

THE LORD OF THE RINGS  
FAN CLUB OFFICIAL MOVIE MAGAZINE

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MIRANDA OTTO

LIGHTS UP *The Two Towers*

THE EQUINE STARS OF *The Lord of the Rings*

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An Interview with Daniel Reeve



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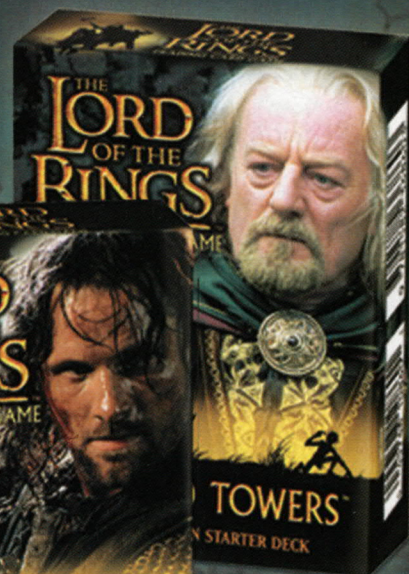
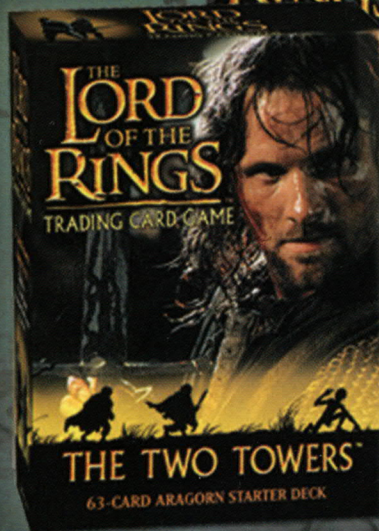


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Publisher  
WARREN HOLLAND

Founder  
DAN MADSEN

Publications Director  
PETER LOHRER

Managing Editor  
CARLA ATKINSON

Contributing Writers  
JUDY ALLEY, STEPHEN BLACKMON, DAN MADSEN,  
JUSTIN PAKES, IAN SMITH

Creative Director  
DAN BURNS

Art Direction  
MICHEL VRANA & MIKE YOUNG

Layout & Design  
LEE BROOKS, MATTHEW JUNG, MICHEL VRANA, MIKE YOUNG

Staff Photographer  
JASON WAICUNAS

Production Coordinator  
WILLIAM DE ROOY

Editor for New Line Cinema  
JOHN MAYO

Advertising Sales  
MARC MICHAELS  
(757) 664-1164

Memberships Sales  
1-800-451-6381  
WWW.LOTRFANCLUB.COM

Senior Vice President, Fan Club Studio  
ANTHONY VITTONI

Director of Fan Services  
JUSTIN PAKES

Fan Club Studio Staff  
LA VONDA D. DULANEY, WILLIAM DE ROOY, CARMEN  
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# At Last!

After spending the past year immersed in *The Lord of the Rings* film project, it's impossible for me to offer a truly objective review of *The Two Towers*. Usually, my movie-going experience is pretty straightforward, but when I settled in to watch *The Two Towers* on December 18, my privileged spot in the catbird seat over the course of 2002 meant that I was, at times, watching a movie within a movie, or perhaps a movie with two soundtracks—Howard Shore's on the one hand, and on the other, the blended voices of the cast and crew we have interviewed for the magazine.

For instance, this quote sprang into my head, nearly verbatim, as I watched the Battle of Helm's Deep begin:

"Peter visualized very strongly, from the very first day that we started talking about Helm's Deep, the look of an army marching to war with, as he called them, 'forests of pikes' above their heads—this sea of wavering, corn-like stems that would create this formidable and freakish wall of impenetrable pikes."

This was Weta Workshop Director Richard Taylor's voice, describing Peter Jackson's thoughts on the design for the Uruk-hai warriors and weaponry. It was powerful to see that vivid mental image unfold before me on the screen.

