore also the Sindar, the Nandor, the Laiquendi and the Silvan Elves, no such statement is made.

We do know the hair colour of a few individual Teleri. Círdan is described as ‘grey and old’ (*LOTR*, p.1007), and Celeborn’s hair was ‘of silver long and bright’ (*LOTR*, p.345). Thingol’s hair is also described as ‘grey silver’ (*The Silmarillion*, p.58) and, in describing Galadriel’s hair colour, it is said that it ‘was touched by some memory of the starlike silver of her mother’ (*Unfinished Tales*, p.296); her mother being Eärwen, niece of Thingol. So, it seems reasonable to conclude that Thingol’s kin³, at least, were all silver-haired. But, it seems equally unreasonable to assume that this applied to all the Teleri – if it did, one might expect that Tolkien would have made some statement to that effect. Or, perhaps would not have bothered pointing out that Thingol and his kin all had silvery-grey locks, when most of the Elves of Middle-earth⁴ would also have had it.

³ Which included Círdan in some undefined capacity (*HoME XII*, p.385) and Celeborn, who was grandson of Elmo, Thingol and Olwë’s younger brother (*Unfinished Tales*, p.301).

⁴ Given the Teleri were more numerous than the Noldor and that all the pre-Exile Elvish inhabitants of Middle-earth from

So, we can be fairly confident that the Teleri were not all dark-haired, nor golden-haired, nor silver-haired. If these were all distinctive features of the Noldor, Vanyar, and Thingol's kin, respectively, it seems unlikely that any random Teler would have potentially been mistakable for one of them. We can also be pretty certain they weren't redheads, given the attested rarity of that trait. Which pretty much leaves either a more flaxen shade of blond or the lighter shades of brown⁵. Based on the lack of any similar blanket statement like the ones applied to the Vanyar and Noldor, it also seems likely that the mass of the Teleri didn't have a uniform hair colour. In other words, any Teler picked at random would seem most likely to be somewhere on the blond-brown spectrum, probably towards the brown end, as proper blond would start infringing on the Vanyar's hair territory⁶.

To conclude this razor-sharp analysis and, as it were, cut to the chase to keep things trim and stop them getting over-long⁷⁸, it does seem pretty unlikely that many, if any,

Anduin westwards seem to have been Telerin in origin, if silver hair were a widespread Telerin trait, it would have been wholly unremarkable.

⁵ One imagines that Tolkien didn't envisage blue, pink or green-haired Elves.

⁶ Hairitory?

⁷ I apologise for the hair-rific puns and references permeating that sentence. I just can't beehive myself sometimes.

⁸ I further apologise for the preceding footnote.

Teleri were the platinum blond of Legolas et al. in the films. But a slightly more subdued blond is perhaps not entirely far-fetched, though one feels this would have been far from a dominant trait.

A (NEARLY) COMPLETE HISTORY OF ARDA, AS TOLD IN MONTY PYTHON QUOTES

(I'm so sorry)¹

Avigail Ben-Gad

Melkor: Come and see the violence inherent in the system. Help! Help! I'm being repressed!

Feanor: Alright, but apart from the sanitation, the education, the wine, public order, safety, and security, what have the Valar ever done for us?

Feanor: Look, get out. Go on. Get out! Get out!

Morgoth: I beg your pardon?

Feanor: I'm turning you out! I'm not having my house filled with filthy jail-crows. Now look, I'm giving you just half a minute then I'm going to call Tulkas, so get out!

Morgoth: I don't much like the tone of your voice.

Noldor: We are no longer the elves who say 's'! We are now the elves who say... 'TH'!

Feanor: (gives death-glare)

¹ No I'm not.

Maedhros: People, we should be struggling together.

Feanor: We are!

Maedhros: No, we should be rising up against the common enemy.

Feanor: Fingolfin?!

Maedhros: No, no, Morgoth!

Fingolfin: Have at you!

Morgoth: You are indeed brave, sir elf, but the fight is mine.

Fingolfin: Oh, had enough, eh?

Morgoth: Look, you stupid bastard. You've got no arms left!

Fingolfin: Yes I have.

Morgoth: Look!

Fingolfin: Just a flesh wound!

Thingol: You must cut down the mightiest tree in the forest with... a herring!

Gwindor: You only killed your best friend Beleg, you know.

Turin: I didn't mean to.

Gwindor: Didn't mean to? You put your sword right through his head.

Turin: Oh dear... is he all right?

Gurthang: Always look on the bright side of life.

Maedhros: If you will not show us the Silmaril, we shall take your castle by force!

Elwing: You don't frighten us, Feanorian pig-dogs! Go and boil your bottoms, son of a silly person!

Sauron: I am very proud to be in charge of the first religion with free gifts. You get this luxury ring of power with every new enrolment.

Kings of men: Ooooooh!

Elves: Tra-la-la-lally, tril-lil-lil-lil-lolly!

Gandalf: On second thoughts, let us not go to Rivendell. It is a silly place.

Thorin (addressing Bard from Erebor): Your mother was a hamster and your father smelt of elderberries.

Aragorn: I am your king!

