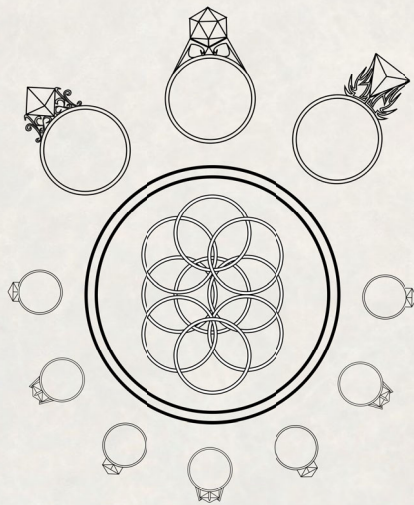


MUSICAL CHAPTERS FROM
THE LORD OF THE RINGS
AFTER THE MYTHOLOGY OF J.R.R. TOLKIEN



ZARATHUSTRA
THE PAUL CORFIELD GODFREY
MUSIC TRUST

Prima
FACIE



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Zarathustra: The Paul Corfield Godfrey Trust was founded in 2021 with the objective of promoting the compositions of the composer, by the commissioning for musical works by the composer; the publishing of works by the composer (Zarathustra Music); the promotion and performance of works by the composer; the recording and distribution of works by the composer and the promotion of the composer's music by means of lectures, tours and other events.

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Paul Corfield Godfrey
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Paul Corfield Godfrey's "Musical Chapters from *The Lord of the Rings* after the mythology of JRR Tolkien"

THE COMPLETION OF A CYCLE

My very first involvement with the writings of J R R Tolkien came at the age of six, when in the summer of 1956 I was given a copy of *The Hobbit* by my sister-in-law Lois Mitchison (the daughter of Naomi Mitchison, whose comments on *The Lord of the Rings* had been included on the dust-jacket of the first edition of that work). I remember within a couple of years I had contrived my own dramatisation of the work, and dragooned a number of friends in to perform it in my garden for a small audience of neighbours and parents. Among the music I improvised then were settings of Bilbo's *Old fat spider*, the Wood-elves' *Down the swift dark stream you go*, and the Lake-men's *The King beneath the Mountain*, all of which still remain essentially unchanged in the score of *The Hobbit* (with the latter two quoted in retrospect in *The Lord of the Rings*). My next endeavour at a musical treatment came nearly a decade later, when in 1966-67 I recall writing a series of vocal and musical settings of words from both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* as part of a suite scored for an extravagantly large orchestra and range of singers including chorus. Some of the music written for this suite, including the themes for the Shire, the Hobbits and the lament for Boromir, have similarly survived into the current scores for the cycle as a whole.

The following year I made my first foray into a full-scale operatic setting of the grandiosely entitled *The Doom* treating the journey of Frodo and Sam to Mordor, and scored similarly for an enormous orchestra including no fewer than eight recorders and six saxophones. This three-act work has remained as part of *The Lord of the Rings* cycle but has been substantially revised for the current version, with an orchestra reduced to standard dimensions and some scenes almost entirely re-composed. I then began work on a setting of *The Hobbit*, which proceeded as far as Beorn's halls before I abandoned it to turn to other compositions. It was only in 1972 that I returned to the realm of Tolkien, picking up *The Hobbit* from Mirkwood onwards and then revising the earlier sections with the intention that they would ultimately form part of a massive thirteen-evening cycle covering the whole of *The Lord of the Rings* as well as the now finished (albeit unorchestrated) *Hobbit*. Substantial sections of this project were completed at this stage, comprising multiple settings of songs as well as chapters including *Tom Bombadil*, *The Grey Havens* and the opening scenes of *A Long-expected Party*.

It was at around this stage that, shortly after the death of Tolkien himself, I wrote to Rayner Unwin as his publisher to enquire about the copyright status of these texts. He advised me that the rights had been sold at that time to United Artists (who were still at that stage considering the production of a film), and that the latter had so far refused to allow rights for musical setting to anyone. Accordingly, and with many other compositional commissions and other calls on my time, I set aside my work on the cycle and incorporated some of the music already written into other pieces. It was only in the early 1980s that I returned to Rayner Unwin with an enquiry regarding the possibility of a setting of *The Children of Húrin*, and the sometimes comic results (including a demo recording with my own head in a bucket to simulate Morgoth) have been described elsewhere. The process however concluded with my completion of a four-part *Silmarillion* cycle in 1996, which included some textual elements from *The Lord of the Rings* in my setting of *Beren and Lúthien* which were accordingly included in my contract with the Tolkien Estate and HarperCollins as publishers.

I have also described elsewhere the disappointing response of performers to the completion of the *Silmarillion* cycle, regarded as impractically large-scale for production. I assembled my miscellaneous sketches for the *Lord of the Rings* material, and completed the orchestration of *The Hobbit*, but had no prospects of performance for either. It was not until 2016 when Simon Crosby Buttle and Volante Opera Productions began to take an interest in the performance of *The Fall of Gondolin*, that I began to consider any expansion of my existing fragments and episodes. The success of the first CD issue by Prima Facie, and the enthusiasm of the performers (who had originally agreed to undertake the recording on a purely voluntary basis) led to the recording over the next five years of *Beren and Lúthien*, *The Children of Húrin* and *Fëanor*, as well as a final evening entitled *The War of Wrath* which Simon persuaded me was necessary to bring the series of epic scenes to a satisfactory conclusion (the genesis of which is explained in my booklet note for those CDs).

We had already been talking about the prospect of an appendix volume to *The Silmarillion* containing some extracts from the *Lord of the Rings* sketches, but I had demurred at the prospect of completing my earlier work on the cycle which appeared to be a mammoth task unlikely ever to see any prospect of performance. However, the pandemic lockdowns of 2020-21 suddenly furnished a spur to composition as well as providing an opportunity, and Simon produced a heavily abridged version of my earlier text which reduced the scale of the work down to altogether more manageable proportions. I now turned back to my earlier sketches, beginning in an entirely arbitrary and fortuitous manner with the completion of the scene of triumph at *The Field of Cormallen*, and linking Frodo's song at *The Prancing Pony* through to the description of Aragorn in the following scene.

I then worked backwards through the earlier version of *Tom Bombadil*, making some thematic amendments; and returned to my 1970s sketch for *A Long-expected Party*, again revising and bringing the score into accordance with the existing *Silmarillion*. The revision of *The Black Gate is closed* had perforce to be much more extensive – some of the themes, such as that for the Ring itself, had been substantially altered over the years – and the music later written for the Gondorian scenes had to be incorporated into the originally much more basic material supplied for Faramir.

Because of the isolation imposed upon me as a result of the worldwide corona pandemic, I found with the opportunity for uninterrupted composition that the new and revised music fell into place with remarkable fluidity and ease; and what emerged was a set of musical chapters which formed a partnership with the epic scenes from *The Silmarillion* in a manner which reflected Tolkien's own scheme for his work as envisioned in the 1950s with the two cycles forming part of an integral whole. For example, the unaccompanied choral music associated with the ceremonies in Gondolin to herald the arrival of summer is now transformed into the orchestral music which conjures up the realm of Lothlórien, in many ways the successor to Gondolin as the hidden refuge of the Elves. The Tolkien Estate agreed to allow for the music to be performed and recorded, and the mammoth series of sessions involving some 35 singers undertaking over eighty individual solo roles (as well as chorus) in both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* has been proceeding for some considerable time. Even with the abridgement of the text, the "musical chapters from *The Lord*

of the *Rings*“ constitute a huge torso of a musical work; and it is important that listeners should consider not only what it is, but what it seeks to be. The adaptation was originally undertaken in the early 1970s and therefore predates both the famous BBC version by Brian Sibley and Michael Bakewell, as well as the Peter Jackson trilogy of films. Elements that assumed great importance as action sequences in the latter – the Battle of the Hornburg and the Pelennor Fields, for example – are here reduced to background for the dialogue of the characters. And some characters that were omitted altogether from other versions – Tom Bombadil, Goldberry, Glorfindel and Imrahil – are here restored to their place in the narrative. The lengthy closing sections of the story, including the scouring of the Shire, which Tolkien regarded as important but were omitted from Jackson’s conclusion, are here restored as part of an extended valedictory postlude to the whole. Dialogue that was heavily pruned in other dramatic adaptations is here allowed to proceed at full length, with the musical undercurrent providing incident and cross-references along the way, and several of the poems are given at substantial length either in the complete work or as appendices. At the same time a very conscious effort has been made, as far as possible, to preserve Tolkien’s original words without alteration; and the motivations and intentions of the characters also remain unchanged. The missing visual element too has been preserved as far as practicable, by the insertion of orchestral interludes and other passages attempting to evoke and describe the scenery of Tolkien’s imagination. These are also in turn amplified by stage directions in the libretto, allowing for the listener to envisage the operatic dimension of an actual theatrical production.

In some ways, of course, the musical chapters from *The Lord of the Rings* are quite distinct in dramatic style from *The Silmarillion* in the same manner as the disparate texts themselves. The role of the chorus in delivering the narration in the ‘epic scenes’ vanishes altogether in the ‘musical chapters’ (although it re-emerges in the final Appendix to describe the passing of Aragorn and Arwen), which therefore become somewhat more conventionally operatic in form. At the same time the *Lord of the Rings* texts themselves, generally more closely argued and complex in their development, engender a more contrapuntal and elaborate response in the thematic treatment. And the selected chapters focus on the lyrical and philosophical aspects of the text in a manner that goes far beyond the simple restitution of Tom Bombadil and the scouring of the Shire to their places in the tale.

While the music for my cycle of epic scenes from *The Silmarillion* displayed a slow evolution of thematic material – from the densely chromatic opening chords of *Fëanor* to the multiplicity of motifs associated with the Valar, the Eldar, Men and the other populations of Tolkien’s Middle-earth – that for the parallel cycle of musical chapters from *The Lord of the Rings* depends to a very large degree on the assumption that the motifs of *The Silmarillion* are taken for granted as a background to the dramatic development, and only slowly reveal new musical facets as the action develops. It therefore makes no sense whatsoever to consider the material of *The Lord of the Rings* in isolation from *The Silmarillion*, even when in the actual course of the compositional process music written for the former during the 1970s found itself adapted and reinterpreted in the latter from the 1980s onward.

One such example may suffice; the whole of the chapter *The Steward and the King*, extending from the *Song of the Eagle* (written in 1970) to the wedding of Aragorn and Arwen, is condensed in the film to a single scene of some five minutes in which only Aragorn’s speech in Quenya is actually delivered in the words written by Tolkien himself. In the ‘musical chapter’ we not only hear the song of the Eagle developed as part of the coronation scene, and the return of the wedding music from *The Fall of Gondolin* now transfigured in the same manner that Frodo describes in his summons to blessing on the night (his speech on the subject concludes the scene); but we also hear the lengthy

philosophical debate between Gandalf and Aragorn regarding the future development of the world and of the realm of Men in particular. And the discovery on the mountain of the scion of the Tree returns us musically past the era of Gondolin to the second scene of *Fëanor*, with the theme associated with the Two Trees finally reappearing after its age-long absence (all of this omitted entirely by Jackson) as part of a complete structure lasting nearly half an hour.

In effect what we have here is a considerably different viewpoint on *The Lord of the Rings* from other adaptations, and listeners who are only familiar with the Jackson films may find many differences that may even disconcert them. But we have endeavoured with every fibre in our being to remain faithful to the author’s original vision, and in this I cannot stress sufficiently the contribution of Simon Crosby Buttle, who not only spurred me to the completion of the work but also rendered invaluable assistance in providing a practical text. It is for that reason, among many others, that this score is dedicated to him.

PAUL CORFIELD GODFREY

A NOTE ON THE TEXT

As has been mentioned above, every effort has been made in this setting to preserve Tolkien’s original words; but there are instances where minor alterations have been necessary to ensure audibility and singability of the text, or to deal with omissions elsewhere within the narrative. However no additional material has been added at any point, although stage directions have sometimes been amended in the interests of practicality in theatrical presentation.

Similarly the chapters in *The Two Towers* (CDs 6-9) have been interspersed with each other on these discs, in order to allow for variety and contrast between the more public scenes in Rohan and the intimate details of the secret quest of the Ringbearer. In theatrical presentations of the cycle as a whole, it will inevitably be found necessary to restore the original order as shown in both the vocal and full scores, to allow singers time for rest over consecutive evenings of performance.

The appendices contained on CD 15 consist of two lengthy settings – *The Lay of Leithian* for Aragorn and *The Lay of Eärendil* for Bilbo – which reduplicate musical material from *The Silmarillion* where the same narratives are explored in greater detail. Neither would be likely to prove practicable in the context of a staged presentation, but listeners may wish to insert them into the audio scores at the appropriate juncture. Legolas’s song *To the sea* has also been heard in *The War of Wrath* (assigned there to Eärendil) but its music is referenced in his farewell scene. By way of compensation the appendices include his earlier narration of the *Lay of Nimrodel*, which could be inserted into *The Mirror of Galadriel* (provision is made for this in the music); and Gimli’s *Lay of Durin* could also be substituted for an orchestral interlude during *A Journey in the Dark*. The tracks on the discs are arranged accordingly to allow for such procedures, as is explained in more detail on pages 53-54 of this booklet. But I should however perhaps emphasise that it is strongly recommended that no attempt should be made to insert these extended treatments into the course of dramatic or stage presentations, since they would inevitably involve the sacrifice of some dramatic urgency as the action progresses during these chapters.

The final appendix *Aragorn and Arwen* fulfils Tolkien’s wish that the tale should be concluded with this episode, even though he could find no way to include it in the body of his narrative; he insisted that it should be included in the one-volume paperback edition of *The Lord of the Rings* even when the remainder of the supplementary material from *The Return of the King* was performed omitted. It originated as a piano piece *The passing of Arwen* – a companion to the musical chapters from *The Lord of the Rings* in the same way as the piano rondo *Akallabêth* acts to epic scenes from *The Silmarillion*. The expanded version heard here, including the dialogue between the lovers at the death of the King, similarly brings back the narrative chorus from *The Silmarillion* (as already noted) to provide a final epilogue to the score.

PAUL CORFIELD GODFREY

A NOTE FROM VOLANTE OPERA PRODUCTIONS

We freely admit to you that this recording is not live or a studio recording. We did not have the means to employ a full orchestra and chorus to rehearse and record this work. What we do have is the small recording studio we use with room for only one person at a time in the booth. The orchestra for this recording was created using sampled instrument sets with audio samples of real instrument sounds which are then sequenced in the recording software ready to be played. It is a slow process preparing the scores this way but with patience the results are as close to real as can be without the real thing.

With the help of our professional singer colleagues we have managed to fill out the cast but due to the limitations of space in our recording setup, we could only record them one at a time often months apart from the other characters in the scene.

The chorus, with our limitations of space this meant that however many singers we had would have to record individually. We therefore decided that a chorus of sixteen, whilst very under the required numbers, would serve best for this recording as a demonstration of the music. Again, with patience in post processing they can be brought very close to the sound of a live ensemble though and we hope that any imperfections in this will be forgiven in the interest of getting this piece heard. The purpose of this Demo Recording is simply to get the piece heard. The ideal would of course be to hear it performed by a full orchestra and chorus but until this happens we hope that this recording will serve.

Volante Opera Productions was founded by Julian Boyce in 1999, originally bringing opera gala performances to Wales and England. One of our main aims is to take live music into the community and enable a wider audience to hear varied and exciting repertoire. We function as a profit free organisation with all of our funds raised going directly to our contributors or to charities.

Since 2018 we have expanded our work into the world of recording with an aim to release new or previously unrecorded pieces, either commercially in collaboration with Prima Facie or via our online videos on YouTube and Facebook.

Paul Corfield Godfrey was born in London. After a period of residence in Ireland he now lives in South Wales, studying composition and conducting at various times with Alan Bush and David Wynne. His compositions include four symphonies: various orchestral, chamber and instrumental works: songs and choral works: operas, including *The Dialogues of Óisín* and *Saint Patric and Arcturus*, both performed in Cardiff and elsewhere: and a cycle of epic scenes based on J. R. R. Tolkien's posthumous novel *The Silmarillion*, as well as musical chapters from *The Hobbit* due to be published in 2026 along with *The Lord of the Rings*. Other works have been performed in London and elsewhere throughout the UK, Hungary, America, France, Australia and New Zealand. His manuscript scores are lodged at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth. He has appeared as a performer both on radio and television, and he reviews live performances, audio and video recordings for MusicWeb International.

When beginning this process, it became clear to us that to produce a large booklet would drive costs up, especially as in the last years paper prices have risen sharply, and ultimately the price paid by those of you who wish to support the composer's work adapting JRR Tolkien would in turn rise. The decision was taken to make the booklet cost effective while balancing the usefulness of the libretto. As such, a digital version of this booklet is available for those who might wish to have a copy on their computer or other devices.

See <https://www.volanteopera.wales/epic-scenes-and-musical-chapters-libretti>

AT THIS POINT WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK VARIOUS PEOPLE

Volante Opera Productions would like to thank all of the singers who took part in the recording of this immense work – it has been no small undertaking and they have all gone above and beyond to fill these roles in such an incredible way for you all to hear.

Volante and Paul would also like to jointly thank the officers of Zarathustra: The Paul Corfield Godfrey Trust, namely Klara Claesson, Larissa Martins Costa and Phillip Walch, for not only their work behind the scenes in helping get this project to its release but their unwavering support and friendship of us as individuals as well.

Volante would also like to offer thanks to a person without who none of this would likely have started – Jeroen Bakker. His articles and early championing of Paul's work were what crossed our paths in 2018 and started these endeavours - without him we may never have come across Paul's music.

Our deepest gratitude to Ted Nasmith, whose artwork he has so graciously supplied to us for the the presentation of this work, and The Silmarillion, and The Hobbit, which will be released in late Summer 2026.

To the channels who have helped inform the Tolkien community about this project. Everyone at theonering.net for their support and for announcing the release for us. Alan Sisto and the gang at the 'Prancing Pony Podcast' and its sister channel, 'Today's Tolkien Times'. Marcel R. Bülles at thetolkienist.com for introducing our work to his followers. To our friends at www.youtube.com/@TolkienTalk for support and friendship. To Paulo Nardi and Valerio Merenda of the 'Associazione Italiana Studi Tolkieniani' at <https://www.jrrtolkien.it/>. We are honoured and deeply grateful to you all for the support and encouragement.

To Jeremy Edmonds, Andrew Ferguson, and Chad High of tolkienguide.com. For advice, help with contacts, and again to Jeremy for the use of his recording space for video meetings and recordings. We are very grateful to the three of you.

For taking part in the recording of Bilbo's birthday/leaving party as extras, Patrick A. Kompio, Deniz Bevan, Steve Jones, Melanie Madden, Laylla Martins Costa, Larissa Martins Costa, Chris Haralambous, Klara Claesson, Irja Claesson, Fredrik Johnsson, Phillip Walch, Austin Cook, thank you from all the team.

We extend our thanks to Pontypridd Choral Society for adding their voices to Bilbo's party and to the 'Scouring of the Shire'.

To all those who helped but are not named here due to your help coming after this booklet was sent for printing, you are not forgotten and we will include you all in our digital booklet.

Klara, Larissa and Phil would like jointly to thank the person who has made this project possible. Without Paul Corfield Godfrey's long dedication and commitment, this work would not be possible. We are honoured to have been entrusted to assist him with this monumental endeavour, and to call him a friend.

Lastly to Christopher Tolkien, who encouraged Paul in the days when it appeared that this and Paul's other Tolkien cycles would never reach an audience. His enthusiasm is never forgotten.



This work would not be possible without the extraordinary generosity of all of our singers who have given their free time to help record this work. We offer our most humble thanks to each and every one of them.

Cast and characters, in order of appearance

Characters introduced in *The Fellowship of the Ring*

Hamfast 'Ham' Gamgee (bass)
Old Noakes (baritone)
Daddy Twofoot (baritone)
The Stranger (baritone)
Ted Sandyman (tenor)
Gandalf (baritone)
Bilbo Baggins (tenor)
Odo Proudfoot (baritone)
Lobelia Sackville-Baggins (mezzo-soprano)
Everard Took (tenor)
Otho Sackville-Baggins (baritone)
Peregrin 'Pippin' Took (tenor)
Meriadoc 'Merry' Brandybuck (baritone)
Rory Brandybuck (baritone)
Frodo Baggins (tenor)
Samwise 'Sam' Gamgee (baritone)
Sméagol / Gollum (tenor)

Déagol (baritone)
Gildor Inglorion (tenor)
Tom Bombadil (baritone)
Goldberry (soprano)
The Barrow-Wight (mezzo-soprano)
Barliman Butterbur (bass)

Bill Ferny (bass)
Strider / Aragorn (bass-baritone)
Glorfindel (tenor)
Glóin (bass-baritone)
Elrond (tenor)
Lindir (mezzo-soprano)
Khamûl (bass)

Dáin II (bass)
Boromir (bass)
Galdor (baritone)
Saruman (tenor)
Gimli (bass)
Legolas (tenor)
Haldir (baritone)
Celeborn (bass-baritone)
Galadriel (soprano)

Jasey Hall
Owen Webb
Alastair Moore
Howard Kirk
Edmond Choo
Philip Lloyd-Evans
Huw Llywelyn
Howard Kirk

Helen Greenaway
Peter Wilman
Owen Webb
David Fortey

Dyfed Wyn Evans
Alastair Moore
Simon Crosby Buttle
Julian Boyce
Michael Clifton-

Thompson

Alastair Moore
Rhodri Prys Jones
Howard Kirk
Emma Mary Llewellyn
Sophie Yelland
George Newton-

Fitzgerald

Laurence Cole
Stephen Wells
Edmond Choo
Gavin Davies
James Schouten
Louise Ratcliffe
George Newton-

Fitzgerald

Jasey Hall
Laurence Cole
Howard Kirk
Gareth Lloyd
Gareth Long
Rhodri Prys Jones
Howard Kirk
Gavin Davies
Angharad Morgan

Characters introduced in *The Two Towers*

Uglúk (baritone)
Grishnákh (tenor)
Treebeard (bass)
Éomer (tenor)
Éothain (baritone)
Háma (baritone)
Théoden (bass-baritone)
Wormtongue (tenor)
Éowyn (mezzo-soprano)
Quickbeam (baritone)
Anborn (bass)
Faramir (tenor)
Damrod (baritone)
Mablung (baritone)
Ceorl (bass)

The Voice of Sauron (bass)
Shagrat (tenor)
Gorbag (baritone)

Characters introduced in *The Return of the King*

Denethor (bass)
Beregond (baritone)
Halbarad (baritone)
Elrohir (bass)

Elladan (bass)
King of the Dead (mezzo-soprano)
Imrahil (baritone)
Ingold (tenor)
The Witch-king (bass)
Ioreth (mezzo-soprano)
The Herb Master (bass)
The Mouth of Sauron (bass)
Snaga (tenor)
Tracker (tenor)
Soldier (baritone)
Gwaihir (soprano)
The Minstrel (tenor)
Arwen (soprano)
Hob Hayward (baritone)
Farmer Cotton (baritone)
Círdan (bass)
The Voice of Elbereth (soprano)

Alastair Moore
Peter Wilman
Martin Lloyd
Huw Llywelyn
Howard Kirk
Alastair Moore
Gavin Davies
Peter Wilman
Helen Jarmany
Howard Kirk
Jasey Hall
James Schouten
Alastair Moore
Owen Webb
George Newton-Fitzgerald
Jasey Hall
Peter Wilman
Alastair Moore

Laurence Cole
Alastair Moore
Owen Webb
George Newton-Fitzgerald

Jasey Hall
Francesca Saracino
Owen Webb
Peter Wilman
Jasey Hall
Helen Greenaway
Martin Lloyd
Laurence Cole
Steffan Lloyd-Evans
Peter Wilman
Alastair Moore
Rosie Hay
Rhodri Prys Jones
Emma Mary Llewellyn
Howard Kirk
Alastair Moore
Laurence Cole
Emma Mary Llewellyn

Chorus

soprano:
mezzo-soprano:
tenor:
bass:

Meriel Andrew, Rosie Hay, Emma Mary Llewellyn, Angharad Morgan
Helen Greenaway, Carolyn Jackson, Stella Woodman, Sophie Yelland
Simon Crosby Buttle, Edmond Choo, Huw Llywelyn, Peter Wilman
Julian Boyce, Dyfed Wyn Evans, George Newton-Fitzgerald, Jasey Hall
(and Martin Lloyd in "Flight to the Ford")

For more information on the performers found on this recording, see
<https://www.volanteopera.wales/biographies>



THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

TRACK LIST

CD 1

A Long Expected Party 34:10

- [1] Scene One
- [2] Scene Two
- [3] Scene Three
- [4] Scene Four
- [5] *Walking Song*: "The road goes ever on and on..."

The Return of the Shadow 45:13

- [6] Scene One
- [7] Scene Two
- [8] "In Eregion long ago..."
- [9] "It is but two lines..."
- [10] "Long after, but still long ago..."
- [11] "Well, well, bless my beard..."
- [12] Scene Three
- [13] "It's going to be a fine night..."
- [14] Scene Four
- [15] *Drinking Song*: "Ho! ho! ho!..."
- [16] "Snow-white, Snow-white!..."
- [17] Scene Five

CD 2

Tom Bombadil 37:55

- [1] Prelude: *The Old Forest*
- [2] Scene One
- [3] "Hey dol, merry dol..."
- [4] "Well, my little fellows..."
- [5] "Hey come derry dol..."
- [6] Scene Two
- [7] "The sun will shine tomorrow..."
- [8] "Ring a ding dillo..."
- [9] Scene Three
- [10] Scene Four
- [11] "Ho, Tom Bombadil..."
- [12] "Wake now my merry lads..."
- [13] "Bombadil will give you clothes..."

The Prancing Pony 24:13

- [14] Scene One
- [15] "There is an inn, a merry old inn..."
- [16] "Barly! Barly!..."
- [17] Scene Two: Interlude
- [18] "Hello! Who are you, and what do you want?..."
- [19] "Dear Frodo. Bad news has reached me here..."
- [20] "Why didn't you tell us you were a friend..."

CD 3

Flight to the Ford 29:41

- [1] Prelude: *Weathertop*
- [2] Scene One
- [3] "Gil-Galad was an Elven King..."
- [4] "Look, the moon is rising..."
- [5] Scene Two
- [6] Scene Three: *The Stone Troll*
- [7] Scene Four
- [8] Scene Five

The Council of Elrond 44:59

- [9] Scene One
- [10] Scene Two
- [11] *Song of the Blessed Realm*: "A Elbereth Gilthoniel..."
- [12] Scene Three
- [13] "Here, my friends, is Frodo son of Drogo..."
- [14] "It is now many years ago..."
- [15] "You have done well to come..."
- [16] "Seek for the sword that was broken..."
- [17] "Bring out the Ring, Frodo..."
- [18] "These things, Galdor..."
- [19] "Know also, my friends..."
- [20] "And now I will answer..."
- [21] "Saruman, I said, only one hand..."

CD 4

The Council of Elrond, pt. 2 08:07

- [1] "This is grave news concerning Saruman..."
- [2] "I do not understand..."
- [3] "The road then that must be trod..."

Farewell to Rivendell 22:25

- [4] Scene One
- [5] "This is Sting..."
- [6] "I sit beside the fire and think..."
- [7] Interlude: *The Reforging of Andúril*
- [8] Scenes Two
- [9] Scene Three

A Journey in the Dark 22:38

- [10] Scene One
- [11] "Follow my staff!..."
- [12] Scene Two
- [13] Scene Three
- [14] Scene Four

CD 5

The Mirror of Galadriel 49:04

- [1] Prelude: *Lament for Gandalf*
- [2] Scene One
- [3] Scene Two
- [4] Scene Three
- [5] "I know what it was that last you saw..."
- [6] Scene Four
- [7] Scene Five
- [8] "Ai! laurië lantar lassi súrinen..."

The Breaking of the Fellowship 22:31

- [9] Scene One
- [10] Interlude & Scene Two
- [11] Scenes Three
- [12] Scene Four



THE TWO TOWERS

TRACK LIST

CD 6

The Plains and the Forest 32:55

- [1] Scene One
- [2] "I tried to take the Ring from Frodo..."
- [3] *Lament for Boromir*: "Through Rohan over fen and field..."
- [4] "This is strange! There are only two boats..."
- [5] Scene Two
- [6] Scene Three
- [7] "In the willow-meads of Tasarinan..."

The Riders of Rohan 32:09

- [8] Scene One
- [9] "Gondor! Gondor! Would that I looked upon you..."
- [10] Scene Two
- [11] Scene Three
- [12] "Taurelilómëa tumbalemorna tumbaletaurëa Lómëanor..."
- [13] Scene Four
- [14] "Well met, my friends..."
- [15] "I have spoken words only of hope..."
- [16] "But first, it would ease my heart..."

CD 7

The Black Gate is Closed 36:38

- [1] Prelude
- [2] Scene One
- [3] Scene Two
- [4] "Alive without breath, as cold as death..."
- [5] Scene Three
- [6] Scene Four
- [7] Scene Five
- [8] "Grey as a mouse..."

The King of the Golden Hall 30:51

- [9] Scene One
- [10] Scene Two
- [11] Scene Three
- [12] "Now, Théoden son of Thengel..."
- [13] "There is no time to tell you all..."
- [14] "Here, Lord, is Herugrim your ancient blade..."
- [15] "Behold! I go forth..."
- [16] Scene Four

CD 8

The Window on the West 38:58

- [1] Scene One
- [2] "Here is where the smoke came from!..."
- [3] "And now, Frodo, of your errand?..."
- [4] "Five days ere I set out..."
- [5] Scene Two
- [6] Scene Three
- [7] Interlude: *The Pool*
- [8] Scene Four
- [9] Interlude: *Waterfall*
- [10] Scene Five

The Journey to Isengard 34:02

- [11] Scene One
- [12] Scene Two
- [13] Scene Three
- [14] Scene Four
- [15] "Well, well! The hunt is over..."
- [16] "And here is Gandalf, with Théoden..."

CD 9

The Voice of Saruman 28:13

- [1] Scene One
- [2] "But you, Gandalf! For you at least..."
- [3] "Stay, Saruman! I did not give you leave..."
- [4] Scene Two

Cirith Ungol 35:27

- [5] Prelude: *Journey to the Cross-Roads*
- [6] Scene One
- [7] Scene Two
- [8] Scene Three
- [9] Scene Four
- [10] Scene Five
- [11] Scene Six



THE RETURN OF THE KING

TRACK LIST

CD 10		CD 12	
Minas Tirith	21:20	Mount Doom	45:00
[1] Scene One		[1] Scene One	
[2] Scene Two		[2] Scene Two	
[3] "Here do I swear fealty and service..."		[3] Scene Three	
[4] Scene Three		[4] Scene Four	
[5] "Hullo! I am glad to see you back..."		[5] Scene Five	
The Passing of the Grey Company	32:07	[6] Scene Six	
[6] Prelude		The Field of Cormallen	25:36
[7] Scene One		[7] Scene One	
[8] Scene Two		[8] Scene two	
[9] "It is near the hour of our going..."		[9] "It reminds me of Númenor..."	
[10] "Come! Speak and be comforted..."		[10] Scene Three	
[11] "Over the lands there lies a long shadow..."		CD 13	
[12] "Aragorn, why will you go on this deadly road?..."		The Steward and the King	30:15
[13] Scene Three		[1] Prelude: <i>The Song of the Eagle</i>	
[14] "This is an evil way..."		[2] Scene One	
The Siege of Gondor	25:54	[3] "The last Steward of Gondor begs leave..."	
[15] Prelude: <i>The Ride of the Rohirrim</i>		[4] Scene Two	
[16] Scene One		[5] Scene Three	
[17] Scene Two		Homeward Bound	31:08
[18] Scene Three		[6] Scene One	
[19] Scene Four		[7] Scene Two	
[20] Scene Five		[8] Scene Three	
CD 11		[9] Scene Four	
Pelennor Fields	28:17	[10] Scene Five	
[1] Prelude and Scene One		CD 14	
[2] "Arise, arise, Riders of Théoden!..."		The Scouring of the Shire	23:46
[3] "Begone, foul dwimmerlaik, lord of carrion!..."		[1] Scene One	
[4] "Farewell, Master Holbytla! My body is broken..."		[2] Scene Two	
[5] "There Théoden fell..."		[3] Scene Three	
[6] Scene Two		[4] "No doubt, no doubt!..."	
[7] "Death in the morning and at day's ending..."		The Grey Havens	35:00
[8] Scene Three		[5] Prelude	
[9] Scene Four		[6] Scene One: <i>The Sea Bell</i>	
[10] "Out of doubt, out of dark..."		[7] Scene Two	
[11] "Thus we meet again..."		[8] Scene Three	
The Houses of Healing	34:34	CD 15	
[12] Prelude		APPENDICES	
[13] Scene One		[1] <i>The Lay of Lúthien</i>	15:10
[14] "He is nearly spent..."		[2] <i>The Lay of Eärendil</i>	26:44
[15] "Hail, Lord! It is long since..."		[3] <i>The Lay of Durin</i>	09:05
[16] "Look! Gulls! They are flying far inland..."		[4] <i>The Lay of Nimrodel</i>	05:25
[17] Scene Two		[5] <i>Aragorn and Arwen</i>	22:16
The Black Gate Opens	12:38		
[18] Prelude			
[19] "Come forth! Come forth!..."			
[20] "The Eagles are coming!..."			



NOTE FOR LISTENERS

These musical chapters from *The Lord of the Rings* constitute a massive whole, and we strongly recommend that you should allow yourself adequate breaks when playing the discs, in order to avoid both physical and audio fatigue. We suggest that you follow the guidelines for live and concert performances, splitting the chapters into at least six sessions, and allowing for sufficient intervals between individual chapters where indicated by an asterisk.

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THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

CD 1 A LONG-EXPECTED PARTY

[1] Scene One

The Ivy Bush inn on Bywater Road. The interior is filled with smoke and laughter. Ham Gamgee holds forth in a corner; his audience are attentive but sceptical

HAM GAMGEE A very nice well-spoken gentlehobbit is Mister Bilbo Baggins, as I've always said.

OLD NOAKES But what about this Frodo that lives with him? Baggins is his name, but he's more than half a Brandybuck, they say. It beats me why any Baggins of Hobbiton should go looking for a wife away there in Buckland, where folks are so queer.

DADDY TWOFOOT And no wonder they're queer, if they live on the wrong side of the Brandywine River, and right agin the Old Forest. That's a dark bad place, if half the tales be true.

HAM GAMGEE You're right, Dad!....not that the Brandybucks live *in* the Old Forest; but they're a queer breed, seemingly. They play about with boats on that big river; and that ain't natural. But be that as it may, Mister Frodo is as nice a young hobbit as you could wish to meet. Very much like Mister Bilbo, and in more than looks. After all his father was a Baggins. A decent respectable hobbit was Mister Drogo Baggins, and there was never much to tell of him, till he was drowned.

The STRANGER [most surprised] Drowned?

HAM GAMGEE Well, so they say. You see: Mister Drogo, he married poor Miss Primula Brandybuck. She was our Mister Bilbo's cousin on the mother's side, her mother being the youngest of the Old Took's daughters, and Mister Drogo was his second cousin; so Mister Frodo is his first and second cousin, once removed either way, as the saying is, if you follow me. And Mister Drogo was staying at Brandy Hall with his father-in-law, old Master Gorbodoc, as he often did after his marriage (him being partial to his vittles, and old Gorbodoc keeping a mighty generous table), and he went out *boating* on the Brandywine River; and he and his wife were drowned, and poor Mister Frodo only a child and all.

OLD NOAKES I heard they went on the water after dinner in the moonlight, and it was Drogo's weight as sunk the boat.

TED SANDYMAN And I heard she pushed him in, and he pulled her in after him.

HAM GAMGEE [somewhat shocked] You shouldn't listen to all you hear, Sandyman. There isn't no call to go talking of pushing and pulling. Boats are quite

tricky enough for those as sit still without looking further for the cause of the trouble. Anyway: there was this Mister Frodo left an orphan and stranded, as the saying is, among those queer Bucklanders, being brought up anyhow in Brandy Hall. A regular warren, by all account. Old Master Gorbodoc never had fewer than a couple of hundred relations in the place. Mister Bilbo never did a kinder deed than when he brought the lad back to live among decent folk. But I reckon it was a nasty shock for those Sackville-Bagginses. They thought they was going to get Bag End, that time he went off and was thought to be dead. And then he comes back and orders them off, and he goes on living and living, and never looking a day older, bless him! And then suddenly he produces an heir, and has all the papers made out proper. The Sackville-Bagginses won't never see the inside of Bag End now, or 'tis to be hoped not.

The STRANGER There's a tidy bit of money stacked away up there, I hear tell. All the top of your Hill is full of tunnels packed with chests of gold and silver, and jools, by what I've heard.

HAM GAMGEE Then you've heard more than I can speak to; I know nothing of jools. Mister Bilbo is free with his money, and there seems no end of it; but I know of no tunnel-making. But my lad Sam will know more about that. He's in and out of Bag End. Crazy about stories of the old days he is, and he listens to all Mister Bilbo's tales. Mister Bilbo has learned him his letters—meaning no harm, mind you, and I hope that none will come of it. *Elves and Dragons!* I says to him. *Cabbages and potatoes are better for me and you. Don't go getting mixed up in the business of your betters, or you'll land in trouble too big for you,* I says to him. And I might say it to others, too.

He looks sharply at Sandyman, and there is general laughter

TED SANDYMAN Ah, but he has likely been adding to what he brought at first. He's often away from home. And look at the outlandish folk who visit him: dwarves coming at night, and that old wandering conjuror Gandalf and all. You can say what you like, Gaffer, but Bag End's a queer place, and its folk are queerer.

HAM GAMGEE And you can say what you like, about what you know no more of than you do of boating, Mister Sandyman. If that's being queer, then we could do with a bit more queerness in these parts. There's some not far from here who wouldn't offer a pint of beer to a friend, not if they lived in a hole with golden walls. But they do things proper at Bag End. Our Sam says that everyone's going to be invited to the party, and there's going to be a feast, mark you, a feast for all—this very Thursday as is.

The inner curtain falls, cutting off the scene. Before the curtain the stage is in darkness

[2] Scene Two

Suddenly through the inner curtain there appears a gaudy display of flowers, as if in a garden. The light falls through the curtain as if through a window, and illuminates the figures of Gandalf and Bilbo sitting looking out into the garden

GANDALF How bright your garden looks! **BILBO** Yes. I am very fond of it, and of all the dear old Shire; but I think I need a holiday.

GANDALF You mean to go on with your plan, then?

BILBO I do. I made up my mind months ago, and I haven't changed it.

GANDALF Very well. It is no good saying more. Stick to your plan—the whole plan, mind—and I hope it will turn out the best, for you, and for all of us.

BILBO I hope so. Anyway I mean to enjoy myself on Thursday, and have my little joke.

GANDALF Who will laugh, I wonder?

BILBO We shall see.

The light on the two figures at the front fades. At the same time the light on the other side of the inner curtain grows, and the flowers transform themselves into a sheaf of cut blossoms hanging above the table in the following scene. When the light has grown fully behind it, the inner curtain rises

[3] Scene Three

The next evening. Bilbo is presiding at table, whereat sit one hundred and forty-four hobbits, including Odo Proudfoot, Everard Took, Melilot Brandybuck, Otho and Lobelia Sackville-Baggins, Rory Brandybuck, Merry Brandybuck, Pippin Took, Frodo Baggins and Fredegard Bolger. They are all eating and drinking merrily. Bilbo rises for a speech. Some of the hobbits, and especially the Sackville-Bagginses, sit back with looks of boredom

BILBO My dear people...

Cries of Hear, hear!, laughter and cheers interrupt him. Bilbo pauses, smiling, and puts one hand in his trouser pocket before beginning again

My dear Bagginses and Boffins; and my dear Tookes and Brandybucks, and Grubbs and Chubbs, and Burrowses and Hornblowers, and Bolgers, Bracegirdles, Goodbodies, Brockhouses and Proudfoots...

ODO PROUDFOOT Proudfeet!

BILBO Proudfoots. Also my good Sackville-Bagginses whom I welcome back at last to Bag End. Today is my one hundred and eleventh birthday: I am eleventy-one today!

Shouts of Hooray!, Many happy returns!, etc., also stamps and claps as before. Miscellaneous noises of trumpets and horns, pipes and flutes, and other musical instruments: crackers are pulled. Everard Took begins to make arrangements for an impromptu musical

evening, and he and Melilot Brandybuck, being somewhat inebriated, start to dance merrily on the table. Bilbo stares aghast for a moment; then, grabbing a horn, he blows three loud toots. There is silence

I shall not keep you long.

An ironic cheer arises from some of the guests

I have called you together for a purpose: indeed, for three purposes. Firstly, to tell you that I am immensely fond of you all, and that eleventy-one years is far too short a time to spend among such excellent hobbits. [*Cheers of approval, calls of Hear, hear!, etc*] I don't know half of you half as well as I should like; and I like less than half of you half as well as you deserve.

LOBELIA [*aside to Otho*] Is that a compliment or not?

BILBO Secondly, to celebrate my birthday. I should say: *our* birthday. For it is, of course, also the birthday of my heir and nephew, Frodo.

LOBELIA Silly old fool! Why doesn't he get it over with?

BILBO He comes of age and into his inheritance today.

LOBELIA And what does he mean by that?

BILBO Together we score one hundred and forty-four. Your numbers were chosen to fit this remarkable total: one Gross, if I may use the expression.

LOBELIA I suppose we were invited to fill up the number!

EVERARD TOOK One Gross, indeed! Vulgar expression!

BILBO It is also, if I may be allowed to refer to ancient history, the anniversary of my arrival by barrel at Esgaroth on the Long Lake; though the fact that it was my birthday slipped my memory on that occasion. The banquet was very splendid, however, though I had a bad cold at the time, I remember, and could not say much except *Thag you very buch*. I now repeat it more correctly: Thank you very much for coming to my little party.

Bilbo draws himself up and speaks loudly; everyone sits up who still can. Some hobbits continue eating and paying only half attention

Thirdly, I wish to make an announcement. I regret to announce that—though, as I say, eleventy-one years is far too short a time to spend among you—this is the end. I am going. I am leaving *now*. Goodbye!

There is a flash. When it clears, Bilbo has totally vanished. There is a gasp. Odo Proudfoot stamps his feet impatiently. And then everyone starts talking at once

LOBELIA Very bad taste!

OTHO He's mad. I always said so.

EVERARD TOOK Absurd behaviour.

PIPPIN What fun!

MERRY Isn't it?

ODO PROUDFOOT Ridiculous prank.

RORY BRANDYBUCK I'm not so sure. There's something fishy about this. I believe that Mad Baggins is off again, silly old fool! But why worry? He hasn't taken the vittles with him. Come on, Frodo! More food, more drink!

Frodo nods to the waiters, who serves food and drink. As he leaves the tent, the light fades and the inner curtain descends

[4] Scene Four

The stage is in the parlour of Bag End, as in Scene Two of The Hobbit. Bilbo, again visible, puts his head round the door and enters. He is dressed dwarf-fashion. He then takes the Ring out of his pocket, and makes as though to put it in an envelope on the mantelpiece; but instead he removes it and puts it in his pocket. Then the door opens and Gandalf enters

BILBO Hello! I wondered if you would turn up.

GANDALF [*seating himself*] I am glad to find you visible. I wanted to catch you and have a few words. I suppose you feel that everything has gone off splendidly and according to plan?

BILBO I do. Though that flash was surprising; it quite startled me, let alone the others. A little addition of your own, I suppose?

GANDALF It was. You have wisely kept that ring secret all these years, and it seemed to me necessary to give your guests something else that would seem to explain your sudden vanishment.

BILBO And would spoil my joke. You are an interfering old busybody, but I expect you know best, as usual.

GANDALF I do; when I know anything. But I don't feel too sure about this whole affair. It has now come to the final point. You have had your joke, and given the whole Shire something to talk about for nine days, or nine months very likely, and annoyed or offended most of your relatives. Are you going any further?

BILBO Yes, I am. I feel I need a holiday, a very long holiday, as I told you before.

Probably a permanent holiday: I don't expect I shall return. In fact, I don't mean to, and have made all the arrangements. I am old, Gandalf. I don't look it, but I am beginning to feel it in my heart of hearts. I feel all thin, sort of stretched, if you know what I mean; like butter that has been spread over too much bread. That can't be right. I need a change, or something. I want to see mountains again, Gandalf,

mountains—and then find somewhere where I can rest. You'll look after Frodo, won't you, when I am gone?—keep an eye on him?

GANDALF Yes, I will: two eyes, as often as I can spare them.

BILBO I am leaving everything to him, of course. I hope he will be happy, when he gets used to being on his own. It's time he was his own master now.

GANDALF Everything? The ring as well? You agreed to that, you remember.

BILBO Well... I... guess, I suppose so.

GANDALF Where is it?

BILBO In an envelope, if you must know: there on the mantelpiece. Well, no! here it is in my pocket! Isn't that odd now? Yes, after all, why not? Why shouldn't it stay there? And what business is it of yours, to know what I do with my own things?

GANDALF There is no need to get angry.

BILBO If I am it is your fault. It is mine, I tell you. It is my own. I found it. It came to me. My own. My precious. Yes, my precious.

GANDALF [*alarmed*] It has been called that before, but not by you.

BILBO But I say it now. And why not? Even if Gollum said the same once. It's mine now, and I shall keep it, I say.

GANDALF [*rising and speaking sternly*] You will be a fool if you do, Bilbo. It has got far too much hold on you. Let it go! And then you can go yourself, and be free!

BILBO I'll do as I choose, and go as I please!

GANDALF Now, now, my dear hobbit! All your long life we have been friends, and you owe me something. Do as you promised: give it up!

BILBO [*gripping his sword*] Well, if you want my ring yourself, say so! But I won't give my precious away, I tell you.

GANDALF [*very sternly*] It will be my turn to get angry soon; and if you say that again, I shall. Then you shall see Gandalf the Grey unclashed.

BILBO [*beginning to tremble*] I don't know what has come over you, Gandalf. You have never been like this before. What's it all about? I found it, and Gollum would have killed me, if I hadn't kept it. I'm not a thief, whatever he said.

GANDALF I have never called you one. And I am not one either. I was not trying to rob you, but to help you. I wish you would trust me, as you used.

BILBO I'm sorry. But I felt so queer. It has been so growing on my mind lately. I don't seem able to make up my mind.

GANDALF Then trust mine. It is quite made up. Go away, and leave it behind. Give it to Frodo, and I will look after him.

BILBO [*with a sigh of relief*] All right, I will. And now I really must be starting, or somebody else will catch me.

GANDALF You have still got the ring in your pocket.