When our heroes arrived at Edoras, I recalled the observations of several cast members about the jaw-dropping beauty of that New Zealand landscape, specifically Bernard Hill's comment that cast and crew members had tried to capture it with their own cameras, but ultimately decided that film could not do it justice.

And I got a good laugh out of the otherwise somber scene in which Legolas, Gimli, and Aragorn look sadly at the pile of Orc remains that they mistakenly believe to include the bodies of Merry and Pippin. When an angry Aragorn kicks an Orc helmet and then lets out a howl of anguish, I was remembering Jackson's revelation that Viggo Mortensen's cry was first and foremost prompted by the fact that he had broken his toe on that take!

I hope that *The Two Towers* was for you, too, a uniquely intimate movie-going experience that we have hopefully enhanced through the voices, images, and stories brought to you by the magazine over the past year.

We will bring you even more insights about the films themselves in the coming year and introduce you to even more of the talented behind-the-scenes people who were essential to making this historic project a reality.

Carla Atkinson

CARLA ATKINSON  
Managing Editor

spectral corpse prop from the royal ontario  
museum's *the two towers* exhibit. special  
coverage of the event on page 15.



# Contents

## Features

### 26 UPDATE WITH PETER JACKSON

The director talks about the first time he read *The Lord of the Rings*, his favorite character, the Hobbit he identifies with most, the greatest compliment he has received on the trilogy so far—and much, much more!

### 34 THWARTED HEROINE

— An Interview with Miranda Otto

Before the bustle and excitement surrounding *The Two Towers* premiere began, Miranda Otto took time to talk with us about her acting pedigree, the trilogy's astounding success—and the time she (really) stabbed an Orc.

### 44 THE MANE EVENT

More than 250 horses starred in the battle and chase scenes in *The Lord of the Rings*. We've journeyed to the stables to bring you stories of courageous performances—not to mention rampant cross-dressing!

### 60 ARTIFACTS — *The Maps and Calligraphy of Middle-earth*

Daniel Reeve left his job of 20 years to work on *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. The artist and calligrapher tells us about the beautiful work he did to help make Middle-earth authentic on the big screen—including the now-famous inscription on the One Ring.

### 70 DOWN THE ADVENTURE PATH

— *Foiled Again: Topps Makes Memories*

The longtime purveyor of collectible trading cards brings its expertise and artistry to New Line Cinema's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy.

## Departments

### 8 MAILBAGGINS

### 10 NEWS FROM MIDDLE-EARTH

The second-greatest premiere of all time comes to New York City ... J.R.R. Tolkien turns 111 ... Middle-earth is recreated in Toronto—again ... plus, a full report on RingCon!

### 20 UNSUNG HEROES

— Greensmaster Brian Massey

Brian Massey describes the extensive work that went into creating the peculiar nature of Middle-earth, from the lush fields and feel of Hobbiton to the eerie mammoth trees of Fangorn Forest.

### 54 FIRSTHAND: JUDY ALLEY

New Zealand native Judy Alley takes us through her wild ride as production manager, set dresser, and merchandising assets wrangler for *The Lord of the Rings*.

### 73 CATALOG

### 82 QUOTEWORTHY



# Mailbag

## THE SPECIAL-EDITION EXPERIENCE

I have just purchased my copy of the special-edition DVD and what can I say? Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! As a charter member of the Fan Club, I felt really honored that Peter Jackson has given the fans the opportunity to be mentioned in the end credits.

*The Lord of the Rings* has been my favorite story from childhood, and I, like so many others, have read it repeatedly and hoped that it would one day become a movie. Mr. Jackson has fulfilled one of my movie dreams! I am just so proud and overwhelmed by the fact that my own name can be attached to such a beautiful masterpiece. The DVD extras are great! It's wonderful to see how much hard work was put into this production! The crew's dedication is incredible, and the extra scenes are perfect!

If J.R.R. Tolkien was alive today, I am sure he would be completely over the moon with this epic. The casting, the acting, the directing, the costumes ... the whole thing is like no other film ever made and will remain the ultimate masterpiece forever!

Peter Jackson, you're the best! I can't thank you enough.