Boromir: Well, I didn't vote for you!

Traumatic flashback in Gimli's head: Cram, cram, cram, cram. Lovely cram! Wonderful craaam! Lovely cram! Wonderful cram. Cra-a-a-a-a-a-am! Cra-a-a-a-a-a-a-am! Cra-a-a-a-a-a-a-am! Cra-a-a-a-a-a-a-am! Lovely cram! (Lovely cram!) Lovely cram! (Lovely cram!) Lovely craaaam! Cram, cram, cram, craaaaam!

Frodo: Look, you've got it all wrong! You don't need to follow me to Mordor. You don't need to follow anybody! You've got to think for yourselves! You're all

individuals!

Fellowship: Yes! We're all individuals!

Frodo: You're all different!

Fellowship: Yes, we are all different!

Sam: I'm not...

Fellowship: Shhh!

Hama to Aragorn: Oh, but you can't expect to wield supreme executive power just because some watery tart threw a sword at you!²

Gollum: Po-ta-toes?!

Denethor: 'ELLO FARAMIR!!!! Testing! Testing!

Testing! Testing! This is your nine o'clock alarm call!

(Takes Faramir off the bed and thumps his head on the wall.)

Denethor: Now that's what I call a dead Gondorian.

² In case it wasn't clear, Isildur is the watery tart. Promiscuity is admittedly in question, though he does drown.

PRACTICAL HYPERBOLE

Or: OTT Tolkienian Responses To Everyday Situations

We all occasionally get annoyed by commonplace events or feel that ordinary platitudes just won't do the job. Well, here are some phrases from Tolkien's works that may help you in such difficult situations.

| Situation | Response |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Being buttonholed by a chugger | How do ye of uncouth race dare to demand aught of me, Elu Thingol, Lord of Beleriand, whose life began by the waters of Cuiviénen years uncounted ere the fathers of the stunted people awoke? ¹ |
| Someone asking what's for dinner today | PO-TAY-TOES. |
| Picking soft furnishings | Choose thou, for now I am weary of the world. |
| Greeting a friend who's arrived late | Hail Eärendil, of mariners most renowned, the looked for that cometh at unawares, the longed for that cometh beyond hope! |

¹ Maybe change the ending of that one unless you want to start a fight.

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Your train being cancelled | The entire Oath of Fëanor, replacing each instance of the word 'Silmaril' with 'train'. |
| A victorious occasion | I threw down my enemy, and he fell from the high place and broke the mountain-side where he smote it in his ruin. |
| A losing occasion | The final verse of Gimli's song of Durin (The world is grey, the mountains old...) |
| Finding your keys | Yé! utúvienyes! |
| Losing your keys | I remember the first raindrop and the first acorn... |
| Someone doing something stupid | Fool of a Took! |
| Being doorstepped by someone | The way is shut. It was made by those who are dead and the dead keep it. The way is shut. |
| Mishearing someone | What did you say? (In Gollum accent) |
| Any sort of event where you're cheering from the sidelines | GROND! Duh duh. GROND! Duh duh. GROND! Duh duh (repeat as desired). |
| Your morning alarm | Fear! Fire! Foes! Awake! |
| Anytime someone challenges you | I am no man! ² |

² Works best if you are a) not a man and b) can dramatically remove your helmet to prove this point.

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| Dealing with a pedant | I care not whether you say now asëa aranion or kingsfoil, so long as you have some. |
| Introducing yourself | I am Aragorn, son of Arathorn, chieftain of the Dúnedain of Arnor, Captain of the Host of the West, bearer of the Star of the North, wielder of the Sword Reforged, victorious in battle, whose hands bring healing, the Elfstone, Elessar of the line of Valandil, Isildur's son, Elendil's son of Númenor. ³ |
| Arriving somewhere after a long journey | Et Eärello Endoreenna útúlien. Sinome maruvan ar Hildinyar tenn' Ambar-metta! |
| Talking to an astronomer⁴ | What do your Elf eyes see? |
| Someone asking what you're doing for the weekend | DOOM. |
| Being asked what your main concern is | DOOM. |

³ This one works better if you're a man. Preferably called Aragorn.

⁴ I'm sure we all do this on a daily basis...?

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| Being asked what your greatest strength is | DOOM. |
| Being asked what your greatest weakness is | DOOM. ⁵ |
| Someone asking how your week went | Each day was as long as a life-age of the earth. |
| Being admonished by a junior | You have no power here, Gandalf the Grey. |
| Arriving late to an event | A wizard is never late. Nor is he early. He arrives precisely when he means to. ⁶ |
| Pretending to be mad | Any set of lines spoken by Tom Bombadil ⁷ . |
| Your bus finally turns up | The Eagles are coming! |
| Justifying your lie in | Long there he lay, an image of the splendour of the Kings of Men, in glory undimmed before the Breaking of the World. |

⁵ It's just such a useful rejoinder to any query.

⁶ More credible if you're wearing a big pointy hat.

⁷ For extra verisimilitude, stick a pencil up each nostril and wear your pants on your head.