BILBO Well, so I have! You had better take it and deliver it for me.

GANDALF No, don't give the ring to me. Put it on the mantelpiece. It will be quite safe there, until Frodo comes.

BILBO [*does so*] Well, that's that. Now I'm off.

GANDALF Goodbye for the present, Bilbo, until our next meeting!

Bilbo turns and passes quickly from the room

[5] **BILBO**

The Road goes ever on and on
down from the door where it began.
Now far ahead the Road has gone
and I must follow, if I can,
pursuing it with eager feet
until it joins some larger way
where many paths and errands meet.
And whither then? I cannot say.

*His voice dies away. Gandalf remains still
in his chair, deep in thought. Shortly
Frodo comes in quietly*

FRODO Has he gone?

GANDALF Yes; he has gone at last. He
left a packet for you on the mantelpiece.

*Frodo picks up the packet and glances at
it, but does not open it*

You are master of Bag End now. Also, I
fancy, you'll find a golden ring.

FRODO The ring! Has he left me that? I
wonder why. Still, it may be useful.

GANDALF I should not make use of it, if I
were you. But keep it secret, and keep it
safe!

FRODO You are very mysterious! What
are you afraid of?

GANDALF I am not certain; so I will say
no more. I may be able to tell you some-
thing when I come back. I'll come and see
you again as soon as I can. Look out for
me, especially at unlikely times! Goodbye!

*He leaves. Frodo opens the packet and
stares at the ring with increasing
bewilderment. The curtain falls slowly*

THE RETURN OF THE SHADOW

[6] **Scene One**

*Seventeen years after the events in A
Long-expected Party. The scene is in the
Green Dragon Inn in Bywater. Ted
Sandyman is sitting near the fire talking
to Sam Gamgee, and a number of other
hobbits are clustered around listening*

SAM Queer things you do hear these
days, to be sure.

TED SANDYMAN Ah, you do if you listen.
But I can hear fireside tales and children's
stories at home, if I want to.

SAM No doubt you can; and I dare say
there's more truth in them than you give
them credit for. Take dragons, now.

TED SANDYMAN No, thank 'ee, I won't.
There's only one dragon in Bywater, and
that's green.

SAM *[laughing with the rest]* All right. But
what about these tree-men, these giants as
you may call them? They do say that one
as big as an elm tree was seen up away
beyond the North Moors, not long back.

TED SANDYMAN Who says?

SAM My cousin Hal for one.

TED SANDYMAN Says he did, perhaps.
Your Hal's always saying that he's seen
things; and sometimes he sees things as
ain't there.

SAM But this one was walking, I tell you;
and there ain't no elm tree on the North
Moors.

TED SANDYMAN Then Hal can't have
seen one.

SAM *[undeterred by the general laughter
and clapping]* All the same, you can't deny
that others beside our Halfast have seen
queer folk crossing the Shire: crossing it,
mind you...there are more that are turned
back at the borders. And I've heard tell that
the Elves are moving west, sailing over the
Sea and leaving us.

TED SANDYMAN Well, that isn't anything
new, if you believe the old tales. Let them
sail! but I warrant you haven't seen them
doing it, nor anyone else in the Shire.

SAM *[doubtfully]* Well, I don't know.
There's Mister Baggins now, who I work for.
He told me they were sailing, and he knows
a lot about Elves. And old Mister Bilbo
knew more.

TED SANDYMAN Oh, they're both
cracked. Leastways, old Mister Bilbo was
cracked, and Frodo's cracking. If that's
where you get your news from, you'll never
want for moonshine.

He stands up and drains his mug
Well, friends, I'm off home.

*He goes out. The other hobbits, except
Sam, who sits in the corner thoughtfully,
go out. He drains his mug and goes out.
Darkness veils the scene*

[7] **Scene Two**

*The inner curtain rises to disclose the
scene as at the end of A Long-expected
Party, but with the stage set further back.
Otherwise the scene is largely the same;
Frodo is sitting in his armchair and
seems hardly to have moved since the
earlier scene, except that the ring is no
longer to be seen. Then there is a knock
at the door. Frodo sighs and rises, opens
the door, and starts back in surprise*

FRODO Gandalf! I...I haven't seen you for
nearly seventeen years! I thought you had
given up all interest in the doings of the
Shire.

GANDALF *[looking weary and older, but
feigning cheerfulness]* All well, eh? You
look the same as ever, Frodo!

FRODO So do you. But I...I...well, come in!

GANDALF *[entering and hanging up his
cloak]* Thank you. I will. Because I have
not come purely on a social call. I have
things to tell you, about Bilbo; about your
ring; and about the Dark Lord of Mordor.

FRODO *[looking alarmed and shutting the
door quickly]* What on earth is the matter?

GANDALF Well, this must be said: your
ring is dangerous—no, perilous, deadly.

FRODO *[very alarmed and moving
towards his chair]* In what way?

[8] GANDALF *[sitting down with him]*
In Eregion long ago many magic rings were
made. A mortal who keeps one of them
does not die, but he does not continue to
grow or obtain more life, he merely
continues, until at last every minute
becomes a weariness. And if he often uses
the Ring to become invisible, he fades; he
becomes in the end invisible permanently,
and walks in the twilight under the Eye of

the dark power that rules the Rings. Yes,
sooner or later—later, if he is strong and
well-meaning to begin with, but neither
strength nor good purpose will last—sooner
or later the Dark Power will devour him.

FRODO How long have you known all
this?

GANDALF It was just before the Battle of
the Five Armies that Bilbo found his ring. A
shadow fell on my heart then; I wondered
often how Gollum came by such a thing. I
might perhaps have consulted Saruman the
White, but something always held me back.

FRODO Who's he? I never heard of him
before.

GANDALF He is the chief of my Order
and the head of the White Council. His
knowledge is deep; but his pride is great,
and he ill takes any meddling. But all that
he would reveal of his lore told against my
fears; so my doubt slept, but uneasily.
Until that night when Bilbo left this house.
He said and did things then that no words
of Saruman could allay. I knew at last that
something dark and dreadful was at work.
And I have spent most of the years since in
finding out about it. You do not know your
real peril yet; but you shall. Give me the
ring for a moment.

*Frodo sits quite still for a moment. Then
reluctantly he takes the Ring from his
pocket and hands it slowly to Gandalf.*

Gandalf takes it and holds it up

Do you see any markings on it?

FRODO No; there are none. It is quite
plain, and never shows any sign of wear.

GANDALF Well, then, look!

*He throws the Ring into a corner of the
fire; Frodo gasps and gropes for the
tongs. Gandalf turns sternly*

No—wait!

*It becomes very dark outside. As Gandalf
takes the tongs and removes the Ring
from the fire, it seems to glow with an
ethereal light, Gandalf takes it in his
hand, and Frodo gasps*

It is quite cool. Take it!

*Frodo takes the ring. As he looks at it, he
gasps again, he sees writing appear on
the previously plain gold band*

FRODO I cannot read the fiery letters.

GANDALF No, but I can. The letters are
Elvish, of an ancient mode, but the tongue
is that of Mordor, which I will not utter here.

[9] It is but two lines of a verse long
known in Elven lore:

*Three Rings for the Elven kings under the
sky,
seven for the dwarf-lords in their halls of
stone,
nine for Mortal men doomed to die,
one for the Dark Lord on his Dark Throne
in the Land of Mordor where the Shadows
lie.
One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find
them,
one Ring to bring them all and in the
darkness bind them
in the Land of Mordor where the Shadows
lie.*

GANDALF This is the Master-ring, the One Ring to rule them all. This is the One Ring that he lost many years ago, to the great weakening of his power. He greatly desires it; but he must not get it.

FRODO This Ring! How came it to me?

GANDALF The name of Sauron, the Dark Lord, even you hobbits have heard. After a defeat and a respite, the Shadow takes another form and grows again. The Enemy is fast becoming very strong. We should be hard put to it, even were it not for this dreadful chance. The Three, fairest of all, the Elven kings hid from him, and his hands never touched them or sullied them. Nine he gave to Mortal Men, proud and great, and so ensnared them. Long ago they fell under the dominion of the One, and they became Ringwraiths, shadows under his dark shadow, His most terrible servants. He needs only the One; for he made that Ring himself, it is his, and if he recovers it, He will be stronger than ever.

FRODO Why, why wasn't it destroyed? And how did the Enemy ever come to lose it, if it was so precious to him?

GANDALF It was taken from him. It was Gil-galad, Elven king, and Elendil of Westemnesse who overthrew Sauron, though they perished in the deed; and Isildur Elendil's son cut the Ring from Sauron's hand, and took it for his own. Then Sauron was vanquished, and his spirit fled and was hidden for many years...But the Ring was lost, Frodo.

[10] Long after, but still very long ago, there lived by the banks of the River a clever-handed people. The most inquisitive of that family was called Sméagol.

Slowly as if in a distant vision, the action is seen as described in the narrative

He had a friend named Déagol, of similar sort but not so quick. On a time they went out fishing on the river, and on a sudden a great fish took Déagol, and it dragged him down to the bottom of the river. And there he saw something shining...

In the vision Sméagol comes up behind Déagol on the bank

SMÉAGOL Give us that, Déagol my love.

DÉAGOL Why?

SMÉAGOL Because it's my birthday, my love, and I want it.

DÉAGOL I found it, and I'm going to keep it.

SMÉAGOL Oh, you are indeed, my love.

GANDALF ...and he caught Déagol by the throat and strangled him, because the gold looked so bright and beautiful. Then he put the ring on his finger. He journeyed up into the mountains, and vanished out of all knowledge—till Bilbo came.

FRODO Gollum!

GANDALF Yes, Gollum. After Bilbo escaped from him, he came out in pursuit. He was caught and taken, for examination. And through him the Enemy now knows where the One is hidden. And he has heard at last, I think, of hobbits and the Shire, and Baggins.

FRODO What a pity that Bilbo didn't stab the vile creature, when he had the chance!

GANDALF Pity? It was pity that stayed his hand.

FRODO I do not feel any pity for Gollum. He deserves death.

GANDALF Deserves death! I daresay he does. Many that live deserve death, and many that die deserve life. Even the Wise cannot see all ends.

FRODO But why not destroy the Ring?

GANDALF It cannot be unmade by your hands, or by mine. There is only one way: to find the Cracks of Doom in the depths of Orodruin, the Fiery Mountain, and cast the Ring in there.

FRODO Then I ought to leave Bag End, leave the Shire, leave everything and go away.

GANDALF My dear Frodo! But I am afraid you are right. You will have to go, and leave the name of Baggins behind you. When you go, go as Mister Underhill. You ought to go quiet, and you ought to go soon.

FRODO I know. But where shall I go?

GANDALF If you want my advice, I should make for Rivendell.

FRODO Rivendell! Very good: I will make for Rivendell.

GANDALF I shall have to go off again in the morning; only for a short time, I hope. If I am delayed, do not wait for me; but I do not think you need to go alone.

Suddenly he stops short, listening, then creeps to the door, which he suddenly opens. Sam falls in and to the ground

[11] Well, well, bless my beard! Sam Gamgee is it? Now what may you be doing?

SAM Lor' bless you, Mister Gandalf, sir! Nothing!

GANDALF [*angrily*] Don't be a fool! What did you hear, and why did you listen?

SAM [*dithering*] Well, sir, I heard a deal I didn't rightly understand, about an Enemy, and Rings, and Mister Bilbo, and Elves, sir. Couldn't you take me to see Elves, sir, when you go?

GANDALF Get up, Sam! I have thought of something to punish you for listening. You shall go with Mister Frodo!

SAM [*springing up*] Me, sir! Me go and see Elves and all! Hooray!

To the consternation of Frodo and Gandalf he bursts into tears. Both rush to comfort him, the inner curtain falls quickly

[12] Scene Three

Dusk on the road outside Bag End.

Frodo sits down on the bank; as it grows steadily darker. Merry departs driving a cart piled high with household belongings

MERRY Someone must get there and warm the house before you arrive. See you later: the day after tomorrow, if you don't go to sleep on the way!

Frodo shivers. A long silence. Then the sound of voices drifting on the breeze is heard; the voice of Ham Gamgee can be made out, but the voice of his interrogator is low and indistinguishable

HAM No, Mister Baggins has gone away. Went just now, and my Sam went with him; anyway all his stuff went. Where to? That ain't no secret. He's moved to Buckland or some such place. No, I can't give no message. Good night to you!

Silence descends again. Frodo lies back on the bank with a sigh

[13] FRODO It's going to be a fine night. That's fine for a beginning. I feel like walking. I can't bear any more hanging about. I am going to start, and Gandalf must follow me.

He rises precipitately and goes towards the door

Sam! Pippin! Time!

SAM [*inside*] Coming, sir!

Pippin strolls out of the door and Sam follows, wiping his mouth

FRODO All aboard, Sam?

SAM Yes, sir. I'll last for a little bit now, sir.

FRODO Well now, we're off at last!

He picks up a pack from the ground, and the others do the same. All three go on their way. In the dark the inner curtain rises

[14] Scene Four

The woods are seen, in the light of late afternoon. A road threads its way through the trees, coming from upstage right towards the front and passing offstage at the front left. The ground falls sharply away towards the front right. At first the stage remains empty; then the three hobbits walk slowly along the road from above. Frodo stops and sings softly to himself, looking along the road

FRODO The road goes ever on and on down from the door where it began! Now far ahead the road has gone And I must follow, if I can...

SAM I can hear a horse coming along behind.

PIPPIN Perhaps it is Gandalf coming after us.

FRODO [*suddenly*] It may not matter much, but I would rather not be seen on the road—by anyone. Let's get out of sight!

They all run quickly towards the front and tumble down the bank, Frodo hesitating for a moment at the rear. He raises his head carefully above the bank. The road remains empty. A black horse appears from slowly down the road, on it sits a large man crouching in the saddle, wrapped in a great hooded black cloak. Only his boots in the high stirrups show below, his face shadowed and invisible. When the horse reaches the tree behind which Frodo is hidden, it halts; slowly it turns its head from side to side. Frodo remains still; and then, slowly, his hand reaches down to his pocket. Slowly he draws the Ring out and is about to place it on his hand, when the rider shakes the reins, and the horse moves on down the road. He starts, and replaces the Ring in his pocket wonderingly. Pippin and Sam have seen nothing of this; they lie back on the bank and begin to sing softly

[15] PIPPIN and SAM

Ho! ho! ho! to the bottle I go
to heal my heart and drown my woe.
Rain may fall and wind may blow,
and many miles be still to go,
but under a tall tree will I lie
and let the clouds go sailing by.
Ho! ho! ho!

Suddenly they are interrupted by a lone shrill cry of horror from the road, the cry of some evil creature. All lie still, petrified. Slowly down the road appears another rider, clad in the same way as the first. The dusk has drawn on, and the shape of the Rider is hardly visible against the blackness of the forest. As it reaches their hiding place the horse halts; and the Rider dismounts. Slowly it begins to make its way towards the bank. Frodo and the other hobbits remain absolutely still. And then there comes suddenly a burst of song from downstage, off left

[16] Voices of ELVES

Snow-white! Snow-white! O Lady clear!
O Queen beyond the Western Seas!
O Light to us who wander here
amid the world of woven trees!

The Rider hesitates for a moment, then in the deepening dusk goes back and mounts his horse. He rides off back up the road, blending with the dark shadows
Gilthoniel, O Elbereth!
Clear are thy eyes and bright thy breath!
Snow-white! Snow-white! We sing to thee
In a far land beyond the Sea.

A glimmer of light begins to appear from the left, and slowly a procession of Elves appears, carrying no lamps but shining as it were by a light from within. They pass slowly along the road
O stars that in the Sunless Years
with shining hand by her were sown,
in windy fields now bright and clear
we see your silver blossom blown!

Frodo rises to his feet and climbs the bank; Pippin and Sam follow him
A Elbereth Gilthoniel,
silivren penna-míriel
o menel aglar elenath!
We still remember, we who dwell
in this far land beyond the trees,
thy starlight on the Western Seas.

Gildor sees Frodo and halts

GILDOR Hail, Frodo!

FRODO How do you know my name?
Who are you?

GILDOR I am Gildor Inglorion of the House of Finrod, journeying now to cross over the Great Sea. I do not know for what reason the Enemy pursues you; but I perceive that He is, strange indeed though that appears to me. And I warn you that peril is now both before you and behind you, and upon either side.

FRODO You mean the Black Riders? What are they?

GILDOR Is it not enough to know that they are servants of the Enemy? Flee them! Speak no words to them! They are deadly. May Elbereth protect you!

Many of the Elves have already passed on up the road; a sound of singing is heard from behind the hill. Gildor turns and follows them rapidly. The hobbits return and then hurry quickly on their way. The inner curtain falls

[17] Scene Five

Frodo's house at Crickhollow, the same evening. Merry is hurrying about making things ready for the arrival of Frodo, Sam and Pippin when these three rush in through the door in a state of collapse

MERRY What on earth is the matter?

PIPPIN Black Riders!

MERRY And what on earth are Black Riders?

PIPPIN We have been followed by black figures riding on black horses. But what I want to know from Frodo is why they have been following us.

He winks at Merry, who nods, as he passes towards a chair, and collapses into it. All the others sit down and Frodo leans forward

FRODO Well, I shall have to tell you now. But I don't quite know how to begin.

MERRY I think I could help you by telling you myself.

FRODO What do you mean?

MERRY Just this, my dear old Frodo: you are miserable, because you don't want to say good-bye. You always meant to leave the Shire, of course, but now danger has come upon you sooner than expected, so you must go at once.

PIPPIN You must go; and therefore we must, too. We know the Ring is no laughing matter; but we are going to do our best to help you against the Enemy.

FRODO The Ring!...

MERRY Sam! Confess!... Here's our chief collector of information!

FRODO Sam!

PIPPIN And he collected quite a bit, I can tell you, before he was finally caught.

FRODO [faintly and quite overcome] You are a set of deceitful scoundrels! But bless you! I give in. But the only thing to do is to go off in a quite unexpected direction.

PIPPIN But that can only mean going off into the Old Forest! The stories about it are a nightmare!

MERRY It sounds very desperate, but I believe Frodo is right. It is the only way of getting off without being followed at once. I have been in several times: usually in daylight, of course, when the trees are sleepy and fairly quiet.

Frodo shakes his hand in consent

[18] SAM [goes quickly and apologetically up to Frodo] I don't know how to say it, but I seem to see ahead in a kind of way. I don't know rightly what I want, but I have something to do before the end. I must see it through, sir, if you understand me.

FRODO I don't altogether. But I understand that Gandalf chose me a good companion. I am content.

They remain in silence as the curtain falls

CD 2 TOM BOMBADIL

[1] Prelude

The curtain rises to show a pattern of shifting trees. The hobbits are seen walking through the Old Forest. Trying to make their way to the back; trees force them across the scene. As the prelude ends, the lights behind the inner curtain rise, and the scene at the front fades

[2] Scene One

The scene reveals a river bank concealed by mists and reeds. The main part of the stage is a wide bank above the river, a great willow tree extended over the sward. From behind this great tree the four hobbits come forward, with Merry leading and obviously relieved

MERRY Well, now at least I have some idea of where we are! This is the River Withywindle.

PIPPIN But we can't go another step without rest.

SAM It's cool under the willow. Less flies!

FRODO Come on! We can't have a nap yet. We must get clear of the forest first.

MERRY Must have a nap...

All but Frodo lay down beneath the great tree, with their backs to cracks running up its trunk. Frodo looks at them for a moment, and then sleep suddenly overwhelms him. He staggers, and the tree suddenly moves towards him with menace. At the same time the cracks in its trunk close around the three sleepers, and Frodo suddenly screams

FRODO Help! Help! Help!

Frodo staggers as sleep seems to overwhelm him. At that moment there comes a voice from along the river

[3] TOM BOMBADIL [very distant]

Hey dol, merry dol, ring a ding dillo!

Ring a dong, hop along, fal lal the willow!

Tom Bom, jolly Tom, Tom Bombadillo!

All the forest suddenly becomes still, as if under a spell of silence. The voice slowly draws nearer; Frodo stirs and starts as if awakening from a dream

Hey come merry dol, derry dol, my darling!
Light goes the weather wind and the feathered starling.

Down along under hill, shining in the sunlight,

there my pretty lady is, River-woman's daughter,

slender as the willow wand, clearer than the water.

Old Tom Bombadil water-lilies bringing comes hopping home again. Can you hear him singing?

Hey come merry sol, derry sol and merry-o, Goldberry, Goldberry, merry yellow berry-o!

Poor old Willow Man, you tuck your roots away!

Tom's in a hurry now. Evening will follow day.

Tom's going home again water-lilies bringing.

Hey! come derry dol! Can you hear me singing?

He comes onto the stage, dancing and singing to himself as he does so. Frodo rushes towards him

FRODO Help!

TOM BOMBADIL Whoa! Whoa! steady there! Now, my little fellow, where you be a-going to, puffing like a bellows? What's the matter here then? Do you know who I am? I'm Tom Bombadil. Tell me what's your trouble! Tom's in a hurry now. Don't you crush my lilies!

FRODO My friends are caught in the willow tree!

TOM BOMBADIL What? Old Man Willow? Naught worse than that, eh? That can soon be mended. I know a tune for him. Old grey Willow Man! I'll freeze his marrow cold, if he doesn't behave himself. I'll sing his roots off. I'll sing a wind up and blow branch and leaf away.

He strides up to the tree, and breaking off a hanging branch lashes the trunk of the tree with it

You let them out again, Old Man Willow! What be you a-thinkin' of? You should not be waking. Eat earth! Dig deep! Drink water! Go to sleep, Old Man Willow! Bombadil is talking!

There is a sudden crack and the trunk splits open, releasing the imprisoned hobbits. A shudder runs through the willow from root to tip, and a complete silence falls

[4] Well, my little fellows! You shall come home with me. The table is all laden with yellow cream, honeycomb, white bread and butter. Goldberry is waiting. Time enough for questions about the supper table. You follow on just as soon as you are able!

With a sudden leap and bound he rushes dancing away along the path. The hobbits look at each other with blank amazement. His voice is heard, already far in the distance as the hobbits still amazed, listen to his call and follow on

Hop along, my little friends, up the

Withywindle!

Tom's going on ahead candles for the

kindle.

Down west sinks the sun; soon you will be

groping.

When the night shadows fall, then the door

will open,

out of the window panes light will twinkle

yellow.

Fear no alder black! Heed no hoary willow!

Fear neither root nor bough! Tom goes on

before you.

Hey now! merry dol! we'll be waiting for

you!

[5] *The light fades quickly, and the inner curtain falls. Before this the scene appears with the trees moving as in the prelude; but now the movement becomes a dance of great shadows. The four hobbits hurry along, at the front of the stage, while the scene moves past them. Then there appears a light through the inner curtain, and the voice of Tom Bombadil is heard*

TOM BOMBADIL

Hey come derry dol, hop along my hearties! Come on then, hobbits all! we are fond of parties.

Now let the song begin! Let us sing together!

GOLDBERRY

Now let the song begin! Let us sing together

of the sun, stars, moon and mist, wind and cloudy weather,

light on the budding leaf, dew on the feather,

wind on the open hill, bells on the heather, reeds by the shady pool, lilies on the water; old Tom Bombadil and the River-daughter!

The lights rise as the inner curtain dissolves

[6] Scene Two

A woodland glade is disclosed, lit by lamps hanging from high branches.

There stand Tom and Goldberry. Frodo and the hobbits come forward into the light, and Frodo halts in amazement

FRODO

O slender as a willow-wand! O clearer than clear water!

O reed by the living pool, fair River-daughter!

O springtime and summertime, and spring again after!

O wind on the waterfall, and the leaves' laughter!

GOLDBERRY Have peace now until the morning! Heed no nightly noises! For nothing passes door and window here save moonlight and starlight and the wind off the hill-top.

The light again grows dim, and the hobbits lie down to sleep. Tom Bombadil remains watching over them for a while in silence; then, as the light fades, he speaks to them

[7] TOM BOMBADIL The sun will shine tomorrow; 'twill be a glad morning. But keep well to the green grass. Don't you go a-meddling with old stone or cold Wights or prying in their houses, unless you be strong folk with hearts that never falter! And if you fall in difficulty, sing and call to me: Ho! Tom Bombadil, Tom Bombadillo!

by water, wood and hill, by reed and willow, by fire, sun and moon, hearken now and hear us!

Come, Tom Bombadil, for our need is near us!

He fades into the darkness; all that can be seen are the forms of the slumbering hobbits. Slowly there appears a distant vision above their forms. The moon appears to rise; and in its light there appears a tall pinnacle of rock, with a man seated upon its highest point. Suddenly a shadow like the shape of great wings passes over the scene. There is a noise like a strong wind blowing, and a sound of distant hoofbeats. The vision fades and darkness covers the scene. In the darkness the inner curtain falls

[8] TOM BOMBADIL *[behind the scene]* Ring a ding dillo!

Wake now, my merry friends! Ring a ding dillo del, derry dol, my hearties! Old Tom Bombadil is a merry fellow; bright blue his jacket is, and his boots are yellow!

GOLDBERRY *[behind the scene]*

Speed now, fair friends! and hold to your purpose! North with the wind in your left eye, and a blessing on your footsteps! Make haste while the Sun shines! It was a merry meeting!

Her voice fades into the darkness and slowly becomes inaudible. At the same time the inner curtain rises

[9] Scene Three

Mist covers the entire scene. The four hobbits, seen groping forward through the fogs. Frodo, who is leading, pushes on too quickly, and the others suddenly vanish into the vapour. Frodo walks on a few paces before stopping suddenly

FRODO Sam! Pippin! Merry! Why don't you keep up?

There is no answer. He rushes back and calls again

Where are you?

Again there is no answer. He comes back towards the centre. At the same time the mists begin to lift, and a tall standing stone appears, looming high over him

Where are you?

The BARROW-WIGHT *[its voice seeming to come from the stone]*

Here!...I am waiting for you!

FRODO *[crying out]* No!...

Sudden total darkness descends across the scene; the lights in the orchestra go out. The inner curtain falls again

[10] Scene Four

Before the inner curtain the light grows; a pale greenish light. A long tomb-like chamber extends across the stage.

Inside four biers, upon each lay the four hobbits: Frodo to the left, the others on the right. All lie on their backs, and their faces are pale, and they are clad in white. On their heads are circlets, and there are swords at their sides. But across their three necks lies one naked sword. Frodo stirs restlessly and draws one hand across his eyes. At the same time a voice is heard from below the ground

The BARROW-WIGHT

Cold be heart and hand and bone, and cold be sleep under stone: never more to wake on stony bed, never, till the Sun falls and the Moon is dead.

In the black wind the stars shall die, and still on stone here let them lie, till the Dark Lord lifts his hand over dead sea and withered land.

[11] *Frodo raises his head and looks behind him. A long arm gropes across the stage, walking on its fingers towards*

Sam, who lies nearest, and towards the hilt of the sword which lies across the necks of the three hobbits. Frodo suddenly starts up, seizing a sword that lies by him, and strikes off the hand near the wrist. The hand breaks off, there is a shriek, and the light vanishes. In the dark there comes a snarling noise

FRODO [with great voice and enthusiasm] Ho! Tom Bombadil, Tom Bombadillo! by water, wood and hill, by reed and willow, by fire, sun and moon, hearken now and hear us! Come, Tom Bombadil, for our need is near us!

There is a moment's silence; and then a voice can be heard in the distance, drawing rapidly nearer

TOM BOMBADIL

Old Tom Bombadil is a merry fellow; bright blue his jacket is, and his boots are yellow. None have ever caught him yet, for Tom he's the master; his songs are stronger songs, and his feet are faster.

There is a loud rumbling noise, as of stones rolling and falling; And suddenly a low door-like opening appears, through which the bright sunlight streams into the tomb. In it is seen Tom Bombadil, silhouetted against the door. He comes forward into the dark chamber, singing Get you out, you old Wight! Vanish in the sunlight!

Shrivel like the cold mist, like a wind go wailing out into the barren lands far beyond the mountains! Come never here again! Leave your barrow empty! Lost and forgotten be, darker than the darkness, where gates stand for ever shut, till the world is mended.

At these words there comes a cry, and part of the chamber falls in with a crash. The cry dies away into a long trailing shriek, fading away into an unguessable distance. And then there is silence

[12] Wake now, my merry lads! Wake and hear me calling! Warm now be heart and limb! the cold stone is broken, dark door is standing wide, dead hand is fallen, Night under Night has flown, and the Gate is open!

Sam, Merry and Pippin stir slowly. Then they sit up and look in wonder at their surroundings, and then at themselves

MERRY What in the name of wonder? ...Ah, I remember! The men of Carn Dûm came on us at night, and we were worsted. Ah! the spear in my breast! No! no!...What am I saying? I have been dreaming. Where did you get to, Frodo?

FRODO I thought that I was lost; but I don't want to speak of it. Let us think of what we are to do now!

Tom reaches to lift up the swords which had lain by the hobbits

TOM BOMBADIL Sharp blades are good to have, if hobbits go a-wandering east, south or far away, into dark and danger. Few now remember them, yet still some go wandering, the men of Westeros who forged these blades, sons of forgotten kings walking in loneliness, guarding from evil things, folk that are heedless.

In the darkness there appears a vision: a vast plain over which there stride shapes of men, tall and grim with bright swords. And last comes a man later to be known to them as King Elessar: and he bears a star on his brow. The hobbits look on uncomprehendingly, and the vision fades

[13] TOM BOMBADIL Bombadil will give you clothes, and good advice, until this day is over. Four miles hence along the road you'll come upon a village, Bree under Bree Hill, with doors looking westward. There you'll find an old inn that is called *The Prancing Pony*; Barliman Butterbur is the worthy keeper. There you can stay the night, but afterwards the morning will speed you along your way. Keep up your merry hearts, and go to meet your fortune!

FRODO It may be all that we could wish, but remember, please—that the name of *Baggins* must not be mentioned. I am Mister Underhill, if any name must be given.

TOM BOMBADIL

Hey now, come now! whither do you wander? Up, down, near or far, here, there or yonder? Tom's country ends here; he will not pass the borders. He has his house to mind, and Goldberry is waiting!

Frodo and the hobbits bid him farewell with silent bows. The inner curtain has grown lighter and now rises to disclose the bright sunlight playing on the downs. As the hobbits pass down across the plain, Tom Bombadil stands watching them, silhouetted as a black shadow against the light. The curtain falls

THE PRANCING PONY

[14] Scene One

The curtain rises on the full stage. The scene is the main room of the Prancing Pony; a bar is at the back, towards the left. To the right is the main inn door.

There are many people in the bar, among them Bill Ferny; also there is Barliman Butterbur, serving some of the time behind the bar, and Nob, his hobbit servant, rushing about with trays of food and drink. The outer door opens and the four travellers enter. Butterbur vanishes through a door at the back

FRODO Can we...

BUTTERBUR [reappearing for a moment] Half a minute, if you please!

He dashes out, and then returns wiping his hands on his apron

BUTTERBUR Good evening, little masters! What may you be wanting?

FRODO Beds for four, if that can be managed. Are you Mister Butterbur?

BUTTERBUR That's right. Barliman Butterbur at your service! Might I ask your names, sir?

FRODO Mister Took and Mister Brandybuck, and this is Sam Gamgee. My name is Underhill.

BUTTERBUR [starting] Now what does that remind me of?...There now! It's gone again! I'll see what I can do for you. But there is such a crowd already in the house tonight as there hasn't been for long enough. Will you be wanting anything to drink, masters, while your rooms are got ready?

FRODO [to the others] Shall we?

MERRY I shall go out for a sniff of the air, I think.

PIPPIN All right! Mind yourself! Don't get lost!

He and Sam go over towards the back; Merry wraps his cloak about him and goes out. Frodo and Butterbur come further forward towards the front of the stage and talk in conversational terms. Suddenly the door flies open. A weather-beaten man enters and strides towards the bar, where Nob comes out and serves him. As he enters the conversation momentarily ceases, but at once resumes again

FRODO Who's that?

BUTTERBUR Him? I don't rightly know. He is one of the wandering folk: Rangers, we call them. What his right name is I've never heard; but he's known round here as Strider. Funny you should ask about him...

BILL FERNY Barly!

Butterbur at once goes over to serve him, before Frodo has a chance to interrogate him further. Strider has sat down in the corner towards the front, and beckons to Frodo to join him. Frodo, after a moment's hesitation, does so

STRIDER I am called Strider. I am very pleased to meet you, Master—Underhill, if old Butterbur got your name right.

FRODO He did.

STRIDER Well, Master Underhill, if I were you, I should stop your friends talking too much.

PIPPIN [now audible above the murmur] Yes, old Mister Bilbo was my uncle. He did some most peculiar things. For example, when he left the Shire, at his farewell party, he gave a speech to his relatives who were invited, in which he roundly insulted them all! a more comical thing I never heard...

STRIDER Drink, fire and chance meeting are pleasant enough...but, well—this isn't the Shire. There are queer folk about; though I say it as shouldn't, you may think. And there have been even stranger travellers through Bree lately...

Seeing Frodo's increasing disturbance You had better do something quick!

PIPPIN ...and at the end he...

FRODO [*jumping up on the table and suddenly interrupting*] We are all very grateful for the kindness of your reception...

BILL FERNY [*as Frodo dries up*] A song! **The OTHERS** A song! a song!

BILL FERNY Come on, Master, sing us something we haven't heard before!

[15] FRODO [*beginning now with confidence, his hand in his pocket, and the other beating time*]

There is an inn, a merry old inn
beneath an old grey hill,
and there they brew a beer so brown
that the Man in the Moon himself
came down one night to drink his fill.

The ostler has a tipsy cat
that plays a five-stringed fiddle;
and up and down he runs his bow,
now squeaking high, now purring low,
now sawing in the middle.
The landlord keeps a little dog
that is mighty fond of jokes;
when there's good cheer among the guests
he cocks an ear at all the jests
and laughs until he chokes.
They also keep a horned cow
as proud as any queen;
but music turns her head like ale,
and makes her wave her tufted tail
and dance upon the green.
And oh! the rows of silver dishes
and the store of silver spoons!
For Sundays there's a special pair,
and those they polish up with care
on Saturday afternoons.

The Man in the Moon was drinking deep,
and then rolled beneath his chair;
and there he dozed and dreamed of ale,
till in the stars in the sky were
gleaming pale, and dawn was in the air.
Then the ostler said to his tipsy cat:

FRODO, BILL FERNY and others

*The white horses of the Moon,
they neigh and champ their silver bits;
but their master's been and drowned
his wits, and the Sun'll be rising soon!*
So the cat on his fiddle played hey-diddle-
diddle, a jig that would wake the dead;
he squeaked and sawed and quickened
the tune,

while the landlord shook the Man
in the Moon: *It's after three!* he said.
They rolled the Man slowly up the hill
and bundled him into the Moon,
while his horses galloped up in the rear,
and the cow came capering like a deer,
and the cat always quickened the tune.
With a ping and a pong the fiddle-strings
broke!

All the COMPANY

The cow jumped over the Moon,
the little dog laughed to see such fun,
and the dish...

*Frodo jumps high in the air, and at the
same moment he vanishes. The song
stops abruptly*

[16] All the COMPANY Barly! Barly!
*The landlord comes in; at once all the
regulars rush towards him at the back,
shouting confusedly. Suddenly Frodo*

*reappears, sat on a seat by Strider, who
alone has taken no part in proceedings.
With no sign of surprise, continues the
conversation as if nothing had happened*

STRIDER Well? Why did you do that?

Worse than anything your friends could
have said! You have put your foot in it! or
should I say your...finger?

FRODO [*annoyed and alarmed*]

I don't know what you mean.

STRIDER Oh yes, you do: but we had
better wait until the uproar has died down.
Then, if you please, Mister Baggins, I would
like to have a quiet word with you.

FRODO What about?

STRIDER A matter of some importance to
us both.

*At the back, Bill Ferny's voice rises
above the others*

BILL FERNY ...saw him, Mister Butterbur;
or leastways, I didn't see him, if you take
my meaning!

BUTTERBUR [*coming slowly forward*]

There's some mistake somewhere.

BILL FERNY Well, where is he now?

BUTTERBUR How should I know?

There's Mister Took, now: he's not
vanished.

BILL FERNY Well, I saw what I saw, and I
saw what I didn't.

BUTTERBUR [*now at the front*]

And I say there's been some mistake.

FRODO [*advancing into the light*]

Of course there's a mistake! I haven't
vanished. I've been having a few words
with Strider in the corner.

STRIDER You may hear something to
your advantage.

FRODO Very well. I'll speak to you later.

*There is a sullen murmur, more of denial
than of relief; but the customers go back
to their drinking readily enough, with the
exception of Bill Ferny who slinks out
with suspicious glances*

BUTTERBUR Now what have you been
doing, Mister Underhill? Frightening my
customers with your acrobatics!

FRODO I am very sorry to have caused
any trouble. It was quite unintentional I
assure you. A most unfortunate accident.

BUTTERBUR Very good! But before you
go, I should like a word with you, Mister
Underhill. Something has come back to
mind that I ought to tell you. When I've
seen to a thing or two, I'll come along to
your room, if you're willing.

FRODO Certainly!

*He collects Sam and Pippin from the
crowd, and they go out together with
Nob. Strider rises and follows them.
The inner curtain falls*

[17] Scene Two: Interlude

*The inner curtain rises again, to disclose
a parlour room with Frodo and Pippin
sitting on one side of the fireplace, and
Sam on the other. All three are in a state
of relaxation. There comes a knock on
the door, and Strider enters*

[18] PIPPIN Hello! who are you, and
what do you want?

STRIDER My name is Strider; and,
though he may have forgotten it, your friend
promised to have a quiet talk with me.

FRODO You said that I might hear
something to my advantage, I believe.
What do you know?

STRIDER Too much; too many dark
things. But as for your business: I was
looking for a hobbit called Frodo Baggins. I
wanted to find him quickly. I had heard that
he was carrying out of the Shire...well, a
secret that concerned me and my friends.
[*Frodo and Sam leap up with expressions
of alarm*] Now, don't mistake me! I shall
take more care of the secret than you do.
And care is needed. Watch every shadow!
Black horsemen have passed through
Bree. So your little prank...

FRODO It was sheer accident!

STRIDER That accident has made your
position dangerous.

FRODO Hardly more than it was already. I
knew these riders were pursuing me; but
now at any rate they seem to have missed
me, and gone away.

STRIDER You must not count on that.
They will return. And more are coming.
There are others. I know their number. I
know these Riders. You may escape from
Bree, and go forward while the Sun is up;
but you won't go far. They will come on you
in the Wild, in some dark place where there
is no help. Do you wish them to find you?
They are terrible!...[*He grips the sides of
his armchair with clenched hands, his face
drawn in pain*] But there, perhaps I know
more about these pursuers than you do.
You fear them, but you do not fear them
enough, yet. You will have to escape, if you
can. Strider will take you by paths that are
seldom trodden. Will you have him?

SAM By your leave, Mister Frodo, I'd say
no! This Strider here, he warns and says
take care; and I say yes to that, and let's
begin with him. He knows something, that's
plain, and more than I like; but it's no
reason to let him go leading us out into
some dark place far from help, as he puts
it.

FRODO [*slowly and reluctantly*] I think
that you are not really as you choose to
look. Why the disguise? Who are you?
What do you really know about... about my
business; and how do you know it?

STRIDER [*with a grim smile*] The lesson
in caution has been well learned. I will
answer some of your questions...

*A second knock comes at the door, and
Butterbur arrives with candles, Nob
following him with hot water. Strider
withdraws into a dark corner*

BUTTERBUR I've come to bid you
goodnight, masters. Nob! take the water to
the rooms! [*Nob goes out through a door
opposite. Butterbur comes forward, closing
the door*] It's like this: you see, I was
asked to look out for hobbits of the Shire,
and for one by the name of Baggins in
particular.

FRODO By whom?

BUTTERBUR Ah, by Gandalf, if you know who I mean. Three months ago he was here, and he gave me a letter to *Mister Frodo Baggins, Bag End, Hobbiton in the Shire.*

FRODO A letter for me from Gandalf!

BUTTERBUR Ah! then your right name is Baggins?

FRODO It is, and you had better give me that letter at once!

Butterbur nervously hands over the letter and starts to leave

BUTTERBUR *[handing it over]*

Goodnight, Mister Underhill...Baggins, I should say! Bless me! Where's your Mister Brandybuck?

FRODO He said something about going out for a breath of air.

BUTTERBUR I'd better send Nob to look for him.

He hurries out. Strider comes forward impatiently from his corner

STRIDER Well? When are you going to open that letter?

Frodo opens the letter and begins to read

[19] FRODO

Dear Frodo,

Bad news has reached me here. I must go off at once. I will return as soon as I can; and I will follow you, if I find that you are gone. You may meet a friend of mine on the road: a man by some called Strider. He knows our business and will help you. His real name is Aragorn.

All that is gold does not glitter,
not all those who wander are lost;
the old that is strong does not wither,
deep roots are not reached by the frost.
From the ashes a fire shall be woken,
a light from the shadows shall spring;
renewed shall be blade that was broken,
the crownless again shall be king.

He pauses, turning the letter over and over in his hands and considering carefully

[20] Why didn't you tell us that you were a friend of Gandalf's? It would have saved time.

STRIDER Would it? I knew nothing of this letter.

He throws back his cloak to show a sword hilt that had lain concealed at his side. He draws it from its sheath, and they see that it is broken off about a foot below the hilt

Not much use, is it, Sam? But I am Aragorn son of Arathorn: and if by life or death I can save you, I will... Well, then, Strider will be your guide. We shall have a rough road tomorrow. But if once we shake off our pursuit, I shall make for Weathertop.

SAM Weathertop? What's that?

STRIDER It is a hill, about half way from here to Rivendell. Gandalf will make for that point, if he follows us. He is greater than you know.

PIPPIN Where is that silly fellow Merry? It would be the last straw, if we had to go out to look for him...

A door suddenly slams; then feet come running down the passage outside, and Merry bursts in, Nob following

MERRY I have seen them, Frodo! I have seen them! Black Riders!

FRODO Black Riders! Where?

MERRY Here in the village. I went out for a stroll, and was just outside on my way back. Suddenly I shivered, and felt that something horrible was creeping near; there was a sort of deeper shade among the shadows. It slid away at once into the darkness.

STRIDER *[suddenly interrupting]* Which way?

FRODO *[as Merry starts]* Go on! This is a friend of Gandalf's. I will explain later.

MERRY Eastward.

FRODO What will happen? Will they attack the inn?

STRIDER I think not. They are not all here yet. And in any case that is not their way. In dark and loneliness they are strongest; and all the long leagues of Eriador lie still before us.

The others look at him in horror.

The curtain falls

CD 3 FLIGHT TO THE FORD

[1] Prelude: Weathertop

Slowly a dim light grows before the inner curtain. It discloses a high hilltop, rounded with a high parapet of stone, ruined and tumbled to the ground in many places. Beyond this is seen a panorama of land and sky, reflected on and through the inner curtain. Strider leads the hobbits into the circle. Merry stretches himself

[2] Scene One

MERRY Well, here we are! And very cheerless and uninviting it looks. There is no water, and no shelter, and no sign of Gandalf.

STRIDER I wonder? *[He casts a glance about him on the ground. He lifts a large white stone]* This has been handled recently. What do you think of these marks?

FRODO It could be a G rune with thin branches. What could that mean?

STRIDER I would say that they stood for G, and were a sign that Gandalf was here last night. There have been scorching flames here; I guess that he was attacked on this hilltop, but with what result I cannot tell. He is here no longer, and we must now make our own way to Rivendell as best we can.

Pippin has clambered up to the edge of the dell, and is looking out. Suddenly he points downwards

PIPPIN Look!

Strider at once rushes up to the edge and throws himself flat on the wall

FRODO What is it?

STRIDER I do not know, but I fear the worst. *[He raises his head cautiously above the parapet and looks out]* Yes...the enemy is here.

MERRY Have they seen us?

STRIDER Let us build a fire here. Sauron can put fire to his evil uses, as he can all things; but these Riders do not love it, and fear those who wield it.

He moves to one side and gathers some twigs from the ground. Two of the other hobbits go offstage and bring in some larger branches. Strider brings out his tinder box and quickly and expertly makes a fire. Darkness has now shrouded the landscape and the sky above and below; outside the circle, which is illuminated by the fire, there is total darkness as Sam shivers by the fireside

SAM The darkness presses round so close.

STRIDER Then I will tell you a part of the tale of Gil-galad, fair but sad; and yet it may lift up your hearts.

[3] Gil-galad was an Elven king, of him the harpers sadly sing; the last whose realm was fair and free between the Mountains and the Sea. His sword was long, his lance was keen, his shining helm afar was seen; the countless stars of heaven's field were mirrored in his silver shield.

But long ago he rode away,
and where he dwelleth none can say;
for into darkness fell his star
in Mordor where the shadows are

The hobbits move and stretch

[4] MERRY Look! the moon is rising. It must be getting late.

He and Sam get up and walk away from the fire towards the edge of the circle.

Frodo and Pippin remain sitting with Strider

SAM *[suddenly turns and comes running back]* I don't know what it was, but I suddenly felt afraid.

FRODO *[rising]* Did you see anything?

SAM No, sir. I saw nothing; but I didn't stop to look.

STRIDER Draw close to the fire, with your faces outward! Draw your swords!

They all draw rapidly round the fire, which slowly dies down. The light in the dell begins to fade; the inner curtain slowly rises

PIPPIN What's...that?

Beyond the wall appears, at first as deep-er black shapes in the darkness beyond, five tall cloaked figures. Slowly, as the moon rises higher, their shapes become more and more clearly delineated. Pippin, Merry and Sam throw themselves on the ground. Two of the shapes remain on the edge of the circle; the other three advance. Strider remains motionless to one side. Frodo alone remains to meet them. Slowly he draws from his pocket the Ring and holds it up before their gaze. They still advance. Then he places the Ring on his finger. At that moment the lights from the front go on, and the silhouettes are illuminated.

The five figures are seen as great grey and haggard shapes of men, with helmets on their heads and swords of steel in their hands. The three in the foreground halt, and then the Lord of the Black Riders, who wears a crown on his head, advances again. Frodo is almost within grasp, as he reaches for the Ring

FRODO [suddenly crying aloud]

A Elbereth! Gilthoniel!

The Lord gives a shrill cry and raises his sword and stabs Frodo in the shoulder, and at once Frodo falls forward. In that moment the others arise. Strider seizes a brand from the fire with a shout, and the five Riders at once fade back into the night. Sudden darkness falls as Frodo removes the Ring from his hand, and collapses to the ground

[5] Scene Two

As the lights come back up same scene is disclosed in the light of dawn. Strider has Frodo raised in his arms, and is holding a bowl of water before him; the other three hobbits are gathered around. Frodo slowly stirs, and then screams

FRODO What has happened? Where is the pale king? [The others calm him, and then Strider answers his question]

STRIDER They have drawn away for the time being. But not far; they will come again another night, if we do not make our escape. I fear that they believe you have a deadly wound that will subdue you to their will. We shall see!