Laura Christian  
Wickford, Essex, U.K.

I have just watched *The Fellowship of the Ring Special Extended DVD Edition*, and I simply want to tell Peter Jackson, "thank you" for the wonder and magic of the new version. It changed the whole film for me, and from my perspective, the character who was most aided by the change was Aragorn.

Please don't misunderstand me. Viggo Mortensen created a perfect Aragorn, but I didn't feel connected to him. I felt for him, but not *with* him. Now, however, with the added scene of Aragorn singing the "Lay of Luthien," his spirit in turmoil, knowing that it is he who will rob Arwen of her immortality, you know the agony that Aragorn

After watching *The Fellowship of the Ring*, I realized there was no way that I would be the only person to be disappointed with the Arwen character's consumption of the character Glorfindel. Not that Liv Tyler did not do well or that the character [didn't need] a little extra flare for the movie ... but it was disheartening to see something that changed in this fantasy classic trilogy.

Now never in my right mind did I think anyone would admit on paper that there was a controversy, so when I looked at the "Coming Up" box in Issue No. 4 of the Fan Club magazine, I got really, really excited. Not only were people admitting there was a controversy, the actress was going to talk about [it], maybe some light would be shed, and explanations [given].

But no ... The text says "Liv Tyler on the Arwen Controversy." And did she talk about the controversy? Nope. Didn't even mention it. I waited with bated breath to open up this magazine and see this article, and felt completely, utterly betrayed.

The magazine promised it was going to acknowledge some of the less positive feedback about the character Arwen and instead shied away. It's one thing to ignore the issue, but to promise it and blatantly not fulfill that promise ... well, this is one Fan Club member who didn't appreciate it.

Tanya  
Medford, Oregon, USA

Tanya,  
*Thank you for your letter. Our reference was to Liv Tyler's comments in the third column of page 32 of Issue No. 5. In these comments, Ms. Tyler does address the difficulties of developing her character and fan concerns about Arwen. Please accept our apology if this was not enough to satisfy your curiosity.*



## THE "ARWEN" ISSUE

I would like to take the time to thank you all for the wonderful magazines you produce. I look forward to every new issue with great anticipation! I was especially excited to read the interview with Liv Tyler on playing Arwen. Though there are many fans who are angry with Peter Jackson's decision to give Arwen a more active role, I thought it enhanced the depth of her character and the Aragorn-Arwen dilemma they face throughout the trilogy. I look forward to reading more interviews with other cast members who portrayed elves, such as Hugo Weaving and Orlando Bloom.

Steph Ophoff  
Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA





bears, and the heart of the character is finally revealed on film. No wonder Peter Jackson was reluctant to cut this scene. Then, when the pair of lovers is in Rivendell and Arwen again promises her immortality to Aragorn, the scene seems less abrupt. You know that for Viggo's character, Arwen's offer of sacrifice is a source of pain as well as joy.

Of course, all the characters benefit from the additions in this special edition. I think *The Fellowship of the Ring* is now stronger because of the new, more human touches. But Viggo's Aragorn now lives for me on screen in a way he did not before, and I am grateful that Peter Jackson took the time to let us see what he saw in the character. It is a most powerful vision.

Debra Mauldin  
Denison, Texas, USA

## MIND-BLOWING YEAR

What a mind-blowing year 2002 has been so far! Before seeing *The Fellowship of the Ring* for the first time on 3 January 2002, I knew relatively little about the world of J.R.R. Tolkien, apart from having read *The Hobbit* years before.

How things have changed! The moment I saw and fell in love with everything to do with *The Fellowship of the Ring*, I had to know everything I possibly could about this new vista. Since then, as well as seeing the film another nine times, I have read *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Silmarillion*, and am half-way through *Unfinished Tales*. Also, as a primary school teacher, I chose to read *The Hobbit* to my class (who became just as avid fans as I was by the end!) and picked *In Dreams* as one of my choir pieces in the annual music concert! Of course, to top it all, I became a member of this fantastic fan club. All in all, Middle-earth has been brought to life in a way I never thought possible, and it really has changed my life! I just can't get enough of it!