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| Someone crossing you or your family | This cannot be borne! ⁸ |
| Giving travel advice | Fly, you fools! |
| Someone asking about your musical talents | Drums, drums in the deep. |
| Meeting someone for the first time | Elen síla lúmenn' omentielvo |
| Being asked an annoying question | Meddle not in the affairs of wizards, for they are subtle and quick to anger |
| Asking your prospective father-in-law for their child's hand in marriage | And here I have found what I sought not indeed, but finding I would possess for ever. For it is above all gold and silver, and beyond all jewels. Neither rock, nor steel, nor the fires of Morgoth, nor all the powers of the Elf-kingdoms, shall keep from me the treasure that I desire. For [insert name] your son/daughter/child/spawn is the fairest of all the Children of the World. |
| Someone you don't like asking you for | See now! I too desire a treasure that is withheld. For rock and |

⁸ Most effective when preceded by wailing and tearing your beard (if applicable), followed by seven days of silence and fasting.

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| your child's hand in marriage | steel and the fires of Morgoth keep the jewel that I would possess against all the powers of the Elf-kingdoms. Yet I hear you say that bonds such as these do not daunt you. Go your way therefore! Bring to me in your hand a Silmaril from Morgoth's crown; and then, if s/he/they will, [insert name] may set his/her/their hand/tentacle/appendage of choice in yours. Then you shall have my jewel; and though the fate of Arda lie within the Silmarils, yet you shall hold me generous. |
| Someone you do like asking for your child's hand in marriage | Ónen-i [name of your child] [name of prospective child-in-law]; ú-chebin [name of your child] anim |

TOM'S SONG

Thea Fennell

Hey dol! merry dol! ring a dong dillo!

Ring a dong! Sing along! fal lal the willow!

Tom's song, Tom Bom, Tom Bombadillo!

Hey! Come merry dol! derry dol! My chorus!

Leaves, water, wind, and all, singing, swaying for us.

Under roots and into dark, snaring weary Shirelings,

Serving for the craban's perch, heeding lofty tidings.

Willow-Man and ancient wood bend only to the Master,

Whisper of the world to come, the Doom and its
disaster.

Old Tom Bombadil, saving sleepy halflings,

Comes dancing through the trees, can you hear him
laughing?

Hey! Come merry dol! derry dol! My willow!

Tom's come, Tom Bom, Tom Bombadillo!

Hobbit-folk, and willow-men, are but a meagre
mattering,

Come now, Tom's begun, water-lilies scattering,
Tom's path is clearer now, come my little rovers!
Come now! derry dol! for soon the party's over!

Hop along! Tom's gone, caught inside his head now,
He'll catch you up again, before you go to bed, now.
He'll find you yet in stony walls, under the barrow's
spell;

And then again, when shadow falls, and the Usurper's
felled.

Out from the oldest night, so the first shall rise
Cold be his laughter now, and cold be heart and eyes.
Fear then the failing stars, and the blackened wind,
The daughter of the deadened sea, the winter that she
brings,
So, come! into the Master's house, and to unfettered
dreams—

But take heed of where you tread herein; not all is as it seems...

CONSEQUENCES

Various members of the Society

Faramir met Aragorn, son of Arathorn, Elendil's heir, the Elessar, Envinyatar, Wielder of the Sword Reforged, etc., in the chimney of Bag End.

Faramir said: "My name is Faramir. You killed my father. Prepare to die."

Aragorn, son of Arathorn, Elendil's heir, the Elessar, Envinyatar, Wielder of the Sword Reforged, etc., said, after a long pause: "...no."

They drank the Elf-king's Dorwinion wine and threw a rave in Mirkwood. As a consequence, they could never look each other in the eye again.

Draugluin, Sire of Werewolves, met a werewolf in the form of Sauron, in the Mouth of Sauron (interpret as you will).

Draugluin, Sire of Werewolves, said: "Bom Tombadil Bom Tombadil Bom Tombadil."¹

¹ Bom Tombadil had become a Society meme at the time. It's probably better not to ask. -Ed.

A werewolf in the form of Sauron said: “Every word of the sentence you just said was wrong.”

They performed an extremely intricate fist-bump/handshake with very little rehearsal. As a consequence, Thanos wiped out half the population of Middle-earth, but then decided against it because Fëanor and Morgoth had already done that.

Sam Gamgee met Theoden in Wetherspoons.

Sam Gamgee said, pointing at Theoden’s shoes: “What are thoooooose!”

Theoden said: “I’m sorry, but I just don’t feel that way.”

They tarried in Arvernien, and built a boat of timbers felled in Nimbrehil to journey in. As a consequence, the Age of Man was ended, and the Age of Cats began.

Tom Bombadil’s cooler cousin Steve met Mandos the “Fun” and “Life and Soul of the Party” in the mosh pit at the Numenorian Human Sacrifice.

Tom Bombadil's cooler cousin Steve said: "Throw it into the fire!"

Mandos the "Fun" and "Life and Soul of the Party" said: "Bom Tombadil, Bom Tombadil, Bom Tombadil... Bom Tombadil!"

Together, they invented Middle-earth's first skateboard. As a consequence, they ran away together.

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