SAM Then we must leave here as soon as possible!

STRIDER Yes. We are in great peril here after dark, since the attack of last night, and we can hardly meet greater danger wherever we go.

The others turn away and begin to prepare for flight. Strider helps Frodo to his feet; the latter clutches at his shoulder, but appears fit to move for the time being. They move offstage to the right as the scene darkens

[6] Scene Three: The Stone Troll

The inner curtain rises again; the hobbits are camped by the stone trolls, with the scene as at The Hobbit. Frodo lies listlessly on the ground. Sam attempting to raise his spirits, accompanied by Merry and Pippin

SAM

Troll sat alone on his seat of stone, and munched and mumbled a bare old bone;

for many a year he had gnawed it near, for meat was hard to come by.

PIPPIN and MERRY

Done by! Gum by!

SAM

In a cave in the hills he dwelt alone, and meat was hard to come by.

Up came Tom with his big boots on.

Said he to Troll: Pray, what is yon?

For it looks like the shin o' my nuncle Tim, as should be a-lyin' in graveyard.

PIPPIN and MERRY

Caveyard! Paveyard!

SAM

This many a year has Tim been gone, and I thought he were lyin' in graveyard.

—My lad, said Troll, these bones I stole, but what be bones that lie in a hole?

Thy nuncle was dead as a lump o' lead, afore I found his shinbone.

PIPPIN and MERRY

Tinbone! Thinbone!

SAM

He can spare a share for a poor old troll, for he don't need his shinbone.

Said Tom: I don't see why the likes o' thee without axin' leave should go makin' free with the shank or the shin o' my father's kin so hand the old bone over!

PIPPIN and MERRY

Rover! Trover!

SAM

Though dead he be, it belongs to he; so hand the old bone over!

For a couple of pins, says Troll, and grins, I'd eat thee too, and gnaw thy shins.

A bit o' fresh meat will go down sweet!

I'll try my teeth on thee now.

PIPPIN and MERRY

Hee now! See now!

SAM

I'm tired o' gnawing old bones and skins; I've a mind to dine on thee now.

But just as he thought his dinner was

caught,

he found his hands had hold of naught.

Before he could mind, Tom slipped behind and gave him the boot to larn him.

PIPPIN and MERRY

Warn him! Darn him!

SAM

A bump on the boot on the seat,

Tom thought,

would be the way to larn him.

But harder than stone is the flesh and bone of a troll that sits in the hills alone;

as well set your boot to the mountain's root, for the seat of a troll don't feel it.

PIPPIN and MERRY

Peel it! Heel it!

SAM

Old Troll laughed, when he heard

Tom groan,

and he knew his toes could feel it.

Tom's leg is lame, since home he came, and his bootless foot is lasting lame;

but Troll don't care, and he's still there with the bone he boned from its owner.

PIPPIN and MERRY

Doner! Boner!

SAM, PIPPIN and MERRY

Troll's old seat is still the same,

and the bone he boned from its owner!

The three hobbits laugh and applaud Sam's and their performance, but Frodo remains still and unhearing as his fever worsens. Strider goes quickly to him to raises him up. They support him and move from the clearing, Sam now caring and concerned, as the light fades and the stage darkens

[7] Scene Four

Along the Road there is heard a sound of hoofbeats, mingled with a dim ringing as of small harness bells tinkling. Aragorn and the three other hobbits look toward the sound as with intrigue and concern as Frodo speaks

FRODO That does not sound like a Black Rider's horse!

The hobbits nod hopefully but dubiously, and shrink back into the shelter of the trees. Strider alone remains standing, with a look of joy growing on his face.

The rider, who is passing, suddenly reins in his horse and calls out loudly

GLORFINDER Ai na vedui Dúnanad! Mae govannen!

Strider and the hobbits rapidly descend the hill to meet Glorfindel, who has now dismounted

Hail and well met! I was sent from Rivendell to look for you. We feared you were in danger on the Road. We had heard that the Nine were abroad, and that you were astray bearing a great burden without guidance, since Gandalf had not returned. There are few even in Rivendell who can ride openly against the Nine; but such as there were Elrond sent out. But there is no time for further news.

SAM My master is sick and wounded. He can't go on walking. He needs rest.

GLORFINDER Then he shall ride my horse. His pace is light and smooth; and if danger presses too near, he will bear you away with a speed that even the steeds of the Enemy cannot rival. Our danger will be greatest just ere we reach the river; for my heart now warns me that the pursuit is now swift behind us, and other danger may be waiting at the Ford.

He takes Frodo by the hand and leads him to the horse, of which he prepares to shorten the girths so that the hobbit can mount. The horse leads away with Frodo upon it followed by Glorfindel, Strider, and the other three hobbits. The sound of fast riding continues, and Glorfindel suddenly darts forward

Fly! Fly! the enemy is upon us! Ride forward! Ride! Ride on! Noro lim, noro lim, Asfaloth!

At once the scene darkens, and the inner curtain rises. Mists swirl thickly over the stage, and only Frodo and the five Black Riders remain visible. Frodo gallops off wildly to the right, and the Riders pursue him across the stage

[8] Scene Five

The light grows, and Frodo gallops across the stage from the right towards the front. There is now seen a shallow foaming Ford, running across the stage, which Frodo crosses. The shape of all nine Black Riders is now seen through the mists; Frodo turns and dismounts from his horse, remaining alone on the near side of the Ford and brandishing his sword

FRODO Go back! Go back to the Land of Mordor, and trouble me no more!

The BLACK RIDERS *[laughing coldly and swaying in the mist]* Come back! Come back! to Mordor we will take you!

FRODO *[collapsing, in a whisper]*
Go back!

The BLACK RIDERS *[advancing across the Ford, still swaying in the breeze]*
The Ring! The Ring!

FRODO *[with sudden desperate strength]*
By Elbereth and Lúthien the Fair, you shall have neither the Ring nor me!

Suddenly there is a great roar and falling of rocks, and the River rises in a flood. The Black Riders in the midst of the Ford are swept away by a loud rolling of many stones, and a plumed cavalry of waves. The mists cover the stage almost totally, Frodo alone remaining visible at the front. Bright lights shine through the vapours, silhouetting him. Slowly he sways and is seen to fall to the ground. The curtain falls

THE COUNCIL OF ELROND

[9] Scene One

Rivendell: a dark beamed room, with high rafters and an ornate stone grate set into the panelling. A small window towards the back looks out across a landscape of streams and forest to a background of mountains seen through the inner curtain, which remains down. On one side there is a couch, illuminated by the light of the brightly burning fire in the grate. Extended upon it, with a sheet stretched over him, lies Frodo in a troubled sleep. Watching him anxiously from a large chair by the window sits Gandalf, sucking softly at his long pipe. Slowly Frodo stirs on his couch, and opens his eyes. Gandalf, at the movement, quickly rises from his seat and goes across to him with concern

FRODO Where am I?

GANDALF In the house of Elrond.

FRODO Gandalf!

Frodo struggles swiftly to rise, but Gandalf bends over him and, supporting him, lays him back among the pillows

GANDALF Yes, I am here. And you are lucky to be here at all, after all the ridiculous things you have said and done since you left home.

FRODO What happened at the Ford? It all seemed so distant, somehow; it still does.

GANDALF It would. It would. The wound was beginning to overcome you at last. The Riders made for the Ford, as soon as you fled. Your friends sprang aside off the Road, and then ran up behind. Glorfindel knew that a flood would come down, if the Riders tried to cross. The moment the flood appeared, he rushed down, followed by Aragorn and the others with flaming brands. Caught between fire and water, the Riders were dismayed, and hurled into the water and overwhelmed.

FRODO Who made the flood?

GANDALF Elrond commanded it. And here you are all safe for the present. Soon there will be feasting and merrymaking, and you will all be there in place of honour.

The door, which opens into the room from close beside the window, opens tentatively. Sam, Merry and Pippin enter and then, seeing Frodo sitting up in bed, rush, forward with joy

PIPPIN Hurray! Here is our noble cousin!

FRODO Pippin! Merry! Sam! hullo!...

SAM *[clasping Frodo's hand]* It's warm, Mister Frodo! Meaning your hand...it has felt so cold through the long nights.

FRODO *[to Gandalf]* I am ready to go down?

SAM Let us go down!

PIPPIN You have shown your usual cunning in getting up just in time for a meal.

MERRY More than a meal! a feast!

Suddenly, below in the valley, bells are heard ringing loudly. It is the summons to the hall. Sam helps Frodo gently from the bed, and elves bring in rich clothing for him. The light fades, but the bells grow ever more loud. The inner curtain rises

[10] Scene Two

The Hall of Fire is seen as the light grows again. A long table extends from the back of the stage toward front left.

Seated at the head of it is Elrond.

Forward, to the right, a fire is burning on the floor, the smoke rising to the roof. At the back of the stage, behind Elrond's seat, there is a large window which looks out across the same view of streams, woods and mountains; to the right of it, behind the fire, stands a great harp. To the left of Elrond sits Glorfindel; Gandalf is to his left, and then down the table sit Frodo, Glóin, Sam, Lindir, Pippin, Merry and several other elves. Arwen is playing the great harp. Behind her the stage is in shadow, but a line of pillars can be vaguely seen; at the base of one of them sits Bilbo, asleep and unobserved by the rest of the company. From the back of the hall Aragorn advances towards Arwen. He stands beside her, with his dark cloak flung back; he is clad in elven-mail, and a star shines on his breast.

Amid the hubbub of conversation Frodo turns to his right, where Glóin sits, clad richly with many gems about him, and his long white beard neatly forked and tucked into his belt. After a short while Glóin grows aware of his attention and rises from his seat to bow

GLÓIN Glóin at your service! Welcome and well met!

FRODO Frodo Baggins at your service and your family's. And am I right in guessing that you are the Glóin, one of the twelve companions of the great Thorin Oakenshield?

He has risen from his seat in astonishment; the rich cushions behind him are scattered. Glóin retrieves them for him and helps him back to his seat whilst replying

GLÓIN Quite right. And I have already been told that you are the heir of our friend Bilbo the renowned. You have had some adventures, I hear. But perhaps I should not enquire too closely?

FRODO I think we will not speak of it, at least not yet. But I am equally curious to learn what brings so important a dwarf so far from the Lonely Mountain.

GLÓIN If you have not heard, I think we will not speak of that yet either. Master Elrond will summon us all before long, I believe, but then we shall hear many things. But there is much else that may be told, good and bad. Dáin is still King under the Mountain, and fabulously rich. Of the ten companions who have survived, seven are with him: Dwalin, Dori, Nori, Bifur, Bofur, Bombur and myself.

FRODO And what has become of Balin and Ori and Óin?

GLÓIN We do not know...it is largely on account of Balin that I have come to Rivendell...

Elrond suddenly rises from the table; the conversation ceases

ELROND Awake, little master!

He moves across to the pillar, and all now watch the shadow. From it rises the small figure of Bilbo, very old and very wrinkled

FRODO Bilbo!

BILBO Hello, Frodo my lad! So you have got here at last!

The company move from the table and sit in a circle about the fire and the great harp; it is time for the singing to begin. Arwen returns to the harp and begins to play once more. Some chairs are placed around the circle. Meanwhile Bilbo and Frodo continue their conversation, sinking almost unnoticed into two chairs which happen to be placed near them

FRODO What were you doing in that corner?

BILBO Why, sitting, and thinking. Fancy that Ring of mine causing such a disturbance! Have you got it there? I can't help feeling curious, you know, after all that I have heard. I should very much like to peep at it again.

FRODO Yes, I've got it. It looks just the same as it ever did.

BILBO Well, I should just like to see it for a moment.

Frodo draws out the Ring from a chain around his neck, where it has been placed during his illness. Bilbo stretches out his hand almost greedily to receive it; but his manner evidently troubles Frodo, who draws the Ring sharply back, looking at Bilbo with distaste and horror. Bilbo sighs and clasps his head in his hands

I understand now. Put it away. I am sorry; sorry you have come in for this burden; sorry about everything. Don't adventures ever have an end? I suppose not. Somebody always has to carry on the story.

Bilbo rises and clasps Frodo round the shoulders; who rises, they steal gently out into the moonlit valley together. The circle of fire glows gently as Lindir rises

[11] LINDIR

A Elbereth Gilthoniel,
silivren penna-míriel
o menel aglar elenath!
Na-chaered palan-dirieli
o galadhremmin ennorath,
with Elvish maidens
Fanuilos, le linnathon,
nef aear, sí nef aearon!

The light has faded almost completely, only the notes of the harp falling into the stillness. The curtain slowly falls

[12] Scene Three

The Hall of Fire. Morning light gives the appearance that the hall is much colder and more chill. The fire is extinguished, and the light of the dawn air streams in through the window. The great table too has vanished; instead there is a wide semicircle of seats, rising up to Elrond's great chair in its position by the window. As the curtain rises the hall is empty except for Gandalf, Frodo and Bilbo who are in talk at the foot of one of the pillars

GANDALF Feel ready for the Great Council?

FRODO I feel ready for anything. But most of all I should like to go walking today and get up into the forest there.

Suddenly a clear high bell rings out as Sam enters the halls through the pillars at the back, which are in semi-darkness even in the morning light

GANDALF But that is the warning bell for the Council of Elrond. Come! both you and Bilbo are wanted.

At his words the great doors on the left of the stage swing open, and Elrond and his council enter to their places. The line to Elrond's left stretches past Gandalf, Galdor and Legolas to Aragorn; the line to his right stretches past Glorfindel, Glóin, Gimli and Bilbo to Frodo. Sam remains sitting on the floor in semi-darkness. As he is about to sit, Elrond pauses

[13] ELROND Here, my friends, is Frodo son of Drogo. Few have ever come hither through greater perils or on an errand more urgent. These are those of my council whom you have not met before: Gimli son of Glóin, and Legolas, a messenger from his father Thranduil, the Elven king of Mirkwood.

As he says these last words, the door opens once more and Boromir enters; as he crosses the threshold he suddenly sees Bilbo and Frodo nearest to him, and looks at them with sudden amazement

And here is Boromir, a man from the South. He arrived in the grey morning, and seeks counsel. I have bidden him to be present, for here his questions shall be answered.

Boromir bows to Elrond and seats himself in the seat next to Frodo; Elrond also sits and then looks at Glóin

But the tale of Glóin is also new to me. It appears that the hearts of the Dwarves of the Lonely Mountain are troubled.

[14] GLÓIN It is now many years ago that a shadow of disquiet fell upon our people. Some spoke of Moria, the mighty works of our fathers that are called in our own tongue Khazad-dûm; and they declared that now at last we had the power and numbers to return. At length Balin listened to the whispers, and resolved to go; and he took with him Ori and Óin and many of our folk, and went away south. For a while we had news, and it seemed good; but then there was silence, and no word has ever come from Moria again.

Slowly a vision reveals itself, a distant reflection of the narrative that follows
Then about a year ago a messenger came to Dáin, but not from Moria—from Mordor; a horseman in the night, who called Dáin to his gate. *The Lord Sauron the Great*, so he said, wished for our friendship; and he asked urgently concerning *hobbits*, of what kind they were, and where they dwelt.

KHAMÛL As a small token only of your friendship Sauron asks this,

GLÓIN ...he said:

KHAMÛL ...that you should find this thief and get from him, willing or no, a little ring, the least of rings, that once he stole. It is but a trifle that Sauron fancies, and an earnest of your goodwill. Do you refuse?

GLÓIN At that his voice came like the breath of snakes, and all who stood by shuddered, but Dáin replied:

DÁIN I say neither yea nor nay. I must consider this message and what it means under its fair cloak.

KHAMÛL Consider well, but not too long, **GLÓIN** ...said the rider, and rode into the darkness. *[The vision fades]* And so it is that I have been sent by Dáin to warn Bilbo that he is sought by the Enemy, and to learn, if may be, why he desires this ring, this least of rings.

[15] ELROND You have done well to come. But you do not stand alone. The Ring! What shall we do with the Ring, the least of rings, the trifle that Sauron fancies? That is the doom that we must deem.

BOROMIR Give me leave, Master Elrond, to speak first of Gondor; for from the land of Gondor am I come. By our valour the wild folk of the East have long been held in check, but what now? The Nameless Enemy has risen again. The power of the Black Land grows, and we are hard beset. In this evil hour I have come on an errand over many dangerous leagues to Elrond. For on an eve a dream came to me. The eastern sky grew dark and there was growing thunder, but in the West a pale light lingered, and out of it I heard a voice, remote but clear, saying:

[16] *Seek for the Sword that was broken; in Imladris it dwells.*

There shall be counsel taken stronger than Morgul spells. There shall be shown a sign that Doom is near at hand, for Isildur's Bane shall waken, and the halfling forth shall stand.

Aragorn arises, and casts his sword upon the table before Elrond, the blade broken in two pieces

ARAGORN And here in the house of Elrond more shall be made clear to you. Behold the Sword that was broken!

BOROMIR And who are you?

ELROND He is Aragorn son of Arathorn, and he is descended through many fathers from Isildur Elendil's son of Minas Ithil.

[17] GANDALF Bring out the Ring, Frodo! The time has come. Hold it up, and then Boromir will understand the remainder of his riddle.

Frodo slowly rises to his feet. All eyes are focused on him. He draws the Ring out and holds it high. It glitters and gleams in his hand; but Boromir's eyes do more than reflect its glint as he gazes fixedly at the golden circle

ELROND Behold Isildur's Bane!

BOROMIR The Halfling!...Is then Doom come at last?

ELROND That shall be told.

GALDOR The Wise may have good reason to believe that the halfling's trove is indeed the Great Ring of long debate, but may we not hear the proofs? And I would ask this also: what of Saruman? He is learned in the lore of the Rings, yet he is not among us. What is his counsel—if he knows these things that we have heard?

[18] ELROND These things, Galdor, it is the part of Gandalf to make clear.

GANDALF Some, Galdor, would think the tidings of Glóin, and the pursuit of Frodo, proof enough that the halfling's trove is a thing of great worth to the Enemy. Yet it is a Ring. What then? The Three we know of. The Seven are taken or destroyed. The Nine the Nazgûl keep. What then is this one that he desires so much? From the first my heart misgave me, against all reason that I knew, and I desired to know how this thing came to Gollum. So I set a watch for him, and I opened my heart to Aragorn the heir of Isildur.

ARAGORN And since it seemed fitting that Isildur's heir should labour to repair Isildur's fault, I went with Gandalf on the long and hapless search.

GANDALF And then in my despair I thought of a test that might make the finding of Gollum unneeded. The Ring itself might reveal if it were the One. Upon this very Ring which you have seen held aloft letters may be read, if one has the strength of will to place the thing into the fire for a while. That have I done, and this have I read:

*Ash nazg durbatulûk,
ash nazg gimbatul,
ash nazg thrakatulûk
agh burzum-ishi krimpatul.*

As Gandalf speaks the verse of the Ring, a shadow passes over the scene, blocking out the sun and all about grows dark. He suddenly looks and sounds terrible. All of those present tremble in fear and the elves close their ears to the terrible verse. As the shadow passes, all sigh in relief.

[19] Know also, my friends, that Aragorn found the creature called Gollum. He was loth to speak and his tale is unclear, but it is beyond all doubt that he went to Mordor. Thus the Enemy knows now that the One is found, that it was long in the Shire; and since his servants have pursued it almost to our door, he will soon know, indeed he may already know even as I speak, that we have it here.

LEGOLAS Alas, alas! the tidings that I was sent to bring must now be told. Sméagol, who is called Gollum, has escaped.

ARAGORN Escaped? That is ill news indeed. How came the folk of Thranduil to fail in their watchfulness?

LEGOLAS In the days of fair weather we led him wearily through the woods, and on a summer night Orcs came upon us unawares. When the battle was over, we found that Gollum was gone, and his guards were slain or taken.

ELROND Well, he is gone. We have no time to seek for him again. He must do as he will. But he may yet play a part that neither he nor Sauron have foreseen.

[20] GANDALF And now I will answer Galdor's other question. What of Saruman? I rode from the Shire to gather news, and not far from Bree I came upon Radagast the Brown, one of my Order. He told me that the Nine were abroad and that Saruman had offered help. I asked him to send his messengers, the Eagles, to Orthanc to aid us, and I came at last to Isengard, the dwelling of Saruman. Late one evening I came to the one gate in the wall; and it was strongly guarded. I rode to the foot of the Tower of Orthanc, and there Saruman met me and led me up to his chamber. He had a ring on his finger.

As before a vision reveals itself, a distant reflection of the narrative that follows

GANDALF I have come for your aid, Saruman the White.

SARUMAN White!

GANDALF ...he sneered.

SARUMAN It serves as a beginning. The white page can be overwritten; and the white light can be broken.

GANDALF In which case it is no longer white. And he that breaks a thing to find out what it is has left the path of wisdom.

SARUMAN I have not brought you here to be instructed by you,

GANDALF ...said he,

SARUMAN ...but to give you a choice.

The Elder Days are gone; the time of the Elves is over, but our time is at hand. A new Power is rising. Against it the old policies will not avail us at all. We may join

with that Power. Its victory is at hand; and there will be rich reward for those who aided it. And why not, Gandalf? The Ruling Ring? If we could command that, then the Power would pass to us. And I believe you know where this precious thing now lies: is it not so?

GANDALF ...and as he said this, a lust which he could not conceal shone in his eyes. **[21] Saruman**, I said, *only one hand at a time can wield the One, so do not trouble to say we. Well, the choices it seems are to submit either to Sauron, or yourself. I will take neither. Have you others to offer?*

SARUMAN The third choice is to stay here, until the end.

GANDALF Until what end?

SARUMAN Until you reveal to me where the One may be found. Or until it is found in your despite, and the Ruler has time to turn to lighter matters: to devise, say, a fitting reward for the hindrance and insolence of Gandalf the Grey.

GANDALF They took me then and set me alone on the pinnacle of Orthanc. But Radagast rode away as I had asked, and Gwaihir the Windlord came to Orthanc, and bore me away before Saruman was aware. He set me down in the land of Rohan before dawn. There I found evil already at work, and Théoden the King would not listen to my warnings. He bade me take a horse and be gone; and I chose the best horse in the land. Shadowfax they called him. I galloped to Weathertop like a gale, and the Nazgûl were there before me. At sunrise I escaped and fled towards the north. I reached here at last by a long hard road, for Shadowfax had departed. And now the Tale is told, from first to last. Here we all are, and here is the Ring. But we have not come any nearer to our purpose. What shall we do with it?

There is a long silence as the assembled group ponder the news which has been told to them, until at last Elrond stirs slowly in his seat

CD 4

[1] ELROND This is grave news concerning Saruman, for we trusted him and he is deep in all our counsels.

GLORFINDEL What power remains still, lies with us here in Imladris, or with Círdan at the Havens, or in Lórien. But have we, have they the strength to withstand the Enemy?

ELROND I have not the strength; neither have they.

GLORFINDEL Then if the Ring cannot be kept forever by strength, two things only remain for us to attempt: to send it over the Sea, or destroy it.

ELROND We cannot destroy it by any craft that we possess. And those that dwell beyond the Sea would not receive it.

GALDOR Then there are but two courses, as Glorfindel has declared: to hide the Ring for ever, or unmake it.

ELROND It seems to me clear which road we must now take: a hard road, a road unforeseen. To walk into peril—to Mordor. We must take the Ring to the Fire.

Silence falls once again. Only Boromir still moves, turning his great horn slowly in his fingers and frowning

[2] BOROMIR I do not understand all this. Let the Ring be your weapon, if it has such power as you say. Take it and go forth to victory!

ELROND Alas! no, we cannot use the Ruling Ring. If any of the Wise should with this Ring overthrow the Dark Lord, using his own arts, he would then set himself on Sauron's throne, and a new Dark Lord would appear.

GLÓIN But what of the Three Rings of the Elves?

ELROND The Three were not made by Sauron. Those who made them did not desire power, but understanding.

GLÓIN But what would happen if the Ruling Ring were destroyed, as you counsel?

ELROND We know not for certain; but maybe when the One is gone, the Three will fail, and many fair things fade and be forgotten. **[3]** The road then that must be trod will be very hard; and neither strength nor wisdom will carry us far upon it.

Silence falls once again, this time a silence of greater depth than ever. Outside the hall the noon bell rings; still nobody moves or speaks. All the council sit with downcast eyes: Frodo turns towards them and sits the same way. Then, with his head still downcast and his face to the ground, he makes his momentous declaration in a small voice

FRODO I will take the Ring, though I do not know the way.

All those present show great shock and surprise as Frodo makes his pledge, stirring up in their seats to look on him. Sam comes swiftly to his side and takes his hand, while the council stare in surprise at his sudden appearance. Then Elrond rises and passes out from the hall, and the others of his council follow him. Only Gandalf and Bilbo remain, looking down on Frodo and Sam with grave thought and deep pity. As they pass from the room in turn, leaving the two hobbits alone in the hall, the curtain falls slowly

FAREWELL TO RIVENDELL

[4] Scene One

The Hall of Fire again, now some days later. Elrond is seated with his Council as before, except that Frodo and Sam are standing with Pippin and Merry by the fire; Bilbo and Gandalf are now seated among the others of the Council

ELROND The time is come. If the Ring is to set out, it must go soon. But those who go with it must pass into the domain of the Enemy far from aid. Do you still hold to your word, Frodo, that you will be the Ringbearer?

FRODO I do. I will go with Sam.

As he says this, Sam moves across the fire to stand by him on the left side of the stage; as each new companion is chosen and named, they also move across until there are nine figures all standing towards the left, with their backs to the audience and facing the Council

ELROND Then I will choose you companions to go with you. And the Fellowship of the Ring shall be nine. With you and your faithful servant, Gandalf shall go; for this shall be his great task, and maybe the end of his labours.

Gandalf rises from his seat on the Council, bows to Elrond and joins Frodo on the floor

For the rest, they shall represent the other Free Peoples of Middle-earth: Legolas shall be for the Elves; and Gimli son of Glóin for the Dwarves. For Men you shall have Aragorn son of Arathorn, for the Ring of Isildur concerns him closely.

Frodo half-turns to Aragorn, with delight in his face

FRODO ...Strider!

ARAGORN [*rising and joining him*]

Yes. I ask leave once more to be your companion, Frodo.

FRODO I would have begged you to come, but I thought you were going to Minas Tirith with Boromir.

ARAGORN I am; and the Sword that was broken shall be reforged ere I set out to war. Therefore Boromir will also be in our company. He is a valiant man.

Boromir rises and join him; all turn back to face Elrond

ELROND There remain two more to be found.

PIPPIN We want to go with Frodo.

ELROND That is because you do not see and cannot comprehend what lies ahead.

GANDALF Nor do any of us see clearly.

ELROND Let it be so then. You shall go.

Merry and Pippin move from the fire across to join Frodo. Elrond looks on them and sighs

Now the tale of the Nine is filled. The Company must depart.

He rises; Glorfindel, Galdor and Glóin rise also, and follow him out. Gimli, Legolas, Aragorn, Boromir and Gandalf hesitate for a moment, then follow; Pippin, Merry and Sam too slowly depart, leaving Frodo and Bilbo alone together. Bilbo looks closely at Frodo for a moment, and then reaches into his cloak, bringing out a short sword in a shabby sheath

[5] BILBO This is Sting. Take it, if you like. I shan't want it again, I expect.

Frodo accepts it with every sign of gratitude. Bilbo smiles and, going over to the shadows, brings out a heavy package. He unwraps it and shows to Frodo's astonished gaze a suit of mail

And this is the dwarf-mail that Thorin gave me. You hardly feel any weight when you put it on.

FRODO I don't think I should look right in it.

BILBO Never mind about looks. You can wear it under your outer clothes.

FRODO Very well, I will take it.

Bilbo draws off Frodo's cloak and puts the coat of mail round him. Then he wraps the cloak round him again, concealing the metal

I cannot thank you as I should, Bilbo, for this and all your past kindnesses.

BILBO [*concealing his emotion*]

Don't try.

Frodo bows low in gratitude, and Bilbo turns away to look out of the window at the gathering darkness. They each catch the other's eye once again for a moment; then Frodo passes swiftly from the hall. Bilbo is left alone. Slowly he comes forward, shivering slightly, and sits down by the blazing fire

[6] BILBO

I sit beside the fire and think of all that I have seen, of meadow flowers and butterflies in summers that have been; of yellow leaves and gossamer in autumns that there were, with morning mist and silver sun and wind upon my hair. I sit beside the fire and think of how the world shall be when winter comes without a spring that I shall ever see.

For still there are so many things that I have never seen; in every wood in every spring there is a different green. I sit beside the fire and think of people long ago, and people who will see a world that I shall never know.

But all the while I sit and think of times there were before, I listen for returning feet and voices at the door.

By the last line nothing can be discerned on the stage except the fire glowing in the darkness

[7] Interlude

Slowly a sound can be heard as of a great bellows; then the ring of an anvil being hammered with great force. The fire burns ever more brightly illuminating the tall figure of Aragorn silhouetted against the flames. As the fire reaches its greatest height, he raises from the fire his Sword, reforged and renewed

ARAGORN Andúril, Flame of the West! At once darkness falls and the fire goes out. All that is heard is the wind howling dolefully. The inner curtain falls, and slowly the light grows again

[8] Scene Two

The valley of Rivendell, early the next morning. Cold bitter frost sparkles on the ground; the mountains stand out clearly in the sharp air. A few trees and ferns grow to the right of the stage; on the left

these descend steeply into the gorge.

The Fellowship of the Ring—Frodo, Sam, Merry, Pippin, Aragorn, Boromir, Legolas, Gimli and Gandalf—is waiting to depart. Elrond alone stands to bid them farewell at the edge of the valley

ELROND This is my last word. The Ringbearer is setting out on the Quest of Mount Doom. On him alone is any charge laid: the others go with him as free companions, to help him on his way.

GIMLI Faithless is he that says farewell when the road darkens!

ELROND Maybe; but let him not vow to walk in the dark, who has not yet seen the nightfall. Look not too far ahead! But go now with good hearts!

BOROMIR Loud and clear sounds my horn in the valleys of the hills, and then let the foes of Gondor flee!

Boromir raises to his lips a great horn which he blows with a resounding blast; on all sides the echoes of the horn come ringing back

ELROND Farewell; and may the blessing of Elves and Men and all free folk go with you! [*From the valley below and all around, elves bid the Fellowship farewell!*]

Voices of ELVISH MAIDENS

Farewell! Farewell!

The scene is enveloped in darkness and the inner curtain rises

[9] Scene Three

In the wild and empty land of Eregion. Only a stunted tree dominates the landscape, and the mountains loom ominously over the deserted plain. The Fellowship, Gandalf leading, are encamping beneath the withered tree. Darkness is falling quickly, and there is a heavily overcast sky

GANDALF We cannot go further tonight. We must rest here awhile.

FRODO And then where are we to go?

GANDALF There is one way we may attempt: the road to the Mines of Moria. *The Fellowship has by now settled to the ground, and all at this word turn sharply to face the wizard, Boromir and Legolas stifling exclamations of horror*

ARAGORN [*darkly*] The road may lead to Moria, but how can we tell it will lead through Moria?

BOROMIR It is a name of ill omen. Nor do I see the need to go there. Let us journey southward.

GANDALF We cannot afford the time. The watchful eyes of both of Saruman and the Enemy are on these lands. Therefore I advise that we should go neither over the mountains, nor round them, but under them. That is a road that the Enemy at any rate will least expect us to take.

FRODO [*suddenly starting*] Did you see anything pass over?

LEGOLAS I felt it, whatever it was. It may have been nothing, only a wisp of thin cloud.

ARAGORN It was moving fast then, and not with the wind.

FRODO How the wind howls!

All fall into silent thought, while the wind howls and wails in the night; until suddenly Aragorn starts to his feet

ARAGORN How the wind howls! It is howling with wolf-voices! The Wargs have come west of the mountains!

GANDALF The hunt is on!

BOROMIR How far is Moria?

GANDALF Some fifteen miles as the crow flies, and maybe twenty as the wolf runs.

BOROMIR Then let us start as soon as we may!

Wolf voices are now heard just beyond the light as Gandalf describing a circle with his staff

GANDALF Fly, hounds of Sauron! Fly, if you value your lives! I will shrivel you from tail to snout, if you come within this ring!

Suddenly a pack of wolves bound into the light towards the encampment.

Gandalf seems to grow; his staff bursts into a great blaze of lightning

Naur an edraith ammen! Naur dan i naurhoth!

The withered tree above his head suddenly springs into flame and the whole plain is covered with a great light. Legolas steps forward and fires an arrow at one great grey wolf. Suddenly darkness falls, and the wolves flee. Legolas comes forward further and gives a start of surprise as he picks up his arrow, which is undamaged. Gandalf has also come forward and looks at the arrow over the elf's shoulder

It is as I feared. These were no ordinary wolves looking for food in the darkness. Let us go quickly!

As the Fellowship hurriedly prepare to leave, Aragorn with a sign of heavy resignation turns his gaze to the wizard who is now preparing to lead them on

ARAGORN I will follow your lead, but it is not of the Ring or of us others that I am thinking of, but of you, Gandalf, when I say to you: if you pass the doors of Moria, beware!

They rise and prepare to go on their way. The curtain slowly falls

A JOURNEY IN THE DARK

[10] Scene One

The curtain rises. The Gates of Moria are disclosed: two great doors, intricately carved. To either side of the Gates stand two great holly trees, curling about the lintels of the doors. The doors are shut. On them is engraved at the head a high crown with seven stars about it; below, a hammer and an anvil, and at the base a great star. Around the head of the Gates are carved many letters. As the curtain rises, Gandalf followed by Gimli, Aragorn and the others of the Fellowship, walk briskly towards the Gate, carefully avoiding a deep stagnant lake which lies to the right of the gates and laps almost up to the doors themselves

GANDALF Well, here we are at last!

GIMLI There are the emblems of Durin!

LEGOLAS And the star of the House of Fëanor!

FRODO What does the writing say? I thought I knew elf-letters, but I cannot decipher these.

GANDALF They only say: *The Doors of Durin, Lord of Moria. Speak, friend, and enter.*

PIPPIN What does it mean by *Speak, friend, and enter*?

GIMLI That is plain enough. If you are a friend, speak the password, and the doors will open.

BOROMIR But do you know the word, Gandalf?

GANDALF No!...

PIPPIN What are you going to do then?

GANDALF Knock on the doors with your head, Peregrin Took! But if that does not shatter them, and I am allowed a little peace from foolish questions, I will seek for the opening words.

He pauses for a moment, then steps briskly up to the Gates. He touches the star with his staff and speaks in a commanding tone

Annon edhellen, edro hi ammen!

Fennas nogothrim, lasto beth lammen!

The Gates do not stir. He strikes them with his staff

Edro, edro!

Still the Gates do not move. He hesitates and sinks into deep thought. The voices of wolves howling are heard distantly

BOROMIR How I hate this foul water!

He stoops and picking up a large stone casts it far into the deep pool. There is a loud splash, followed by a gentle rippling

FRODO Why did you do that, Boromir? I hate this place, too, and am afraid: not of the wolves, not of the dark behind the doors, but of something else. I am afraid of the pool. Don't disturb it!

A sudden gust of the wind along the edge of the pool fans the ripples to a greater height. At the same time the sound of the wolves' voices is borne louder on the breeze

MERRY I wish we could get away!

PIPPIN Why doesn't Gandalf do something?

The ripples on the water grow higher, and lap at the shore. The distant voices of the wolves die away. Gandalf rouses suddenly from his reverie

GANDALF I have it, I have it! Of course! Absurdly simple, like most riddles when you see the answer.

He picks up his staff and beats it on the door. He speaks in a bold clear voice

Mellon!
The doors slowly swing open from the centre; through them a shadowy stair is seen climbing steeply into the darkness
I was wrong after all, and Gimli too. I had only to speak the Elvish word for friend and the doors opened. Now let us go!

He strides forward into the arch, but at that moment there is a sudden seething in the water. A tentacle rises from the stagnant pool and seizes Frodo by the ankle; Sam rushes back and hacks him free, while the rest seem rooted to the spot

Into the gateway, quick!

All the Company turn and hustle into the Gate, as the seething in the water grows higher. Many more tentacles come rippling from the water. Gandalf raises his staff on high and the doors swing closed, as the Watcher in the Water rises towards the surface. As the doors shut, complete darkness suddenly descends across the scene. In the dark, voices are heard echoing in the stony walls as the inner curtain descends

FRODO What was that?

GANDALF Something has crept, or has been driven out of dark waters under the mountains. There are older and fouler things than Orcs in the deep places of the world.

BOROMIR In the deep places of the world! And thither are we going against my wish. Who will lead us now in this deadly dark?

GANDALF I will, and Gimli shall come with me. [11] Follow my staff!

A light appears, a thin spark at the tip of Gandalf's staff only dimly visible through the inner curtain. There is a sound like a great millwheel churning in the depths

[12] Scene Two

Nearly total darkness, but through it can be dimly seen a passage across the stage in front of the inner curtain, with a chamber let into the side of the living rock. Led by Gandalf, the Fellowship come along the passage. Greater light comes from Gandalf's staff, and in this additional illumination may be seen a deep gash in the side of the chamber, a shaft descending deep into the earth. As the party reach the chamber, Merry and Pippin push forward towards it, but Gandalf keeps them back, indicating the deep cleft

GANDALF This seems to have been a guard chamber.

Pippin creeps over and looks into the cleft, peering into the darkness. He gropes for a stone and lets it fall. There is a long silence, while the others prepare to settle down for the night. Then, very distant but magnified and repeated in the hollow echoes of the shaft, there comes a plunk, as if the stone has fallen into deep water in some cavernous place
What's that?...Fool of a Took!...This is a serious journey, not a hobbit walking party. Throw yourself in next time, and then you will be no further nuisance.

He is halted by a noise from out of the depths, the sound of a hammer tapping out a signal of some sort. When the noise dies away there is a long silence

GIMLI That is the sound of a hammer, or I have never heard one.

GANDALF Yes, and I do not like it. Probably something has been disturbed that would have better been left quiet. Pray do nothing of the sort again! You, Frodo, can take the first watch.

All of them settle down to sleep; Gandalf's staff dulls and the light fades back to the illumination at the beginning of the scene. Frodo remains standing on watch, when suddenly he starts. Along the passage creeps a small dark figure with two gleaming eyes. Frodo grabs his sword and holds it out before him. There is a sudden hiss, and the eyes vanish. Frodo remains standing on guard, with a look of excited horror on his face. The light fades totally and night descends

[13] Scene Three

The same scene, the next morning. Gandalf is now on watch, and the others are stirring from their sleep. A stronger light now fills the scene, and in it further details are seen. A long low slab is raised from the ground just to the left of the chamber entrance; it is like a tomb. Also there may be dimly seen fragments of armour and weaponry, like the debris of some faded and forgotten battle

GANDALF We are tired; but I think we will not wish to spend another night in Moria.

BOROMIR No indeed!

GIMLI I have looked on Moria, and it is very great; but it has become dark and dreadful, and I doubt now that Balin ever came here.

GANDALF Let us go this way.

Slowly they all rise and follow him towards the left, when he suddenly stops and looks sharply at the raised slab

FRODO It looks like a tomb...

GANDALF Here is written in the tongues of Men and Dwarves: *Balin son of Fundin, Lord of Moria.*

FRODO He is dead then...

Gimli turns away, casting his cloak over his face. All remain still in homage. Only Aragorn stirs, searching around him in the crevices of the wall. Suddenly he draws from one of these a few leaves of badly burned parchment. He hands them to Gandalf, who spreads them out on the tomb and reads slowly. At last he sighs

GANDALF It is grim reading; I fear their end was cruel. Listen! *We cannot get out. We cannot get out. The pool is up to the wall at the West Gate. The Watcher in the Water took Óin. We cannot get out. The end comes...and then Drums, drums in the deep. I wonder what that means. The last thing written is a trailing scrawl of runes: They are coming. There is nothing more.*

All remain for a moment in silence, when there comes suddenly a great boom seeming to roll from the depths far below. Then there is a sudden blast of a horn in the corridor. All have sprung to a sudden attention; now Legolas and Gimli rush to look along the passage to the right

LEGOLAS They are coming!

GIMLI We cannot get out!

GANDALF Trapped! just as they were before.

He indicates the way to the left, where Boromir is listening. Harsh cries come from the right. Aragorn and Legolas hastily pile rocks high across the way. Gandalf joins them and stands looking along the passage

Who comes hither to disturb the rest of Balin, Lord of Moria?

There is a rattle of harsh laughter, and then a momentary silence. Immediately there comes again the great boom from the deep. All hastily gather and rush away down the passage to the left as the inner curtain rises. Gandalf alone remains

[14] Scene Four

A great hall of the Mines is seen. To the left, total darkness; but to the right shines in the clear light of day, a stream of light which falls upon a deep chasm towards the right of the stage. Across this chasm springs the arch of a narrow bridge without rail or parapet, which falls steeply into the deeps at either side. The drums still roll deeply but now more distantly. Slowly to the left a red glow rises, like flames from the deep. In this glow are seen standing the eight companions awaiting Gandalf. There is a sudden flash of bright light and then a loud roll of the drums in the depths. Gandalf comes fleeing into the hall

GIMLI What happened?

ARAGORN Did you meet the beater of the drums?

GANDALF I do not know. But I found myself suddenly faced by something that I have not met before. Something came along the passage, dark as a cloud, blocking out all light. The Orcs themselves were afraid and grew silent. It nearly broke me; but all the wall gave way, and the roof as well, I think. I am afraid that Balin is buried deep...and maybe something else is buried there too.

Suddenly the fires from behind spring up and flame more brightly. In it are heard cries and calls on the brassy horns

But look ahead! The Bridge is dangerous and narrow. Lead the way, Gimli!

One by one the party file across the Bridge, while the Orcs shriek and howl on the wrong side of the fire; when suddenly there is the loudest crash of all, and the flames are doused by a great smoke which rises from the ground and whirls up towards the roof. In it there is seen a dim shape, a great form of shadow

LEGOLAS Ai, a Balrog! a Balrog is come!

GIMLI Durin's Bane!

GANDALF Fly! Over the Bridge! I must hold the narrow way. Fly!

The remainder rush across the bridge. Gandalf alone stands on the narrow span, and the smoke halts around him

You cannot pass. I am a servant of the Secret Fire, wielder of the flame of Anor. You cannot pass. The dark fire will not avail you, flame of Udûn. Go back to the shadow, for you cannot pass!

The shape grows more solid, and then rushes again across the bridge. Gandalf, awkwardly as if driven to defend himself, draws his sword. At once it spins out of his hand

You cannot pass!

ARAGORN He cannot stand alone!... I am with you, Gandalf!

He also draws his sword and charges onto the bridge. At that moment Gandalf raises his staff and, crying aloud, smites the bridge before him. The staff breaks asunder and falls from his hand. A blinding sheet of white flame springs up, and the bridge cracks. With a dreadful cry the Balrog plunges down into the abyss. But as it falls, it seizes Gandalf falls with it into the chasm

GANDALF Fly, you fools!

He vanishes into the black deeps. All stand rooted with horror staring into the pit. Then the Orcs charge forward over the quenched fire, yelling and shooting arrows over the abyss. Aragorn sheathes his sword and rouses the others

ARAGORN Come, I will lead you now! Follow me!

They stumble wildly after him into the sunlight outside, as the Orcs yell their defiance. The curtain falls very quickly, only the beats of doom remaining. These fade slowly into extinction

CD 5 THE MIRROR OF GALADRIEL

[1] Prelude: Lament for Gandalf

The scene is covered in deep dusk. At first the inner curtain remains down, and only the gravel path leading down from the mountains can be seen. Gimli and Frodo walk along behind Aragorn and Legolas; the others follow behind in a group. Suddenly Frodo stops, and Gimli hesitates with him

[2] Scene One

GIMLI Not a sound but the wind. There are no Orcs near. What is it?

FRODO I don't know. I thought I heard feet, and I thought I saw a light—like eyes. I have thought so often, since we entered Moria.

GIMLI I hear nothing but the night-speech of plant and stone.

During this the inner curtain has risen, and there is seen in the dusk the shapes of tree trunks which appear to be made of silver and gold

LEGOLAS Lothlórien! Lothlórien! We have come to the eaves of the Golden Wood.

ARAGORN Lothlórien! Glad am I to hear again the wind in the trees! Let us hope that the virtue of the Elves will keep us tonight from the peril that comes behind.

Aragorn moves forward into the trees, when there comes a voice from the shadows

HALDIR Daro!

LEGOLAS Stand still! Do not move or speak!...

There is a sound of a gentle laugh, and Haldir appears from the trees above as the Fellowship see many elves suddenly visible in many trees

HALDIR Welcome! We have had rumours of your coming, for the messengers of Elrond passed through Lórien. And since you come with an elf of our kindred, we are willing to befriend you as Elrond asked. How many are you?

LEGOLAS Eight.

HALDIR It is well. But we must debate no longer. You are come to Lórien.

ARAGORN Here is the heart of Elvendom on earth, and here my heart dwells ever, unless there be a light beyond the dark roads that we still must tread.

Aragorn to himself

Arwen vanimelda, namárie!

The light fades to almost total darkness, only the sound of the waterfall's musical rustle being heard, mingled with the wind gently sighing in the branches

[3] Scene Two

The company, led by Haldir, enter the clearing. As they do so, there comes the sound of a clear note on a trumpet. It is answered three times from far above

HALDIR Welcome to Caras Galadhon, where dwell the Lord Celeborn and the Lady Galadriel. It is their wish that you would speak with them.

As he speaks the branches and trees at the back open up, and the inner curtain rises to disclose a great hall thronged with Elves. At the back, upon two seats, are Celeborn and Galadriel. They rise as the Fellowship come forward, and motion them to seat themselves among the leaves

CELEBORN Here there are eight. Nine were to set out: so said the messages. But maybe there has been some change of counsel that we have not heard.

GALADRIEL Nay; there was no change of counsel. Gandalf the Grey set out with the Fellowship, but he did not pass the borders of this land.

ARAGORN Alas! Gandalf the Grey fell into shadow. He remained in Moria and did not escape.

All present cry out with grief and amazement at this most evil news as Celeborn speaks with a strained heart as he offers his help to the Fellowship

CELEBORN I did not know that your plight was so evil. I will do what I can to aid you, each according to his need: but especially that one of the little folk who bears the burden.

GALADRIEL [to Frodo] Your quest is known to us; but we will not speak of it here more openly. But this I will say to you: your

quest stands upon the edge of a knife. Stray but a little and it will fall, to the ruin of all. Yet hope remains while all the Company is true.

She rises from her seat and comes forward

Do not let your hearts be troubled! Tonight you shall rest in peace.