Thanks again to everyone concerned for making this fan club the best ever!

Nichola Gray  
Nr. Sheffield, England

## BLOOM FAN

I would enjoy it if you did an interview with Orlando Bloom in one of your upcoming issues. Legolas is my favorite character from *The Lord of the Rings*. But still, your magazine is a lot better than *Teen People* or something. Your magazine rocks!

Emily Stiver  
North Olmstead, Ohio, USA

Emily, we're preparing an interview with Orlando Bloom now. Send in your interview questions for Orlando Bloom or any other cast and crew members we have not yet featured in the magazine, and we will consider them for inclusion in our interviews. You can email your questions to: [interviews@lotrfanclub.com](mailto:interviews@lotrfanclub.com), or send them to Attn: Mailbaggins, c/o Decipher Inc., P.O. Box 56, Norfolk, VA 23501, USA. ✍

We're eager to hear your feedback, so please write to us via email at [editor@lotrfanclub.com](mailto:editor@lotrfanclub.com) or by regular mail at *The Lord of the Rings Fan Club Official Movie Magazine*, Attn. MailBaggins, c/o Decipher, Inc., PO Box 56, Norfolk, VA 23501, USA. We will assume that we can publish your letter in the magazine, along with your full name, hometown, state, and country, unless you state otherwise. Letters may be edited for the sake of brevity and clarity. We look forward to hearing from you!



# News

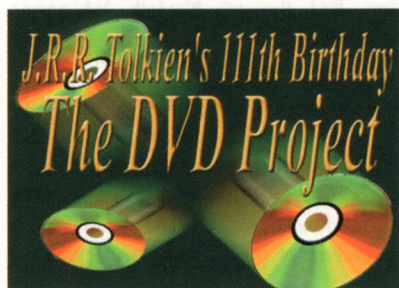
FROM MIDDLE-EARTH

## Marking "Eleventy-One"

January 3, 2003 marked the "eleventy-first" birthday of J.R.R. Tolkien, the author who started it all, and Fan Club member Josh Rubinstein helped the Tolkien Society coordinate one of the biggest and most organized tributes, complete with an online birthday party information hub. Fans from all over the globe registered their local parties, DVD showings, and theaters that were offering group or discount rates for showings of *The Two Towers*. Central to the site was a registration list of all who would join in the worldwide toast on January 3. Glasses were lifted at 9PM on that memorable Friday in nearly every time zone.

Rubinstein is also organizing a commemorative documentary DVD with fellow partiers to bring together footage of the assorted parties and make an enduring record of the events. To submit footage or find information on the project, visit [tolkiensociety.org](http://tolkiensociety.org).

~ Stephen Blackmon



elijah wood hams it up at the new york premiere

PHOTO BY GREGORY PACE/CORBIS SYGMA

## A Towering Good Time

BY STEPHEN BLACKMON

*The Two Towers*, the long-awaited second installment in *The Lord of the Rings* film trilogy, premiered to a standing ovation in the Ziegfeld Theater in New York City on December 5, 2002. Cast, crew, fans, and reporters braved snow and ice to see the early showing of the critically acclaimed film.

Director Peter Jackson, Weta Workshop Director Richard Taylor, Screenwriter Philippa Boyens, and Supervising Art Director Dan Hennah were all on hand at the Ziegfeld as their labor of love was unveiled. Many cast members were also in attendance, including familiar faces Elijah Wood (Frodo), Dominic Monaghan (Merry),



"THERE'S AN INCREDIBLE MESSAGE IN THIS MOVIE  
... nature is being threatened and  
nature actually fights back."

[ELIJAH WOOD]

Billy Boyd (Pippin), Sean Astin (Sam), Liv Tyler (Arwen), John Rhys-Davies (Gimli), and Orlando Bloom (Legolas), as well as *The Two Towers* newcomers Andy Serkis (Gollum), Brad Dourif (Wormtongue), Miranda Otto (Éowyn), Bernard Hill (Théoden), and Karl Urban (Éomer).