She comes further forward, and as she passes Frodo's seat she turns and beckons to him. He rises as if in a trance and follows her. The inner curtain descends, cutting off the rear of the scene

[4] Scene Three

Galadriel and Frodo are alone; she leads him to the right, to a pool of water

GALADRIEL This is the Mirror of Galadriel. I have brought you here so that you may look in it, if you will.

FRODO What shall I look for, and what shall I see?

GALADRIEL You shall see things that were, and things that are, and things that yet may be. But which it is that he sees, even the wisest cannot always tell. Do you wish to look?

FRODO I will look.

The scene has grown darker. Frodo advances, looking over the water, as all the lights darken. The inner curtain discloses a scene, shown as if through a dim mist. On the stage Galadriel herself becomes almost invisible in the shadow. The Sea is seen at night; the waves rise and a great storm rages. Then is seen against the Sun, sinking blood-red into a wrack of clouds, the black outline of a tall ship with torn sails riding up out of the West. The light fades, and a ship is seen with black sails and banner bearing the emblem of a white tree sailing under the sunlight. The light fades again; and into the mist a small ship appears to sail, twinkling with lights. Frodo sighs, and prepares to draw away. The Mirror goes altogether dark; and in the black abyss there appears a single Eye, rimmed with fire that slowly grows until it fills the stage. Its pupil opens onto blackness, a window into nothing. Then the Eye begins to move, searching this way and that. Frodo draws the Ring from his neck, and raises it as if offering it to the Eye. He moves away from the water and towards the vision but as he gets ever closer to it, Galadriel draws him back

GALADRIEL Do not touch the water!

[5] *The vision fades, and Frodo stirs as if waking from a dream*

I know what it was that last you saw; for that is also in my mind.

She lifts up her arms towards the East in a gesture of denial. In the darkness a sudden ray of light shines upon her finger; Frodo sees a ring of gold with a white stone. She turns and sees his gaze

Yes; it is not permitted to speak of it, but it cannot be hidden from the Ring-bearer, and one who has seen the Eye of him who

holds the Seven and the Nine. Verily it is upon the finger of Galadriel that one of the Three remains. This is Nenya, the Ring of Adamant, and I am its keeper. Do you not now see wherefore your coming is to us as the footstep of Doom? For if you fail, then we are laid bare to the Enemy. Yet, if you succeed, then our power is diminished, and Lothlórien will fade.

FRODO And what do you wish?

GALADRIEL That what should be, shall be. For the fate of Lothlórien you are not answerable. Yet I could wish, were it of any avail, that the One Ring had never been made, or had remained for ever lost.

FRODO You are wise and fearless and fair, Lady Galadriel. I will give you the One Ring, if you ask for it. It is too great a matter for me.

GALADRIEL Wise the Lady Galadriel may be; but here she has met her match in courtesy. I do not deny that my heart has greatly desired to ask what you offer. And now at last it comes. You will give me the Ring freely! In place of the Dark Lord you will set up a Queen. And I shall not be dark, but beautiful and terrible as the Morning and the Night, fair as the Sea and the Sun and snow upon the mountains, dreadful as the storm and the lightning, stronger than the foundations of the Earth! All shall love me, and despair!

She raises her hand, and from the ring she wears there issues a great light that illumines her alone and leaves all dark. Then she lets her hand fall again, and suddenly she laughs, and the light fades I pass the test. I will diminish, and go into the West, and remain Galadriel.

She falls to the ground, and darkness envelops the scene

[6] Scene Four

In the darkness the inner curtain rises again, disclosing the stage as in Scene Two. Galadriel and Frodo are again in their places. Celeborn, at Galadriel's side, looks at the Fellowship

CELEBORN Now is the time when those who wish to continue the Quest must harden their hearts to leave this land.

GALADRIEL They all resolved to go forward.

BOROMIR As for me, my way lies onward and not back.

CELEBORN That is true; but is all this company going with you to Minas Tirith?

BOROMIR I am not the leader of this company.

At these words, all in attendance look at Aragorn; but he remains silent in some doubt

CELEBORN I see that you do not know yet what to do. It is not my part to choose for you; but I will help you as I may. I will furnish your company with boats. Yet they will not give you counsel; in the end you must leave them and the River, and turn West—or East.

ARAGORN I thank you many times.
CELEBORN All is ready at the Haven.
Haldir has entered with two Elves bearing cloaks, rope and packages of foodstuffs. The Company rise from their chairs and come down towards the front, bowing to Celeborn and Galadriel. As they leave the bower, the back of the stage is enveloped in darkness

PIPPIN Are these magical cloaks?

HALDIR They are elvish robes. Leaf and branch, water and stone, they have the hue and the beauty of all the things under the twilight of Lothlórien that we love; for we put the thought of all that we love into all that we make.

Sam handles one of the ropes, fascinated by the feel. Elven ropes are made from hithlain, a silk-like material, grey and light but strong

SAM [handling one of the ropes] What are these?

HALDIR Rope indeed! Never travel far without a rope, and one that is strong and light such as these.

Sam takes one; at the same time the Company have been donning the grey cloaks, which they will continue to wear from now on. Gimli opens one of the packages and extracts a thin cake from it

GIMLI And what is this?

HALDIR We call it *lembas*, or waybread. One will keep a traveller on his feet for a day of long labour, even be he one of the tall Men of Minas Tirith.

BOROMIR [remains apart at the front: to himself] If you wish only to destroy the Ring, then there is little use in war and weapons; and the Men of Minas Tirith cannot help. But if you wish to destroy the armed might of the Dark Lord, then it is folly to go without force into his domain; and folly to throw it away.

The inner curtain falls

[7] Scene Five

The front of the stage has also been changing. The River is now seen, lapping its banks below at the front of the stage; on its current are drawn three large boats, towards which Haldir leads the Company. In that moment comes the voice of Galadriel from the darkness beyond the inner curtain

GALADRIEL

I sang of leaves, of leaves of gold,
and leaves of gold there grew;
of wind I sang, a wind there came
and in the branches blew.
Beyond the Sun, beyond the Moon,
the foam was on the Sea
and by the sand of Ilmarin
there grew a golden Tree.

Haldir bows low as Galadriel appears through the trees to the Fellowship in the boats, and departs

O Lórien! too long I have dwelt
upon this hither shore
and in a fading crown have twined
the golden elanor.
The winter draws so swiftly nigh,

the bare and leafless Day;
the leaves are falling in the stream,
the River flows away.

But if of ships I now should sing,
what ship would come to me?
What ship would bear me ever back
across so wide a sea?

A light shines from her, as with sadness in her face she draws near to the boats

Ere you go, I have brought hither gifts
which the Lord and Lady of the Galadhrim
now offer you in memory of Lothlórien.

Eight Elves enter with the gifts. She gives Boromir a belt of gold; Merry and Pippin two small silver brooches. To Legolas she gives a bow and quiver of arrows; to Gimli an axe. To Sam she gives a flower. To Aragorn she first gives a scabbard, and a green stone. The scabbard he places around his sword; and the stone he fastens by a fillet about his forehead

ARAGORN For the gifts that you have given me I thank you, O Lady of Lórien of whom was sprung the Evenstar.

The Lady bows her head, and lastly she turns to Frodo who looks on her with the same wonder as when they first met

GALADRIEL And to you, Ring bearer, I come to you last who are not last in my thoughts. In this phial is caught the light of Eärendil's star. May it be a light to you in dark places, when all other lights go out!

She passes to Frodo a small crystal phial, which glitters as she moves it. Frodo takes it and bows. All sit down in the boats, but a deep dusk has set in, and all that can be seen are the Fellowship as shadows in the boats, dark shapes against the pure white light that shines upon and from Galadriel. In this light she lifts up her arms and sings; and in her singing she appears to diminish and shrink ever further into the distance

[8] **GALADRIEL**

Ai! laurië lantar lassí súrinen,
yéni únótimë ve rámar aldaron!
Yéni ve lintë yuldar avánier
mi oromardi lisse-miruvóreva.
Andúnë pella, Vardo tellumar
nu luini yassen tintilar i eleni
ómaryo airetári-lírinen.

Sí man i yulma nin enquantuva?

At this stage she has reached the back of the scene; but still she seems to diminish, but her voice still piercing the scene

An sí Tintallë Varda Oiolossëo
ve fanyar máryat Elentári ortanë
ar ilyë tier undulávë lumbulë;
ar sindanóriello caita mornië
i falmalinnar imbë met, ar hísië
untúpa Calciyo míri oialë.
Sí vanwar ná, Rómello vanwa, Valimar!
Namárië! Nai hiruvalyë Valimar.
Nai elyë hiruva. Namárië!

At the last word she vanishes into the distance; the light fades. But the ships of the Fellowship and their burden remain silhouetted at the front of the stage, until after a long while the curtain falls

THE BREAKING OF THE FELLOWSHIP

[9] Scene One

The curtain rises. The scene is at the bank of the Great River, beyond which can be seen a wide empty plain. The bank rises out of the river towards the front left. At first the scene remains empty, and then the three boats containing the Fellowship appear from the back right, paddling down towards the bank. In the first boat come Aragorn, Frodo and Sam; in the second boat Boromir, Merry and Pippin; and in the third Legolas and Gimli. All the boats are beached. Legolas, Boromir and Aragorn start to furl the boats' covers, and together with Gimli to unload the stores. Merry and Pippin rise and walk along the bank. Frodo and Sam are left alone at the front of the stage

SAM [puzzled] I had a funny dream an hour before we stopped, Mister Frodo. I saw a log with eyes!

FRODO I should make nothing of it, if it were the first time that those eyes had been seen. But it isn't. I saw them in Moria; and after we left, I saw them again.

SAM And I don't like my thoughts; but thinking of one thing and another, I fancy I could put a name on the creature. Gollum, maybe?

FRODO Yes, that is what I have feared for some time. Ever since Moria.

SAM And we'd better be a bit more watchful ourselves, or we'll feel some nasty fingers round our necks one of these nights.

Sam looks around nervously at this thought

ARAGORN [coming up behind them] Ah! So you know about our little footpad, do you? I have tried to catch him once or twice, but he is slier than a fox and as slippery as a fish. We shall have to try going faster tomorrow.

The light fades, and the inner curtain falls

[10] Interlude and Scene Two

The backcloth depicts a high cliff and the river roars through a rocky gorge. The three boats come into sight, struggling against the rough passage. Aragorn calls to the other boats as they pass through

ARAGORN Behold the Argonath, the Pillars of the Kings! Under their shadow the heir of Isildur has nought to dread!

Suddenly the cliffs at the back fall away, and there is seen a broad lake leading towards a green river bank and a lawn upon it. Aragorn indicates this lawn, and the boats steer towards it. As they pass towards the back, a front curtain falls shutting off the scene. The lawn of Parth Galen is disclosed, occupying the full stage. On this the Fellowship are sitting; the boats are just visible at the far left of the stage, lying at anchor in the River. Aragorn addresses the Company

ARAGORN The day has come at last. Shall we turn west with Boromir, or turn east to the Fear and Shadow; or shall we break our Fellowship, and go this way and that as each may choose? Whatever we do must be done soon, for we cannot long halt here. *[There is a long silence. No one moves]* Well, Frodo, I fear that the burden is laid on you.

FRODO *[after a long pause]* I know that haste is needed, yet I cannot choose. The burden is heavy. Give me an hour longer, and I will speak. Let me be alone!

ARAGORN Very well, Frodo son of Drogo; you shall have an hour, and you will be alone. We will stay here for the while.

Frodo bows to him and walks away into the trees to the right. Boromir follows his path with staring eyes. Darkness descends, and the inner curtain falls

[11] Scene Three

A high place on the mountain. Trees grow to the right, but to the left there is a large boulder in an open space. Frodo is seated on the boulder, looking to the left. He remains for a long while in silence.

Suddenly he stirs uneasily. From the right Boromir enters from the forest. Frodo turns. Boromir smiles gently

BOROMIR I was afraid for you, Frodo. None of us should wander alone, you least of all. May I stay and talk? It would comfort me.

FRODO You are kind. But I do not think that any speech would help me. For I know what I should do, but I am afraid of doing it, Boromir: afraid.

BOROMIR *[seating himself beside Frodo on the rock]* Are you sure that you do not suffer needlessly? I wish to help you. You need counsel in your hard choice.

FRODO I think I know already what counsel you would give, Boromir. And it would seem like wisdom but for the warning of my heart.

BOROMIR Warning? Against what?

FRODO Against delay. Against the way that seems easier. Against refusal of the burden that is laid on me. Against trust in strength.

BOROMIR Yet strength has protected you long.

FRODO I do not doubt it. But walls may not be strong enough. If they fall, what then?

BOROMIR We shall fall valiantly. Yet there is still hope that they will not fall.

FRODO No hope while the Ring lasts.

BOROMIR *[his eyes lightening with understanding]* Ah! the Ring! the Ring! Is it not a strange fate that we should suffer so much fear and doubt for such a small thing? So small a thing! Could I not have sight of it again?

FRODO *[suddenly starting and shivering]* It is better that it remain hidden.

BOROMIR *[indifferently]* As you will. I care not. Yet may I not even speak of it? For you seem to think only of its power in the hands of the Enemy: of its evil uses, not

of its good. But true-hearted men will not be corrupted. What could not a warrior do in this hour, a great leader? What could not Aragorn do? Or, if he refuses, why not Boromir? The Ring would give me the power of command. How I would drive the hosts of Mordor, and all men would flock to my banner!

He has stridden towards the edge of the forest, hardly arguing with Frodo any longer, but arguing with himself. Stopping suddenly, he turns towards Frodo

And they tell us to throw it away! I do not say *destroy* it. That might be well, if reason could show any hope of doing so. But the only plan is that a halfling should walk blindly into Mordor and offer the Enemy every chance of recapturing it for himself! Surely you see it, my friend? You say that you are afraid. But is it not really your good sense that revolts?

FRODO No, I am afraid. Simply afraid. But I am glad that I have heard you speak so fully. My mind is clearer now.

BOROMIR *[eagerly]* Then you will come to Minas Tirith?

FRODO You misunderstand me.

BOROMIR *[approaching nearer]* But you will come, at least for a while?

He lays his hand on Frodo's shoulder in friendly fashion; but at the touch Frodo starts, and rises abruptly from his seat Why are you so unfriendly? I need your Ring: you know that now: but I give you my word that I do not desire to keep it. Will you not at least let me make trial of my plan? Lend me the Ring!

FRODO No, no! The Council laid it upon me to bear it.

BOROMIR *[angrily]* Fools! Obstinate fools! Running wilfully to death and ruining our cause. It is not yours save by unhappy chance. Give it to me!

Frodo does not answer, but moves away until the rock stands between them

Come, come, my friend! You can lay the blame on me, if you will. You can say that I was too strong and took it by force. For I am too strong for you, halfling!

He jumps over the rock, leaping at Frodo who suddenly vanishes. Boromir gasps, staring in amazement, and then calls out Miserable trickster! Now I see your mind. You will take the Ring to Sauron and sell us all. Curse you and all halflings to death and darkness!

Suddenly he falls down, as if struck by his own curse, onto the rock. There is a long silence; and then he raises his face, now streaked with tears

What have I said? What have I done?

Frodo, Frodo! Come back!

He runs off into the trees. The scene grows darker. Slowly Frodo's voice is heard, although he still remains invisible

FRODO I will do now what I must. Some I cannot trust, and those I can are too dear to me. Strider, too: his heart yearns for Minas Tirith, and he will be needed there. I will go alone. At once.

The light has faded almost totally; a shadow seems to pass across the stage, and darkness covers the scene

[12] Scene Four

The inner curtain rises, to show the stage as in Scene Two. The six remaining members of the Fellowship are talking as Boromir steps out from the trees

ARAGORN Where have you been, Boromir? Have you seen Frodo?

BOROMIR *[coming slowly forward]* Yes, and no. I found him some way up the hill, and I spoke to him. I urged him to come to Minas Tirith and not go East. I grew angry and he left me—he vanished.

ARAGORN How long is it since you saw Frodo last?

BOROMIR Half an hour, maybe. Or it might be an hour. I have wandered for some time since. I do not know! I do not know!

SAM An hour since he vanished! We must find him at once!

Pippin and Merry run off into the trees, and Legolas and Gimli hasten off quickly in the other direction

PIPPIN and MERRY Frodo!... Frodo!

ARAGORN Hold on! Wait!

It is too late; the two hobbits and Legolas and Gimli have already disappeared

We shall all be scattered and lost! Boromir!...I do not know what part you have played in this mischief, but help now! Go after those two young hobbits, and guard them at the least.

Boromir nods, and strides briskly off through the trees. Aragorn turns to Sam

Come with me, Sam! None of us should be alone.

He springs away in the same direction as Gimli and Legolas. Sam makes as if to follow, and then suddenly halts. One of the boats visible at the far left of the stage is moving. Sam suddenly calls out

SAM I'm coming, Mister Frodo!

He plunges down after the boat. Frodo appears again, taking off the Ring and replacing it around his neck. He is weary, and exhausted, and coldly angry

FRODO Of all the confounded nuisances you are the worst, Sam!

SAM Oh, Mister Frodo, that's hard! trying to go without me and all. If I hadn't seen you, where would you be now?

FRODO Safely on my way.

SAM Safely! All alone and without me to help you?

FRODO But I am going to Mordor.

SAM And I am coming with you.

FRODO *[suddenly laughing]* So all my plan is spoilt! We will go, and may the others find a safe road! I don't suppose that we shall see them again.

SAM Yet we may, Mister Frodo. We may. *Frodo claps him round the shoulder, and they push a boat into the water. After they have gone, the lawn remains empty for a long time. But dimly there can be heard the sounds of shouting, and the call of Boromir's horn. The curtain falls*

THE TWO TOWERS

CD 6 THE PLAINS AND THE FOREST

[1] Scene One

Before the curtain rises, harsh cries are heard from behind the scene. The curtain rises; at once Merry and Pippin run onstage, through the trees. They stop and call

PIPPIN and MERRY Frodo! Frodo!

They listen, and then call again

Frodo! Frodo!

They listen again

Frodo! Frodo!

Then suddenly there emerges from the trees a posse of Orcs, led by Grishnákh and Uglúk. Pippin and Merry scream, and the Orcs give a yell of triumph. Pippin and Merry try to fight, but are quickly disarmed and bound. Suddenly there comes the sound of Boromir's horn from offstage. Boromir enters fighting. Then there comes a shower of arrows, which strike Boromir. He staggers and falls. The Orcs at once seize Pippin and Merry and hustle them off into the trees. Boromir rises, as if to follow, and then sinks back against a tree and lies still. He shudders convulsively. Suddenly Aragorn comes leaping through the trees, sword in hand. Seeing Boromir he halts, and kneels down beside him. Boromir opens his eyes and speaks slowly

[2] BOROMIR I tried to take the Ring from Frodo. I am sorry. I have paid. They have gone—the halflings: the Orcs have bound them. I think they are not dead. Farewell, Aragorn! Go to Minas Tirith and save my people! I have failed.

Looking intensely at Boromir, Aragorn takes his hand softly

ARAGORN No! you have conquered! Minas Tirith will not fall!

Boromir smiles, and then lies suddenly still. Aragorn continues to speak, seemingly unnoticing and he continues to ask Boromir for news of the hobbits fate

Which way did they go? Was Frodo there? *He feels Boromir's heart, sighs, and looks up to the sky*

Alas! This is a bitter end. What should I do now? Boromir has laid it on me to go to Minas Tirith, and my heart desires it; but where are the Ring and the Bearer? How shall I find them, and save the Quest from disaster?

He bends his head, and remains still.

Legolas and Gimli enter, bow and axe in hand; and wait at the edge of the clearing

LEGOLAS Alas! We came when we heard the horn.

ARAGORN [turning] Boromir is dead. He fell defending the hobbits, when I was upon the hill.

GIMLI The hobbits! Where are they then? Where is Frodo?

Gimli looks around surveying the scene for signs of the hobbits

ARAGORN I do not know. Before he died Boromir told me that the Orcs had bound them; he did not think that they were dead. What is to be done now?

Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli stand over Boromir as they ponder their next steps.

Legolas resolves to honour Boromir

LEGOLAS First we must tend to the fallen.

GIMLI But we must be swift, for we must follow the Orcs.

ARAGORN But we don't know if the Ring-bearer is with them or not. Are we to abandon him?

LEGOLAS Let us do first what we must do.

They bend and lift Boromir. The glade grows suddenly dark as they bear the body away. The inner curtain falls, and only dim lights are seen through it. At first there are only glimpses of green, like the sun slanting down through leaves

[3] ARAGORN [from behind the scene] Through Rohan over fen and field where the long grass grows the West Wind comes walking, and around the walls it goes. *What news from the West, O wandering wind, do you bring to me tonight? Have you seen Boromir the Tall by moon or by starlight?*

ARAGORN and LEGOLAS

I saw him ride over seven streams, over waters wide and grey; I saw him walk in empty lands, until he passed away.

O Boromir! From the high walls I westward looked afar But you came not from empty lands where no men are.

The light grows more continuous, and the blue stream of the River becomes visible at the far left of the stage

LEGOLAS [from behind the scene] From the mouth of the Sea the South Wind flies, from the sandhills and the stones; The wailing of the gulls it bears, and at the gate it moans. *What news from the South, O sighing wind, do you bring to me at eve? Where now is Boromir the Fair? He tarries and I grieve.*

LEGOLAS and GIMLI

Ask not of me where he doth dwell; so many bones there lie

On the white shores and the dark shores under the stormy sky.

O Boromir! beyond the gate the seaward road runs south,

But you came not with the wailing gulls from the grey sea's mouth.

The River is now clearly seen at the left; the light shows in silhouette behind the inner curtain the three bearing Boromir to the boats. They place his body in one; and release it into the current

ARAGORN [behind the scene, as before] From the gate of the Kings the North Wind rides, and past the roaring falls; And clear and cold about the tower its loud horn calls. *What news from the North, O mighty wind, do you bring me today? What news of Boromir the Bold? for he is long away.*

The boat floats gently out and vanishes.

The three remain in silhouette watching

LEGOLAS, ARAGORN and GIMLI *Neath Amon Hen I heard his cry. There many foes he fought. His cloven shield, his broken sword, they to the water brought.*

His head so proud, his face so fair, his limbs they laid to rest; And Rauros, golden Rauros-falls, him bore upon his breast.

O Boromir! The Tower of Guard shall ever northward gaze To Rauros, golden Rauros-falls, until the end of days.

As the companions turn back onto the lawn, Legolas and Gimli suddenly start, and stare along the bank towards the front

[4] LEGOLAS This is strange! There are only two boats along the bank.

Gimli turns to Aragorn for guidance and knowledge on what has taken place

GIMLI How do you read this riddle? *Aragorn, after a long pause, finally sees the truth, all of the truth, that Frodo's decisions inform his own*

ARAGORN Frodo has gone by boat, and Sam has gone with him.

GIMLI But why should he leave us, and never a word?

LEGOLAS Maybe hunting Orcs came upon him, and he fled.

ARAGORN He fled, but not I think from Orcs. Sam was right; he knew that he must go alone.

LEGOLAS Well, our choice is now clear: either to follow Frodo, or the Orcs.

ARAGORN And let me make a right choice, and change the fate of this unhappy day!...

Aragorn pauses for a moment, contemplating what course he must take next. He looks towards the far bank

I will follow the Orcs. I would have guided Frodo to Mordor, and gone with him to the end; but if I seek him now in the wilderness, I must abandon the captives to torment and death. My heart speaks clearly at the last: the fate of the Ring Bearer is in my hands no longer. The Fellowship has played its part. Yet we that remain cannot forsake our companions while we have strength. Come! we will go now. We shall make such a chase as shall be accounted a marvel among the Three Kindreds: Elves, Dwarves and Men. Forth the Three Hunters!

He springs away into the trees, and the dwarf and the elf follow. They are seen weaving in and out of the trees at great speed as the inner curtain falls

[5] Scene Two

Night is falling on the borders of Fangorn Forest, the trees of which can be seen in the distance. Fires have been lit by the posse of Orcs who have captured Merry and Pippin, who lie bound in the foreground. Beyond stand Uglúk and Grishnákh, trying to cow their followers into some sort of order

UGLÚK Kill all, but not the Halflings; they are to be brought back alive as quickly as possible. I heard that one of them has got something that's wanted for the war. Grishnákh, stand guard over them! But they're not to be killed, unless the filthy horsemen break through! Understand? As long as I'm alive, I want them!

He hurries away to superintend the defence, and there and through the shadows and vapours the fight and the fires can only be glimpsed. Grishnákh crouches down by the hobbits, warming himself at the fire

GRISHNÁKH Well, my little ones! Enjoying your nice rest? Or not? A little awkwardly placed, perhaps: swords and whips on one hand, and nasty spears on the other! Little people should not meddle in affairs that are too big for them.

He suddenly begins to grope at Pippin, searching him and trying to get his hand inside his shirt

PIPPIN I don't think you will find it that way. It isn't easy to find.

GRISHNÁKH Find it? Find what? What are you talking about, little one?

PIPPIN Gollum, gollum!...Nothing, my precious!

GRISHNÁKH O ho! that's what he means, is it? O ho! Very, very dangerous, my little ones.

MERRY Perhaps; and not only to us. Still, you know your own business best. Do you want it, or not?

GRISHNÁKH My dear little fools, everything you have, and everything you know, will be got out of you in due time: everything! We shan't hurry the enquiry. What do you think you've been kept alive for?

MERRY But you haven't got us home yet. And if we come to Isengard, it won't be Grishnákh who benefits; Saruman will take all that he can find.

GRISHNÁKH [more violently] Have you got it—either of you?

PIPPIN Untie us!

Grishnákh looks over towards the back; there is no sign of Uglúk. Drawing his sword, cutting their bonds. But the ring of the metal is his undoing. A horseman suddenly appears through the mist, and a spear shoots out at Grishnákh. It pierces him through the chest; he screams, falling down dead. Merry and Pippin do not move, and the horseman passes by them and on into the darkness. Still Merry and Pippin lie motionless for a time until they resolve to find cover away from the battle

MERRY So far, so good; but how are we to avoid becoming spitted?

PIPPIN We must get under cover. It will not be any comfort to us, if the Riders discover that we are not Orcs after we are dead.

MERRY Fangorn Forest?

Pippin displays a look of concern at the mention of that dangerous and unfriendly forest

PIPPIN Lead on, Master Brandybuck! We have been warned against Fangorn.

MERRY But the Forest seems better to me, all the same, than death in the middle of a battle.

Pippin nods, and the two move forward crawling on their hands and knees toward the forest. The mists now swirl more thickly across the stage, and the scene is obscured as the hobbits vanish from view

[6] Scene Three

The inner curtain is down: through it may be seen a thick tangle of trees, behung with mosses and creepers. The floor of the forest is a thick mass of fallen leaves, a carpet of decaying peat. Towards the front there is an open space; although trees surround it even from the audience. The mists are dispersing. One large stump stands all by itself towards the right. It is the hour before sunrise. Merry and Pippin are standing in the clearing, continuing a conversation and looking into the forest with anxiety

MERRY But the Sun at any rate must creep in sometime. It does not feel at all like Bilbo's description of Mirkwood. This is not dark and black; it is just dim, and frightfully tree-ish. You can't imagine animals living here at all.

PIPPIN No, nor hobbits. And I don't like the thought of trying to get through it either. Nothing to eat for a hundred miles, I should guess.

MERRY We shall be cold tonight, whichever way we go.

Suddenly a shaft of sunlight slants down into the glade, offering a little warmth

PIPPIN Ah! morning! Now for a sight of the land!

MERRY The wind's changing. I am afraid the clouds will come up soon. It feels cool.

PIPPIN Yes; what a pity! The shabby old forest looked so different in the sunlight. I almost felt I liked the place.

Suddenly a voice speaks from the old tree stump by the side of them. A tree-like being stands beside them

TREEBEARD Almost felt you liked the Forest! That's good! That's uncommonly kind of you! Turn around, and let me have a look at you. I almost feel that I dislike you both, but do not let us be hasty. Turn around!

Suddenly two branch-like arms shoot out from the side of the stump, which rises from its position and moves over towards them, turning them round to look at them as it does so

TREEBEARD Hm, hm! Very odd indeed! Do not be too hasty, that is my motto. But if I had seen you before I heard you, I should just have trodden on you, thinking you were Orcs, and found out my mistake afterwards. Very odd you are, indeed. Root and twig, very odd!

PIPPIN Please, who are you? And what are you?

TREEBEARD Hum, now: well, I am an Ent. *Fangorn* is my name according to some, *Treebeard* others make it. Treebeard will do.

MERRY An Ent? What's that?

TREEBEARD Hoo now, hoo! now that would be telling! Not so hasty! What are you?

PIPPIN We're hobbits.

TREEBEARD Hoom, hoom! Come now! Not so hasty! You'll be telling me your right names if you're not careful.

MERRY As a matter of fact, I'm Meriadoc Brandybuck, though most people call me Merry.

PIPPIN And I'm Peregrin Took, but I'm generally called Pippin.

TREEBEARD H'm, but you are hasty folk, I see. I am honoured by your confidence; but I am not going to tell you my name, not yet at any rate. But what are you doing here? What is going on? What is Gandalf up to? And these *burárum*—these Orcs, and young Saruman down at Isengard?

MERRY Do you know Gandalf?

TREEBEARD Yes, I do know him: the only wizard that really cares about trees. Do you know him?

PIPPIN Yes, indeed. He was our guide.

MERRY If you would like to hear more, we will tell you. But it will take some time. Wouldn't you like to put us down?

TREEBEARD Let us go.

MERRY Go? Go where?

TREEBEARD To my home, or one of my homes.

PIPPIN Is it far?

TREEBEARD I do not know. You might call it far, perhaps. But what does that matter?

PIPPIN Well, you see, we have lost all our belongings.

TREEBEARD Ho, hm! you need not trouble about that. I can keep you green and growing for a long, long while. Let us go! [*He steps forward; the inner curtain has risen, and he passes on through the Forest, the hobbits following. The sun goes behind a cloud, and the light fades. All that remains is the shadow of the trees, and Treebeard's voice, singing deeply and slowly as if to himself alone*]

[7] In the willow meads of Tasarinan

I walked in the spring.
Ah, the sight and the smell of the spring
in Nan-tasarion!

And I thought that was good
I wandered in summer in the elm-woods
of Ossiriand.

Ah, the light and the music in the summer
by the Seven Rivers of Ossir!

My voice went up and sang in the sky.
And now all those lands lie under the wave,
and I walk in Ambaróna, in Tauremorna,
in Aldalómë,
In my own land, in the country of Fangorn,
where the roots are long,
and the years lie thicker than the leaves
In Tauremornalómë.

*The curtain descends as the light fades,
with Treebeard, Merry and Pippin
continuing with their journey into the
heart of the forest*

It is dark. The scene is disclosed as a high place among the hills, in the cool hour before dawn. There are many rocks strewn about, and among these are a few still bodies—orc bodies. Legolas is in the lead as the three Hunters enter, running swiftly. He suddenly halts and calls to the others

The light has grown behind the inner curtain, which now dissolves to disclose a landscape covered in mist. Through this there may be seen a distant range of white mountains and then, as the mists lift, a green plain below which stretches for many miles in all directions

TREEBEARD Hm, hoom! Well, well! that is a bundle of news, and no mistake. By root and twig, but it is a strange tale. Indeed a great storm seems to be brewing. The wind is setting East, and the withering of all woods may be near. But Saruman now! Saruman is a neighbour; I cannot overlook him.

PIPPIN Who is Saruman? Do you know anything about his history?

TREEBEARD Saruman is a wizard: more than that I cannot say. The Wizards came first after the Great Ships came over the Sea; but whether they came with the ships I never could tell. Saruman was reckoned great among them. He gave up wandering some time ago, and settled down at Isengard. He was very quiet to begin with; I used to talk with him often. I told him many things that he would never have found out for himself; but I cannot recall that he ever told me anything. I think that now I understand what he is up to. He is plotting to become a Power. He has a mind of metal and wheels; and he does not care for living things, except insofar as they serve him for the moment. And now it is clear that he is a black traitor. Down on the borders they are felling trees—good trees. Many were my friends, creatures I had known from nut and acorn; many had voices of their own that are lost for ever now. And there are wastes of stump and bramble where once there were singing groves. Curse him, root and branch! I must stop it! And you shall come with me.

MERRY We will do what we can.

TREEBEARD Our roads go together—to Isengard!

Merry and Pippin rise in excitement, with an air of congratulation; but Treebeard suddenly pauses

[12] Voices of ENTS *[behind the scene]*
T aurelilómëa tumbalemorna
tumbaletaurëa Lómëanor,
Laurelindórenan lindelorendor
malinornélión ornemalin.

TREEBEARD But I spoke hastily. We must not be hasty. I must cool myself and think; for it is easier to shout stop! than to do it.

The light becomes rapidly dark, and in the dark is heard a murmur of many deep voices

[13] Scene Four

The scene has changed back to the borders of Fangorn Forest. Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli are hastily searching the ground for traces of Merry and Pippin. At last Gimli looks up with a sigh of resignation; it is becoming dark, and the sun has already set

LEGOLAS I do not think the wood feels evil, whatever tales may say. There is no malice near us; but there is watchfulness, and anger. Do you not feel the tenseness? It takes my breath. It is old and full of memory.

Aragorn is still searching the ground for tracks

ARAGORN I am almost sure that the hobbits have been here. But there are other marks, very strange marks, which I cannot understand.

LEGOLAS *[who has been looking into the trees]* Look!

GIMLI Look at what?

LEGOLAS There in the trees.

GIMLI Where? I have not elf-eyes.

LEGOLAS *[pointing]* Hush! speak more softly! Down in the wood.

GIMLI I see, I see now!

LEGOLAS It is he. Cannot you see him, passing from tree to tree?

Slowly there appears through the misty trees at the back the figure of an old man, walking towards them. The inner curtain will rise to let him pass through to the front, and at the same time the mists will disperse

GIMLI Look, Aragorn! There is an old man.

The old man draws nearer to them
It is Saruman. Do not let him speak, or put a spell on us! Shoot first! Why are you waiting? What is the matter with you?

Legolas raises his bow, and then lets his arms fall again. The old man, with a sudden quickening of his pace, reaches the clearing. As he does so, all stiffen.

There is a long silence

[14] The OLD MAN Well met, my friends! I wish to speak with you. Put that bow away, Master Elf! And Master Dwarf, pray take your hand from your axe haft! You will need no such arguments...And what may you be doing in these parts? Such things are not often seen here.

The three remain silent

There are those who would begin to doubt whether your errand is fit to tell. You are tracking the footsteps of two young hobbits. Well, they climbed up here the day before yesterday; and they met someone they did not expect. And now you would like to know where they were taken? Well, maybe I can tell you some news about that. But why are we standing? Your errand, you see, is no longer as urgent as you thought. Let us sit down and be more at ease.

He turns away to seat himself on a large stone towards the back. As if released from a spell, the other three stir and ready their weapons

GIMLI Saruman! Speak! Tell us where you have hidden our friends!

The old man turns and springs suddenly up on the rock. He throws off his cloak, revealing himself clad all in white. It is Gandalf

LEGOLAS Mithrandir! Mithrandir!

GANDALF Well met, I say to you again, Legolas!

ARAGORN Gandalf! beyond all hope you return to us in our need!

Gandalf looks upon the three and around them as if in a dream

GANDALF Gandalf. Yes, that was my name. I was Gandalf.

GIMLI But you are all in white!

GANDALF Yes, I am white now. Indeed I am Saruman, one might say: Saruman as he should have been. I have passed through fire and deep water. I have forgotten much that I thought I knew, and learned again much that I had forgotten. I can see many things far off, but many things that are close at hand I cannot see. Tell me of yourselves!

ARAGORN What do you wish to know? It is a long tale. Will you not first give us news of the hobbits? Where are they now?

GANDALF With Treebeard and the Ents.

ARAGORN Are there still Ents in the world?

LEGOLAS Even among us they are only a memory. Who is this Treebeard?

GANDALF Treebeard is Fangorn, the guardian of the forest; he is the oldest of the Ents that still walk under the Sun upon this Middle-earth. He came here two days ago; and the coming of Merry and Pippin was like a falling of small stones that starts an avalanche in the mountains. A thing is about to happen that has not happened since the Elder Days: the Ents are going to wake up and find that they are strong.

LEGOLAS What will they do?

GANDALF I do not think they know themselves. **[15]** But I have spoken words only of hope. Hope is not victory. War is upon us and all our friends, a war in which only the use of the Ring would give us surety of victory. It fills me with great sorrow and great fear; for much shall be destroyed, and all may be lost. I am Gandalf, Gandalf the White, but Black is mightier still... Come, Aragorn son of Arathorn! The quest of your companions is over. Your next journey is marked by your given word. You must go to Eorlingas and seek out Théoden in his hall. For you are needed.

ARAGORN Will you come with me? For you are our Captain and our banner.

LEGOLAS Yes, together we will follow you. **[16]** But first, it would ease my heart to hear what befell you in Moria.

GIMLI Come, Gandalf, tell us how you fared with the Balrog!

GANDALF Name him not!...

A distant vision reflects his narrative
Long time I fell...Long time I fell, and he fell with me. His fire was about me. I was burned. Then we plunged into the deep water, and all was dark. Cold it was as the tide of death; almost it froze my heart. Thither I came, to the uttermost foundations of stone. Far, far below the deepest delvings of the Dwarves, the earth is gnawed by nameless things. Even Sauron knows them not. They are older than He. Now I have walked there, but I will bring back no report to darken the light of day. I threw down my enemy, and his fire was quenched. Then darkness took me, and I strayed out of thought and time, and I wandered far upon roads that I will not tell. Naked I was sent back—for a brief time, until my task is done. And naked I lay upon

the mountain top. I was alone, forgotten, without escape upon the hard horn of the world. And so at last Gwaihir the Windlord found me again, and bore me to Lothlórien. I tarried there in the ageless time of that land. Healing I found, and I was clad in white. Thence by strange roads I came.

The distant vision vanishes; all is dark behind the inner curtain

But come! we have spent much time here.

He raises his voice high above the trees
Shadowfax! Shadowfax!

There comes the sound of galloping horses, drawing steadily nearer. The inner curtain rises to disclose the great horse awaiting the command of his master. With him are two other horses. Gandalf goes to Shadowfax and caresses him

Far let us ride together now, my friend, and part not in this world again! We go at once to Meduseld, the hall of King Théoden. Hasufel shall bear Aragorn, and Arod Legolas. I will set Gimli before me, and by his leave Shadowfax shall bear us both.

LEGOLAS [looking out over the plain] I see a great smoke to the west. What may that be?

GANDALF Battle and war! Let us ride!
He springs up onto Shadowfax, Gimli clambering up in front of him, and Aragorn and Legolas mount their horses. As they prepare to set out, the curtain falls

CD 7 THE BLACK GATE IS CLOSED

[1] Scene One

The curtain rises. The bleak barren hills of the Emyrn Muil. On the left of the stage, rough scrubby ground; on the right towards the back this drops away in a steep cliff. Below the cliff there lies a wide expanse of marshes and swamps; in the distance, beyond the festering green, looms a dark ridge of mountains. It is dusk, and dark clouds loom overhead. Much of the background is concealed by the inner curtain and veiled by grey mists which swirl about constantly. Frodo and Sam appear through the mists on the left, Sam leading and Frodo dragging behind. Sam comes forward, seeking a way down the cliff, and halts

[2] SAM Well, master, we're in a fix and no mistake.

He stares with puckered eyes towards the mountains, from whence issue a series of red flashes like the leaping up of great fires

What a fix! That's the one place in all the lands we've ever heard of that we don't want to see any closer; and that's just where we can't get, nohow. We can't get down; and if we did, we'd find all that green land a nasty bog, I'll warrant. Phew! Can you smell it?

Frodo stares at the distant mountains

FRODO Mordor!...If I must go there, I wish I could come back quickly and make...an end!

At the back the red glow dies, but dark thunderclouds roll up towards the front, directly overhead. Sam turns towards the back anxiously, and then returns to his former position

SAM Did you see them again, Mister Frodo?

FRODO [still troubled] No; I've seen none of those eyes for three nights now. But he...he's not my chief worry. There's an Eye...an Eye!

He turns away, his face in his hands; and then looks up with sudden resolve
Come on! We must get down! Where does this gully lead to?

SAM A nasty drop, I'll warrant.

FRODO Look! The cliff looks easier here.

SAM Well, it's always easier getting down; those as can't fly can jump!

FRODO All the same, we must try. I'm going down to try it out.

He clammers down; his voice is heard from below, muffled

One step down! And this ledge broadens out to the right. I could stand there without a hold. I'll—

His words are cut off by a loud and sudden clap of thunder. At the same time there comes an unearthly shriek from the clouds: the shriek of a Black Rider, a Nazgûl. Frodo cries out in horror and agony, clasp his wound, sustained during his encounter with the wraiths on Weathertop. Sam rushes to the edge and leans over, dropping his pack to the ground

SAM Master! Master! Master!

FRODO [weakly, from below]

All right! All right! I'm here. But I can't see.

A sheet of hail sweeps down across the scene, obscuring even Sam totally from view

SAM I'm coming down to you.

FRODO [in a stronger voice] No! Wait!

You can't do anything without a rope.

Sam slaps his forehead with sudden realisation. Frodo begins to grow impatient as Sam exclaims

SAM Rope! Ha ha ha!...

He collapses, helpless with laughter, to the ground, his head thrown back into the rain. The storm begins to pass and looking up from below, Frodo speaks with an annoyed voice

FRODO Stop laughing! Are you trying to tell me you've got some rope in your pocket? If so, out with it!

SAM Yes, Master Frodo, in my pack and all. Clean forgot about it!

FRODO Then get busy and let us an end down!

Sam runs to his pack, rummages in it, brings out his rope and throws one end down to Frodo below. He heaves Frodo up. Frodo scrambles up to the level. The storm clouds gradually begin to lift, and it slowly becomes clearer, revealing a night

sky. A crescent moon hangs over the Emyrn Muil. Frodo rises and wanders thoughtfully along the cliff edge, staring at the mountains which once more grow visible. Sam comes up behind, curling the rope

SAM Now don't go doing anything silly in the dark, Mister Frodo! And I haven't got over that scream yet, if you have. Like a Black Rider...Well, if you must climb, why not use the rope?

FRODO [with sudden resolution]

Make it fast to that stump, then!

SAM Oh, very well! Let's get it over with!
He ties the rope to a stump near the edge and swings himself over. Frodo continues for a while to stare at the distant mountains, until at last he turns to follow Sam. As Frodo scrambles over the edge and disappears—carefully checking the knot—the mists from the back sweep forward to the front of the stage, obscuring the scene. It grows dark, and the inner curtain falls. At first the vapours remain steady, but they soon begin to swirl upwards, thus giving the impression of descent from the hills

[3] Scene Two

As the mists slowly clear and the light grows, the area at the foot of the cliff is revealed. Bare ground with a few tussocks of grass. Near the base of the cliff is a small bush; behind this, a gully runs off right. Sam is holding the bottom of the rope, down which Frodo is still climbing. Frodo scrambles to the ground and turns to Sam with elation

FRODO Well! We've done it! We've escaped from the Emyrn Muil! But now—

SAM Ninnyhammers! Noodles! My beautiful rope! As nice a sign for that Gollum as we could leave. Made by Galadriel herself, maybe...Galadriel!...

He pulls at the rope as if in farewell. To his surprise it comes loose and falls down on top of him. He collapses to the ground, and Frodo rushes forward to help him

FRODO [laughing] Who tied the knot? A good thing that it lasted as long as it did—

He looks up at the cliff, and suddenly jerks Sam's arm

Look!

SAM Where?

FRODO On the cliff!

SAM Snakes and adders! Gollum!

FRODO Ssh! he'll hear you!

Frodo and Sam retreat behind the small bush at the base of the cliff

GOLLUM [from above, descending the cliff] Ach, ss! Cautious, my precious! More haste, less speed, gollum! Where is it, where is it, my precious, my precious? It's ours, it is, and we wants it!

He comes slowly into view, creeping down the cliff, head downwards, slobbering, his filthy teeth gritted hard as he effortlessly descends the cliff face towards Frodo and Sam below

The filthy swine, the thieves! Curse them!

GOLLUM We hates them—ach!

He falls, but a few feet from the ground. At once Sam dashes from hiding and falls onto him. They struggle together, but Gollum seizes Sam's throat and Sam cannot break the hold. Frodo rushes from concealment, drawing his sword. He grabs Gollum from behind, holding the blade to his neck

FRODO Let go, Gollum! This is Sting. You have seen it before. Let go! or I'll cut your throat!

Gollum collapses shivering on the ground

GOLLUM Don't hurt us! Don't let them hurt us, they won't hurt us will they, nice little hobbitses? We'll be very good, yes, gollum!

SAM [*angrily rising and fingering his neck gently*] What shall we do with him?

Frodo is not listening. He hears instead two voices from the past. He stares unseeingly before him; Gollum and Sam look at him in amazement

Voice of FRODO What a pity that Bilbo didn't stab the vile creature, when he had the chance!

Voice of GANDALF Pity? It was pity that stayed his hand.

Voice of FRODO I do not feel any pity for Gollum. He deserves death.

Voice of GANDALF Deserves death! I daresay he does. Many that live deserve death, and many that die deserve life...

The voices fade into silence. Frodo lowers his sword and sighs

FRODO Very well. For now that I see him, I pity him.

GOLLUM Yes, wretched we are, yes, precious. Hobbits won't hurt us, no, precious. We'll help, yes, gollum. Find them paths in the dark, we will. But where were they going, we wonders?

FRODO You know, Sméagol, or you guess: to Mordor!

GOLLUM Ach, ss! We guessed, yes we guessed, and we didn't want them to go, did we? Ashes, ashes and dust, and thirst there is: and pits, pits, pits, and Orcs, thousands of Orcses.

FRODO So you've been there, and you're being drawn back, aren't you?

GOLLUM Yess. Yess. No! Once, by accident it was, wasn't it, precious? Yes, by accident. But we won't go back, no, no!

His voice suddenly changes: he collapses flat on the ground, puts his hands to his face, and speaks towards the East, to the right of the stage

Leave me alone, gollum! You hurt me. Oh, my poor hands, gollum! I—we—I—don't want to go back. I can't find it. Ach! Not for you! Go away! Don't look at us! Go to sleep!

FRODO He will not go away or go to sleep at your command, Sméagol, but if you really wish to be free of him again, then you must help us to find a way towards him.

GOLLUM Tee-hee-hee! He's over there. Always there. Orcs will take you all the way.

FRODO Get up! Now!

Gollum gets up, backing against the cliff

GOLLUM Don't ask Sméagol! Not now, no! Rest a bit...first...nice hobbits!

FRODO Then sit down; and don't move!

Gollum slowly settles down flat on the ground, as if for sleep. Frodo and Sam lean back against the cliff, exchanging meaningful glances. Gollum slowly opens one eyes, looks warily up, and springs away. Sam leaps after him and grabs his ankle, bringing him to the ground

SAM You're a nasty treacherous creature!

FRODO Your rope might come in useful again.

Sam brings up his rope, bends down to Gollum and ties his ankle

GOLLUM Ach! It hurts us! Take it off!

FRODO No, I will not take it off, unless you promise—

GOLLUM Sméagol!...Sméagol will swear on the Precious.

FRODO [*drawing himself up*] On the Precious? How dare you! *One Ring to rule them all and in the darkness bind them.* Would you commit your promise to that, Sméagol? Beware! It will hold you—but it will twist your words.

GOLLUM On the Precious, on the Precious!

FRODO Then speak your promise!

GOLLUM I will serve the master of the Precious. Good master, good Sméagol, gollum, gollum!

He tries to bite at the rope round his ankle as Frodo looks on him with pity

FRODO Take the rope off, Sam!

Sam reluctantly obeys. Gollum, as soon as he is free, springs up and begins dancing about, clicking his fingers with delight. Frodo smiles to see Gollum happier but Sam looks on suspiciously

SAM Well, Gollum, we'd better be going.

GOLLUM Yes, come down here!

He skips away to the right, down the gully. Frodo and Sam exchange glances and then follow Gollum as quickly as they can. From the gully Gollum's voice can be heard. As his song progresses this grows steadily fainter and finally fades away. At the same time dark green fumes rise up and veil the stage. They swirl across the stage, becoming gradually darker

[4] GOLLUM

Alive without breath,
as cold as death;
never thirsty, ever drinking,
clad in mail never clinking.
Drowns on dry land,
thinks an island
is a mountain;
thinks a fountain
is a puff of air.
So sleek, so fair!
What a joy to meet!
We only wish
to catch a fish,
so juicy-sweet!

The stage is obscured and darkened

[5] Scene Three

Lights begin to flicker suddenly through the mists. They flash out more and more brightly. In the green flare is seen a marshy mere. Will-of-the-wisp flickers about. Hardly anything is visible. Gollum, Frodo and Sam appear and feel their way slowly across the pool

SAM What are they, Gollum?

GOLLUM [*leading*] The tricksy lights? Candles of corpses, yes, yes. Don't look at them! Where's master?

SAM [*turning back*] Come on, Mister Frodo! Don't look at them!

FRODO [*dreamily*] All right. I'm coming.

Sam turns and makes back towards Gollum, but suddenly trips and falls in the water

SAM Ach! [*He wrenches himself up*] There are dead things, dead faces in the water!

GOLLUM [*turning*] The Dead Marshes, yes, yes, that is their name. You should not look in when the candles are lit.

SAM Who...what are they?

FRODO [*dreamily*] I don't know...but I have seen them too. They lie in the pools, pale faces deep under the dark water. I saw grim faces and evil, and noble faces and sad. Many faces proud and fair, and weeds in their silver hair. But all foul, all rotting, all dead. A fell light is in them. I know not who they are.

The Dead Marshes, a series of wetlands where the remains of many elves and men are found from ancient battles

GOLLUM All dead, yes, all rotten. There was a great battle long ago, for days and nights at the Gates. But the marshes have grown since then...creeping, always creeping. You cannot reach them. You cannot touch them. No precious! all dead.

SAM Can't we get on and get away?

GOLLUM [*beginning to lead them on again*] Yes, yes, but slowly, slowly...or the hobbits go down to join the dead and light little candles. Follow Sméagol! Don't look at the lights!

While he has been speaking, the lights have been growing once more fainter.

The green smokes gradually obscure the stage again

[6] Scene Four

The mists have slowly transformed into a grey colour, and now fade away altogether as a yellow veil. High mounds of crushed and powdered ash, great cones fire-blasted and poisoned earth, stand about. In the foreground lies a pool choked with ash. On a muddy mound to the left, Frodo and Sam are lying asleep. Below, on the edge of the pool, Gollum sits staring into the water

GOLLUM Sméagol promised.—Yes, we promised to help the master: the master of the Precious. But if we were master...—But Sméagol said he would be very very good.—Yes, let's be good, precious, to ourselves.—But the nice hobbit took the

rope off Sméagol's leg.—But he's a Baggins, my precious. We hates Bagginses. We must have it!—But he'll see, he'll know! He'll take it from us!—He sees, he knows. Must take it, must take it, not for him, for ourselves! We wants it! But...not yet, eh? Perhaps not. She might help, yes—No! not that way!—Yes! we wants it! we wants it!

He rises and scrambles round to Frodo's head. He stretches out his hands towards the hobbit's neck, when Sam stirs suddenly in his sleep

SAM [waking] Wh—what's the time?

GOLLUM Ss!

He falls sideways, fawning on Sam
Nice hobbits! Nice Sam! Sleepyheads leave Sméagol to watch!

SAM But it's evening. We should be going. Wake up, Mister Frodo!

FRODO [shaken and waking] Ah! I feel almost refreshed.

He looks beyond Sam at Gollum, and smiles at him

Come! You have guided us well and faithfully. Bring us to the Gate, and you may go.

GOLLUM To the Gate, eh? But it won't look nice at all, no, no!

A flying shadow is abruptly cast over the sky. Gollum looks up to the sky as Frodo and Sam follow his eyes upward

Wraiths! Wraiths on wings! The Precious is their master. They see everything, everything! Nothing can hide from them. He sees, He knows! Ah, gollum, gollum, gollum!

The scene is slowly covered again by mists

[7] Scene Five

The Black Gate is closed. High cliffs lower on every side, and between them is a high rampart of black stone with two great gates of iron. Above the Gates are two strong towers, with a battlement running between them. To either side of the Gates roads lead away to south and east. Smoke curls upwards from within the battlements. Sunrise. Trumpets ring out harshly from the towers; steel glints on the battlements

SAM Well, here's the Gate! And it seems to me as if that's about as far as we're going to get. We can't go no further.

GOLLUM No, no, we can't go no further. Sméagol said so. Sméagol knew.

SAM Then what the plague did you bring us here for?

GOLLUM Master said; *Bring us to the Gate*. So Sméagol does so.

FRODO I did say so, because I purpose to enter Mordor, and I shall go this way.

GOLLUM No, no, master! Don't take the Precious to him! He'll eat us if he gets it, eat all the world. Keep it, nice master; or go away, and give it back to little Sméagol. Sméagol will keep it safe. Hobbits go home. Don't go to the Gate!

FRODO I am commanded to go to the land of Mordor, and therefore I shall go.

GOLLUM Not this way, master! There is another way; darker, more secret.

FRODO [suspiciously] Another way?

GOLLUM Sméagol found it. Let Sméagol show you!

FRODO You have not spoken of this before.

GOLLUM Master did not ask. Nice Sméagol always helps.

A sudden fanfare rings out from the tower on the left, answered from the right. The Gate slowly opens and a posse of Orcs march out, taking up a rapid march eastwards towards the right of the stage. Frodo starts up to the edge of the dell and watches them, then slowly sinks back once more and turns again to Gollum

FRODO Sméagol, I will trust you. Tell me of this way.

Gollum glances anxiously up at the Gate above, and timorously begins from memory to describe the path

GOLLUM If master goes along the western road, he will come to a crossing in a circle of dark trees. On the right, a road goes on down to the River; and straight ahead it goes down to the south, yes.

FRODO But what of the other way?

GOLLUM Yes, yes, the road to the left. At once it begins to climb up, up, winding and climbing back towards the tall shadows. When it turns round the black rock, you'll see it.

SAM See it? What?

GOLLUM The old fortress, very horrible now. We used to hear tales from the south when Sméagol was young—yes, there were many tales about the Tower of the Moon.

FRODO That would be Minas Ithil that Isildur the son of Elendil built. But what has it to do with us?

GOLLUM Well, master, there it was and is: but not beautiful, not now. Very dreadful things live there: the Silent Watchers. But there is another way, a little path leading up into the mountains, and then a long cleft, and then a tunnel, a dark tunnel; and at last a path high above the high pass.

SAM [roughly] I don't like the sound of it. If it's still there, it'll be guarded too.

FRODO Is not the way guarded?

GOLLUM Yes, yes, maybe. But there is no other way.

Frodo sits staring at the ground. A distant peal of thunder crackles over the mountains. At last, when Frodo sits up and looks as though he will answer, a sudden roar of singing breaks out close to them, only just above their heads. The sound of many hundreds of men, all marching hard across the cliff above

[8] MEN OF HARAD

Grey as a mouse,...

SAM What's that?

MEN OF HARAD

Big as a house,...

Gollum starts up to the edge of the dell to see who is singing

nose like a snake,
I make the earth shake
as I tramp through the grass;
trees crack as I pass.

They pass through the Gates

With horns in my mouth
I walk in the South,
flapping big ears.

Beyond count of years
I stomp round and round,
never lie on the ground,
not even to die.

Oliphant am I,
biggest of all,
huge, grey and tall.
If ever you'd met me
you wouldn't forget me;
if you never do

you won't think I'm true;
but old Oliphant am I,
and I never lie.

The Gate crashes closed behind them

GOLLUM [whispered] We must move, master. This place is unsafe.

FRODO Well, Sméagol, I will come with you.

GOLLUM Good master, nice master, wise master! But soft and quick as shadows we must go!

Frodo and Sam rise wearily and gather up their packs. The curtain falls

THE KING OF THE GOLDEN HALL

[9] Scene One

The curtain rises to disclose the plains of Rohan, and not far distant the range of the White Mountains. Legolas, Gimli, Aragorn and Gandalf stand there, looking out towards the mountains; their horses wait nearby

ARAGORN

Where now is the horse and the rider?

Where is the horn that was blowing?
They have passed like rain on the
mountain, like a wind in the meadow;
The days have gone down in the West
behind the hills into shadow.

Who shall gather the smoke
of the dead wood burning,
or behold the flowing years
from the Sea returning?

The light fades quickly, and the inner curtain falls

[10] Scene Two

The inner curtain remains down; before it is now seen the entrance to Meduseld in Edoras, with Éothain and Háma on watch, as Aragorn, Legolas, Gimli and Gandalf approach

HÁMA and ÉOTHAIN Stay, strangers here unknown!

ARAGORN Has not then Éomer returned, and given warning of our coming?

HÁMA Maybe it was not wholly unlooked for. It is but two nights ago that Wormtongue came to us and said that by the will of Théoden no stranger should pass these gates.

GANDALF Speak no more! I am in haste. For I am Gandalf. I have returned. And here beside me is Aragorn son of Arathorn, the heir of Kings. Here also are Legolas the Elf and Gimli the Dwarf, our comrades.

HÁMA I am the Doorwarden of Théoden; Háma is my name. Here I must bid you lay aside your weapons before you enter.

Legolas unhappily surrenders his long silver knife, his quiver and his bow to the guard

LEGOLAS Keep these well; for they come from the Golden Wood and the Lady of Lothlórien herself gave them to me.

Háma laying them down beside him against the wall looks at Legolas with grave respect

HÁMA No man shall touch them, I promise you.

ARAGORN It is not my will to put aside my sword, or to deliver Andúril to any other man.

HÁMA It is the will of Théoden.

GANDALF Come, come! we are friends here. Here at least is my sword, Goodman Háma. Glamdring it is called, for the Elves made it long ago. Now let me pass. Come, Aragorn!

ARAGORN [*slowly laying his sword against the wall*] Here I set it; but I command you not to touch it, nor to permit any other to lay hand on it.

HÁMA It shall be, lord, as you command.

GIMLI Well, if it has Andúril to keep it company, my axe may rest here too without shame.

GANDALF And now, if all is as you wish, let us go to speak with your master.

HÁMA Your staff...forgive me, but that too must be left at the doors.

GANDALF Foolishness! Prudence is one thing, but discourtesy is another. I am old. If I may not lean on my stick as I go, then I will sit out here until it please Théoden to hobble out himself to speak with me.

HÁMA The staff in the hand of a wizard may be more than a prop for age. Yet in doubt a man of worth will trust to his own wisdom. I believe that you are friends and folk worthy of honour, who have no evil purpose. You may go in.

He bows before them, and he and Éothain depart to left and right. The light before the inner curtain grows dim, and that within grows brighter. The inner curtain rises, and the four go through into the hall

[11] Scene Three

In the light within the hall, which at first is dim, little can at first be seen. Then light falls on Théoden sitting in his high chair. Behind him stands his sister-daughter Éowyn and before him Wormtongue sits on the steps of the dais. Théoden is clad in black, with which his white hair contrasts boldly. The golden circlet about his head is set with a single diamond. There is a long silence before Gandalf steps forward, his staff in hand as he speaks to the king

GANDALF Hail, Théoden son of Thengel! I have returned. For behold! the storm comes, and now all friends should gather together, lest each singly be destroyed.

THÉODEN I greet you; and maybe you look for welcome. But why should I welcome you, Master Stormcrow? Tell me that.

WORMTONGUE You speak justly, lord. It is but five days since Théodred your son was slain upon the west marches; and in Éomer there is little trust. And even now we learn from Gondor that the Dark Lord is stirring in the east. Why indeed should we welcome you, Master Stormcrow?

GANDALF The courtesy of your hall is somewhat lessened of late, Théoden son of Thengel. Seldom has any lord of Rohan received three such guests. Grey is their raiment, for the Elves clad them, and they have passed through the shadow of great peril to your hall.

WORMTONGUE Then it is true, as Éomer reported, that you are in league with the Sorceress of the Golden Wood?

Gandalf with sudden anger flashes his gaze to Grima Wormtongue

GANDALF The wise speak only of what they know, Grima son of Galmód. A witless worm are you become. Therefore be silent, and keep your forked tongue behind your teeth. I have not passed through fire and death to bandy crooked words with you until the lightning falls.

He raises his staff. There is a roll of thunder, and all the lights grow out. Only Gandalf is seen, standing white and tall before the blackened room. In the gloom is heard the voice of Wormtongue

WORMTONGUE Did I not counsel you, lord, to forbid his staff? That fool, Háma, has betrayed us!

Gandalf still holds his staff high as there is a sudden flash of lightning. Then all is silent. Wormtongue sprawls on his face. The light slowly grows again

[12] **GANDALF** Now, Théoden son of Thengel, will you hearken to me? Not all is dark. Take courage, Lord of the Mark! Too long have you sat in shadows.

Théoden rises from his chair unsteadily. Wormtongue remains lying on the floor. Éowyn comes forward to Théoden's side and helps him down from his chair

THÉODEN Go, Éowyn sister-daughter! The time for fear is past.

Éowyn turns and looks at Aragorn for a long moment; then she passes him and goes from the hall. The light at the front of the stage grows, and Wormtongue lying on the dais is swallowed up in greater darkness

It is not so dark here.

GANDALF No; nor does age lie so heavy on your shoulders as some would have you think.

THÉODEN Dark have been my dreams of late, but I feel as one new awakened. I would that you had come before, Gandalf. What is to be done?

GANDALF Much; but first send for Éomer. Do I not guess rightly that you hold him prisoner by the counsel of Gríma the Wormtongue?

THÉODEN It is true. He had disobeyed my commands, and threatened death to Gríma in my hall.

GANDALF A man may love you and yet love not the counsels of Wormtongue.

THÉODEN That may be. Call Éomer to me.

Legolas beckons, and Háma comes forward. Legolas speaks to him towards the back, and Háma goes rapidly out. Gandalf brings Théoden towards the front; the King begins to become straighter and less apparently aged

[13] **GANDALF** There is no time to tell you all that you should know. But see! you dream no longer. You live. Gondor and Rohan do not stand alone. The Enemy is strong beyond our reckoning, yet we have a hope which he has not guessed.

THÉODEN Alas! that these evil days should be mine, and should come in my old age instead of the peace which I have earned.

GANDALF Your hands would remember their old strength better, if they grasped a sword.

Éomer enters from the right, his sword held with the hilt towards Théoden, and with Háma following him

ÉOMER Take this, dear lord! It was ever at your service.

GANDALF Will you not take the sword? Éomer kneels before Théoden, who takes the sword and raises it high with a sudden gesture

THÉODEN Arise, arise now, Riders of Théoden! Dire deeds awaken, dark is it eastward. Let horse be bridled, horn be sounded! Forth Eorlingas!

MEN [*entering hastily*] Command us!

ÉOMER Westu Théoden há! It is a joy to us to see you return into your own!

THÉODEN Take back your sword, Éomer sister-son! Go, Háma, and seek my own sword! Gríma has it in his keeping. Bring him to me also. Now, Gandalf, what is your counsel?

GANDALF Every man that can ride should be sent west at once, as Éomer counselled; we must destroy the threat of Saruman, while we have time. If we fail, we fall.

THÉODEN This counsel seems good to me now. Let all my folk get ready!

ARAGORN The men of Rohan must ride forth today, and we will ride with them, axe, sword and bow.

ÉOMER Now indeed is there hope of victory!

THÉODEN I myself will go to war, to fall in the front of the battle maybe. Thus shall I sleep better.

ARAGORN Then even the defeat of Rohan will be glorious in song.

All around, within and outside the Golden Hall, the men of Rohan rejoice

ÉOMER, ÉOTHAIN and MEN The Lord of the Mark will ride! Forth Eorlingas!

Suddenly Háma appears from the back, escorting Wormtongue. Bringing forward a long sword, presenting it to Théoden

[14] HÁMA Here, lord, is Herugrim your ancient blade. It was hidden in his rooms.

WORMTONGUE You lie.

GANDALF See, Théoden, here is a snake! With safety you cannot take it with you, nor can you leave it behind. To slay it would be just. But it was not always as it now is. You, Wormtongue, have done what you could for your true master. Yet Saruman is apt to overlook his bargains. I should advise you to go quickly and remind him, lest he forget your faithful service.

Wormtongue starts. He stares at Gandalf and then at Théoden with suddenly revealed hatred. Then he breaks from Háma and rushes from the hall. Éowyn comes from the back, bearing in her hands a cup of wine which she presents to Théoden

ÉOWYN Ferthu Théoden há! Receive now this cup and drink in thy happy hour. Health be with thee at thy coming!

Théoden drinks from the cup and passes it back to her. She then bears it to Gandalf, who drinks; and finally she bears it to Aragorn

Hail, Aragorn son of Arathorn!

ARAGORN Hail, Lady of Rohan!

He hands it back to her and meets her gaze in silence

[15] THÉODEN Behold! I go forth, and it seems like to be my last riding. I name here Éomer my sister-son as my heir. But to someone I must now entrust the people that I leave behind, to rule them in my place. Which of you will shall it be?

He speaks to the men in the hall; but there is no reply. Éowyn has offered the cup to Gimli and Legolas, and now stands at one side

Is there none whom you would name?

HÁMA Éowyn. She is fearless and all love her. Let her be as a lord to the Eorlingas, while we are gone.

THÉODEN Let it be so.

Éowyn comes and kneels before the King

Farewell, sister-daughter! Dark is the hour, yet maybe we shall return to the Golden Hall.

Éowyn is speaking to Théoden, but looking at Aragorn while she does so

ÉOWYN A year shall endure for every day that passes until your return.

ARAGORN The King shall come again. Fear not! Not West but East does our doom await us.

All the MEN Forth Eorlingas!

Spears are clashed on shields. Then the King raises his hand and all leave the stage in great excitement. Only Éowyn remains, following Aragorn with a sad look on her face. As she turns back towards the hall, the inner curtain falls and darkness shrouds the scene

[16] Scene Four

The rear of the stage, which at first remains shrouded in darkness, is entirely dominated by a great concourse of trees; but all the trees are swaying in the breeze, and singing. Towards the front are Pippin and Merry; Treebeard is in the centre of the stage with Quickbeam; and the other Ents are towards the back. The whole scene is filled with the light of the sun rippling through many leaves

QUICKBEAM

O Orofarnë, Lassemista, Carnimírië!

O rowan fair, upon your hair how white
the blossom lay!

O rowan mine, I saw you shine upon a
summer's day,

your rind so bright, your leaves so light,
your voice so cool and soft;

upon your head how golden-red the
crown you bore aloft!

O rowan dead, upon your head your hair
is dry and grey;

your crown is spilled, your voice is stilled
forever and a day,

O Orofarnë, Lassemista, Carnimírië!

Suddenly there comes a great shout from behind the scene

ENTS Ra-hoom-rah! Ra-hoom-rah!

We come, we come with roll of drum:

ta-runda runda runda rum!

We come, we come with horn and drum:

ta-rūna rūna rūna rom!

The light behind the scene suddenly flares up, a vivid orange. In it are seen the shadows of many trees, marching across the stage as if to war. Quickbeam and the hobbits rise and watch the procession passing

Hoom, hoom! to Isengard!

though Isengard be ringed and barred

with doors of stone,

though Isengard be strong and hard,

as cold as stone and bare as bone,

we go, we go, we go to war,

to hew the stone and break the door;

for bole and bough are burning now,

the furnace roars—we go to war!

To land of doom with tramp of doom,

with roll of drum we come, we come;

to Isengard with doom we come!

With doom we come!

Suddenly the whole scene darkens, and then through the inner curtain is seen only a distant silver light, against which are silhouetted the shapes of trees standing still—and waiting

TREEBEARD Night lies over Isengard.

Treebeard and the hobbits move towards the back and vanish into the darkness.

The curtain falls

CD 8 THE WINDOW ON THE WEST

[1] Scene One

The curtain rises. A glade in Ithilien. To the left, a tree-covered bank slopes upwards to the rear. To the right, a thicket of fern. Across the back the

mountains are dimly visible. On the extreme right of the clearing, a spring rises. In the centre of the stage, Sam sits leaning against the bank. In the fern Frodo lies asleep. Gollum is sitting on a boulder which lies on the left of the stage below the bank, looking at the sleeping Frodo. Sunrise. Gollum rises and turns towards Sam

SAM Hullo, Gollum! Is Mister Frodo asleep?

GOLLUM [moving to crawl away into the fern] Yes, master sleeps.

SAM Hi! Gollum! Where are you going?

GOLLUM Hunting.

SAM Well, old noser, could you find something for a hungry hobbit?

GOLLUM Yes, perhaps. Sméagol always helps.

He crawls away. Sam turns towards the fern and looks at the gently sleeping Frodo

SAM Too thin and drawn he is. Not right for a hobbit.

He sighs deeply and Frodo stirs gently. Sam returns to the clearing. Suddenly there is a crackle in the fern and Gollum comes out, carrying a dead rabbit in each hand

GOLLUM Sméagol always helps.

He puts the rabbits down by Sam, who rummages in his pack and brings out two pans

SAM Good Gollum! Now I've another job for you. Fill these pans with water.

Gollum takes the pans over to the spring. Sam moves to the centre of the stage, building a small fire. Gollum returns with the water, suddenly sees what Sam is doing, and rushes forward

GOLLUM Ach, sss, no! Mustn't do it!

SAM Do what?

GOLLUM Not make fire! It burns, it kills! It will bring...sss...enemies.

SAM Don't see why. Anyway, I'm going to stew these conies.

GOLLUM Stew the conies! What for?

They are young, they are tender. Eat them, silly hobbit!

SAM Now, now! If you give me a coney, the coney's mine to eat as I like. Go and eat yours how you like...out of my sight.

The fire is completed and lit. Gollum picks up a rabbits and goes off into the fern, grumbling. Sam puts his rabbit in a pan on the fire, and then goes to wake Frodo who rouses and sniffs the air

FRODO Hello, Sam! What's that I can smell?

SAM A rabbit stew from Gollum. It'll be ready soon—

He breaks off. The fire has caught the fern and blazes up. He rushes back and stamps it out. The sound of a horn is heard. Frodo and Sam stare at each and dive into the fern. Voices are heard approaching from the right

[2] ANBORN Here is where the smoke came from!

FARAMIR 'Twill be in the fern.

DAMROD We have it trapped!

They stride onstage and begin to beat the bush; Frodo and Sam suddenly leap up, drawing their swords. The men start back in surprise, also drawing

MABLUNG What have we here?

ANBORN Not Orcs.

DAMROD Elves?

FARAMIR Nay! not Elves, for they are fair to look on.

SAM Meaning we're not, I take you.

[*Faramir laughs*] Thank you kindly. And who are you?

FARAMIR I am Faramir, Captain of Gondor. But declare your errand!

FRODO We are hobbits of the Shire. Frodo, son of Drogo, am I; and this Samwise, son of Hamfast. We are travellers from Rivendell, or Imladris as some call it. [*Faramir starts, and grows suddenly intent*] Seven companions had we: two men, Aragorn and Boromir—

ALL Boromir!

FARAMIR Boromir, son of the Lord Denethor? What know you of him?

FRODO Are the words known to you that Boromir brought to Rivendell?—
Seek for the Sword that was broken, In Imladris it dwells?

FARAMIR They are known indeed, and are some token of your truth.

FRODO Aragorn whom I named is the bearer of the Sword that was broken. And we are the Halflings that the rhyme spoke of.

FARAMIR I see that might be so. And what is Isildur's Bane?

FRODO That...is hidden for the moment.

FARAMIR I must know more of this.

There is a sudden burst of horns in the distance

But at present I am busy engaged. There will be an ambush near at hand ere the day is done. I will leave Mablung and Damrod to guard you. If I return, I will speak to you again.

FRODO May the light shine on your swords!

FARAMIR Farewell!

He and Anborn disappear over the bank. Frodo looks after Faramir, and then turns back to Mablung and Damrod to ask them more of their mission

FRODO For whom are you in ambush?

MABLUNG For the Southrons, curse them!

DAMROD Aye, curse them! For the Enemy has been among them, and they have returned to him.

MABLUNG I doubt not that the days of Minas Tirith are numbered, so great is his strength.

MEN OF HARAD

Grey as a mouse,
Big as a house,
nose like a snake,
I make the earth shake

Faramir and his men approach from the left of the scene, readying themselves to engage the men of Harad

FARAMIR and MEN Gondor! Gondor!

Sounds of battle come from the left

MEN OF HARAD

as I tramp through the grass;
trees crack as I pass.

With horns in my mouth

I walk in the South,

flapping big ears.

Beyond count of years

I stomp round and round,

never lie on the ground,

not even to die.

Oliphaunt am I,

biggest of all,

huge, grey and tall.

If ever you'd met me

you wouldn't forget me;

if you never do

you won't think I'm true;

but old Oliphaunt am I...

FRODO I wonder where Gollum is?

SAM It sounds like a thousand smiths all smithying together. They're as near as I want them now.

MEN [*behind the scenes*]

Mumak! Mumak! Ware!

MABLUNG [*leaping up the bank*]

Some have broken from the trap!...There they go, and the captain leading!

DAMROD [*joining Mablung*]

They are coming this way!...May the Valar turn him aside!

A Southron stumbles into the glade from the bank and stands staring at Frodo and Sam in wonderment. Damrod stabs him in the back

DAMROD Ah!

Faramir and his followers return to the glade. At a motion from Faramir some remove the body of the dead Southron, and then all form a line along the bank. Faramir comes forward alone, and seats himself on a stone

[3] **FARAMIR** And now, Frodo, of your errand?

FRODO Of that I may not speak; but return to Minas Tirith, and Boromir will explain all when he comes.

Faramir stirs with interest

FARAMIR So! Were you a friend of Boromir's?

FRODO For my part.

Faramir looks on Frodo gravely with sadness in his eyes

FARAMIR Then you would grieve to know that Boromir is dead?

FRODO I would grieve indeed...Dead? But how do you know?

FARAMIR Night oft brings news to near kindred. Boromir was my brother.—

[4] Five days ere I set out his horn was heard in Minas Tirith: but dim, as an echo in the mind. And on the third night I sat by the waters of Anduin, in the grey dark under the young pale moon; and the sad reeds were rustling. Then I saw, or it seemed that I saw, a boat glimmering grey on the water, and a pale light was round it. An awe fell on me, for the boat turned towards me, and it was filled with clear water, from which

came the light. And wrapped in the water lay Boromir, my brother, dead. A broken sword was on his knee. And I cried out: but he was gone. The boat passed glimmering on into the night. Dream-like it was, and yet I do not doubt that he is dead and has passed down the River to the Sea.

FRODO Alas! that is Boromir indeed! Go back, Faramir, valiant Captain of Gondor, and defend your City while you may!

FARAMIR Indeed we must move hence without delay, for vengeance will come from the hills if we longer stay. We are weary. I will take you to a secret refuge of the men of Ithilien, where we may rest.

The scene begins to cover slowly with mist, and the inner curtain descends

[5] Scene Two

The chorus slowly move off to the left. Frodo and Faramir appear to follow: after them comes Sam, then Mablung and Damrod with Anborn bringing up the rear

FARAMIR I broke off our speech together, because I felt that we were drawing near to matters which should not be debated openly before my men. Isildur's Bane—clearly it is a mighty heirloom of some sort. You were not friendly with Boromir, or you did not part in friendship. For I remember of Boromir as a boy, that it always displeased him that his father was not a king. Alas, poor Boromir! But I stray. If this heirloom were a fell weapon, I can well believe that Boromir, ever anxious for glory, might desire such a thing. But fear not! I would not take this thing, if it lay by the highway. I do not ask to know more; but if you trust me, I can aid you.

Sam suddenly swings round, and then turns back

SAM [*to himself*] I'm not sure of it, and why should I bother about the old villain?

They halt. A rocky wall appears at the back. Anborn moves off back along the path, and Faramir turns to Frodo

FARAMIR Here alas I must blindfold you.

FRODO As you will.

Mablung and Damrod cover their eyes, and lead them off. Darkness covers the scene. The sound of rushing water is heard, drawing continually closer

[6] Scene Three

The voice of Faramir is heard at the front of the stage

FARAMIR Let them see!

The lights rise, and the interior of a large cave is seen. At the left, a passage leads outside; to the right, the cave goes further in. Across the back, a large window in the inner curtain looks out through a waterfall, through which there shines the light of the setting sun. At the back, where the men are unpacking, there is a large table half onto the stage; to the left, near the front, there a small table; and at the right there are couches in a recess in the wall. Faramir, leading the hobbits, has unbound their eyes; they stare about them

FARAMIR This is the Window of the Sunset, Henneth Annûn, fairest of the falls of Ithilien.

He moves to the recess on the right of the cave. The sun sets, and the golden glow fades. Torches are lit. More soldiers enter. Faramir seats himself on the couch. The hobbits wander over to the left and sit down. Anborn comes in with a group of scouts

You saw and heard nothing, Anborn?

ANBORN No, lord: no Orc at least. But I saw something a little strange. It was deep dusk, so perhaps it was no more than a squirrel. But if so, I saw no tail; and I thought I heard it hiss at me from the branches. A large black squirrel, maybe.

Faramir glances at Frodo and Sam suspiciously, makes a remark to Anborn, and then moves over to them. The men at the back pass largely from the stage; but several sit around at the large table and begin to eat

FARAMIR You may soon desire to sleep; but first let us talk a while.

FRODO Yes. But tell me now of your own fortunes. For I would learn more of Minas Tirith the long-enduring. What hope have you?

Food—some bread and meat—is brought for the hobbits, who eat and listen intently

FARAMIR It is long since we had hope. For the Enemy increases, while we decrease. We are a failing people, a springless autumn. Childless lords sit in ancient halls, musing on heraldry; in secret chambers men compound elixirs, or in high cold towers ask questions of the stars.

Frodo is lost in thought

SAM [with his mouth full] You don't say much about Elves, sir.

FARAMIR No, Master Samwise, yet I envy you that you have spoken with the White Lady of Lothlórien.

SAM [swallowing hard] Galadriell!...Warm as sunlight, cold as frost in the stars. Now Boromir—

He stops suddenly and flushes red as Faramir cuts in on him at the mention of Boromir

FARAMIR [sharply] Yes? Now Boromir, you would say?

SAM Yes, sir, it's my opinion that in Lórien he first saw clearly what he wanted: the Enemy's Ring!

FRODO [coming out of his thoughts too late] Sam!

Sam turns white and gasps

FARAMIR [grimly] So that is the answer to all the riddles! The One Ring, that was thought to have perished from the world! Ha!

He stands up, his eyes glinting. Frodo and Sam knock over their stools and, drawing their swords, leap back to the walls. All the men in the cave cease eating and stare. All stay still for a moment; then Faramir laughs quietly and sits down again

Not if it lay by the highway would I take it, I said. Sit at peace!

The hobbits return and sit down cautiously. The men return to their meals quietly

Fear not! Sleep now, in peace, both of you—if you can. But first tell me, if you will, whither you go and what to do.

FRODO [with infinite weariness] I am going to Mordor. I must find the Mountain of Fire and cast the thing into the Gulf of Doom.

He suddenly collapses into Faramir's arms. Sam comes forward, and silently they help him to the couch where Sam lies down beside him. The remaining men finish their meal and disperse, some into the cave and some outside. The torches are extinguished. All is still and dark, save the moon shining in through the waterfall. [7] There is no movement. The sound of the waterfall again is heard; all becomes completely dark. Suddenly a beam of light falls on Frodo's couch. Faramir is seen bending over him, awakening him

FARAMIR There is a matter on which I desire your counsel. Come!

Silently Frodo rises and follows him out. Sam suddenly stirs and leaps up after them. The light fades. The sound of the waterfall is heard clearly once more as the inner curtain rises in the darkness

[8] Scene Four

The light returns to disclose the pool at the base of the waterfall. The fall cascades down from the left into a deep pool, which stretches across the front of the stage. Above the fall rises a high bank, where Anborn stands staring across the water. Along the back lies a thin strand of sand, with the ground rising behind it covered with thick undergrowth. The moon is shining behind the trees. Faramir and Frodo enter above left, with Sam lagging behind

FARAMIR Moonset over Gondor. Fair Ithil, as he goes from Middle-earth, glances upon the white locks of old Mindolluin.

He steps up beside Anborn. A small dark creature is seen diving in the pool
Now what is that, Anborn?

ANBORN 'Tis not a squirrel. It seems we are discovered at last. [He draws his bow] Shall I shoot?

Faramir turns to Frodo

FARAMIR Shall we shoot?

FRODO [quickly] No!

FARAMIR Come now, tell me why it should be spared.

FRODO Because he is allured here by a mastering desire.

FARAMIR Does he then know of your burden?

FRODO Indeed yes.

FARAMIR Then...he is pursuing it?

FRODO Maybe.

FARAMIR What else could he seek?

FRODO Fish. Look!

From the water Gollum cautiously emerges, carrying a fish in each hand

ANBORN Shall I not shoot, captain?

FARAMIR Wait, Anborn. Now, Frodo, why should we spare?

FRODO He is my guide. Let me go down to him.

FARAMIR Go then! Be swift!

He signals to Anborn, who leads Frodo off left. Silence. Frodo enters slowly below right, with Anborn behind

FRODO Sméagol!

GOLLUM [to himself] Fissh, nice fish.

FRODO [louder] Sméagol! Come to Master!

GOLLUM No! Master can wait.

FRODO Sméagol, come now! Precious is waiting!

GOLLUM Ss!...[He creeps along the bank towards Frodo, still carrying his fish.

Suddenly he catches sight of Anborn in the shadows] There's something there!

Master, master, wicked, tricky, false! [He suddenly turns on Frodo, but Mablung leaps down behind and grabs him]

MABLUNG Hold still! [He ties his hands roughly. Anborn steps down from behind]

FRODO Easy, easy! Sméagol! Trust master!

Gollum turns round and spits at him. Mablung places a hood over his head, and he and Anborn carry him off. The moon sets and all becomes still

[9] Interlude

The waterfall roars on. Darkness and silence. The inner curtain falls

[10] Scene Five

The cave of Henneth Annûn, as in Scene Three. Torches are lit once again. The large table has gone, and a high chair has been placed in the recess in which Faramir sits grimly. Frodo and Sam enter anxiously, Frodo from outside and Sam from within. As they meet, Gollum, bound, is brought in by Mablung and Anborn

SAM Got him?

FRODO Yes, I'm afraid.

FARAMIR Bring the prisoner to me.

Gollum is brought forward and the hood is removed from his eyes

GOLLUM Loose us! Loose us!

FARAMIR Unbind him, Frodo!

Frodo loosens Gollum's hands

Come hither! Look at me! Have you been here before?

GOLLUM Never been here; never come here again.

FARAMIR [to Frodo] Are you satisfied?

FRODO Yes.

FARAMIR Then I surrender this creature, Sméagol, to your protection. This is my doom. As for you, Frodo, I declare you free.

Frodo bows low; Faramir turns sternly towards Gollum

And may death find you swiftly, in Gondor or without, if you do not well serve your master. Whither were you leading him?

Gollum does not answer

FARAMIR Answer me!

FRODO I will answer. He said there is a path near to Minas Ithil.

FARAMIR Do you know the name of the pass?

FRODO No.

FARAMIR It is called Cirith Ungol.

Faramir turning to Gollum

Is it not?

GOLLUM No. Yes! There is no other way.

FARAMIR How do you know?...Take him away, Anborn.

Gollum is led away by Faramir's men

Frodo, I do not think you should go to Cirith Ungol.

FRODO What do you know of this place?

FARAMIR Nothing certain; but there is some dark terror that dwells in the pass.

FRODO But where else will you lead me?

FARAMIR I know not. It is a hard doom and a hopeless errand. But at least beware of this Sméagol. Now hasten while you may! If you are ready, you should go.

Sam goes and picks up the packs from against the wall. Mablung and Damrod wait to lead them out of the cave. Gollum is brought after them

FRODO [bowing low] Farewell!

FARAMIR Go, with the good will of all good men!

The sun rises, and the fall becomes a curtain of living fire. As Frodo and Sam leave, Faramir walks over to the fall and stares out. His silhouette is still starkly visible as the curtain falls

THE JOURNEY TO ISENGARD

[11] Scene One

The plains of Rohan, open grassland largely shrouded in mist. Through this the men of Rohirrim, together with Gandalf, Legolas, Gimli and Aragorn are seen at some distance riding at speed

GANDALF [towards the back] Ride, Théoden! Ride to Helm's Deep! I must leave you for a while. Await me at Helm's Gate!

He gallops off towards the back; Háma and Éothain are gathered towards the front

ÉOTHAIN What does that mean?

HÁMA That Gandalf Greyhame has need of haste. Ever he goes and comes unlooked-for.

ÉOTHAIN Wormtongue, were he here, would not find it hard to explain.

HÁMA True enough; but, for myself, I will wait until I see Gandalf again.

ÉOTHAIN Maybe you will wait long.

Ceorl comes riding forward from the mist

CEORL Is Éomer here? You come at last, but too late and with too little strength. There is no hope ahead.

THÉODEN Come, stand before me, Ceorl!

Ceorl approaches the king, but does not stand, instead kneeling before his lord,

Ceorl looking saddened begins to speak

CEORL Command me, lord! And forgive me! I thought—

THÉODEN You thought that I remained in Meduseld bent like an old tree under the winter snow. But a west wind has shaken the boughs.

A further change in the light indicates the passage of time. Théoden is now seen on foot, striding purposefully towards the gate of the Hornburg

Has aught been seen of Gandalf?

HÁMA Yes, lord. It is said that he went away westward towards Isengard. Some say also that Wormtongue was seen earlier, going northward with a company of Orcs.

THÉODEN It will go ill with Wormtongue, if Gandalf comes upon him. Yet in this need we need not fly much further.

[12] Scene Two

The scene is set at the gates of the Hornburg in Helm's Deep. The inner curtain is down; when it rises, it will reveal a chain of mountains rising ever higher above the ramparts of the fortress. It is night. Before the gate there stand Théoden, Éomer, Aragorn, Legolas, Gimli, Háma, Éothain and Ceorl, looking out to the front over the valley

ARAGORN It is a great host and follows us fast.

THÉODEN They bring fire, and they are burning as they come, rick, cot and tree. Alas, for my folk!

GIMLI [to Legolas] This land is more to my liking. There is good rock here. Give me a year and a hundred of my kin, and I would make this a place that armies would break upon like water.

LEGOLAS I do not doubt it. But I do not like this place, and I shall like it no more by the light of day. But all the more I would wish for a hundred of the good archers of Mirkwood.

Éothain, with unwelcome news, suddenly comes running in from the gate

ÉOTHAIN The enemy is at hand!

Aragorn turning to Éomer

ARAGORN Come! This is the hour when we draw swords together!

Trumpets sound from within, and Théoden, Legolas, Háma, Éothain, Gimli and Ceorl pass towards the gate. In the gateway they pause, and the first Orcs leap up towards them

ÉOMER Guthwinë! Guthwinë for the Mark!

ARAGORN Andúril! Andúril for the Dúnedain!

From below them the orcs cry out

ORCS Andúril! Andúril! Andúril goes to war! The Blade that was broken shines again!

Aragorn and Éomer fall upon them, and drive them back down the mountain side.

Arrows fly through the air

ARAGORN This is a night as long as years. How long will the day tarry?

CEORL Dawn is not far off.

HÁMA Yet dawn shall not help us, I fear.

ÉOMER They will not give way now for dusk or dawn, until Théoden is taken, or they themselves are slain.

ARAGORN Nonetheless day will bring hope to me. Is it not said that no foe has ever taken the Hornburg, if men defended it?

ÉOMER So the minstrels say.

ARAGORN Then let us defend it, and hope!

Suddenly and loud, there comes a blare of trumpets from below; then a crash and a flash of flame and smoke. Mists cloud the stage suddenly as all about shakes violently

Devilry of Saruman! They have crept beneath while we talked, and lit the fire of Orthanc beneath our feet. Elendil! Elendil!

Over the rubble many Orcs charge up; the defenders pass rapidly within the gates. Aragorn leaps down and fights those who seek to come at him. Éomer calls from within the gate

ÉOMER All who can have now got safe within, Aragorn! Come back!

Aragorn fights his way back towards the gate; Gimli and Háma come forward to help him. Aragorn reaches the gate, but Gimli and Háma are driven back beyond it and off to the right, still fighting. The gates are shut rapidly, before there is a new influx of Orcs. But through the mists it is seen that the Orcs come flooding around the gate, and with them they bear the head and arms of Háma, which they wave aloft with defiance. Darkness rapidly descends, and the inner curtain covers the scene above the gate

[13] Scene Three

The scene, when the lights rise, is within the Hornburg. Théoden and Éomer are talking as Aragorn comes towards them. Théoden turns to him

THÉODEN What is the news, Aragorn?

ARAGORN The causeway is taken, lord, and all defence swept away; but many have escaped hither, and others have gone further up the hills.

THÉODEN Is Háma here?

ARAGORN No, lord: he was slain before the gate.

THÉODEN [sinks into contemplation] How shall any tower withstand such numbers and such reckless hate? But I will not end here, like an old badger in a trap. When dawn comes, I will bid men sound Helm's horn, and I will then ride forth.

ARAGORN I will ride with you then.

He passes quickly from the room.

Darkness falls again. The inner curtain rises to show the scene as at the end of Scene Two. The Orcs now swarm below the gate, ramming it with beaters, but to little effect. Aragorn suddenly appears above the gate, looking out. The orcs below see Aragorn and make demands, and offer insults

The ORCS Come down! Come down! Bring out your King! We will fetch him from his hole, if he does not come. Bring out your skulking King!

ARAGORN The King stays or comes at his own will.

The ORCS [*jeering*] We are the fighting Uruk-hai. We come to kill, by sun or moon. We do not stop the fight for night or day.

ARAGORN Depart, or not one of you shall be spared. You do not know your peril.

But the Orcs laugh, when the Gates are suddenly thrown open, and the way into the Hornburg is revealed although the interior is shrouded in mist. The King appears with Éomer on his right side and Ceorl on his left; and as he comes forth, the sun rises

RIDERS Helm! Helm! Helm is arisen and comes back to war! Helm for Théoden King!

A light is cast on the hillside. The inner curtain discloses above the gate a forest of great trees, with darkness under their boughs; but the trees move and sway in a lifelike manner. The Orcs scream, and flee. Suddenly from the right Gandalf enters, his hand held high; and a white light seems to come from him. The Orcs scream again, and run wailing from him into the shadow of the trees

ARAGORN Behold the White Rider! Gandalf is come again!

LEGOLAS Mithrandir! Mithrandir! This is wizardry indeed!

Silence falls and the trees cease to move; Gandalf comes forward to the side of Théoden and his riders

GANDALF Hail, Lord of the Mark! The dark night is passed, and the day has come again.

ÉOMER But the day has brought strange tidings. Strange help you bring, Gandalf the White!

GANDALF The trees? But that is no deed of mine. It is a thing beyond the counsel of the Wise.

THÉODEN Then, if not yours, whose is the wizardry?

GANDALF It is not wizardry, but a power far older.

THÉODEN And what may that be?

GANDALF If you would learn that, then you should come with me to Isengard. Yes, I shall return to Isengard, and those who will may come with me. There we may see strange things.

THÉODEN But there are not enough men in the Mark, not if they were all gathered together, to assault the stronghold of Saruman.

GANDALF Nevertheless, to Isengard I go.

THÉODEN Then I will come with you, if that is your counsel.

GANDALF I wish to speak to Saruman; and since he has done you great injury, it would be fitting if you were there. But do not command many of your men to go with you. We go to a parley, not a fight.

He leads Théoden down the causeway; the others follow him

LEGOLAS What has become of the miserable Orcs?

GANDALF That, I think, no-one will ever know.

The inner curtain falls

[14] Scene Four

The curtain rises. The scene is as first completely shrouded in mist. All that can be seen is a pillar of black stone, with a white hand inscribed on it. As the scene progresses and the mist lifts, the scene is disclosed as the plain of Orthanc, with walls encircling a plain with a high tower in the distance. But all is now ruined; the walls are broken and shattered, and the plain is flooded; only the high tower remains unbroken by the storm that has ruined its domain, with pale waters lapping at its feet. Théoden, Gandalf and party enter and stand looking at the pillar. As Théoden and the Riders look, they gasp as they realise that the power of Saruman is overthrown. And then they start still more, as through the mist are seen two figures: Merry and Pippin. Pippin is lying back asleep; Merry is sitting beside him, smoking a long pipe. Suddenly Merry becomes aware of them and advances, bowing

MERRY Welcome, my lords, to Isengard! We are the door-wardens. Meriadoc son of Saradoc am I; and my companion (who—alas!—is overcome with weariness) is Peregrin son of Paladin of the House of Took. The Lord Saruman is within; but at the moment he is closeted with one Wormtongue, or doubtless he would be here to welcome such honourable guests.

GANDALF Doubtless he would! And was it Saruman that ordered you to guard his damaged doors, and watch for the arrival of guests, when your attention could be spared from plate and bottle?

MERRY Our orders come from Treebeard, who has taken over the management of Isengard. He commanded me to welcome the Lord of Rohan with suitable words.