Excited premiere-goers were in for a few surprises as *The Two Towers* unfolded. Before the show, Jackson told the audience that among the three films in the trilogy, this one strayed farthest from the beloved books. Several changes in the characters and storyline would be clearly evident in the picture.

The film continued the stories of the fractured Fellowship. Frodo (Elijah Wood) and Sam Gamgee (Sean Astin)

hold their course into Mordor with the schizophrenic Gollum (Andy Serkis) as their guide. Merry and Pippin are taken by the Isengard Uruk-hai to the borders of Fangorn Forest, where they meet the ancient Treebeard and play their own part in the War of the Ring. And Aragorn (Viggo Mortensen), Legolas, and Gimli pursue the troop that has taken Merry and Pippin—until an encounter with the Riders of Rohan and the breathtaking White Rider sidetracks them into the beautifully filmed Battle of Helm's Deep. All of the stories continue in glorious Peter Jackson fashion, building to a powerful and poignant climax.

The director and actors said they were pleased that this film displays

## MR. SMITH GOES TO THE PREMIERE

*Ever wonder what it would be like to attend a big movie premiere? Fan Club Charter Member Ian Smith, a frequent contributor to the magazine, got a once-in-lifetime invitation to attend the London premiere from friend Brian Sibley, author of the behind-the-scenes books about The Lord of the Rings film trilogy. Here is his report:*

Somewhat surprisingly, the first thing that registered as I stepped past the police-guarded walkway entrance to the cinema was *not* the screams of the assembled 3,000 to 4,000 fans, crying out in recognition as film stars, soap actors, and TV media figures arrived. It was the palpable sense of excitement in the air.

Once past the barriers and excited fans, we made our way to the cinema foyer, where a barrage of press photographers and camera crews were waiting to interview various celebrities as they arrived. Those interviews, along with scenes of guests arriving, were transmitted live to the cinema screen, and it was clear that the celebrities being interviewed were just as excited as the rest of us. Cast and crew tried their best to shake hands, pose for photos, and sign every little scrap of paper the fans were holding out, despite the bitter cold.

Just before the film screening, Peter Jackson introduced a host of cast and



ORLANDO BLOOM  
AND LIV TYLER AT  
THE NEW YORK  
PREMIERE



crew, and all of them hugged him as they came on stage, with Sean Astin expressing the feeling of many audience members by doing a "We are not worthy" bow to everyone's favorite director. John Rhys-Davies won my admiration when he announced that he would not be staying to watch the film, as he wanted to go back out to sign things for the thousands of fans congregated outside.

Leaving the cinema with so many celebrities milling around me was a rather surreal experience. Ahead of me were Cate Blanchett and film actor Richard E. Grant. Peter Jackson joined us at the front door of the nightclub hosting the post-premiere party, having undertaken even more signing duties and cheery waves on the short walk between cinema and party venue. Inside, celebrities had two reserved areas, but John Rhys-Davies and Charles Dance (*The Jewel in the Crown*) sat at one small table near the bar with everyone else, seemingly happy to sign even more books and bits of paper for the fans. Bernard Hill, too, mixed with regular partygoers, while the hobbits in attendance (Astin, Billy Boyd, and Dominic Monaghan) kept popping their heads out of their curtained-off areas for signings and photo opportunities, clearly having just as much fun as the rest of us.

Thanks to Brian Sibley, I was able to enter the reserved area on the first floor of the venue, where the wonderful Jan Blenkin (Peter Jackson's personal assistant) took me under her wing and introduced me to one person after another, including Producer Barrie Osborne and Executive Producer Mark Ordesky, who both thanked me for my support when things should clearly have been the other way 'round! Sean Astin was having a whale of a time and took the time to put me at my star-struck ease by laughing at my embarrassment and my attempt to move on right after introductions had been made (so as not to waste his valuable time). "Sean—Ian, Ian—Sean. That's a great conversation. Got a real



the two towers newcomer KARL URBAN at the LONDON PREMIERE

PHOTO BY FÉDÉRIC SHAMIM / CORBIS SYGMA

"IT WAS THE MOST AMAZING THING I'VE EVER EXPERIENCED. OF THE PASSION... I thought the barriers were

more of the relationship aspects of the story and its deeper messages. "There's an incredible message in this movie [about] how nature is being threatened and nature actually fights back," Elijah Wood told the BBC. "This movie is quite multi-layered, so I think people will take various things from it."