GIMLI And what about your companions? What about Legolas and me? Two hundred leagues, through fen and forest, battle and death, to rescue you! And here we find you feasting, and idling—and smoking! Hammer and tongs! if I do not burst, it will be a marvel!

The Riders laugh and all smile with joy and some bemusement

THÉODEN It cannot be doubted that we witness the meeting of dear friends. So these are the lost ones of your company, Gandalf?

GANDALF Where is Treebeard, Merry?

Merry points off to the north of Isengard

MERRY Away on the north side, I believe.

GANDALF Did he leave me no message?

MERRY He left a message, and I was coming to it, but I have been hindered by many other questions. I was to say that, if Gandalf and the Lord of the Mark will ride to the north wall, they will find Treebeard there and he will welcome them.

Théoden and his followers pass on through the remaining mists, the hobbits bow low. Gandalf goes with them; but Legolas, Gimli and Aragorn remain

[15] ARAGORN Well, well! The hunt is over, and we meet again at last, where none of us ever thought to come.

LEGOLAS And now that the great ones have gone to discuss high matters, we would like to know the truth of our tracking.

PIPPIN Well, my tale begins with waking up in the dark and finding myself all strung up in an orc-camp. I am not going to go into details: the whips and the filth and the stench and all that: it does not bear remembering. After we escaped, we met Treebeard; and the following day we went to the Entmoot, and in the afternoon the Ents blew up. I wish you could have heard their song as they marched.

MERRY Well, in the early night we crept through a ravine into the upper end of the Wizard's Vale, the Ents with all their rustling trees behind. It was a very dark cloudy night. Treebeard and his Ents surrounded the walls; but they stood as still as carved stone, breathing and listening. Then all at once there was a tremendous stir.

Trumpets blazed, and the walls of Isengard echoed. We thought battle was about to begin; but nothing of the sort. All Saruman's people were marching away. He emptied Isengard: endless lines of marching Orcs. I thought things looked very black for Rohan; but still Treebeard did not move.

PIPPIN As soon as Saruman had sent off all his army, Treebeard went up to the gates, hammering and calling for Saruman. A dozen more Ents came striding up; they pushed, pulled, tore, and hammered, and in five minutes they had those huge gates just lying in ruin. When they had reduced a large part of the walls to rubble, and what was left of his people had bolted and deserted him, Saruman fled in a panic. He seems to have been at the gates when we arrived; but when the Ents broke in, he left in a hurry. They did not spot him at first; and then Quickbeam moved after him like the wind. It was a near thing. Quickbeam was so hot after Saruman, that Saruman was within a step or two of being strangled when he slipped in through the door.

MERRY Suddenly up came fires and foul fumes from all over the plain. Several of the Ents got scorched and blistered. One of them, Beechbone I think he was called, got caught in a spray of some liquid fire and burned like a torch: a horrible sight.

Merry grimaces at the memory

PIPPIN That sent them mad. I thought they had been really roused before; but I was wrong. I saw what it was like at last. They roared and boomed and trumpeted, until stones began to crack and fall at the sound of them. Then there was a dead silence, suddenly. That had a queer effect on the Ents. They had been boiling over; now they became cold, grim as ice, and quiet. They left the plain, and faded away in the grey light.

MERRY It must have been about midnight when Isengard began to fill up with black creeping streams and pools. Great white

steams hissed up. Storms rose in billows. The Ents kept on pouring in more water, till all the fires were quenched and every cave filled. And that was the end of it all, till Gandalf came.

ARAGORN All except one thing: leaf from the Southfarthing in Isengard. Saruman had secret dealings with someone in the Shire, I guess. Wormtongues may be found in other houses than King Théoden's.

[16] LEGOLAS And here is Gandalf, with Théoden and his men!

Gandalf and Théoden re-enter with their followers

GANDALF Well, Treebeard and I have had some interesting discussions, and made a few plans. Now we must be going on again. But I have a last task to do before I go; I must pay Saruman a farewell visit. Dangerous, and probably useless; but it must be done. Those of you who wish may come with me.

GIMLI I will come.

PIPPIN What's the danger? Will he shoot at us, and pour fire out of the windows; or can he put a spell on us from a distance?

GANDALF A wild beast cornered is not safe to approach. And Saruman has powers you do not guess. Beware of his voice!

He walks away towards Orthanc; the flood waters have sunk, and there is dry land towards the foot of Saruman's stair. With him go Théoden, Éomer, Gimli, Legolas, Merry, Pippin, Aragorn, Éothain and Ceorl. It becomes dark. Mists descend again across the scene, and the curtain slowly falls

CD 9 THE VOICE OF SARUMAN

[1] Scene One

The curtain rises to disclose the foot of the stair of Orthanc. There is a black door at the foot of the tower, and above it a balcony protected by a rail. Gandalf and Théoden with their followers alight from their horses at the foot of the stair. These two, together with Éomer and Aragorn, step up to the black door, and Gandalf strikes it with his staff

GANDALF Saruman! Saruman, come forth!

WORMTONGUE [his voice from within] Who is it? What do you want?

GANDALF Go and fetch Saruman, since you have become his footman, Gríma Wormtongue! And do not waste our time!

Saruman suddenly appears at the balcony above the door. He wears a cloak of bright purple, and a ring on his finger; and he carries in his hand a staff of black wood with an intricately carved silver handle. As he begins to speak, all below look up to him, all look at him with unease except Gandalf

SARUMAN [gently] Well? Why will you disturb my rest? Will you give me no peace at all by night or by day?

The others below remain silent, as if suddenly stricken by enchantment.

Saruman goes on in a still sweeter voice

O worthy son of Thengel the thrice-renowned! Why have you not come before, and as a friend? Long have I desired to see you; is it yet too late to deliver you from the unwise and evil counsels that beset you? Despite the injuries that have been done to me, still I would save you from the ruin that draws nigh inevitably, if you ride upon the road that you have taken. Indeed I alone can save you now.

ÉOMER [suddenly interrupting]

Lord, hear me! Now we feel the peril that we were warned of. Have we ridden forth to victory, only to stand at last amazed by an old liar with honey on his forked tongue?

Saruman, cuts back with a sudden flash of anger at those below him

SARUMAN If we speak of forked tongues, what shall we say of yours, young serpent?

Saruman controls and composes himself

But, my lord of Rohan, am I to be called a murderer, because you go to war needlessly? I say, Théoden King: shall we have peace together, you and I? It is ours to command.

THÉODEN Yes, we will have peace. We will have peace, when you and all your works have perished. You hold out your hand to me, and I perceive only a finger of the claw of Mordor. What will you say of the torches in Westfold, and the children that lie dead there? And they hewed Háma's body before the gates of the Hornburg, after he was dead. When you hang at your window from the gibbet for the sport of your own crows, I will have peace with you and Orthanc.

SARUMAN [suddenly terrible]

Gibbets and crows! Dotard! What is the House of Eorl but a thatched barn where brigands drink in the reek, and their brats roll on the floor among the dogs? But the noose comes, slow in the drawing, tight and hard in the end. Hang if you will!...

[2] But you, Gandalf! For you at least I am grieved, feeling for your shame. How can you endure such company? Our friendship would profit us both alike. Much we could still accomplish together, to heal the disorders of the world. For the common good I am prepared to redress the past, and receive you. Will you not consult with me? Will you not come up?

GANDALF [laughing] Saruman, Saruman! I fear I am beyond your comprehension. But you I understand now only too well. Nay, the guest who has escaped from the roof will think twice, before he comes back in by the door. Nay, I do not think I shall come. But listen, Saruman, for the last time! Will you not come down? Isengard has proved less strong than your hope and fancy made it. So may other things in which you still have trust. Your servants are destroyed and scattered; your neighbours you have made your enemies; and you have cheated your

new master, or tried to. When his Eye turns hither, it will be the red Eye of wrath. But if you come down, you will be free: free to go where you will, even to Mordor if you desire. But you will first surrender the keys of Orthanc, and your staff. They shall be pledges of your conduct, to be returned later if you merit them.

SARUMAN Later, later! Yes, when you have the keys of Barad-dûr itself, I suppose; and the crowns of seven kings, and the rods of the five Wizards, and have purchased yourself a pair of boots many sizes larger than those which you wear now. A modest plan. Hardly one in which my help is needed.

[3] GANDALF Stay, Saruman! I did not give you leave to go. I have not finished. You have become a fool, Saruman, and yet pitiable. You might still have turned away from folly and evil, and have been of service. But you choose to stay. Stay then! But I warn you, you will not easily come out again. Not unless the dark hands of the East stretch out to take you. Saruman! behold, I am not Gandalf the Grey whom you betrayed. I am Gandalf the White, who has returned from death. You have no colour now, and I cast you from the Order and from the Council. Saruman, your staff is broken.

At these words the staff in Saruman's hands breaks in two, and the carved head falls at the feet of Gandalf. With a cry Saruman falls back and crawls away. At the same moment a heavy shining object, a crystal globe, is thrown from high above. It strikes the rail of the balcony and misses Gandalf by inches, and strikes the ground, rolling rapidly away. Pippin runs after it and picks it up

ÉOMER The murderous rogue!

GANDALF No, that was not thrown by Saruman: nor even at his bidding. A parting shot from Master Wormtongue, I think, but ill-aimed.

Gandalf suddenly sees Pippin

Here, my lad, I'll take that! I did not ask you to handle it. I will take care of this; it is not a thing that Saruman would have chosen to cast away.

He takes it hastily from Pippin, wrapping it in the folds of his cloak. At that moment Treebeard appears from behind the tower, and comes up to Gandalf

TREEBEARD So Saruman would not leave? I did not think he would.

GANDALF No; Saruman remains to nurse his hatred, and weave such plots as he can. But he must not be allowed to escape.

TREEBEARD Indeed, no! Ents will see to it. Until seven times the years in which he tormented us have passed, we shall not tire of watching him.

GANDALF Still, for us things have not gone badly. I fancy that, even if we had entered in, we could have found few treasures in Orthanc more precious than the thing which Master Wormtongue threw down at us.

He turns away and walks off, and the others turn to follow. Blackout. The inner curtain rises in the darkness

[4] Scene Two

It is night; the scene is once more upon the plains of Rohan. Gandalf is lying asleep towards the back, by the gate. Merry and Pippin are on the other side of the stage; across the centre many others lie asleep, wrapped in blankets. Only Pippin is stirring; after awhile, his continuous fidgeting awakens Merry

MERRY What's the matter?

PIPPIN I'm not comfortable. I wonder how long it is since I slept in a proper bed?

MERRY But I could sleep anywhere tonight.

PIPPIN Have you spoken to Gandalf?

MERRY Yes.

PIPPIN He's close, isn't he? Not changed at all.

MERRY Oh yes, he is! He has grown, or something.

PIPPIN That glass ball, now. I wonder what it is? It felt so heavy.

MERRY Hello! So that's what's bothering you? Go to sleep! This is hardly the time.

PIPPIN All right! What's the harm in my telling you what I should like: a look at that stone? But I know I can't have it, with old Gandalf sitting on it like a hen on an egg.

MERRY Uuur!...I can't stay awake any longer. If I yawn any more, I shall split at the ears...

He falls asleep. Pippin remains still for a moment, and then rises and walks to and fro. After a further while, he walks over and looks down at Gandalf's sleeping form. Then he sees the crystal, wrapped in a cloak. He goes forward and stands over it, staring at it a long while. Then he bends over and gently removes its wrapping. He brings it forward towards the front; then he sits down and looks at it. The crystal begins to shine with an inner light. Pippin gasps, and tries to draw away; but he is held, and after a while his lips begin to move soundlessly. And then he falls back, with a piercing scream, and lies still. Gandalf leaps up and sees the globe is gone; then he sees Pippin, and comes quickly to his side. The others rise in alarm and cluster around the prostrate hobbit as Gandalf lifts Pippin to his lap and begins to speak with concern

GANDALF The devilry! What mischief has he done—to himself, and all of us?

He bends over Pippin and lays his hands on his brow. Pippin shudders and then screeches out in a toneless voice that sounds like, but also unlike Pippin's own

PIPPIN It is not for you, Saruman! I will send for it at once. Do you understand? Say just that!

GANDALF Peregrin Took! Come back!

PIPPIN [suddenly collapsing]

Gandalf! Gandalf! Forgive me!

GANDALF Forgive you? Tell me first what have you done!

PIPPIN I saw a dark sky, and tall battlements, and tiny stars. It seemed very far away and long ago, yet hard and clear. Then the stars went in and out; they were cut off by things with wings. In the glass they looked like bats wheeling round the tower. I thought there were nine of them. Then he came. He did not speak so that I could hear words; he just looked, and I understood. *So you have come back? Why have you neglected to report for so long?* I did not answer. He said: *Who are you?* I still did not answer, but he pressed me, so I said: *A hobbit.* Then suddenly he seemed to see me, and he laughed. It was cruel. It was like being stabbed with knives. I struggled. But he said: *Wait a moment! We shall meet again soon. Tell Saruman that this dainty is not for him. I will send for it at once. Do you understand? Say just that!* Then he gloated over me. I felt I was falling to pieces. No! no! I can't say any more. I don't remember anything else.

GANDALF Look at me!

Pippin looks up into his eyes; Gandalf holds his gaze for a moment, and then smiles

All right! Say no more! But he did not speak long with you. He was too eager. He did not want information only: he wanted you, quickly, so that he could deal with you in the Dark Tower, slowly. Don't shudder! If you will meddle in the affairs of wizards, you must be prepared to think of such things.

He lifts Pippin in his arms, and lays him down with Merry again

Lie there and rest, if you can!

He leaves Pippin and returns to Aragorn and Théoden, who are gathered with troubled faces

Peril comes in the night when least expected. We have had a narrow escape!

ARAGORN How is Pippin?

GANDALF He was not held long; I think all will be well. Will you, Aragorn, take the stone and guard it? It is a dangerous charge.

ARAGORN Dangerous indeed, but not to all. For this assuredly is the *palantir* of Orthanc, set here by the Kings of Gondor. Now my hour draws near. I will take it.

GANDALF Receive it, lord! in earnest of other things that shall be given back. But if I may counsel you in the use of your own, do not use it—yet! Be wary!

ARAGORN When have I been hasty or unwary, who have waited and prepared for so many long years?

GANDALF Never yet. Do not then stumble at the end of the road. But this time we have been strangely fortunate. I had considered whether or not to probe this stone myself to find its uses. Had I done so, I would have been revealed to him myself. The dark mind of the Enemy will be filled with the voice and the face of the hobbit and with expectation; it may take some time before he learns his error. I will ride ahead at once with Peregrin Took—

Suddenly there appears above them a vast winged shape, passing over the moon like a black cloud. Gandalf gazes upward and then starts

Nazgûl! The messenger of Mordor! The storm is coming. The Nazgûl have crossed the River. Ride, ride, ride! Wait not for the dawn! Ride! Call Shadowfax!

He rushes over to collect Pippin. The inner curtain falls into a sudden darkness. Mists rise strongly before the inner curtain. All that can be seen are the pair riding the horse

PIPPIN What was that, Gandalf?

GANDALF It was a Black Rider on wings, a Nazgûl. It was coming to take you away to the Dark Tower. And then another will come, I think, and swiftly. And so we fly—not from danger but into greater danger. Every stride of Shadowfax brings you nearer the Land of Shadow.

PIPPIN Where are we going, then?

GANDALF To Minas Tirith, before the waves of war surround it.

PIPPIN And how far is that?

GANDALF Leagues upon leagues... Away now, Shadowfax, greatheart, run as you have never run before! Hope is in speed!

The mists swirl ever more thickly across the stage until the curtain falls

CIRITH UNGOL

[5] Prelude:

Journey to the Cross-Roads

The curtain rises. The Cross Roads are revealed before the inner curtain. Four roads meet beneath a circle of dark fir trees. It is dusk, and all is still. At one side, in deep shadow, stands a gnarled statue of an ancient king of Gondor. Frodo, Sam and Gollum cautiously approach

[6] Scene One

Frodo turns to face Gollum as they approach the road

FRODO Do you know where we are?

GOLLUM Yes, master: dangerous places—the Cross Roads, yes. This is the road from the Tower of the Moon down to the ruined city by the River. We must go east now, away up there.

He indicates the road eastward: as he does so a dull rumble of thunder echoes from the mountains

Make haste! Be silent!

Suddenly there is a violent flash of lightning. In it the gaunt statue in the shadow stands suddenly out. On its brow there sits a crown of trailing plants, set with stonecrop gleaming in the king's hair. Another violent flash of lightning

FRODO Look, Sam! The king has got a crown again!

Another flash of lightning, followed by a nearer rumble of thunder

They cannot conquer for ever!

He stands looking at the gnarled face in the lightning flashes. Gollum suddenly rushes back and pulls him on

GOLLUM We must go! Make haste!
Another violent flash of lightning tears across the stage. It becomes dark. A storm is brewing and growing closer

[7] Scene Two

The inner curtain rises. The storm is reaching its height. On the near side of the stage, a narrow path threads its way; below, it drops into a deep chasm. On the far right, the gate of the ghostly city of Minas Morgul, the Tower of the Moon. Across from the gate, a bridge springs to the path on the nearer side of the chasm. Gollum leads Frodo and Sam along the path

GOLLUM This way! This way!

He leads them past the bridge and into the shadows on the far left

FRODO I must rest a while, Sam.

GOLLUM Ssh! Not here, no! Fools! Eyes will see us! Come away!

Frodo wearily struggles to his feet, when suddenly a violent crash of thunder shakes the ground. Trumpets ring out from the city is increasing frenzy. A great red flash leaps into the sky from behind the mountains. A flare of vivid lightning with forks of blue flame rises from the city. The gate swings open

CREATURES OF MINAS MORGUL

Ash nazg durbatulûk,
ash nazg gimbatul,
ash nazg thrakatulûk
agh burzum-ishi krimpatul.

The three travellers collapse to the ground. From the city, heralded by trumpets, ride the nine Ringwraiths at the head of a large army. As these Nazgûl reach the head of the bridge, their leader stops and looks along the path. As his glance falls upon the shadow where the hobbits lie hid, Frodo's hand trembles and then moves slowly to the Ring. He grips Sam's shoulder, and Sam helps him to return his hand to its normal position. At that moment the Lord of the Ringwraiths turns his horse westward and spurs it on. The army pours forth after him. As the final posse of Orcs march off, Sam pulls Frodo's arm

SAM Come on, Mister Frodo!

Gollum hissing from the deepest shadow

GOLLUM Make haste! Make haste!

Frodo rises. The glow of the city dies as the thunderstorm fades away. There is silence as it becomes dark again. The inner curtain falls

[8] Scene Three

Higher up the pass. Frodo and Sam are lying on the ground, resting in the gloom; Gollum is lying down slightly further away. Suddenly from high above a red glow springs up. Gradually more are seen, and the shadow of a tall black tower is outlined at the crest of the path above. Sam pulls Frodo towards him; Frodo looks and nods

SAM [to Gollum] So this secret way of yours is guarded after all!

GOLLUM All ways are watched, of course. But hobbits must try some way.

SAM [to Frodo] There's a wicked feeling about this place. And a smell, do you notice it?

Both shiver with a feeling of danger as Frodo looks around the scene

FRODO I like nothing here: step or stone, breath or bone. Earth, air and water, all seem accursed. But so our path is laid.

At the back, Gollum slowly stalks away up the path, unseen by Sam or Frodo. The hobbits sink down into their own thoughts. All is still. Suddenly Sam looks up again

SAM Gollum—now where's he gone?

FRODO Sméagol!

SAM I don't like him sneaking off without saying.

FRODO It's no good worrying: if he's false, he's false.

SAM All the same, I'd rather have him under my eye: all the more so, if he's false. Do you remember he would never say if this pass was guarded or not? And now we see a tower there. Mark my words: if ever we get to the pass, he won't let us take his Precious over the border without some sort of trouble.

FRODO Yes, just biding his time and waiting on chance.

SAM I'd be dearly glad to see you have a sleep, master. I'd keep watch.

FRODO Sleep!... Yes, even here I could sleep.

SAM Sleep then, master! lay your head in my lap.

Frodo settles down and falls immediately into a deep untroubled sleep. Sam watches over him gently, but slowly he too falls asleep. There is silence. Then slowly Gollum creeps back down the pass. He looks at them, with pain in his eyes. He shudders, and peers back up the pass, shaking his head as if engaging in some inner debate. Then he moves forward again and touches Frodo's hand caressingly. Sam suddenly awakens
Hey, you! What are you doing?

GOLLUM [gently] Nothing, nothing... Nice master!

SAM Where have you been sneaking off to, anyway?

Gollum suddenly starts, as if he had been struck, a green fire in his eyes

GOLLUM Sneaking, sneaking! O nice hobbits! Sméagol is tired and thirsty; he guides them up secret ways, and they say *sneak, sneak*. O yes my precious, very nice.

SAM But where have you been to?

GOLLUM [with a hiss] Sneaking.

SAM [bending over Frodo]

Wake up, Mister Frodo!

FRODO [stirring] It's still dark.

SAM It's always dark here. But Gollum's come back, so we must be going on. The last lap.

FRODO The last lap!...But tell me, Sméagol, can we find the rest of the way by ourselves?

GOLLUM O no! there's the tunnel coming. Sméagol must go on. Not yet.

They rise; the light at once fades.

Sulphurous fumes rise and conceal the stage

[9] Scene Four

The fumes still cover much of the stage, but lift enough to disclose the entrance to a dark tunnel. Frodo, Sam and Gollum stand before it

SAM Ugh! that smell!

GOLLUM This is the way in. This is the tunnel.

FRODO Is this the only way?

GOLLUM Yes, we must go this way now.

FRODO Well, we must take it.

He passes inside. Immediately the stage becomes totally black. Absolutely nothing is visible. There is silence, but growing tension. Suddenly Sam whispers

SAM There's more than one passage here. It's as orc-like a place as ever there could be!

FRODO Which way has Gollum gone? Sméagol! Sméagol!

SAM He's really gone this time, I fancy.

FRODO This is blocked. Right or wrong, we must take the other.

SAM And quick! I can feel something looking at us.

Suddenly there is audible a gurgling bubbling sound, and a long venomous hiss

Master, master! the star-glass! A light in dark places, it was to be!

FRODO Why yes!

Slowly he draws out the Phial of Galadriel. A light shines out from it

Aiya Eärendil Elenion ancálíma!
Slowly behind them two great clusters of eyes are delineated, glowing with a deadly flame. Sam turns to flee in horror, but Frodo seizes his arm

Stand! Stand! Running is no use!

Slowly the eyes creep nearer

Galadriel!

He raises the Phial on high, and draws his sword. Then, slowly and steadily, he walks down towards the eyes. Gradually they grow dimmer and vanish; they turn away and a great bulk, beyond reach of the light, heaves itself in between

SAM Master, master! stars and glory! Now let's get out of this hole—ugh!

Frodo comes up behind him, and holds the light up to the new obstacle

Cobwebs! But what a spider! Have at 'em!

He slashes at the web three times before one cord breaks

It will take days to clear a path like this! Have the eyes come back?

FRODO No, not to be seen; but if the light failed, they would soon come again.

SAM Trapped in the end!

FRODO Come! Let us see what Sting can do! It is an Elven blade. Here! Take the glass and watch!

Sam takes the glass. Frodo draws his sword, steps up to the web, and with one stroke cleaves a great gash through it. After several strokes the web is shattered and Frodo steps through

Come on! On! The pass, Sam! Let's run, run and we'll be through before anyone can stop us!

He dashes off right through the web.

Sam scrambles through after him. As the star-glass vanishes all becomes dark again and the scene fills with mists

[10] Scene Five

The mists have now dispersed, and the area of the stage is clearly lit with a dim twilight. The highest point of the pass is very close and visible in the background. The exit to the lair is on the extreme left, and next to it is another cave. At the extreme right a high pinnacle of rock reaches up. Frodo rushes out of the tunnel at the far left. He breathes deeply, and then sets out to run the short distance to the head of the pass. Suddenly from the other cave a monstrous creature in spider-form squeezes her monstrous body out into the light. Frodo is unaware of her presence, she sets out after him. Sam rushes out of the tunnel and cries out

SAM Look, Mister Frodo, look out! I'm—

GOLLUM Got him! We takes this one, Shelob takes the other. O yes, Sméagol promised; but he's got you, you nasty little sneak!

Frodo, from behind the outcrop of rock on the right, gives a sudden scream. Sam jumps and drives his elbow into Gollum's stomach. Gollum, winded, lets go and springs back; Sam draws his sword and Gollum, with a squeal, leaps back into the tunnel. Sam dashes after him, and then suddenly turns

SAM Master! Master!

He rushes back up the pass when suddenly Shelob reappears from behind the rock, pulling Frodo whom she has already bound, after her. Sam, with a shout, leaps over and stabs her in one of the eyes. The monster, with a great hiss, knocks him over beneath her. Sam, crushed beneath the weight of her body, suddenly sees Frodo's sword lying on the ground. He seizes it and with a mighty thrust stabs her beneath. She leaps up with a great bubbling cry and jumps clear. Sam rouses himself, sword in hand

A Elbereth Gilthoniel,
o menel palan-díriel
le nallon si di'nguruthos!
A tiro nin, Fanuilos!...
Now come, you filth!

He draws the star-glass out from beneath his cloak, and its light leaps into the air with a flash like a white torch. Shelob gives a great scream and backs away. Sam, holding the Phial aloft, forces her back and back, with the sword still in his right hand. Shelob suddenly turns and rushes back into the tunnel. Sam is left

alone; slowly he turns back towards Frodo, lying motionless on the ground
Master, dear master! Frodo, Mister Frodo, don't leave me here alone! Wake up, Mister Frodo, O wake up!

He suddenly stops
He's dead!...Not asleep, dead!...What am I to do? Not...leave Mister Frodo dead, and go home? or...go on? go on? and leave him?

Going to Frodo, he composes his body, and wraps the cloak of Lothlórien around him

What shall I do?...See it through...What, me go alone to the Crack of Doom and all? Me take the Ring? Let me see now...The war's begun...no time to go back...Then take it, and go!

He bends down slowly and draws the Ring from around Frodo's neck
Farewell, Mister Frodo! Forgive your Sam! Rest you in quiet; and may no foul creature come anigh you!

He bows his own head and places the Ring on its chain about it. Slowly he rises and raises the Phial on high. Then he turns, places the Phial within his cloak, and towards the cleft of the pass. Suddenly a voice is heard on the far side of the summit

SHAGRAT Ya hoy, my lads!

ORCS of CIRITH UNGOL Ya hoy!

SAM [reels back against the cliff]
I am caught...How can I save the Ring?...the Ring...

He slowly draws the Ring from off his neck and places it on his finger

[11] Scene Six

SHAGRAT Ya hoy! ya herri hoy!
He appears through the pass at the head of a posse of Orcs. Suddenly, with a cry, another posse issues from the tunnel. Sam cowers back against the rock, but the Orcs pass by

SHAGRAT Hola! Gorbag, you lubber!
What are you doing up here?

GORBAG Orders, so speak civil!

ORCS of MINAS MORGUL Ya hai! hai!

ORCS of CIRITH UNGOL Hai! hola! A spy!

All the ORCS A spy!

They rush down upon the body of Frodo, lying on the path. Sam suddenly starts out, as the last Orc passes. Rapidly the Orcs raise the body and carry it off into the tunnel

ORCS Ya hoy! ya herri hoy! Up! up!

SHAGRAT Now off! Back to the Under Gate!

SAM Quick, Sam, or you'll be too late!

He rushes into the tunnel after them. It becomes once again completely dark and the voices of the Orcs can be heard

ORCS Ya hoy! ya herri hoy! Up! up! Ya hoy!

GORBAG Can't you stop your rabble making so much racket, Shagrat?

SHAGRAT Wait a bit; there's a place we'll talk a bit, while the lads go on.

ORCS [dying away] Ya hoy! ya herri hoy!

Torches are lit by the Orcs; Shagrat and Gorbag take one. As the other Orcs move off, Shagrat and Gorbag halt. As they talk, Sam is seen hovering on the edge of the conversation, invisible to them

GORBAG When were you ordered out?
SHAGRAT About an hour ago; I came at once.

GORBAG I was ordered out a day ago from Lugbúrz. But in the meantime enemies have got up the Stairs. What are you for?

SHAGRAT All right, don't try and teach me my job. My lads saw Shelob on the go. I thought her sneak—

GORBAG Her sneak? What's that?

SHAGRAT Must have seen him: little thin fellow, like a spider himself. Anyway, my lads said her Ladyship was having fun, and that was good enough till the message came. But she got him in the end, didn't she?

GORBAG Got him—this little one? But there was more than one. Who cut the cords she put around him? Who stuck a pin into her Ladyship? Same one, I reckon. And where is he, Shagrat? By all the signs, I'd say there's a warrior loose in your bounds, and you've never even spotted him!

SHAGRAT We'll see. Come on then! Let's go and look at the prisoner!

GORBAG What are you going to do with him? If there's any game—

SHAGRAT None of that! All trespassers are wanted by Lugbúrz safe and whole.

GORBAG You'll find that difficult. He's nothing but carrion now.

SHAGRAT You fool! Carrion! When her Ladyship binds with cords, she's after meat. She doesn't suck cold blood; this fellow isn't dead! [Sam reels against the rock wall, faint with shock] Nar, he'll wake up in a few hours; he'll be all right. Or would be, if Lugbúrz would let him alone.

GORBAG This is going to be more funny than I thought. Let's go!

SHAGRAT There's to be no fun, I tell you!

GORBAG [laughing] All right!

They begin to move on again, leaving Sam faint against the wall

SAM May I be forgiven! I knew it in my heart. Now I've got to get back to him. Somehow, somehow!

SHAGRAT [some way ahead] I'm going to put him in the topmost chamber. He'll be safe up there.

Sam suddenly springs to his feet and rushes after them. As he does so, a door suddenly opens in the tunnel wall and Shagrat and Gorbag pass through

SAM Come on, Sam, or you'll be too late!
The Orcs come running down to meet Shagrat and Gorbag

ORCS Ya hoy! ya herri hoy! ya hoy!...
The gates shut with a great crash. Sam hurls himself against them and falls senseless to the ground. It is totally dark again. The curtain falls

THE RETURN OF THE KING

CD 10 MINAS TIRITH

[1] Scene One

Before the Gates of Minas Tirith: guards stand on the threshold. Gandalf and Pippin ride rapidly onto the scene and dismount as the guards salute him

GUARDS Mithrandir! Mithrandir! Now we know that the storm is indeed nigh!

GANDALF It is upon you. I have ridden on its wings. Let me pass! I must come to your lord Denethor, while his Stewardship lasts. Whatever betide, you have come to the end of the Gondor that you have known. Let me pass!

They fall back to let him enter; as he does so the light fades. The inner curtain descends quickly

[2] Scene Two

The scene is laid before the doors of the Great Hall of the Stewards. Gandalf and Pippin stand before the doors

GANDALF Be careful of your words, Master Peregrin! This is no time for indiscretion. Théoden is a kindly old man. Denethor is a man of far greater lineage and power, although he is not called a King. Do not tell him more than you need. And say nothing of Aragorn, either, unless you must. It is scarcely wise, when bringing the news of the death of his heir, to speak overmuch of the coming of one who will, if he comes, claim the kingship.

He strides forward and knocks upon the door. Both doors open silently, and the inner scene is disclosed. The inner curtain rises and Gandalf and Pippin advance into the hall. The scene is revealed as a great hall with high monoliths of black marble supporting the roof. At the end of the hall sits Denethor in his high chair of state; Gandalf and Pippin advance towards him

Hail, Lord and Steward of Minas Tirith, Denethor son of Ecthelion! I am come with tidings and counsel in this dark hour.

DENETHOR Dark indeed is the hour; and at such times are you wont to come, Mithrandir. But though all the signs forebode that the doom of Gondor is drawing nigh, less now to me is that darkness than my own darkness. It has been told to me that you bring with you one that saw my son die. Is this he?

GANDALF It is.

DENETHOR So, you were there? And how did you escape, and yet he did not, so mighty a man as he was?

PIPPIN The mightiest man may be slain by one arrow, and Boromir was pierced by many. He died to save us, my kinsman and myself; and though he fell and failed, my gratitude is none the less.

He suddenly sinks to his knees in front of Denethor

Little service, no doubt, will so great a lord of Men think to find in a halfling of the Shire; yet such as it is, I will offer it, in payment of my debt.

He draws his sword and presents it to Denethor

DENETHOR And I accept your service.

GANDALF Take the hilts, and speak after the lord, if you are resolved on this.

Denethor takes the sword on his lap, and Pippin lays his hands on the hilt and each in turn, they speak the oath, Denethor first with Pippin repeating after him

[3] DENETHOR and PIPPIN

Here do I swear fealty... and service to the realm of Gondor... and to the Lord and Steward of that realm... to speak and to be silent... to do and to let be, from this hour henceforth... until my lord release me... or death take me... or the world end.

DENETHOR And now, my first command to you is: speak and be not silent! Tell me your full tale.

GANDALF I have much else to heed. For I have not ridden hither from Isengard, only to bring you one small warrior, however courteous. Is it naught to you that Isengard is overthrown, and that I have broken the staff of Saruman?

DENETHOR It is much to me. But I know already sufficient of these deeds for my own counsel against the menace of the East.

Gandalf suddenly looks the Steward in the eyes, and the two look at each other fixedly for a long while. But it is Denethor who first withdraws his gaze

And the rule of Gondor, my lord, is mine and no other man's, unless the king should come again.

GANDALF Unless the king should come again? Well, my lord Steward, it is your task to keep some kingdom still against that event. And for my part, I shall not wholly fail if anything passes through this night that can still grow fair or bear fruit and flower again in days to come. For I also am a steward. Did you not know?

He turns from the hall in wrath and passes out. As he leaves the doors close behind him again, and the light fades quickly

[4] Scene Three

The inner curtain rises, and the lights go up. The scene is laid on the battlements overlooking the plain. In the distance are seen the mountains of Mordor, looming through the mist. Standing on the battlement and looking out are Beregond and Pippin

PIPPIN [pointing] What can I see there?

BEREGOND It was a city, the chief city of Gondor, of which this was only a fortress. For that is the ruin of Osgiliath, which our enemies took and burned many years ago. And of late there have ridden from the city the Fell Riders of Minas Morgul.

PIPPIN The Black Riders?

BEREGOND Yes, they wore black; and I see that you know something of them.

PIPPIN I know of them; but I will not speak of them now, so near, so near...

BEREGOND [looking out again] So near to Mordor? Yes, there it lies. We seldom name it; but we have dwelt ever in sight of that shadow. Sometimes it seems fainter and more distant, sometimes nearer and darker. But the lord Denethor is unlike other men; he sees far. Some say that he sits alone in the Tower at night, and bends his thought this way and that; and that he will at times search even the mind of the Enemy, wrestling with him.

Suddenly there comes a cry from high up in the air, almost inaudible; but it stops the conversation in its tracks

What was that? You also felt something?

PIPPIN Yes; it is a sign of our doom, a Fell Rider of the air.

BEREGOND Yes, the shadow of doom. I fear that Minas Tirith will fall. The very warmth of my blood seems stolen away.

They remain in silence for a while

PIPPIN It is passed. No, my heart will not yet despair. Gondor shall not perish yet.

BEREGOND And things may change when Faramir comes from Ithilien. Yet what can he do indeed? We cannot assault the mountains of...yonder realm. Our reach is shortened, and we cannot strike until some foe comes within it. But I must bid you farewell for this time.

Pippin nods, and Beregond goes quickly out. Pippin remains for a long time looking out at the dark mountains in the distance; then he turns and sighs to himself. Gandalf enters and sits beside Pippin

[5] PIPPIN Hullo! I am glad to see you back. It has been a long day.

GANDALF But the night will be too short. You should sleep, while you may. At sunrise you will be required again of the lord Denethor. No, when the summons comes, not at sunrise. The Darkness has begun. There will be no dawn.

Total darkness. The curtain falls

THE PASSING OF THE GREY COMPANY

[6] Prelude

The scene is as at the end of The Voice of Saruman. Aragorn, Legolas, Gimli and Merry stand looking out after Gandalf and Pippin, who have just departed

[7] Scene One

ARAGORN So four of the Company still remain. We will ride on together. But we will not go alone, as I thought. The king is now determined to set out at once.

LEGOLAS Whither?

ARAGORN I expect he will go to Edoras, and then down to Minas Tirith. I must go down also to Minas Tirith; but I do not yet see the road.

MERRY Don't leave me behind!

ARAGORN Your road will be with Théoden, I think. But do not look for mirth at the ending.

Théoden and Éomer now enter, and Éothain comes up in sudden haste

ÉOTHAIN My lord, there are horsemen coming up behind us.

THÉODEN Bid them halt.

ÉOMER *[in a loud voice]*

Halt! Halt! Who rides in Rohan?

HALBARAD *[from the distance]* Rohan?

Rohan did you say? That is a glad word.

We seek that land in haste from long afar.

ÉOMER You have found it. Who are you? And what is your haste?

HALBARAD *[now much nearer]*

Halbarad Dúnadan, Ranger of the North I am. We seek Aragorn son of Arathorn, and we heard that he was in Rohan.

ARAGORN And you have found him!

Halbarad! Of all joys this is the least expected!

Halbarad enters in haste, and comes straight to Aragorn and embraces him.

Aragorn turns back to the others and brings Halbarad forward

All is well. Here are some of my own kin from the land where I dwelt.

HALBARAD The brethren Elladan and Elrohir have ridden with me, desiring to go to the war.

Elladan and Elrohir, the twin sons of Elrond, enter as he speaks

THÉODEN It is well! If these kinsmen be in any way like to yourself, my lord Aragorn, three such will be a strength that cannot be counted in heads.

He and Éomer turn back and pass from the stage with Merry. Elrohir draws Aragorn aside and speaks quietly with him

ELROHIR I bring word to you from my father: The days are short. If thou art in haste, remember the Paths of the Dead.

ARAGORN Always my days have seemed too short to achieve my desire. But great indeed will be my haste ere I take that road.

ELLADAN That will soon be seen.

He and Aragorn pass towards the back. Darkness quickly falls

[8] Scene Two

The scene is the great hall of Edoras, as in The King of the Golden Hall. There is a table laid across the back of the stage, and many chairs around it. Merry, Gimli and Legolas are gathered alone in the hall

LEGOLAS The sun is high.

MERRY Where is Aragorn?

LEGOLAS In a high chamber. He has neither rested or slept, I think. He went thither some hours ago, saying that he must take thought; and only his kinsman Halbarad went with him.

GIMLI Some dark doubt or care sits on them.

MERRY Why have they come? Have you heard?

GIMLI They received a summons, as you heard. Word came from Rivendell.

Trumpets sound from the outside, and the conversation is cut short. There enter in procession Théoden the King, Éomer his nephew, Éothain the Third Marshal of the Mark, and many others of the Rohirrim. They take their places at the table, and then Théoden rises

THÉODEN Meriadoc of the Shire, take the seat upon my left side; for I would speak with you, ere we depart.

MERRY May I lay the sword of Meriadoc of the Shire in your lap, Théoden King? Receive my service, if you will!

THÉODEN Gladly will I take it. Rise now, Meriadoc, esquire of Rohan and of the household of Meduseld! Take your sword and bear it unto good fortune!

MERRY As a father you shall be to me.

THÉODEN For a little while.

[9] ÉOMER It is near the hour of our going, lord. Shall I bid men sound the horns? But where is Aragorn? His place is empty and he has not eaten.

THÉODEN Let word be sent to the lord Aragorn that the hour is nigh.

Aragorn enters at these words; with him come Halbarad, Elladan and Elrohir

ARAGORN I am troubled in mind, lord. Tell me, Théoden, how soon will you come to Minas Tirith?

THÉODEN It will be five nights at the least.

ARAGORN Five nights...Then, by your leave, lord, I must take new counsel for myself and my kindred. We must ride our own road; and for me the time of stealth has passed. I will ride east by the swiftest way, and I will take the Paths of the Dead.

THÉODEN The Paths of the Dead! Why speak you of them?

ÉOMER Alas, Aragorn my friend! If you seek the Paths of the Dead, our parting is come; and it is little likely that we shall ever meet again under the Sun.

ARAGORN Yet I say to you, Éomer, that in battle we may yet meet again, though all the hosts of Mordor lie between.

THÉODEN You will do as you will, my lord Aragorn. This parting grieves me; but I will now delay no longer.

ARAGORN Farewell, lord! Ride unto great renown! Farewell, Merry! I leave you in good hands, better than we hoped when we hunted the Orcs to Fangorn. Legolas and Gimli will remain with me, I hope; but we will not forget you.

Théoden rises from the table and leaves the hall; Merry, Éomer, Éothain and the Riders follow. Aragorn, Legolas, Gimli, Halbarad, Elladan and Elrohir remain

[10] LEGOLAS Come! speak and be comforted, and shake off the shadow. What has happened in the grey morning?

ARAGORN I have looked in the Stone of Orthanc, my friends. My right cannot be doubted. My strength was enough...barely. It was a bitter struggle, and the weariness is slow to pass. But Sauron has not

forgotten Isildur and the sword of Elendil. He is not so mighty yet that he is above fear; nay, doubt ever gnaws him.

GIMLI But he wields great dominion nonetheless.

ARAGORN We must press him now, and no longer wait upon him for the move. And I learned many things. A great peril now comes unlooked-for upon Gondor from the South. If it is not countered swiftly, I deem the City will be lost ere four days be gone.

GIMLI Then lost it must be. For what help is there to send thither, and how could it come there in time?

ARAGORN I have no help to send, and therefore I must go myself. But there is only one way through the mountains, and that is the Paths of the Dead.

LEGOLAS The Paths of the Dead! It is a fell name. May the living use that road, and not perish?

ARAGORN The living have never used that road, for it is closed to them. But in this hour the heir of Isildur may use it, if he dare. Thus spake Malbeth the Seer, in the days of the last king of Fornost:

[11] *Over the lands there lies a long shadow,
westward reaching wings of darkness.
The Tower trembles; to the tombs of the kings
doom approaches. The Dead awaken,
for the hour is come for the oathbreakers:
at the Stone of Erech they shall stand*

*again
and hear there a horn in the hills ringing.
Whose shall the horn be? Who shall call*

*them
in the grey twilight, the forgotten people?
The heir of him to whom the oath they*

*swore.
From the North he shall come, need shall
drive him:
he shall pass the Door to the Paths of the*

Dead.
LEGOLAS I will go with you even on these paths, and to whatever end they may lead.

GIMLI I trust that the forgotten people will not have forgotten how to fight; for otherwise I do not see why we should trouble them.

ARAGORN That we shall know when we come to Erech. But they must fight if they are to fulfil their oath. Come! To the stone of Erech! I seek the Paths of the Dead. Come with me who will!

He rises; Legolas and Gimli come swiftly to his side. Elladan and Elrohir stand behind him, and Halbarad throws open the door of the hall before him. At that moment a white light streams into the hall, and Éowyn enters running. She throws herself kneeling at Aragorn's feet

[12] ÉOWYN Aragorn, why will you go on this deadly road?

ARAGORN Because I must.

ÉOWYN Then, lord, if you must go, let me ride in your following.

ARAGORN Your duty is with your people.

ÉOWYN Too often have I heard of duty! But I am of the House of Eorl, and I do not fear death.

ARAGORN What then do you fear?

ÉOWYN A cage: to stay behind bars until use and old age accept them, and all chance of doing great deeds is gone beyond recall or desire.

ARAGORN And yet you counsel me not to adventure on the road that I have chosen, because it is perilous?

ÉOWYN So may one counsel another. I would not see a thing that is high and excellent cast away needlessly.

ARAGORN Nor would I; therefore I bid you stay! For you have no errand to the South.

ÉOWYN Neither have these others that go with thee. They go only because they would not be parted from thee—because they love thee.

Aragorn, with a sudden spasm of pain on his face, turns sharply away from her and passes swiftly from the hall. Éowyn remains looking after him, her hands clenched at her side. And then she turns and stumbles from the hall as the light darkens quickly

[13] Scene Three

Darkness envelops across the stage. Nothing can be seen, but voices are heard softened as if by a stony cavern that has no echo

[14] HALBARAD This is an evil way, and my death lies beyond it. I will dare to pass it nonetheless.

ARAGORN Speed only we ask! I summon you to the Stone of Erech!

A light grows from within the cavern, and there is heard a moan or a murmur from the darkness

LEGOLAS The Dead are come. I see shapes of men and of horses, and pale banners like shreds of cloud, and spears like winter thickets on a misty night. The Dead are come.

The light grows again, a new scene as the inner curtain rises to reveal the Stone of Erech. A large black monolithic ball stands alone in the centre of the stage. Mists cover the scene; all that can be seen apart from the great stone are Legolas, Gimli, Aragorn, Halbarad, Elladan and Elrohir standing by the rock. The moaning and murmuring continues

ELLADAN Yes, the Dead are come. They have been summoned.

ARAGORN [addressing the mists and the darkness]

Oathbreakers, why have ye come?

A voice answers as if from far away

The KING OF THE DEAD

To fulfil our oath, and have peace.

ARAGORN The hour is come at last. Now I go to Pelargir upon Anduin, and ye shall come with me. And when all this land is clean of the servants of Sauron, I will hold your oath fulfilled, and ye shall have peace and depart for ever. For I am Elessar, Isildur's heir of Gondor.

And Halbarad unveils a great standard, and on it there is seen displayed a white tree surrounded by seven stars. The curtain falls as the mists swirl ever thicker over the stage

THE SIEGE OF GONDOR

[15] Prelude: The Ride of the Rohirrim

The curtain rises. Only a dim light is visible; and through it, it seems that one sees a large company of horsemen riding at speed

VOICES OF MEN [behind the scenes]

From dark Dunharrow in the dim morning with thane and captain rode Thengel's son; to Edoras he came, the ancient halls of the Mark-wardens mist-enshrouded. Farewell he bade to his free people, hearth and high-seat, and the hallowed places where long he had feasted ere the light faded.

Forth rode the king, fear behind him, fate before him. Fealty kept he; oaths he had taken, all fulfilled them. Forth rode Théoden. Five nights and days eastward and onward rode the Eorlingas through Folde and Fenmarch and the Firienwood,

six thousand spears to Sunlending, Mundburg the mighty under Mindolluin, Sea King's city in the South-kingdom, foe-beleaguered, fire-encircled. Doom drove them on. Darkness took them, horse and horseman; hoofbeats after sank into silence. So the songs tell us.

Towards the end of this passage the light begins to fade, and finally total darkness covers the scene. The inner curtain rises

[16] Scene One

An open place behind the Gate is revealed as the inner curtain rises. The Gates are towards the left at the back of the stage; the rest of the scene is an open courtyard, with walls across the back. Gandalf and Beregond stand together towards the front; Ingold and Imrahil to the back

BEREGOND Will Théoden of Rohan come? Will he remember our old alliance?