After the film screening, the celebration moved to the New York City Public Library. Guests entered the massive foyer to find a dramatic life-size statue of the White Rider—the Fellowship's newly resurrected leader Gandalf. Elves then ushered the privileged guests through marble halls lined with Elvish and Gondorian armor. Guests were treated to a first-class meal and first-class fellowship with the cast and crew.

The after-party went well into the night, as guests discussed the trilogy, most proclaiming *The Two Towers* to be even better than *The Fellowship of the Ring*.

## PARIS

The New York event was just the beginning of the premiere festivities:



PARIS WELCOMES PETER JACKSON

PHOTO BY TONY BARSON / WIREIMAGE.COM

On December 10, Paris welcomed *The Two Towers*, with 2,700 fans coming together to see the film at Le Grand Rex theater. Monaghan, Boyd, and Dourif were among the many cast members spotted in the City of Light on *The Two Towers*' big night.





It was a little frightening, ACTUALLY, SOME going to topple over." [SEAN ASTIN]

## LONDON

The very next night, the spotlight shifted to London, with more than 4,000 fans packing Leicester Square as Hill, Urban, Otto, Serkis, and other cast members walked the carpet into the Odeon Theater alongside the lucky fans who had snared tickets. The near-freezing temperatures couldn't quell the excitement of the fans in J.R.R. Tolkien's homeland, as the stars received their loudest *Two Towers* welcome to date.

"It was the most amazing thing I've ever experienced," Sean Astin told one reporter. "It was a little frightening, actually, some of the passion ... I thought the barriers were going to topple over; it was really wonderful."

Both Liv Tyler (Arwen) and Cate Blanchett (Galadriel) were received with thunderous cheers and applause. "That's the most people I've ever heard screaming my name in my life—I can't take it all in!" Tyler told the BBC.

"It's a surreal dream," Blanchett added. "It's an historic film, and it's never going to happen like this again. I

think Peter Jackson is a genius."

The genius himself entered to shouts of "Peter, Peter!" from the ecstatic crowd. He also stopped to chat with fans, take pictures, and sign autographs.

Fans were also grateful and excited to see John Rhys-Davies (Gimli) take some extra time to talk with the crowd, sign autographs, and take pictures. The seasoned actor spent nearly the entire night talking with fans, even though he had not fully recovered from his recent injuries on the set of *La Femme Musketier*.

The London premiere party was held at The Empire, an upscale banquet hall nearby. Guests partied, gambled (in a private casino), and spoke with the director, cast, and crew after the meal.

The final—and perhaps most sentimental—premiere took place in New Zealand, home base for *The Lord of the Rings* production. Filmmakers, cast, crew, and hometown boosters enjoyed a festive celebration in Wellington. 🍷

ring to it," he repeated several times throughout the evening as we kept bumping into each other. He was a lovely, warm man. Howard Shore and Peter Jackson both looked exhausted after more than a week of premiere-hopping across the globe, but managed to smile greetings and shake hands.

Perhaps the highlight of the evening for me, though, was sitting next to a very tired Liv Tyler, who was not at all "starry" in the way I thought she'd be. We somehow got onto the subject of music ("There's no point in doing music unless I can write my own stuff, and I'm just not good enough yet") and the Fan Club magazine ("It's really interesting. I loved the article on Howard Shore and the way they did my interview..."), and I was impressed, yet again, at how lacking in ego and how "down to earth" so many of the cast members are. Art Department Manager Chris Hennah was especially delightful, and Jan Blenkin eloquently summed up my feelings when she said, "We were so lucky to have had so many wonderful people working with Peter on this movie."

Making our way to the reserved area on the ground floor, I had a lovely chat with the drop-dead gorgeous and extremely witty Karl Urban and stunningly beautiful Miranda Otto before speaking to Billy Boyd, who, together with Dominic Monaghan, seemed to be having a fine evening of it, surrounded by a bevy of beautiful "ladeez." I asked Billy to write something insulting in my movie trilogy book, as the warm wishes and thanks were getting rather monotonous. "Ian, How are you!" he wrote, before adding, "Leave me alone. I'm drinking!"

After a splendid meal, champagne, and the most wonderful company in the world, it remained only to grab a goodie bag full of treats and head home. It was Bilbo Baggins who said, "This will be a night to remember," and indeed, it is one I shall certainly never forget! 🍷 ~ Ian Smith



# DecipherCon 2002 Crowns New Champions

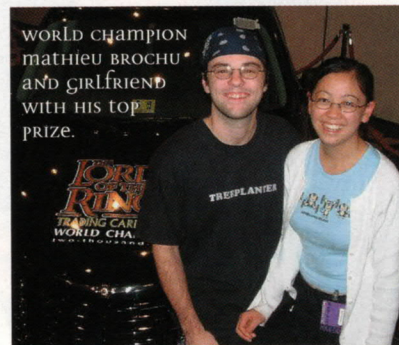
Gamers from 26 countries converged on Chesapeake, Virginia, in fall 2002 to compete in a variety of trading card game (TCG) and roleplaying game (RPG) tournaments at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual DecipherCon.

The convention, held October 30–November 3, featured *The Lord of the Rings* TCG World Championship. Mathieu Brochu of Quebec, Canada,

was named the new *Lord of the Rings* TCG world champion, walking away from the competition with the grand prize Daimler Chrysler PT Cruiser. Decipher's exciting new *Two Towers* set for *The Lord of the Rings* TCG debuted at the convention, and gamers also took part in many exciting *The Lord of the Rings* RPG events.

Sideshow-Weta Collectibles, the

Noble Collection, Del Rey, and United Cutlery teamed up with Decipher—parent company of the Fan Club—to co-sponsor the convention. ☘



## Celebrity Tracks

BY STEPHEN BLACKMON

**LIV TYLER** (Arwen) has just finished shooting *Jersey Girl*, a romance co-starring celebrity-news-central couple Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck. Tyler plays Maya, a video store clerk who has a profound impact on Ollie Trinke—the lead character played by Ben Affleck. Tyler and Affleck worked together previously in Touchstone's *Armageddon* in 1998.

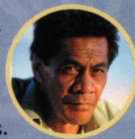


clues to their past and working to help restore the nation.

**MIRANDA OTTO** (Éowyn) finished filming *Doctor Sleep* for Kismet Films and *The Way We Live Now* for the BBC before embarking on *The Two Towers* premiere circuit.



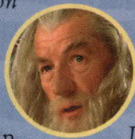
Native Kiwi **NATHANIEL LEES** (Ugluk) will be joining Keanu Reeves, Laurence Fishburne, Carrie-Anne Moss, and fellow *The Lord of the Rings* star Hugo Weaving in both *Matrix* sequels. Lees plays Mifuno in the films, which are coming to theaters in May (*Reloaded*) and November (*Revolutions*).



**BRAD DOURIF** (Worm-tongue) is set to star in *Vlad* alongside fellow *The Lord of the Rings* cast member John Rhys-Davies. The thriller by first-time director Michael D. Sellers was shot in Bucharest and Transylvania, Romania.



**SEAN ASTIN** (Sam Gamgee) has picked up a role in the Showtime science-fiction series *Jeremiah*. The show depicts a post-apocalyptic world in which all adults were killed in a horrific plague known as the black death. Every character on the show is younger than 30 and grew up without parents (as one can imagine, it's not the most well-mannered world). Astin plays a "quirky, colorful" character named Mr. Smith, who travels around with Jeremiah (Luke Perry) and Kurdy (Malcolm Jamal-Warner) looking for



**IAN MCKELLEN** (Gandalf) was the guest of honor on the December 8, 2002 episode of *Inside the Actor's Studio*. Those students and professionals fortunate enough to get tickets tapped the actor's four decades of experience on stage and screen during a candid interview.