GANDALF Yes, he will come; even if he comes too late. But think! the miles are long from Edoras.

IMRAHIL The army of Mordor has crossed the River; and we have learned that the Black Captain leads them once again.

INGOLD If Faramir wins back across the plain, his enemies will be on his heels. It is the Black Captain who defeats us. Few will stand and abide even the horror of his coming.

IMRAHIL His own folk quail at him, and they would slay themselves at his bidding.

GANDALF Then I am needed more there than here.

He hurries out of the Gate. There is much bustle and preparations are made to bar the way against siege engines

INGOLD [looks out over the plain] They have taken the outer wall! They are coming!

BEREGOND Where is Faramir? Say not that he has fallen!

Faramir and Gandalf enter through the Gate in haste, and pass rapidly into the City. Darkness

[17] Scene Two

A small chamber high in the Tower. Gandalf and Faramir enter in haste to see Denethor, sitting deep in thought

FARAMIR My father, I come to you in great haste. I have ridden far, and seen many things in the land of Ithilien. I returned hither as soon as the darkness came. I hope I have not done ill to return.

DENETHOR Why do you ask? Why has not the thing, that you held within your grasp, come here to me in your hand?

FARAMIR If what I did displeased you, father, I wish that I had known your counsel before the burden of so weighty a judgement was thrust upon me.

DENETHOR Would that have availed to change you? I know you well. But in desperate hours gentleness may be repaid with death.

FARAMIR So be it.

DENETHOR So be it! But not with your death only, Lord Faramir: but the death also of your father, and all your people.

GANDALF Had you received this thing, my lord, it would have overthrown you. Were it buried beneath the roots of Mindolluin, still it would burn your mind away.

DENETHOR Such words are vain. It has gone into the shadow, and only time will show what doom awaits it, and us. The time will not be long. What think you of the garrison at Osgiliath?

FARAMIR It is not strong. I have sent the company of Ithilien to strengthen it.

DENETHOR Not enough, I deem. It is there that the first blow will fall.

FARAMIR Yet today we may make the Enemy pay ten times our loss at the passage and yet rue the exchange.

DENETHOR Much must be risked in war.

FARAMIR Then I do not oppose your will, sire. I will go there and do what I can—if you command it.

DENETHOR I do.

FARAMIR Then farewell! But if I should return, think better of me!

DENETHOR That depends on the manner of your return.

Faramir stares wildly at him for a moment, and then rushes from the room. Darkness falls on the scene

[18] Scene Three

The same scene, some hours later. Gandalf enters from the battle

DENETHOR Has Faramir returned?

GANDALF Not yet. He may perhaps hold his men together for a last stand before the Gate, but I doubt it. He is pitted against a foe too great. For one has come that I feared.

PIPPIN Not...the Dark Lord?

DENETHOR Nay, not yet, Master Peregrin! He will not come, save only to triumph over me when all is won.

GANDALF Yet under the Lord of Barad-dûr the most fell of his captains is already master of your outer walls. King of Angmar long ago, Sorcerer, Ringwraith, Lord of the Nazgûl, a spear of terror in the Hand of Sauron, shadow of despair.

DENETHOR [*grimly*] I have long known who is the chief captain of the hosts of the Dark Tower. Can it be that you have returned because you are overmatched?

GANDALF It might be so. But our trial of strength is not yet come; and if words spoken of old be true, not by the hand of man shall he fall, and hidden from the Wise is the doom that awaits him.

The doors of the chamber suddenly open, and men bear in the unconscious body of Faramir, pieced by an arrow

DENETHOR My son!

He flings himself weeping upon his son as Gandalf hurries out

[19] Scene Four

The same scene, again some hours later. Denethor is still bent over the body of his son with Pippin at his side

PIPPIN Do not weep, lord. Perhaps he will get well. Have you asked Gandalf?

DENETHOR Comfort me not with wizards! The fool's hope has failed. The Enemy has found it, and now his power waxes; he sees our very thoughts, and all we do is ruinous. Whatever may now betide in war, my line is ending; mean folk shall rule the last remnant of the Kings of Men, lurking in the hills until all are hounded out.

INGOLD [*enters in haste*] The first circle of the City is burning, lord. What are your commands?

DENETHOR Better to burn sooner than late, for burn we must. Go back to your bonfire! And I? I will go to my pyre. To my pyre! No tomb for Denethor and Faramir. No tomb! No long slow sleep of death embalmed. We will burn like heathen kings before ever a ship sailed hither from the West. Go back and burn!

Ingold, without bow or answer, turns and flees. Denethor bends over Faramir, and murmurs to himself; then he rises and turns brokenly towards Pippin

He is burning, already burning; the house of his spirit crumbles. Farewell, Peregrin son of Paladin! Your service has been short, and now it is drawing to its end. I release you from the little that remains. Go, and die in what way seems best to you. But my life is broken. Here we will wait. Summon my servants, and bring me wood quick to burn, and lay it all about us, and beneath: and pour oil on it. And when I bid you, thrust in a torch. Do this, and speak no more to me. Farewell!

PIPPIN [*in terror*] By your leave, lord!

He turns and flees. As he leaves the first of the servants enter, bearing wood, for the summons has been heard

Your master is not himself! Go slow! Bring no fire to this place while Faramir lives!

Smokes and mists begin to cover the stage. In the darkness which begins to descend the voice of Beregond is heard speaking to Pippin

BEREGOND Whither do you run, Master Peregrin?

PIPPIN To find Mithrandir. Beregond, if you can, do something to prevent any dreadful thing happening.

BEREGOND The lord does not permit those who wear his livery to leave their post for any cause.

PIPPIN I think you have a madman to deal with, not a lord. I must run. I will return if I can.

Beregond rushes through the doors and sees the pyre built for his lords Denethor and Faramir. Denethor, not paying attention to the newcomer, gestures to his men to close and lock the door with him and his son inside

[20] Scene Five

Behind the Gate, as in Scene One. From outside there comes a great crash, as of a battering ram beating on the doors. A terrible voice rises from beyond, speaking the ring verse in Black Speech, the language of Mordor

The WITCH-KING

Ash nazg durbatulûk!

Another crash at the gates

Ash nazg gimbatul!

Another crash

Ash nazg thrakatulûk

agh burzum-ishi krimpatul!

As if riven by lightning, the Gates suddenly collapse to the ground and lie in fragments. The Lord of the Nazgûl is seen beyond them, still hooded and cloaked, sitting on his black horse. He rides slowly forward over the ruins, and then halts opposite Gandalf

GANDALF You cannot enter here. Go back to the abyss prepared for you! Fall into the nothingness that awaits you and your Master. Go!

The Black Rider rises in his seat, and throws back his hood and cloak; and behold! he has a kingly crown; and yet upon no head visible is it set. The fires seem to shine through between the crown and the black shoulders. From a mouth unseen there comes a deadly laughter

The WITCH-KING Old fool! Old fool! This is my hour. Do you not know Death when you see it? Die now, and curse in vain!

And he lifts his sword on high, and flames run down the blade. Gandalf does not move. There is a long silence. And then the silence changes; for in it there are heard the sounds of distant horns blowing, the horns of the Rohirrim. The Witch-King wheels his horse and charges away again in the direction of the horn calls. Gandalf remains still unmoving as the curtain descends

CD 11 PELENNOR FIELDS

[1] Prelude

The curtain rises: smokes swirl ever more thickly across the stage with flames glancing through it

MEN OF ROHAN [*behind the scene*]

We heard the horns in the hills ringing, the swords shining in the South Kingdom. Steeds went riding to the Stoningland as wind in the morning. War was kindled.

Through the mist is seen Théoden with Éowyn and Merry, all clad in fighting garb

[2] Scene One

THÉODEN

Arise, arise, Riders of Théoden!

Fell deeds awake: fire and slaughter! spear shall be shaken, shield be splintered, a sword day, a red day ere the sun rises! Ride now, ride now! Ride to Gondor!

RIDERS OF ROHAN [*onstage*]

Ride now, ride now! Ride to Gondor!

They fling themselves into battle with the Southron host. Suddenly there appears through the mist a great winged shape.

The Lord of the Nazgûl appears, seated on his flying steed; he hurls his spear, and this catches Théoden in the chest.

The King staggers and falls; the winged creature settles to the ground, and the Black Rider rises from it. Éowyn

suddenly puts aside her sword and stands on guard before the King's body

[3] ÉOWYN Begone, foul dwimmerlaik, lord of carrion! Leave the dead in peace!

The WITCH-KING Come not between the Nazgûl and his prey! Or he will not slay thee in thy turn. He will bear thee away to the Houses of Lamentation, beyond all darkness, where thy flesh shall be devoured, and thy shriveled mind be left naked to the Lidless Eye.

ÉOWYN Do what you will; but I will hinder it, if I may.

The WITCH-KING Hinder me? Thou fool. No living man may hinder me!

ÉOWYN But no living man am I! You look upon a woman. Éowyn am I, Éomund's daughter. You stand between me and my kin. Begone, if you be not deathless! For living or dark undead, I will smite you, if you touch him.

The Witch-King pauses and remains silent, as if in sudden doubt. Éowyn picks up her sword and confronts him. Merry slowly begins to make his way stealthily out of the area of light, crawling into the mist. Éowyn and the Lord of the Nazgûl remain staring into each other's eyes. Then the Witch-King raises his sword and strikes at her. She raises her shield to defend herself, but the force of the blow breaks her arm. He raises his sword again, but Merry suddenly appears behind him and stabs him in the back of the leg

MERRY [*calling out*] Éowyn! Éowyn! Éowyn staggers to her feet, raising her sword. With one stroke she drives it

through between the crown and mantle. A great cry arises, and fades away into the wind. Éowyn in her turn falls fainting forward, and lies upon the empty mantle on the ground. Merry alone remains standing above the ruin. He sees Théoden lying below him, and goes down on one knee beside him; Théoden opens his eyes and looks dimly at him

[4] THÉODEN Farewell, Master Holbytla! My body is broken. I go to my fathers. But where is Éomer? For my eyes darken, and I would see him ere I go. He must be King after me. And I would send word to Éowyn; for now I shall never see her again, fair sister-daughter.

MERRY My lord, she is—
He is interrupted by a sudden irruption of riders onto the stage. Éomer dismounts and hurries to Théoden's side. Théoden looks at him and smiles

THÉODEN Hail, Lord of the Mark! Ride now to victory! Bid Éowyn farewell!
He heaves suddenly and is still. A great cry goes up from those about him

RIDERS OF ROHAN
Théoden King! Théoden King!

ÉOMER
Mourn not overmuch! Mighty was the fallen, meet was his ending. When his mound is raised, women then shall weep. War now calls us!
He turns to go from the scene; and in that moment he sees his sister Éowyn as she lies, and starts back

Éowyn, Éowyn! how come you here? What madness or devilry is this? Death, death, death! Death take us all!

RIDERS OF ROHAN Death!... Death!... Death!... Death!...

All hurry out save only Merry, who remains by the side of the King and Éowyn, and some others who raise the bodies of Théoden and Éowyn on a bier. The mists swirl quickly across the stage

[5] MEN OF ROHAN *[behind the scene]*
There Théoden fell, Thengling mighty, to his golden halls and green pastures in the North never returning. Harding and Guthlaf, Dúnhere and Déorwine, doughty Gamling, Herefara and Herubrand, Horn and Fastred, fought and died there in a far country.

[6] Scene Two

The Tombs of the Dead in Minas Tirith. Faramir is stretched out on his bier as at the end of Scene Two of The Siege of Gondor. Denethor stands over him, and his servants are still attempting to bring fuel to light the pyre beneath him. Beregond alone, sword in hand, stands guard against their close approach. But Gandalf, summoned by Pippin and with the hobbit running at his heels, storms in and Beregond's sword flies out of his hand

GANDALF Stay! Stay this madness!
He turns to Denethor
What is this, my lord?

DENETHOR Since when has the Lord of Gondor been answerable to thee?

GANDALF Since your will has been turned to madness and evil. Where is your son, Faramir?

He sees the body, steps hurriedly forward and raises Faramir in his arms. As he does so, Faramir stirs weakly in his arms and moans. Denethor starts suddenly

DENETHOR Do not take my son from me! He calls for me.

GANDALF He calls; but you cannot come to him yet. For he must seek healing on the threshold of death, and maybe find it not.

DENETHOR He will not wake again. Battle is vain. Why should we wish to live longer? Why should we not go to death together?

GANDALF Authority is not given to you, Steward of Gondor, to order the hour of your death. And only the kings of old did thus: slaying themselves in pride and despair, murdering their kin to ease their own death.

Denethor starts suddenly, and produces in his hand a palantír. He holds it high, towering above Gandalf with a sudden wrath

DENETHOR Pride and despair! Didst thou think that the eyes of the White Tower were blind? Nay, I have seen more than thou knowest, White Fool. So! With the left hand thou wouldst use me for a little while as a shield against Mordor, and with the right bring up this Ranger of the North to supplant me. But thy hope is but ignorance. You may triumph on the field, for a day. But against the power that now arises there is no victory. And even now the wind of thy hope cheats thee, and wafts up Anduin a fleet with black sails. The West has failed. It is time now for all to depart who would not be slaves. Come hither! Come, if ye be not all recreant!

Two servants run up the steps to him, bearing fire. Swiftly he snatches a torch; and lays flame to the bier from which Faramir's damaged but live body has been lifted. At once it leaps into flame and smoke. He takes the staff of his Stewardship that lies on the bier and breaks it across his knee. He then bows and lays himself upon the bier in the flames, clasping the palantír with both hands upon his breast. It grows quickly dark, and only the flame of the fire can be seen. Denethor gives a great cry. The flames burn on, and an ever-increasing smoke veils the scene

[7] MEN OF ROHAN *[behind the scene]*
Death in the morning and at day's ending lords took and lowly. Long now they sleep under grass in Gondor by the Great River. Grey now as tears, gleaming silver, red it then rolled, foaming water; foam dyed with blood flamed at sunset, as beacons on mountains burned at evening.
Red fell the dew in Rammas Echor.

The fields of the Pelennor are seen again through the mists; men of Rohan approach bearing the bodies of Théoden and Éowyn in solemn procession

[8] Scene Three

Imrahil and the armies of Gondor appear from the Gates of the City; Imrahil bends over the bier

IMRAHIL Surely here is a woman! Have even the women of the Rohirrim come to war in our need?

RIDERS OF ROHAN Nay! One only. The Lady Éowyn is she.

Imrahil kneels beside the bier and touches her hand

IMRAHIL Men of Rohan! are there no leeches among you? She is hurt, to the death maybe; but she lives. Haste now is needed.

They bear the body of Éowyn swiftly within the Gate. There Pippin, waiting with the Guard to receive Théoden's body, sees Merry stumbling along behind

PIPPIN Well, Merry! Thank goodness I have found you!

MERRY Where is the King? And Éowyn?

PIPPIN They have gone up into the Citadel. Are you hurt? Or wounded?

MERRY I don't think so. But my arm is so cold. It's all going dark again.

PIPPIN Lean on me, foot by foot! It's not far.

MERRY Are you going to bury me?

PIPPIN No indeed! No, we are going to the Houses of Healing.

He supports Merry as they enter the City, and darkness covers the scene once more

[9] Scene Four

Through the mists the River is seen to the right of the stage while the battle continues to rage. Éomer appears; he hesitates towards the front of the stage, as a great ship with black sails comes into sight along the river

VOICES OF MEN *[now on the stage and glimpsed through the smokes]* The Corsairs of Umbar! The Corsairs of Umbar!...Look! the Corsairs of Umbar are coming! It is the last stroke of doom!

[10] ÉOMER *[lifting his sword towards the dark ship with defiance]*

Out of doubt, out of dark, to the day's rising I came singing in the sun, sword unsheathing.
To hope's end I rode and to heart's breaking:
now for wrath, now for ruin and a red nightfall!

And then he looks and stares, for from the ship come forth a great company of men, and among them are seen Aragorn, Legolas, Gimli, Halbarad, Elladan and Elrohir. And on the suddenly revealed head of the mast there flies the standard displayed by Halbarad at Erech. Aragorn comes forward, fighting his way towards Éomer; and the two men meet on the field of battle

[11] ARAGORN Thus we meet again, though all the hosts of Mordor lay between us. Did I not say so?

ÉOMER So you spoke; but I knew not then you were a man foresighted. Yet twice blessed is hope unlooked-for, and never was a meeting of friends more joyful. You come none too soon, my friend; much loss and sorrow has befallen us.

ARAGORN Then let us avenge it, ere we speak of it!

Together they advance into the press of the battle as the curtain falls

THE HOUSES OF HEALING

[12] Prelude

The curtain rises on a room high in the City. In the chamber there are three beds and on these beds Éowyn, Faramir and Merry lie extended. Gandalf stands towards the window, looking at them gravely. loreth, a serving woman, is the only other in the room: and she looks on Faramir, and weeps

[13] Scene One

IORETH Alas! if he should die. Would that there were Kings in Gondor again! For it is said in old lore: *The hands of a king are the hands of a healer, and so the rightful king could ever be known.*

GANDALF Long may men remember your words, loreth! For there is hope in them. Maybe a King has indeed returned to Gondor; or have you not heard the strange tidings that have come to the City?

IORETH All I hope is that those murdering devils do not come to this House and trouble the sick.

Éomer and Imrahil enter in haste looking for news about the Lady Éowyn and Faramir

IMRAHIL We seek the Steward of Gondor, and men say that he is in this House. Has any hurt befallen him?

ÉOMER And the Lady Éowyn, where is she?

GANDALF She lies here, and is not dead: but is near death. But the Lord Faramir was wounded by an evil dart, as ye have heard; and he is now the Steward, for Denethor has departed, and his house is in ashes.

IMRAHIL So victory is shorn of gladness and is bitter bought, if both Gondor and Rohan are in one day bereft of their lords. Éomer rules the Rohirrim. Who shall rule the City meanwhile? Shall we not send for the Lord Aragorn?

ARAGORN [at the door] He is come. But at present I am but the Captain of the Dúnedain of Arnor; and the Prince of Dol Amroth shall rule the City until Faramir awakes.

GANDALF Let us delay not, for time is urgent. For it is only in the coming of Aragorn that any hope remains for the sick that lie in this house. Thus spake loreth, wise-woman of Gondor: *The hands of a king are the hands of a healer, and so the rightful king could ever be known.*

ARAGORN Here I must put forth all such power and skill as are given to me.

He beckons to loreth, who advances with a deep curtsey

Have you store in this House of the herbs of healing?

IORETH Yes, lord: but not enough, I reckon, for all that will need them.

ARAGORN That shall be seen. Have you athelas?

IORETH I do not know, I am sure, lord. I will go and ask the Master.

She curtsies again and passes from the room; the others gather around Faramir

[14] ARAGORN He is nearly spent. But this comes not from the wound, which is healing. He was weary, and grieving for his father's mood, and wounded; and over all he lay under the Black Breath. Would that I could have been here sooner!

The Herb Master enters in haste

The HERB MASTER Your lordship asked for athelas; but alas! sir, we do not keep this plant in the Houses of Healing. For it has no virtue that we know of, unless you give heed to rhymes of the old times that women such as our good loreth still repeat: *When the black breath blows and death's shadow grows and all lights pass, come athelas! come athelas! life to the dying in the king's hand lying!*

IORETH [entering] I have some, sir: but not fresh, I fear. I hope it will serve, sir?

ARAGORN [smiling] It will serve. The worst is over now. Stay and be comforted!

He casts the herbs into a bowl of hot water, and holds this before Faramir's face. There is a long silence

Faramir!...Faramir!...

FARAMIR [slowly stirring] My lord, I come. What does the King command?

ARAGORN Walk no more in the shadows, but awake! You are weary. Rest awhile, and be ready when I return.

FARAMIR I will, lord. For who would lie idle when the King has returned?

IORETH [aside to the Herb Master] King! Did you hear that? What did I say?

The hands of a healer, I said...

Aragorn turns from Faramir, and looks long at Éowyn. Éomer joins him and they bend over her

ARAGORN Éowyn, Éomund's daughter, awake!

He takes another bowl of water, and casts leaves of athelas into it, and holds it beneath her face

The shadow is gone, and all darkness is washed clean!

He lays her hand in Éomer's

Call her! [He passes across to Merry, who lies still and inert, and bends over him]

ÉOMER Éowyn, Éowyn!

ÉOWYN [opening her eyes] Éomer! What joy is this? For they said that you were dead. Nay, but that was only the dark voices in my dream. How long have I been dreaming?

ÉOMER Not long, my sister: but think no more on it!

ÉOWYN I am strangely weary. I must rest a little. But tell me, what of the Lord of the Mark? Alas! do not tell me that that was a dream, for I know that it was not.

Éowyn lays in her bed of healing as

Éomer gives her the news. Though it is not of great surprise to her

ÉOMER He is dead, but he bade me say farewell to Éowyn, dearer than daughter. But do not speak yet of war or woe, until you are made whole again. Great gladness it is to see you wake again to health and hope, so valiant a lady!

ÉOWYN To health? It may be so. At least while there are deeds yet to do. But to hope? I do not know.

Aragorn has broken herbs into another bowl of water, which he holds before Merry's face. Pippin has entered and stands beside Merry's bed with concern on his face

ARAGORN Do not be afraid. I came in time, and have called him back. He is weary now, and grieved; but these evils can soon be amended. His grief he will not forget, but it will not darken his heart, it will teach him wisdom.

He passes from the room. As the action comes to focus more and more on Merry, the angle of view slowly changes, and the beds of Faramir and Éowyn pass towards the back and into darkness.

There are now Pippin, Gandalf and Imrahil gathered about Merry's bed

MERRY [stirs and wakes] I am hungry. What is the time?

PIPPIN [laughing] Past supper-time now; though I daresay I could bring you something, if they will let me.

GANDALF They will indeed. And anything else that this Rider of Rohan may require in Minas Tirith, where his name is in honour.

MERRY Good! Then I would like supper first, and after that to see Legolas and Gimli again. Where are they?

GANDALF They shall be found.

He too passes from the room. Imrahil remains for a moment, looking fondly on Pippin and Merry; and in that moment Legolas and Gimli enter through the door. The turning of the stage has now brought the window more fully into view; through it there can be seen a view out over the plain towards the distant sea

[15] LEGOLAS [to Imrahil] Hail, lord! It is long since the people of Nimrodel left the woods of Lórien, and yet still one may see that not all elves sailed from Amroth west over water.

IMRAHIL So it is said; yet never has one of the Fair Folk been seen in this land for years beyond count.

LEGOLAS But I bear a message to you from Aragorn. There is need for the captains to hold council at once, and he prays that you and Éomer of Rohan will come down to his tents, as soon as may be.

IMRAHIL We will come.

He passes from the room. Legolas turns to Gimli and then the two of them go across to Merry. But suddenly Legolas turns towards the window and stares out of it

[16] LEGOLAS Look! Gulls! They are flying far inland. A wonder they are to me. And a trouble to my heart. Never in all my life had I met them, until we came to Pelargir; and there their wailing voices spoke to me of the Sea. The Sea! I have not yet beheld it. Alas! for the gulls: no peace shall I have again under beech or under elm.

GIMLI For my part I have not heeded them; for it was at Pelargir that we came at last to battle. For there lay the main fleet of Umbar, fifty great ships and smaller vessels beyond count. And it was then that Aragorn called upon the shadow host, and it came up like a grey tide, and all the mariners were filled with terror and jumped overboard. Strange and wonderful I thought it that the designs of Mordor should be overthrown by such wraiths of fear and darkness. With its own weapons was it worsted!

LEGOLAS Then Aragorn let blow a great concourse of trumpets; and the shadow host withdrew to the shore. And Aragorn spoke to them, crying: *Hear the words of the Heir of Isildur! Your oath is fulfilled. Depart, and be at peace!*

GIMLI And thereupon the King of the Dead stood out before his host, and broke his spear and flung it down. Then he bowed low and turned away, and swiftly the whole grey host drew off and vanished like a mist.

LEGOLAS And that is near the end of our tale. Great was the riding of the Paths of the Dead, and great shall it remain, though none be left in Gondor to sing of it in the days that shall come.

GIMLI And that may well befall. For the faces of Aragorn and Gandalf are grave. Much I wonder what counsels they are taking in the tents there below.

The scene darkens, the inner curtain falls

[17] Scene Two

The tent of Aragorn, pitched upon the plain. There are many hangings of silk; but in the tent there are no furnishings save a rough table and chairs about it. At the head of the table sits Gandalf, and with him are Aragorn, Imrahil, Éomer, Elladan, Elrohir and Halbarad. Gandalf rises to his feet

GANDALF My lords, hear the words of the Steward of Gondor ere he died: *You may triumph on the field, for a day: but against the power that now arises there is no victory.* I do not bid you despair, as he did, but to ponder the truth of these words. Hardly has our strength sufficed to beat off the first great assault; the next will be greater. This war then is without final hope, as Denethor perceived. But I still hope for victory, but not by arms. For into the midst of all our policies comes the Ring of Power,

the foundation of the Dark Tower, and the hope of Sauron. If he regains it, your valour is vain, and his victory will be swift and complete: so complete that none can foresee the end of it while this world lasts. If it is destroyed, he will fall: and his fall will be so low that none can foresee his ever rising again. Other evils there are that may come; for Sauron is himself but an emissary. Yet it is not our part to master all the tides of the world, but to do what is in us for the succour of those years wherein we are set, so that those who live after us may have clean earth to till. What weather they shall have is not ours to rule. Now Sauron knows all this, and he knows that his precious thing which he lost has been found again; but he does not know yet where it is, and he is therefore now in great doubt. For if we have found this thing, there are some among us with strength enough to wield it. That too he knows. For do I not guess rightly, Aragorn, that you have shown yourself to him in the Stone of Orthanc?

ARAGORN I did so ere we rode from Rohan. I deemed that the time was ripe, and I thought that the Eye of Sauron should be drawn out from his own land.

ÉOMER But how is this? All is vain, you say, if he has the Ring. Why should he not think it vain to assail us, if we have it?

GANDALF He is not yet sure. Indeed he will look for a time of strife, ere one of the great among us makes himself master and puts down the others. In that time the Ring might yet aid him, if he were sudden. He is watching; he sees much and hears much. He studies the signs: the Sword that robbed him of his Ring remade; the winds of fortune turning in our favour; the fall of his great Captain. His doubt will be growing, even while we speak here. His Eye is now straining towards us, blind to all else that is moving. So we must keep it. For we have not the Ring. In wisdom or great folly it has been sent away to be destroyed, lest it destroy us. Without it we cannot by force defeat his force. But we must at all costs keep his Eye from his true peril. As Aragorn has begun, so we must go on. We must push Sauron to his last throw. We must make ourselves the bait, though his jaws should close on us. We must walk with courage into that trap, but with small hope for ourselves. For, my lords, it may well prove that we shall perish utterly in a black battle far from the living lands; so that even if he be thrown down, we shall not live to see a new age. But this, I deem, is better than to perish nonetheless, and know as we die that no new age shall be.

ARAGORN As I have begun, so I will go on. We come now to the very brink, where hope and despair are akin. Let none reject the counsels of Gandalf, yet let others choose as they will.

ELROHIR From the North we came with this purpose.

ELLADAN And from Elrond our father we brought this very counsel.

ELROHIR We will not turn back.

ÉOMER As my friend Aragorn succoured me and my people, so will I aid him when he calls. I will go.

IMRAHIL As for me, the Lord Aragorn I hold to be my lord, whether he claim it or no. His wish is to me as a command. But we must move soon.

ARAGORN I judge we could lead forth several thousands in a matter of only a few days.

ÉOMER They must be hardy folk that go willingly, knowing their peril.

IMRAHIL *[with a sudden laugh]* Surely this is the greatest jest in all history: that we should ride with seven thousands to assail the mountains and the impenetrable gate of the Black Land! If the Dark Lord knows so much as you say, Mithrandir, will he not smile rather than fear, and with his little finger crush us like a fly that tries to sting Him?

GANDALF No, he will try to trap the fly and take the sting. And there are names among us that are worth more than a thousand knights apiece. No, he will not smile.

ARAGORN Neither shall we. If this be jest, then it is too bitter for laughter. It is the last move in a great jeopardy, and for one side or another it will bring the end of the game.

He draws Andúril his sword from its sheath and holds it up glittering in the light

You shall not be sheathed again until the last battle is fought!

All the others rise to their feet impetuously, drawing their own swords. Gandalf alone remains impassive, leaning on his staff. The curtain falls quickly

THE BLACK GATE OPENS

[18] Prelude

The scene is laid before the Black Gate, which is as seen in Scene Five of The Black Gate is closed. The Gate is still closed. In the foreground there rise three small hills. On the hill to the centre stands Aragorn beneath the banner of the Tree and Stars. On the hill to the left stands Imrahil beneath the banner of Dol Amroth, the Silver Swan. On the hill to the right beneath the banner of Rohan, the White Horse, stands Éomer. The captains of the three armies are gathered at the centre of the stage, looking towards the Gate. Around them stand Pippin, Legolas, Gimli, Gandalf, Elladan, Elrohir and Beregond. Before them towards the Gate stand three heralds, who lift trumpets to their mouths and blow

[19] HERALDS Come forth! Come forth! Let the Lord of the Black Land come forth! Justice shall be done upon Him. The King of Gondor demands that he should atone for his evils, and depart then for ever. Come forth!

There is a long silence, and then a distant roll of thunder in the mountains. Horns sound from within the Gate and the Black Gate opens. From it there rides forth a black horseman on a black horse with a flame of evil burning in its eyes and nostrils. The rider is clad all in black, but he is no Ringwraith, he is a living man. He rides forth alone towards the Captains and halts before them

The MOUTH OF SAURON I am the Mouth of Sauron.

He looks up and down the line of Captains and laughs

Is there anyone in this rout with authority to treat with me? Or indeed with wit to understand me?

He sees Aragorn and looks on him mockingly

Not thou at least! It needs more to make a King than a piece of Elven glass, or a rabble such as this. Why, any brigand of the hills can show as good a following!

Aragorn makes no answer, but takes the eye of the other and holds it. The Mouth of Sauron falls back with a cry

I am a herald and ambassador, and may not be assailed!

GANDALF Where such laws hold, it is also the custom for ambassadors to use less insolence.

The MOUTH OF SAURON So! then thou art the spokesman, old greybeard? Have we not heard of thee at whiles, ever hatching plots and mischief at a safe distance? But this time thou hast stuck out thy nose too far, Master Gandalf. I have tokens that I was bidden to show to thee, if thou shouldst dare to come.

From the Gates there advance slowly three men clad in black. When they reach the field of parley they halt, and then disclose their burdens. One carries the sword of Sam; the next carries a cloak of Lórien, and the third carries the coat of mail that was Frodo's. Pippin at the sight of this last gives a sudden cry

PIPPIN No!...

GANDALF Silence!

The Mouth of Sauron looks with disgust, first to Gandalf and then the hobbit, his voice full of victory

The MOUTH OF SAURON So you have another of these imps with you! I thank him, for it is plain that this brat at least has seen these tokens before, and it would be vain for you to deny them now.

GANDALF I do not wish to deny them. Indeed, I know them all and all their history, and despite your scorn, foul Mouth of Sauron, you cannot say as much. But why do you bring them here?

The MOUTH OF SAURON Dwarf-coat, elf-cloak, blade of the downfallen West, and spy from the little rat-land of the Shire: here are the marks of a conspiracy. Now, maybe he that bore these things was a creature that you would not grieve to lose, and maybe otherwise: one dear to you, perhaps?

Gandalf turns aside and speaks hastily to Aragorn. The Mouth of Sauron laughs
Good, good! he was dear to you, I see. Or maybe his mission was one that you did not wish to fail? It has. And now he shall endure the slow torment of years, unless you accept my Lord's terms.

GANDALF These we will take!

He casts aside his cloak and a white light shines from his staff. He raises his hand and seizes the tokens: coat, cloak and sword

These we will take in memory of our friend. Get you gone, for your embassy is over and death is near to you. Begone!

The Mouth of Sauron rises in his saddle, threatening; and then will a shrill cry he turns and gallops back towards the Gate. Drums roll from within, and fires leap up.

[20] *The Gate opens wide, and a great host streams out. The scene rapidly fills with smoke, as they charge to the assault. The sounds of the battle near at hand grow suddenly louder, and above it is heard raised the voice of Pippin*

PIPPIN The Eagles are coming!

GANDALF and many other voices The Eagles are coming!

The mists swirl ever more thickly over the stage, and Pippin is seen in the midst of the battle

PIPPIN The Eagles are coming!

Behind him a troll raises a rock and casts it at his head, felling him to the ground. Sudden total blackout and silence and slowly the curtain falls

CD 12 MOUNT DOOM

[1] Scene One

The scene is as at the end of Cirith Ungol. Sam lies, stiff and cold, outside the gate of the Tower. Slowly he stirs, and puts a hand to his head. He raises himself painfully to his feet, and makes his slow way back down the tunnel. The light rises to show the outside of the Tower of Cirith Ungol, still before the inner curtain

SAM [to himself] I'm coming, Mister Frodo...

Suddenly there comes from within the Tower a clamour and a tumult, mingled with shrieks and howls. There is a clashing of swords. Sam looks up. The main gate of the Tower now stands open before him. He lurks for a moment in the shadow of the gateway. As he does so, two Orcs suddenly rush out; they run away towards the tunnel, but are at once shot down by arrows and fall to the ground. Sam rouses himself

Come on, you miserable sluggard! Now for it!

He draws his sword and rushes towards the Gate; but suddenly he stops, as if checked by an invisible barrier. He looks up at the gateway. Inside the gate towers there are crouched two great beasts of stone. He shivers, and then draws forth from his bosom the Phial of Galadriel.

With a sudden charge he bursts into the courtyard. At once there is a loud clang of a bell high in the Tower

Well, that's done it! Come on, somebody! Tell Captain Shagrat that the great Elf-warrior has called, with the elf-sword too!

There is no answer. Sam stares about him. In the light can now be dimly seen figures of Orcs lying dead about the courtyard. He halts, scratching his head, puzzled. Then there comes a clatter on the stairs. Snaga appears at the back of the courtyard, charging towards the gate; suddenly he sees Sam, and shrieks. Without halting he turns and runs back in the direction from which he came

Well, well! if they all take such a dislike to me and my Sting, this may turn out better than I hoped. And anyway it looks as if Shagrat, Gorbag and company have done nearly all my job for me. Except for that frightened little rat, I do believe there's nobody left alive in this place!

Suddenly from high above there comes a hideous shriek and then silence. Sam starts in horror

Nobody left alive! Frodo, Frodo! Master! If they've killed you, what shall I do? Well, I'm coming at last, to see what I must.

He strides forward into the courtyard. The light quickly fades

[2] Scene Two

The inner curtain rises, and the lights go up. The scene is laid in a high parapet of the Tower. Battlements stretch across the back left. Towards the front right of the stage a stairway runs up, and two great pillars flank it as it emerges onto the battlement. By the battlement lie a heap of corpses. On the top of them lies Shagrat, turning feebly. Snaga stands in front of him

SHAGRAT You won't go again; you say? Come here, and I'll squeeze your eyes out, like I did to Radbug just now. And when new lads come, I'll deal with you: I'll send you to Shelob.

SNAGA They won't come, not before you're dead anyway.

SHAGRAT Then you must go. I must stay here. But I'm hurt. The Black Pits take that filthy rebel Gorbag! I gave him better than I got, but he knifed me, the dung, before I throttled him.

SNAGA A nice mess you two have made of things, fighting over the swag.

SHAGRAT That's enough from you. I had my orders. It was Gorbag started it, trying to pinch that pretty shirt.

SNAGA Well, he had more sense than you. He told you more than once that the most dangerous of these spies was loose, and you wouldn't listen. Well, he was right. He's on the stairs. And until he's off them, I'm not going down. Not if you were a Nazgûl, I wouldn't.

SHAGRAT So that's it, is it? You'll do this, and you'll not do that! And when he comes, you'll bolt and leave me? No, you won't! I'll put a hole in your belly first.

He raises himself from the ground and lunges at Snaga. The latter leaps backward, and disappears towards the back. Shagrat stands up, leaning on a heavy bundle, and holds it up to look at it. It is Frodo's coat of mail, his cloak, and Sam's sword. He grins to himself.

Suddenly one of the corpses at his feet stirs. Gorbag raises himself behind Shagrat, a broken spear in his hand. He reaches to stab Shagrat; but as he raises himself he gasps, and Shagrat turns swiftly round and drives his knife into Gorbag's throat

Got you, Gorbag! Not dead, eh? Well, I'll finish my job now.

He stabs furiously with his knife, yelling all the while. Then he picks up the blade, licks the blood off it, and comes towards the stairs at the front. In the same moment Sam comes up the stairs. Shagrat sees him and gasps; then he picks up the bundle of mail, cloak and sword, and uses it to parry Sam's nervous strokes as he pushes him aside and rushes down the stair. Sam turns to pursue; then halts, and thinks better of it. He passes on up to the battlement, looks around him, and frowns

SAM A dead end, and after all my climb! This can't be the top of the Tower. But what can I do now?

He suddenly gives way to despair; coming towards the front, he sits down on the top step and buries his head in his hands. The light quickly fades at the back, only a dim red light failing on Sam himself. He begins to sing gently, his head still in his hands, and then he raises his head defiantly, and sings loudly through the empty corridors of the Tower

In Western lands beneath the sun
the flowers may rise in spring.
The trees may bud, the waters run,
the merry finches sing.
Or there maybe 'tis cloudless night
and swaying beeches bear
the elven-stars as jewels bright
amid their branching hair.

Into the darkness behind him, the inner curtain falls

Though here at journey's end I lie
in darkness buried deep,
beyond all towers strong and high,
beyond all mountains steep,
above all shadows rides the Sun,
and stars for ever dwell.
I will not say the day is done,
nor bid the stars farewell.
Beyond all towers strong and high,
beyond all mountains steep...

He stops suddenly short. In the distance, very weakly, can be heard the sound of an answering voice. And then there comes a second voice, nearer: the voice of Snaga, who enters walking along the dimly lit corridor carrying a lantern

SNAGA Hola! You there, you dunghill rat! Stop your squeaking, or I'll come and deal with you. D'you hear? *[There is silence]*

All right. But I'll come and have a look at you just the same, and see what you're up to.

He opens a door and passes into a dungeon off the main passage. Sam approaches the door, and Snaga's voice is now heard behind the inner curtain

You lie quiet, or else you'll pay for it! You've not got long to live in peace, I guess; but if you don't want the fun to begin right now, keep your trap shut, see? There's a reminder for you!

There is the crack of a whip. Sam suddenly charges at the door. Instant blackout as the inner curtain rises

[3] Scene Three

In the light of Snaga's lantern the interior of the dungeon is dimly seen. Snaga is standing towards the back, his whip raised. Below him on the floor lies Frodo, naked. Sam rushes in through the door and seizes Snaga's whip hand: Snaga tries to raise the whip against him, but Sam draws his sword and slashes Snaga's hand from his body. Snaga rushes wildly towards the door, and then collapses. Sam runs rapidly forward to Frodo and leans over him, caressing him

SAM Frodo, Mister Frodo! It's me, Sam! I've come!

FRODO Am I still dreaming? But the other dreams were horrible.

SAM You're not dreaming at all, master. It's real. It's me. I've come.

FRODO Then I wasn't dreaming when I heard the singing below, and tried to answer? Was it you?

SAM It was indeed. I'd given up hope, almost; I couldn't find you.

FRODO *[tenderly]* Well, you have now, Sam...dear Sam...

SAM Come, Mister Frodo! The sooner we get going the better. Can you walk?

FRODO *[rising slowly to his feet]* Yes, I can walk, Sam. I didn't dare to move when I was alone.

In sudden despair

But they've taken everything, Sam.
Everything I had. Do you understand?
Everything! The quest has failed, Sam.
Even if we get out of here, we can't escape.
Only the Elves can do that. Away out of Middle-earth, over the Sea: if even that is wide enough to keep the Shadow out.

SAM No, no, Mister Frodo. I took it, and I've kept it safe.

FRODO You've got it! Here? Give it to me! Give it to me at once! You can't have it!

SAM All right, Mister Frodo!

He takes the Ring from around his neck and places it back around Frodo's
But if it's too great a burden, I could share it, maybe?...

FRODO No, no! you won't, you thief!
He clutches the Ring to himself and then suddenly shudders as the fit of possession passes

Oh Sam, what have I said, what have I done? Forgive me! it is the horrible power of the Ring. But I must carry this burden to the end. It is too late now, Sam dear. I am almost in its power now. I could not give it up, and if you tried to take it I would go mad.

SAM That's all right, Mister Frodo. But now we must get out of here. I'll get you some clothes; it'll have to be Orc-stuff I'm afraid, but there isn't no choice. And for me too. I'll be back quick.

He passes from the room. Frodo stands looking after him as he quickly searches for clothes. The light fades

[4] Scene Four

The scene is a featureless plain, with dust hills rising all around the back of the stage. Towards the front this falls towards a gully, with a ditch at the right. Frodo and Sam enter wearily at the back and come down into the gully. They reach the ditch and sit down. But there is no water flowing in it, and Sam sighs

SAM If Shagrat himself was to offer me a glass of water, I'd shake his hand.

FRODO Don't say such things! It only makes it worse.

SAM If only the Lady could see us or hear us, I'd say to her: *All we want is light and water. Just clean water and clear daylight, better than any jewels.* But it's a long way to Lothlórien.

They sit quietly for a moment, and then two others appear following their trail: an Orc soldier and a tracker. They come down to the head of the gully and halt

TRACKER Nar! I'm going home. No use wearing out my nose on stones any more. There's not a trace left.

SOLDIER Not much use, are you, you little snufflers? I reckon eyes are better than your snotty noses.

TRACKER Then what have you seen with them? You don't even know what you're looking for.

SOLDIER Whose blame's that? Not mine. That comes from Higher Up. First they say it's a great Elf; then it's a small man, then it must be a pack of rebel Uruk-hai: or maybe it's all the lot together.

TRACKER They've lost their heads, that's what it is. And some of the bosses are going to lose their skins, too, I guess, if what I hear is true.

SOLDIER That's cursed rebel-talk, and I'll stick you if you don't shut down, see?

TRACKER But what's the sneak got to do with it? The gobbler with the flapping hands?

SOLDIER I don't know. But he's up to no good, nosing around I'll wager.

TRACKER Well, I hope they catch him quick and put him through it. But I've had enough of this. I'm off.

SOLDIER You come back, or I'll report you!

TRACKER Who to? Not to your precious Shagrat. He won't be captain any more.

SOLDIER I'll give your name and number to the Nazgûl. One of them's in charge at the Tower now.

TRACKER You cursed peaching sneakthief! Go to your filthy Shriekers, and may they freeze the flesh off you! If the Enemy doesn't get them first. They've done in Number One, I've heard, and I hope it's true!

The soldier leaps towards him, spear in hand: but the tracker throws a stone at him and knocks him over. Then the tracker draws out the soldier's sword and cuts off his head. He looks around for a moment, and then runs back towards the Tower. Sam and Frodo have heard it all;

Sam now stirs and turns towards Frodo

SAM Well, I call that neat as neat. If this nice friendliness would spread about in Mordor, half our trouble would be over.

FRODO Quiet, Sam. There may be others about. I wonder how long it will be before we are really caught, and all the slinking and toiling will be over, and in vain. It's dark, and we cannot use the Lady's glass. Keep it safe for me; I have nowhere to keep it now. But Sting I give to you; for I do not think it will be my part to strike any blow again.

He settles down to sleep. Sam remains on watch; and looking up he sees the distant Star of Eärendil high above. He grasps the Phial of Galadriel in his arms as the inner curtain falls

[5] Scene Five

A rock wall appears at the back of the stage; above it can be dimly glimpsed through the mists behind the inner curtain the peak of Mount Doom. A path rises towards it, passing offstage to the left. Sam and Frodo come towards it and stand looking up

SAM Now for it! Now for the last gasp!

FRODO I can't manage it, Sam. It's such a weight to carry. No taste of food, no feel of water, no sound of wind, no memory of tree or grass or flower, no image of moon or star are left to me. I am naked in the dark, Sam, and there is no veil between me and the Ring of fire. I begin to see it even with my waking eyes, and all else fades.

SAM Then the sooner we're rid of it, the sooner to rest.

FRODO I'll crawl, Sam...

They clamber up the path towards the summit. But at that moment, there comes a sudden scream from offstage

GOLLUM Wicked master! Wicked master cheats us: cheats Sméagol, gollum. He mustn't go that way. He musn't hurt Preciouss. Give it to Sméagol, yes, give it to uss! Give it to uss!

Frodo and Sam have spun round, and Frodo gasps. Gollum hurls himself down the hillside and at Frodo's throat. But Frodo places his hand within his cloak, and draws out the Ring. He holds this high in the air above his head, and Gollum suddenly halts staring at it

FRODO Down, down, you creeping thing, and trouble me no more! If you touch me ever again, you will yourself be cast into the Fire of Doom.

SAM Look out! He'll spring! Go on, Master! No time to lose. I'll deal with him. Go on!

FRODO Yes, I must go on. Farewell, Sam! This is the end at last. On Mount Doom doom shall fall. Farewell!

He turns and walks slowly on up the path. Sam turns to Gollum

SAM Now at last I can deal with you!

GOLLUM Don't kill us! Don't hurt us! Let us live, yes, live a little longer. Lost, lost! we're lost! And when Precious goes we'll die, yes, die into the dust. Dusst!

SAM [with a sudden motion of disgust] Oh curse you, you stinking thing! Go away! Be off! Or I shall hurt you, yes, with nasty cruel steel.

Gollum backs away down the path; Sam draws his sword threateningly, and Gollum turns and runs. Sam looks after him for a moment, and then turns to follow Frodo. The stage is empty for a while; and then Gollum reappears and begins to climb the path after him. The light fades, and the stage beyond the inner curtain becomes completely dark. Slowly a throbbing, as of great flames in the deeps, becomes audible. Through the total darkness a glare of flame springs up and dies down. In the light may be seen a great fissure penetrating deep into the core of the Mountain. At the end of the fissure there is a drop into the fire. Smoke covers the scene

SAM [coming to the fissure entrance] Frodo! Master!

Again there comes a belch of flame from beneath, and in it Frodo may be seen, black against the glare, standing on the brink of the chasm. He slowly turns towards Sam

FRODO [his voice echoing in the roof and walls] I have come. But I do not choose now to do what I came to do. I will not do this deed. The Ring is mine!

Abruptly he vanishes. At the same moment Gollum rushes past Sam and throws himself towards the brink of the chasm. The flames from below rise ever higher and higher. Gollum starts to fight with an invisible foe; suddenly he draws his hands up to his mouth and bites.

There is a cry and Frodo reappears, fallen on his knees at the chasm's edge. But Gollum, dancing madly, holds aloft the Ring, a finger still thrust in its circle. It shines as if wrought of living fire

GOLLUM Precious, precious, precious! My precious! O my precious!

He raises his eyes to gloat on his prize, and in that glance he steps too far. He wavers on the brink of the chasm, and then falls with a shriek into the flames. There is at once a great roar and confusion of noise. All the lights at the

front of the stage go out. Through the inner curtain can be seen dimly the shape of the Mountain, as before. It seems to explode with flame, and in the flame it seems that a great golden Ring catches fire and is consumed. Through the Ring appears an Eye; and as the Ring withers, so the Eye crumbles and fades into blackness. Above the tumult is heard a great cry. The Nazgûl appear, riding riding high above the Mountain, until caught in the fiery ruin of hill and sky they crackle, wither and fall to their doom. The Mountain reels beneath a great earthquake, and fires cover its sides. The light slowly fades, only the flickering flames being visible as vast plumes of smoke belch from the riven ground

[6] Scene Six

The light grows once more before the inner curtain. Against the background of ruin and doom can be seen Frodo and Sam

FRODO Well, this is the end, Sam Gamgee.

SAM [falling on his knees] Master! Your poor hand! And I have nothing to bind it with, or comfort it. But he's gone now beyond recall, gone for ever.

FRODO Yes; but remember Gandalf's words: Even Gollum may yet have something to do? But for him, Sam, I could not have destroyed the Ring. The Quest would have been in vain, even at the bitter end. So let us forgive him.

SAM What a tale is this, Mister Frodo! I wish I could hear it told. Do you think they will say: Now comes the story of Nine-fingered Frodo and the Ring of Doom? I don't want to give up yet.

FRODO Maybe not, Sam; but it's like things are in the world. Hope fails. An end comes. We are lost in ruin and downfall, and there is no escape; but the Quest is achieved, and now all is over. Yet I am glad that you are here with me. Here at the end of all things, Sam...

The mists and darkness cover the stage. For a long while nothing may be seen at all. Then, very slowly, the curtain falls as all falls to complete silence

THE FIELD OF CORMALLEN

[7] Scene One

The scene is as at the end of the The Black Gate opens. Gandalf and Aragorn are beneath the banner of the King, and around them, the endless seeming hosts of Mordor rage

PIPPIN The Eagles are coming! The Eagles are coming!

At the sound of Pippin's voice, Gandalf starts and takes up the cry, followed by many others

GANDALF and many other voices

The Eagles are coming! The Eagles are coming!

And at that instant there comes a sudden thunder as of drums, very distant. The hosts of Mordor suddenly halt and quail. Gandalf raises his voice above the increasing tumult

GANDALF Stand, men of the West! Stand and wait! This is the hour of doom.

The thunder grows suddenly louder, and a great fire leaps up beyond the Black Gate. The Gate itself quivers with shock, and collapses as the earthquake reaches it; the hosts of Mordor suddenly scream and flee. Above the Gate reaches a great darkness, a shape of shadow like a vast threatening hand. Enormous it rears above the scene, terrible but impotent: for even as it leans over the stage, a great wind takes it, and it is all blown away, and passes

The realm of Sauron is ended! The Ring-bearer has achieved his Quest.

Silence falls. Gwaihir flies down to the ground, and settles by Gandalf

Twice you have borne me, Gwaihir my friend. Thrice shall pay for all, if you are willing. You will not find me a much greater burden than when you bore me from the mountain-top, where my old life burned away.

GWAIHIR I will bear you whither you will, even were you made of stone.

GANDALF Then come, and let others go with us! For we have need of speed greater than any wind, outmatching the wings of the Nazgûl.

GWAIHIR The North Wind blows, but we shall outfly it.

Gandalf bows to Gwaihir, preparing to mount the eagle's back. The curtain falls

[8] Scene Two

A high place above Minas Tirith is revealed, as by the dawning sunlight. It looks out across the plain to Mordor, and the inner curtain rises. Faramir sits on the ground, looking out towards Mordor, stirring uneasily. The Herb Master enters hesitantly; he is followed by Éowyn

The HERB MASTER My lord, here is Lady Éowyn of Rohan. She rode with the king and was sorely hurt, and dwells now in my keeping. But she is not content, and wishes to speak to the Steward of the City.

ÉOWYN [coming forward to Faramir's side] Do not misunderstand him, lord. It is not lack of care that grieves me. No houses could be fairer, for those who desire to be healed. But I cannot lie in sloth, idle, caged. I looked for death in battle. But I have not died, and battle still goes on.

Faramir signs to the Herb Master, who departs. He rises and moves nearer to Éowyn

FARAMIR It is too late, lady, to follow the Captains, even if you had the strength. But death in battle may come to us all yet, willing or unwilling.

ÉOWYN But my window does not look eastward.

FARAMIR [smiling] Your window does not look eastward? That can be amended. If you stay in this house, and take your rest, then you shall walk in this place as you will; and you shall look east, whither all our hopes have gone. And here you will find me, walking and waiting, and also looking east. It would ease my care, if you would speak with me.

ÉOWYN How should I ease your care, lord?

FARAMIR Would you have my plain answer?

ÉOWYN I would.

FARAMIR Then, Éowyn of Rohan, I say to you that you are beautiful. In the valleys of our hills there are flowers that are fair and bright, and maidens fairer still; but neither flower nor lady have I seen till now in Gondor so lovely and so sorrowful. It would ease my heart, if while the Sun yet shines, I could see you still. For you and I have both passed under the wings of the Shadow, and the same hand drew us back.

ÉOWYN Alas, not me, lord! shadow lies on me still. Look not to me for healing. I am a shield-maiden, and my hand is ungentle.

She turns away from him and looks out towards the mountains for a sight beyond them into the land of the enemy

FARAMIR What do you look for, Éowyn?

ÉOWYN Does not the Black Gate lie yonder? And must he not now be come thither?

FARAMIR Yes, we wait for the stroke of doom.

ÉOWYN I stand upon some dreadful brink, and it is utterly dark in the abyss before my feet, but whether there is any light behind me I cannot tell. For I cannot turn yet. I too await the stroke of doom.

There is a rumble of far distant thunder. Both rise and look out towards Mordor, and the distant mountains. There is a long stillness; and in the stillness their hands meet and clasp, though they do not know it. And then there arises high above the mountains the Hand of Shadow as in Scene One, and lightnings flicker silently about it; and then the wind takes it, and it is dispersed

[9] FARAMIR [stilly] It reminds me of Númenor.

ÉOWYN Of Númenor?

FARAMIR Yes; of Númenor, of the land of Westemnesse that foundered, and of the great dark wave climbing over the green lands and above the hills, and coming on, darkness unescapable. I often dream of it.

ÉOWYN [drawing unknowingly closer to him] Then you believe that darkness is coming? Darkness unescapable?

FARAMIR [looking into her face with passion] No; I do not know what is happening. The reason of my waking mind tells me that great evil has befallen and we stand at the end of days. But my heart says nay; and all my limbs are light, and a hope and joy are come to me that no reason can deny. Éowyn, Éowyn, White Lady of Rohan,

in this hour I do not believe that any darkness will endure!

ÉOWYN I stand in Minas Anor, the Tower of the Sun, and behold! the Shadow has departed! I will be a shield-maiden no longer, nor vie with the great Riders, nor have joy only in the songs of slaying. I will be a healer, and love all things that grow and are not barren!

Éowyn and Faramir turn towards one another, and embrace high above the world. The light behind the inner curtain rises as the mountains of shadow disappear, and silhouette the two figures with sunlight as they embrace. Slowly the light fades, and the inner curtain becomes again opaque. But the light continues to shine with a steady golden glow upon the scene

[10] Scene Three

On the front stage light grows again, and slowly the scene before the inner curtain is illuminated. Gandalf stands in the centre of the stage; on his right hand is Frodo, and on his left is Sam. They all three face towards the back. From behind the inner curtain the voices of men are heard

Voices of MEN Long live the Halflings! ... Praise them with great praise!...

Cuio i Pheriain anann!...Aglar'ni Pheriannath! ...Praise them with great praise, Frodo and Samwise!...Daur a Berhael, Conin en Annûn!...Eglerio!

The inner curtain of gold slowly begins to dissolve, and the scene behind is gradually revealed. In a throne at the head of the stage sits Aragorn, and around him are gathered Legolas and Gimli, Elladan and Elrohir, Halbarad and Imrahil, Éomer and Ingold. A minstrel stands above the throne. And Aragorn descends from the throne to meet them, and takes Frodo by the hand and leads him to the throne; and Gandalf takes Sam and leads him also thither; and the hobbits are seated, and Gandalf and Aragorn kneel before them. They then rise and turn to the throng

GANDALF and ARAGORN Praise them with great praise!

The MINSTREL Lo! lords and knights and men of valour unshamed, kings and princes and fair people of Gondor, and Riders of Rohan, and ye sons of Elrond, and Dúnedain of the North, and Elf and Dwarf, and greathearts of the Shire, and all free folk of the West, now listen to my lay. For I will sing of Frodo of the Nine Fingers and the Ring of Doom.

SAM [from the throne] O great glory and splendour! And all my wishes have come true!

The MINSTREL Praise them with great praise!

ALL Praise them with great praise!

The golden light floods the stage as all the company go on their knees before the throne. The curtain falls

beside him sits his daughter Arwen Evenstar. And the King steps forward, and Elrond lays into his hand the sceptre of Annúminas, and lays the hand of his daughter into the hand of the King. And Aragorn and Arwen pass into the city, and the others follow. Frodo and Gandalf remain until the last

FRODO At last I understand why this is the ending. Now not day only shall be beloved, but night too shall be beautiful, and all its fear pass away!

He turns to join Gandalf, and together they pass into the City at the end of the Elvish procession as the curtain falls

HOMeward BOUND

[6] Scene One

The Court of the King in Minas Tirith. A fountain flows to the left of the stage, and the White Tree grows and blossoms to the right. By the fountain sits the Queen Arwen, and by the tree sits the King Aragorn. Frodo enters and bows before the King and Queen

ARAGORN I know what you have come to say, Frodo: you wish to return to your own home. But for you in the lands of the West there shall ever be a welcome.

FRODO It is true that I wish to go back to the Shire. But first I must go to Rivendell. For if there could be anything wanting in a time so blessed, I missed Bilbo; and I was grieved when among all the household of Elrond I saw that he was not come.

ARWEN Do you wonder at that, Ring-bearer? For you know the power of that which is destroyed; and all that was done by that power is passing away. But your kinsman possessed this thing longer than you. He awaits you there, for he will not make again any journey but one.

FRODO Then I beg leave to depart soon.

ARAGORN In seven days we will go. For we shall ride with you far on the Road, even as far as the country of Rohan. In three days now Éomer shall return thither to bear Théoden to his rest in the Mark, and we shall ride with him to honour the fallen.

ARWEN A gift I will give you; for I am the daughter of Elrond. I shall not go with him now when he departs for the Havens: for mine is the choice of Lúthien, and as she so have I chosen, both the sweet and the bitter. But in my stead you shall go, Ring-bearer, when the time comes and if you so wish it. If your hurts grieve you still and the memory of your burden is heavy, then you may pass into the West, until all your wounds and weariness are healed. But wear this now in memory of Elfstone and Evenstar with whom your life has been woven!

She takes from around her neck a white gem on a chain which has lain upon her breast, and lays it around Frodo's neck
When the memory of the fear and darkness troubles you, this will bring you aid.

Frodo bows to her, and the King rises and takes him by the hand to lead him forth. Darkness falls, and the inner curtain rises

[7] Scene Two

The scene is at first covered in mist; but slowly this is dispersed by the rising sun. When it has finally cleared, there will be seen a barrow opened to the light. At first little can be seen, but the voices of men are heard in the distance

RIDERS of ROHAN

Out of doubt, out of dark, to the day's rising
he rode singing in the sun, sword
unsheathing.

A slow procession enters the scene, bearing with them the body of King Théoden on a bier

Hope he rekindled, and in hope ended;
over death, over dread, over doom lifted
out of loss, out of life, unto long glory.

The body is brought forward and laid into the barrow

Out of doubt, out of dark, to the day's rising
he rode singing in the sun...

MERRY [*approaching the open grave*]
Théoden King, Théoden King! As a father
you were to me, for a little while. Farewell!
Farewell!

The chant loses itself in the distance, and the mists again cover the scene

ÉOMER [*standing*] Now this is the funeral of Théoden the King; but I will speak ere we go of tidings of joy. Faramir, Steward of Gondor, asks that the Lady Éowyn should be his wife, and she grants it full willing. Thus is the friendship of the Mark and Gondor bound with a new bond, and the more do I rejoice.

ARAGORN No miser are you, Éomer, to give thus to Gondor the fairest thing in your realm!

ÉOWYN Wish me well, my liege-lord and healer!

ARAGORN I have wished thee well ever since first I saw thee. It heals my heart to see thee now in bliss.

Darkness shrouds the scene

[8] Scene Three

The scene is the entrance to Isengard, in the same position as at the end of The Journey to Isengard. But now it is greatly changed in appearance. All about is green and growing. Two great trees stand as the door-wardens, and from them an avenue of trees flanks the road leading to the tower of Orthanc. This alone remains unchanged, mirrored in a pool of still water about its feet. In the gate there stand Treebeard with Quickbeam; before them are gathered the King with Gandalf, Elrond, Celeborn, Galadriel, Legolas, Gimli, Frodo, Sam, Merry, Pippin, Elladan and Elrohir

TREEBEARD Welcome to the Treegarth of Orthanc! [*to Gandalf*] You have proved mightiest, and all your labours have gone well. Where would you now be going; and why do you come here?

GANDALF To see how your work goes, my friend. But what of the task that I set you? How is Saruman? Is he not weary of Orthanc yet?

TREEBEARD Ah! I thought you would come to that. Weary of Orthanc? Very weary at last; but I gave him all the news. He grew very weary. He always was hasty. That was his ruin.

GANDALF I observe, my good Fangorn, that with great care you say gave, was, grew. What about is? Is he dead?

TREEBEARD No, not dead, so far as I know. But he is gone. I let him go; there was little left of him when he crawled out, and that worm-creature of his was like a pale shadow. A snake without fangs may crawl where he will.

GANDALF Well, he is gone, and there is no more to be said. But the Tower of Orthanc goes back now to the King, to whom it belongs.

TREEBEARD It is locked. I made Saruman lock it and give me the keys. Quickbeam has them.

Quickbeam bows like a tree bending in the wind and hands the King two great black keys

ARAGORN Now I thank you once more; and I bid you farewell. May your forest grow again in peace. And here then at last comes the end of the Fellowship of the Ring. Yet I hope that Legolas and Gimli will return to Gondor ere long.

GIMLI We will come, if our lords allow it.
LEGOLAS And I shall walk in the woods of Ithilien, and bless it for a while. For a month, a life, a hundred years of men. But Anduin is near, and Anduin leads down to the Sea. To the Sea, to the Sea!...

He and Gimli bow to Gandalf, and to Treebeard, and to the King, and to Celeborn and Galadriel, and to Elrond, and to Frodo and his relations, and depart. Treebeard turns to Celeborn and Galadriel

TREEBEARD It is long, long since we met by stock or stone, a *vanimar vanimálion nostari!* It is sad that we should meet only thus now at the ending. For the world is changing; I feel it in the water, I feel it in the earth, and I smell it in the air. I do not think we shall meet again.

CELEBORN I do not know, Eldest.

GALADRIEL Not in Middle-earth, nor until the lands that lie under the wave are lifted up again. Then in the willow-meads of Tasarinan we may meet in the Spring. Farewell!

Treebeard bows low to them, and then he and Quickbeam depart back into the forest where he first met Merry and Pippin. Aragorn now takes his leave of Celeborn and Galadriel

GALADRIEL Elfstone, through darkness you have come to your hope. Use well the days!

CELEBORN Kinsman, farewell! May your doom be other than mine, and your treasure remain with you to the end!

They turn and depart to the right with Gandalf, Frodo, Elrond and the hobbits. Aragorn remains at the Gate, looking after them. After a long while he raises his hand, and the palantír which he carries therein flashes with a green fire. The sun sets offstage to the right, and his mantle of white is turned all to gold. The light fades as the King of the West remains, with Elladan and Elrohir beside him. The inner curtain falls slowly into the fading light

[9] Scene Four

The scene is an open plain, with the Misty Mountains visible dimly in the background. Saruman and Wormtongue enter, in rags, from the left. They make their wretched way across the stage when Gandalf, Elrond, Celeborn, Galadriel and the hobbits enter after them. Gandalf hails them

GANDALF Well, Saruman! Where are you going?

SARUMAN What is that to you? Will you still order my goings, and are you not content with my ruin?

GANDALF You know the answers: no and no. But in any case the time of my labours now draws to its end. If you had waited at Orthanc, you would have seen the King, and he would have shown you wisdom and mercy.

SARUMAN I desire neither of him. Indeed, I am seeking a way out of his realm.

GALADRIEL Say not so. Say rather that you are overtaken by good fortune; for now you have a last chance.

SARUMAN If it be truly the last, I am glad, for I shall be spared the trouble of refusing it again. All my hopes are ruined, but I would not share yours. If you have any. You have doomed yourselves, and you know it. And now, what ship would bear you ever back across so wide a sea? It will be a grey ship, and full of ghosts.

He turns from them and kicks Wormtongue impatiently

Get up, you idiot! Turn about! If these fine folk are going this way, we will take another!

WORMTONGUE Poor old Gríma! Always beaten and cursed. How I hate him! How I wish I could leave him!

GANDALF Then leave him!

But Wormtongue shoots a glance full of terror at him, and then shuffles quickly past behind Saruman. Both depart swiftly
Alas for Saruman! He has withered altogether. All the same, I am not sure that Treebeard is right: I fancy he could still do some mischief in a small mean way...

His voice grows fainter as the light fades. The inner curtain rises

[10] Scene Five

Rivendell is seen in the evening light. Lanterns twinkle across the stream. Gandalf, Frodo, Elrond, Glorfindel, Sam, Merry, Pippin, Celeborn and Galadriel

stand overlooking the dell. Slowly out of the darkness Galdor emerges to greet them and light their way over the water; and with him comes the aged Bilbo

BILBO Hello, hello! So you've come back?

Frodo goes forward and embraces him, and then Sam, Pippin and Merry do so in turn. In the meantime, Elrond, Glorfindel and Galdor lead Celeborn and Galadriel down into the valley. Stars appear in the sky above

And that reminds me: what's become of my Ring, Frodo, that you took away?

FRODO I have lost it, Bilbo dear. I got rid of it, you know.

BILBO What a pity! I should have liked to see it again...

He takes them, leading them down into the valley after the others. The scene is empty, only the stars appearing in the darkness. Bilbo's voice rises from below, fading gradually into the distance

The road goes ever on and on out from the door where it began. Now far ahead the Road has gone, let others follow it who can, let them a journey new begin! But I at last with weary feet will turn towards the lighted inn, my evening-rest and sleep to meet...

His voice fades away, and there is silence and stillness. The stars shine brightly. The curtain slowly falls

CD 14 THE SCOURING OF THE SHIRE

[1] Scene One

The scene is the same as at the end of the previous chapter; it is now some days later. Gandalf and Elrond stand at the head of the valley, bidding farewell to Frodo, Sam, Merry and Pippin. Gandalf talks to Sam, Merry and Pippin towards the back, but Elrond draws Frodo aside and talks to him alone

ELROND I think, Frodo, that maybe you will never come back here. For about this time of year, when leaves are gold before they fall, look for Bilbo in the woods of the Shire. I shall be with him.

Frodo bows and the four hobbits prepare for departure. It grows dark again, and the stars alone dominate the sky

[2] Scene Two

Through the darkness there looms up an iron gate, stretching across the road at the entrance to the Shire. The stars still shine in the sky above, and reflected on the ground are lights in the windows of some gloomy buildings. Merry, Pippin, Sam and Frodo ride up to the gate, and dismount in surprise. Merry goes forward and rattles at the gate. A horn is blown, and lights in the windows all go out

HOB [from one of the buildings] Who's that? Be off! Can't you read the notice: No admittance between sundown and sunrise?

SAM Of course we can't read the notice in the dark. And if hobbits of the Shire are to be kept out like this, I'll tear your notice down when I find it.

A door opens, and a crowd of hobbits rush out to the gate. When they see the travellers they seem frightened

MERRY Come along! if you don't know me, Hob Hayward, you ought to.

HOB Bless me! It's Mister Merry! Why, they said you was dead! Lost in the Old Forest, by all accounts. I'm pleased to see you!

MERRY Then stop gaping at me, and open the gate!

HOB I'm sorry, Mister Merry, but we have our orders.

MERRY Whose orders?

HOB The Chief's up at Bag End.

FRODO The Chief?... Do you mean Lotho Sackville-Baggins?

HOB I suppose so, Mister Baggins; but we have to say just *The Chief* nowadays.

FRODO Do you indeed! Well, I am glad he has dropped the *Baggins* at any rate. But it is evidently high time the family dealt with him and put him in his place.

HOB It won't do no good talking that way. He'll get to hear of it. And if you make so much noise, you'll wake up the Chief's Big Man.

MERRY We shall wake him up in a manner that will surprise him!

He takes a leap and clammers over the gate. Pippin follows

Come on, Pippin! Two is enough.

FERNY [coming suddenly out of one of the houses] What's all this? Gate-breaking? Clear out, or I'll break your filthy little necks!

MERRY Bill Ferny, if you don't open that gate in ten seconds, you'll regret it. I shall set steel to you, if you don't obey. And when you have opened the gates, you will go through them and never return.

Ferny shuffles to the gate, unlocking it.

Frodo and Sam pass through, while Ferny makes a run into the night and vanishes

So much for your Big Man. We'll see the Chief later. In the meantime we want a lodging for the night.

HOB I'm sorry, Mister Merry, but it isn't allowed.

MERRY What isn't allowed?

HOB Taking in folk offhand like, and eating extra food.

MERRY What's the matter? I thought it had been a good harvest.

HOB Well, no, the year's been good enough. We grows a lot of food, but we don't rightly know what becomes of it.

PIPPIN Oh come! this is all too tiresome for me. No welcome, no drink, no smoke, and a lot of rules and orc-talk instead. I hoped to have a rest, but I can see there's work and trouble ahead.

They move on towards the buildings as the light fails

[3] Scene Three

On the road outside Bag End. Three large houses block the view. Against the door of one, lounge two ruffians. The four hobbits enter along the street. They look at the ruffians suspiciously

SAM Like those men with Bill Ferny at Bree...

MERRY Like many that I saw at Isengard. Well, we've come back none too soon.

The ruffians, seeing themselves observed, slink away

FRODO Not a day too soon. Perhaps too late, at any rate to save Lotho. Miserable fool, but I am sorry for him.

PIPPIN Save Lotho? Whatever do you mean? Destroy him, I should say.

FRODO I don't think you quite understand things, Pippin. Lotho never meant things to come to this pass. He has been a wicked fool, but he's caught now. He's a prisoner in Bag End now, I expect, and very frightened. We ought to try and rescue him.

PIPPIN But it won't be so easy scaring these men off a second time. They'll be much bolder when there's more of them together.

MERRY We have got to do something at once.

SAM Do what?

MERRY Raise the Shire! Now! Wake all our people! They just want a match, and they'll go up in flame.

There is a sudden laugh from one of the houses. The hobbits turn to see

Sandyman lounging in the doorway

SANDYMAN Don't 'ee like it, then? But you always was soft, all of you. What d'you want to come back for?

SAM Now, Master Sandyman, we have work to do in this village, and don't you make it any harder with your jeering, or you'll foot a bill too big for your purse.

SANDYMAN Garn! You can't touch me. I'm a friend of the Boss's. But Sharkey'll touch you all right, if I have any more of your mouth.

PIPPIN You are dirty and insolent, Sandyman. And also very much out of your reckoning. We have already cleared the ruffians out of this village.

Sandyman stares in alarm for a moment; and then he rushes back into the house and blows an alarm on a horn

MERRY Save your breath! I've a better! *He raises his horn to his lips, blowing a fierce rallying call. There comes a shout, and crowds of hobbits flood to the street. They gather round Merry, cheering. After a few moments Farmer Cotton rides up on a pony and salutes Merry*

COTTON Well, what's the next move?

FRODO Who is this Sharkey?

COTTON The biggest villain of the lot, seemingly. We've never seen him, but he's up at Bag End; and he's the real Chief now, I guess. All the ruffians do what he says, and what he says is mostly: hack, burn and ruin. I don't think that fool of a Pimple's even behind it any more.

Merry draws the hobbits off into the shadows of the street, for night is falling rapidly. Farmer Cotton alone remains, warming his hands by the bonfire. The ruffians enter, marching along the street and banging on doors with sticks. In perfect silence the hobbits suddenly emerge from the shadows, every one of them holding a weapon of some kind. Merry steps forward from the circle to confront Bill Ferny, who leads the ruffians

MERRY I warned you not to come back here. I warn you again: you are standing in the light and you are covered by archers. If you lay a finger on this farmer, or on anyone else, you will be shot at once. Lay down any weapons that you have!

Bill Ferny looks round; his men are surrounded. But he decides to try and break out

FERNY At 'em, lads! Let 'em have it! *He aims a blow at Merry, and falls dead with four arrows in his throat. All stop in horror. Slowly the other ruffians lay down their arms; they are bound, and the dead body is carried off. The hobbits escort the other ruffians out*

COTTON Seems almost too easy after all, don't it? I said we could master them; but we needed the call. You came just in the nick of time, Master Merry.

SAM This is worse than Mordor! Much worse in a way. It comes home to you, as they say: because it is home, and you remember it before it was ruined.

FRODO Yes, this is Mordor. Just one of its works. Saruman was doing its work all the time, even when he thought he was working for himself. And the same with those that Saruman tricked, like Lotho.

PIPPIN If I had known all the mischief he had caused, I would have killed Saruman myself.

[4] SARUMAN *[suddenly appears at the open door]* No doubt, no doubt! But you did not, so I am able to welcome you home.

FRODO Sharkey!...

SARUMAN Evidently you did not expect to see me here?

FRODO I did not. Though I might have guessed. A little mischief in a mean way; Gandalf warned me that you were still capable of it.

SARUMAN Quite capable; and more than a little. I have already done much that you will find it hard to amend or undo in your lives. And it will be pleasant to think of that, and set it against my injuries.

FRODO Well, if that is what you find pleasure in, I pity you. It will be a pleasure of memory only, I fear. Go at once, and never return!

HOBBITS Don't let him go!...Kill him!... He's a villain and a murderer... Where is Lotho?...Kill him!

SARUMAN *[smiling]* Kill him! Kill him, if you think there are enough of you, my brave hobbits! But do not think that I have lost all my power. Whoever strikes me shall

be accursed. And if my blood stains the Shire, it shall wither and never more be healed.

FRODO Do not believe him! He has lost all his power, save his voice that can still daunt you and deceive you, if you will let it. But I will not have him slain. It is useless to meet revenge with revenge; it will achieve nothing. Go, Saruman, by the speediest way!

Saruman steps down from the door, and Wormtongue comes crawling after him

SARUMAN Worm! Worm! To the road again, Worm! These fine fellows and lordlings are turning us adrift again. Come along!

He turns to go; but as he passes Frodo, he suddenly draws a knife and stabs at him. The blade turns on the hidden mail-coat and snaps. Sam leaps forward and knocks the knife from Saruman's hand, throwing him to the ground with his sword at his throat

FRODO No, Sam! Do not kill him even now. For he has not hurt me. And in any case I do not wish him to be slain in this evil mood. He was great once, of a noble kind that we should not dare to raise our hands against. He is fallen, and his cure is beyond us; but I would still spare him, in the hope that he might find it.

SARUMAN *[rising to his feet]* You have grown, Halfling. Yes, you have grown very much. You are wise, and cruel. You have robbed my revenge of sweetness, and now I must go hence in bitterness, in debt to your mercy. I hate it, and you!... Well, I go and will trouble you no more. But do not expect me to wish you health and long life. You will have neither. But that is not my doing. I merely foretell.

He strides away, Wormtongue following.

Frodo suddenly calls out, and both halt

FRODO Wormtongue! You need not follow him. I know of no harm you have done to me. You can have rest and food here for a while, until you are stronger and can go your own ways.

SARUMAN No evil? Oh no! Even when he sneaks out at night it is only to look at the stars. But did I hear someone ask where poor Lotho is hiding? You know, don't you, Worm? Will you tell them?

WORMTONGUE *[whimpering]* No, no!

SARUMAN Then I will. Worm killed your Chief, poor little fellow, your nice little Boss. Stabbed him in his sleep, I believe. Buried him, I hope; though Worm has been very hungry lately. No, Worm is not very nice. You had better leave him to me.

WORMTONGUE *[with wild hatred]* You told me to; you made me do it!

SARUMAN You always do what Sharkey says, don't you, Worm? Well, now he says: follow!

He turns away contemptuously; but Wormtongue suddenly leaps up, with a yell springs on Saruman's back. Drawing a hidden knife. He jerks the wizard's

head back, cutting his throat, and runs off towards the village. At once there comes a flight of arrows. Wormtongue falls dead. About Saruman's body mists gather; it builds to an enormous shadowy figure, pale and shrouded, watering and looking out towards the West. Out of the West comes a cold wind. With a sigh the smoke dissolves into nothing. The body seems to shrivel. Frodo steps forward in horror, covers the face and shudders. All bare their heads and stand in silent mourning as the curtain slowly falls

THE GREY HAVENS

[5] Prelude

Frodo's room at Bag End. Frodo is sitting alone in a deep chair, fingering nervously the white jewel of Arwen. His mind is obviously depressed and shrouded in gloom. After a while he lies back in his chair and murmurs in a quiet voice to himself

[6] Scene One: The Sea Bell

FRODO

I walked by the sea, and there came to me as a star-beam on the wet sand, a white shell like a sea-bell; trembling it lay in my wet hand. In my fingers shaken I heard waken a ding within, by a harbour bar a buoy swinging, a call ringing over endless seas, faint now and far.

He raises himself slightly in his chair, and continues in a louder tone

Then I saw a boat silently float on the night-tide, empty and grey. *It is later than late! Why do we wait?* I leapt in and cried *Bear me away!*

His voice has risen to a passion; he half-rises from his seat, but slowly he sinks back again

It bore me away, wetted with spray, wrapt in a mist, wound in a sleep, to a forgotten strand in a strange land. I heard a sea-bell swing in the swell, dinging, dinging, and the breakers roar on the hidden teeth of a perilous reef; and at last I came to a long shore. White it glimmered, and the sea shimmered with star-mirrors in a silver net; cliffs of stone pale as ruel-bone in the moon-foam was gleaming wet; glittering sand slid through my hand, dust of pearl and jewel-grist, trumpets of opal, roses of coral, flutes of green and amethyst. But under cliff-eaves, there were glooming caves,

weed-curtained, dark and grey. A cold air stirred in my hair, and the light waned, as I hurried away. Houses were shuttered, wind round them muttered, roads were empty. I sat by a door and where drizzling rain ran down a drain I cast away all that I bore: in my clutching hand some grains of sand, and a sea-bell silent and dead.

Never will my ear that bell hear, never my feet that shore tread, never again; as in sad lane, in blind alley and in long street ragged I walk. To myself I talk; for still they speak not, men that I meet.

He remains seated in his chair; slowly the light fades. Sam comes gently into the room

SAM What is the matter, Mister Frodo?

FRODO I am wounded, wounded... It will never really heal...

Again he fingers the white jewel of Arwen It is gone for ever, and now all is dark and empty...

Sam moves across the room towards him as the light fades. In the darkness the inner curtain falls

[7] Scene Two

Shadows of great trees are thrown onto the scene, slowly becoming more distinct. The light returns, and Frodo and Sam are seen walking through the moonlit woods. Frodo halts in thought and sings softly to himself

FRODO

Still round the corner there may wait a new road or a secret gate; and though I oft have passed them by, the day will come at last when I shall take the hidden paths that run west of the Moon, east of the Sun.

A small chorus of voices is heard behind the scene. At the sound of the distant Elvish choir, Frodo and Sam stand listening in rapt enchantment. A glimmer of light through the trees is seen, coming ever nearer

Voices of ELVES with GALADRIEL

A Elbereth Gilthoniel!
Silivren penna míriel
o menel agalar elenath!
Gilthoniel! A Elbereth!

We still remember, we who dwell in this far land beyond the trees, the starlight on the Western Seas.

Further lights are seen as there enters through the woods an Elven procession, led by Galдор. And there to the wonder of Frodo and Sam ride Elrond and Galadriel; and by their side, transfigured through the agedness of his features, comes Bilbo. They pause, and Elrond looks at them. As if inspired by an unheard command, Frodo steps forward to join the procession

SAM [crying out]

Where are you going, master?

FRODO To the Havens, Sam... I tried to save the world, and it has been saved, but not for me. It must often be so, Sam, when things are in danger; someone has to give them up, lose them, so that others may keep them. Do not be too sad, Sam. Your time will come. You cannot always be torn in two. You will have to be one and whole, for many years; you have so much to enjoy, and to be, and to do.

Sam bows his head and weeps, while Frodo bends over him, holding him and comforting him

For the Third Age is over, and the days of the Rings are passed, and an end is come of the story of these times. Come now, ride with me!

Sam now steps forward to join him, his heavy heart showing in his laboured footing. The procession moves on towards its destination as the light fades

Voices of ELVES

Aiä Eärendil Elenion Ancalima!...

Ai! laurië lantar lassí súrinen,
yéni únótimë ve rámar aldaron!

GALADRIEL

Namarië!

with ELVEN VOICES

Aiä Eärendil Elenion Ancalima!... Namarië!

[8] Scene Three

In the darkness the inner curtain has risen again, to show the scene totally covered in mist. Light shines through this and, as the mists disperse, a great ship is dimly seen lying at anchor in the water. On the shore, by the anchor, there sits on a great stone Círdan the Shipwright. As the mists lift still further, then can be seen standing beyond him the Elven company with Frodo and Sam; and beyond them there stands a tall cloaked figure as yet indiscernible. As this figure moves forward, the Shipwright rises and lifts the anchor

CÍRDAN All now is ready.

And the tall figure is seen by all to be Gandalf, who comes forward towards the front of the stage. All the Elves go on board; at last only Elrond, Galadriel, Sam, Frodo and Círdan remain towards the front. Gandalf then turns to them

GANDALF Well, my dear friends, here at last comes the end of our Fellowship on the shores of the sea in Middle-earth. Go in peace! I will not say, *Do not weep*; for not all tears are an evil.

And then he and Galadriel and Elrond join hands, and displayed on their fingers are seen the three Rings of the Elves. And Frodo raises his own hand before them, and leads them on into the shadowy vessel. Sam and Círdan alone remain on shore; and the mists swirl once again across the stage. All that can be seen is the great ship moving on its way across the seas. Slowly there appears over the water a faint light, and with it is heard the sound of voices singing. And then it appears that the grey rain-curtain turns all to silver glass, and is rolled back; and there are seen beyond white shores, and beyond them a green country under a swift sunrise. In the distance great lights shine, piercing the lingering mists as the curtain falls

Here ends the history of the "War of the Ring"

CD 15 APPENDICES

The first four of these appendices consist of substantial settings of poems omitted from the musical chapters because they unduly compromised the dramatic urgency of development (see note on the text). However those who wish to experience them in the context of the chapters may insert or substitute them for the tracks indicated at the head of each setting.

THE LAY OF LÚTHIEN

[CD 3, track 3] substitute the following

[1] ARAGORN

The leaves were long, the grass was green,
the hemlock-umbels tall and fair,
and in the glade a light was seen
of stars in shadow shimmering.
Tinúviel was dancing there
to music of a pipe unseen
and light of stars was in her hair
and in her raiment glimmering.
There Beren came from mountains cold,
and lost he wandered under leaves
and where the Elven-river rolled
he walked alone and sorrowing.
He peered between the hemlock-leaves
and saw in wonder flowers of gold
upon her mantle and her sleeves,
and her hair like shadow following.
Enchantment healed his weary feet
that over hills were doomed to roam;
and forth he hastened, strong and fleet,
and grasped at moonbeams glistening.
Through woven woods in Elvenhome
she fled on lightly dancing feet,
and left him lonely still to roam
in the silent forest listening.
He heard there oft the flying sound
of feet as light as linden-leaves,
of water welling underground
in hidden hollows quivering.
Her mantle glistened in the moon,
as on a hill-top high and far
she danced, and at her feet were strewn
the mists of silver wavering.
Now withered lay the hemlock-sheaves,
and one by one with sighing sound
whispering fell the beechen leaves
in the wintry woodland shivering.
He sought her ever, wandering far
where leaves of years were thickly strewn,
by light of moon and ray of star
in frosty heavens quivering.
He saw the Elven-flowers spring
about her feet, and healed again
he longed by her to dance and sing
upon the grass untroubling.
Again she fled, but swift he came.
Tinúviel! Tinúviel!
He called her by her Elvish name,
and there she halted listening.
One moment stood she, and a spell
his voice laid on her; Beren came,
and doom fell on Tinúviel
that in his arms lay glistening.

As Beren looked into her eyes
within the shadows of her hair,
the trembling starlight of the skies
he saw there mirrored shimmering.
Tinúviel the elven-fair
immortal maiden elven-wise
about him cast her shadowy hair
and arms like silver glimmering.
Long was the way that fate them bore,
o'er stony mountains cold and grey
through halls of iron and darkling door
and woods of nightshade morrowless.
The Sundering Seas between them lay,
and yet at last they met once more,
and long ago they passed away
in the forest, singing, sorrowless.

THE LAY OF EÄRENDIL

[CD 3, after track 11] insert the following

[2] BILBO

Eärendil was a mariner
that tarried in Arvernien;
he built a boat of timber felled
in Nimbrethil to journey in;
her sails he wove of silver fair,
of silver were her lanterns made,
her prow was fashioned like a swan,
and light upon her banners laid.
His coat that came of ancient kings
of chainéd rings was forged of old;
his shining shield all wounds defied,
with runes engraved of dwarven gold.
His bow was made of dragon-horn,
his arrows shorn of ebony,
of triple steel his habergeon,
his scabbard of chalcedony,
his sword was like a flame in sheath,
with gems was wreathed his helmet tall,
an eagle plume upon his crest,
upon his breast an emerald.
Beneath the moon and under star
he wandered far from Northern strands,
bewildered on enchanted ways
beyond the days of mortal lands.
From gnashing of the Narrow Ice
where shadow lies on frozen hills,
from nether heats and burning waste
he turned in haste, and roving still
on starless waters far away
at last he came to Night of Naught,
and passed, and never sight he saw
of shining shore not light he sought.
The winds of wrath came driving him,
as blindly in the foam he fled,
from west to east and errandless,
unheralded he homeward sped.
In might the sons of Fëanor
that swore the unforgotten oath
brought war into Arvernien
with burning and with broken troth;
and Elwing from her fastness down
then cast her in the waters wide,
but like a mew was swiftly borne,
uplifted on the swollen tide.
Through hopeless night she came to him,
and flame was in the darkness lit;
more bright than light of diamond
the flame upon her carcanet.
The Silmaril she bound on him,
and crowned him with the living light,

and dauntless then with burning brow
he turned his prow at middle night.
Beyond the world, beyond the Seas,
then strong and free a storm arose,
a wind of power in Tarmenel;
by paths that seldom mortal goes
from Middle-earth on mighty breath
as flying wraith across the grey
and long-forsaken seas distressed;
from east to west he passed away.
Through Evernight he back was borne
on black and roaring waves that ran
o'er leagues unlit and foundered shores
that drowned before the Days began,
until he heard on strands of gold
where ends the world the music long,
where ever foaming billows roll
the yellow gold and jewels wan.
He saw the Mountain silent rise
where twilight lies upon the knees
of Valinor, and Eldamar
beheld afar across the seas.
A wanderer escaped from night
to haven white he came at last,
to Elvenhome the green and fair
where keen the air, where pale as glass
a-glimmer in a valley sheer
the lamplit towers of Tirion
are mirrored on the Shadowmere.
He tarried there from errantry,
and melodies they taught to him,
and sages old him marvels told,
and harps of gold they brought to him.
They clothed him then in elven white,
and seven lights before him sent,
as through the Calacirian
to hidden land forlorn he went.
He came unto the timeless halls
where shining fall the countless years,
and endless reigns the Elder King
in Ilmarin on mountain sheer;
and words unheard were spoken then
to folk of Men and Elven-kin,
beyond the world were visions showed
forbid to those that dwell therein.
A ship then new they built for him
of mithril and of elven-glass
with crystal keel; no shaven oar
nor sail she bore; on silver mast
the Silmaril as lantern light
and banner bright with living flame
of fire unstained by Elbereth
herself was set, who thither came
and wings immortal made for him,
and laid on him undying doom,
to sail the shoreless skies and come
behind the Sun and light of Moon.
From Evereven's lofty hills
where softly silver fountains fall
his wings him bore, a wandering light,
beyond the mighty Mountain Wall.
From World's End then he turned away,
and yearned again to find afar
his home through shadows journeying,
and burning as an island star
on high above the mists he came,
a distant flame before the Sun,
a wonder ere the breaking dawn
where grey the Norland waters run.

And over Middle-earth he passed
and heard at last the weeping sore
of women and of elven maids
in Elder Days, in days of yore.
But on him mighty doom was laid,
till Moon should fade, an orbéd star
to pass, and tarry never more
on Hither Shores where mortals are;
till end of Days on errand high,
a herald bright that never rests,
to bear his burning lamp afar,
the Flammifer of Westernesse.

THE LAY OF DURIN

[CD 4, track 11] substitute the following

[3] GANDALF

Follow my staff!

A light appears, a thin spark at the tip of Gandalf's staff only dimly visible through the inner curtain. There is a sound like a great millwheel churning in the depths as Gimli begins to speak

GIMLI [taking up position behind him and chanting]

The world was young, the mountains
green,
no stain yet on the Moon was seen,
no words were laid on stream or stone
when Durin woke and walked alone.
He named the nameless hills and dells;
he drank from yet untasted wells;
he stooped and looked in Mirrormere,
and saw a crown of stars appear,
as gems upon a silver thread,
above the shadow of his head.
The world was fair, the mountains tall,
in Elder Days before the fall
of mighty kings in Nargothrond
and Gondolin, who now beyond
the Western Seas have passed away;
the world was fair in Durin's Day.
A king he was on carven throne
in many-pillared halls of stone
with golden roof and silver floor,
and runes of power upon the door.
The light of sun and star and moon
in shining lamps of crystal hewn
undimmed by cloud or shade of night
there shone for ever fair and bright.
Unwearied then were Durin's folk;
beneath the mountains music woke;
the harpers harped, the minstrels sang,
and at the gates the trumpets rang.
The world is grey, the mountains old,
the forge's fire is ashen-cold;
no harp is strung, no hammer falls;
the darkness dwells in Durin's halls;
the shadow lies upon his tomb
in Moria, in Khazad-dûm.
But still the sunken stars appear
in dark and windless Mirrormere;
there lies his crown in water deep,
till Durin wakes again from sleep.

THE LAY OF NIMRODEL

[CD 5, after track 2] insert the following

[4] LEGOLAS

An Elven-maid there was of old,
a shining star by day;
her mantle white was hemmed with gold,
her shoes of silver-grey.
A star was bound upon her brows,
a light was on her hair
as sun upon the golden boughs
in Lórien the fair.
Beside the falls of Nimrodel,
by water clear and cool,
her voice as falling silver fell
into the shining pool.
Where now she wanders none can tell,
in sunlight or in shade;
for lost of yore was Nimrodel
and in the mountains strayed.
The elven-ship in haven grey
beneath the mountain-lee
awaited her for many a day
beside the roaring sea.
A wind by night in Northern lands
arose, and loud it cried,
and drove the ship from elven-strands
across the streaming tide.
Amroth beheld the fading shore
now lost beyond the swell,
and cursed the faithless ship that bore
him far from Nimrodel.
From helm to sea they saw him leap,
as arrow from the string,
and dive into the water deep
as swan upon the wing.
But from the West has come no word,
and on the Hither Shore
no tidings Elven-folk have heard
of Amroth evermore.

ARAGORN AND ARWEN

[5] UNSEEN VOICES

But Arwen became as a mortal woman, and
yet it was not yet lot to die until all
that she had gained was lost. As Queen of
Elves and Men she dwelt with Aragorn
for six-score years in great glory and bliss;
yet at the last he felt the approach of old
age, and knew that the span of his life-
days was drawing to its end, long though it
had been.

ARAGORN

At last, Lady Evenstar, fairest in the world,
and most beloved, my world is fading. Lo!
we have gathered, and we have spent, and
now the time of payment draws near.

UNSEEN VOICES

And going to the House of the Kings in the
Silent Street, he laid him down on the bed
that had been prepared for him.

ARWEN

Would you then, lord, leave your people
that live by your word?

ARAGORN

Not before my time. The hour is indeed
hard; yet if I will not go now, then I must
soon go perforce. Now, therefore, I shall
sleep. I speak no comfort to you, for there
is no comfort in the circles of the world. The
utmost choice is now before you: to
repent and go to the Havens, and bear
away into the West the memory of our days
together that shall there be evergreen but
never more than memory; or else to abide
the Doom of Men.

ARWEN

Nay, dear lord, that choice is long over.
There is now no ship that would bear me
hence, and I must indeed abide the Doom
of Men, whether I will or no: the loss and
the silence. But I say to you, King of the
Númenóreans, not until now have I
understood the tale of your people and their
fall. For if this be indeed the gift of the One
to Men, it is bitter to receive.

ARAGORN

So it might seem. But let us not be
overthrown at the final test, who of
old renounced the Shadow and the Ring. In
sorrow we must go, but not in despair.
Behold! we are not bound for ever to the
circles of the world, and beyond them is
more than memory. Farewell!

*And with that, even as he takes her hand
and kisses it, he falls into sleep*

ARWEN

Estel, Estel!

UNSEEN VOICES

Then a great beauty was revealed in him,
so that all who after came looked on him in
wonder; for they saw the grace of his youth,
and the valour of his manhood, and the
majesty of his age were blended together.
And there long he lay, an image of the
splendour of the Kings of Men in glory
undimmed before the breaking of the world.
But Arwen went forth from the House, and
the light of her eyes was quenched; and
she passed away to the land of Lórien,
and dwelt there under the fading trees until
winter came. Galadriel had passed away
and Celeborn also was gone, and the land
was silent. And it seemed that she had
become cold and grey as nightfall in winter
that comes without a star. There at last
when the mallorn-leaves were falling, but
spring had not yet come, she laid herself to
rest upon Cerin Amroth; and there is her
green grave, until the world is changed,
and all the days of her life are utterly
forgotten by men that come after, and
elánor and niphredil bloom no more east of
the Sea. Here ends this tale, as it has come
to us from the South; and with the passing
of Evenstar no more is said in this book of
the days of old.