**CRAIG PARKER** (Haldir) will be narrating an upcoming TV adaptation of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. This remake of the 1975 cult film starring Tim Curry will be released in early 2003 in conjunction with the original film's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.



In addition to his role in *Vlad*, **JOHN RHYSDAVIES** (Gimli) is playing Presidente Hugo Luis Ramos Coronado in the film *Coronado*, due out in 2003. Rhys-Davies also plays Porthos in *La Femme Musketeeer*, the miniseries based upon the children of the heroes from the famous Alexandre Dumas classic *The Three Musketeers*. Rhys-Davies has recovered well from the serious injuries he sustained on the set of *La Femme Musketeeer*. ☘





the dead  
marshes,  
complete with  
spectral beings  
floating just  
beneath the  
surface



# Toronto Hosts Middle-earth


Toronto became one of the world's most enticing destinations for *The Lord of the Rings* movie fans as the Royal Ontario Museum's former McLaughlin Planetarium hosted an amazing collection of props and memorabilia from *The Two Towers* several weeks before the film debuted.

This world-exclusive "A Journey into Middle-earth," organized by Sideshow-Weta, was met with high praise and record-breaking attendance during a four-week run that began October 31. A similar exhibit featuring props from *The Fellowship of the Ring* was held at nearby Casa Loma last year.

The new exhibit was more interactive than the first, seeking to take fans inside Middle-earth. A dozen members of the Oscar-nominated *The Lord of the Rings* art team, led by husband-and-wife team Dan and Chris Hennah, came to Toronto and constructed the display. Visitors were awed by a walk through Fangorn Forest, seeing the curls and twists of the knotted trees firsthand; by

the opulence of Rivendell; and by the dire parapets of Helm's Deep. The Glittering Caves, the Golden Hall, and the caverns of Isengard were also portrayed.

"It was amazing to stand beside Ngila Dickson's costumes and see the precision and attention to detail that went into the work," says Fan Club member Annemarie Esvelt of Brampton, Ontario, Canada. "Aragorn's cloak

still carried the mud stains from the battle at Helm's Deep! The intricacy of Peter Lyon's swords is incredible." 



saruman's  
THRONE of evil



"aragorn's  
cloak still  
carried the  
mud stains  
from the  
battle at  
helm's deep!"



dank caverns  
of the URUK-HAI

PHOTOS BY MIKE YOUNG





# Ring\*Con 2002

## *A Hit with Fans*

*Contributing writer Ian Smith brings us the rundown on the first European convention created for fans of The Lord of the Rings film trilogy*

Ring\*Con 2002, Europe's first *The Lord of the Rings* film trilogy-themed convention, almost didn't happen. As the November 22-24 convention dates drew near, organizers despaired that they may have to cancel due to lack of support.

But a late rally in signup numbers and the strong lineup of events and speakers culminated in a highly successful maiden voyage for the Bonn, Germany, gathering of *The Lord of the Rings* fans. Ring\*Con's celebrity guests were as enthusiastic as fans were. "I've never experienced anything like this," special guest Cameron Rhodes (Farmer Maggot in *The Lord of the Rings* film trilogy) told Ring\*Con delegates. "It's like a rock concert. It's fantastic!" Rhodes' feeling was shared by many who had traveled from across Europe and even from as far afield as the United States to sample the wide vari-

ety of Middle-earth-themed events and activities—ranging from the serious and academic to the frivolous and comic—offered at Ring\*Con.

Fans enjoyed side shows, live music, partying, auctions, costume contests,

and plenty of other entertainment, but for many, Ring\*Con's special guests were the highlight of the convention. There had been concerns about the convention's "star power" due to *The Lord of the Rings* actor John Rhys-Davies' late cancellation (due to contractual movie commitments) and the relatively scant movie screen time (*The Two Towers* had not yet been released) of the remaining guests—the aforementioned Cameron Rhodes, Mark



CAMERON RHODES AND SARAH MCLEOD check out a fan club magazine





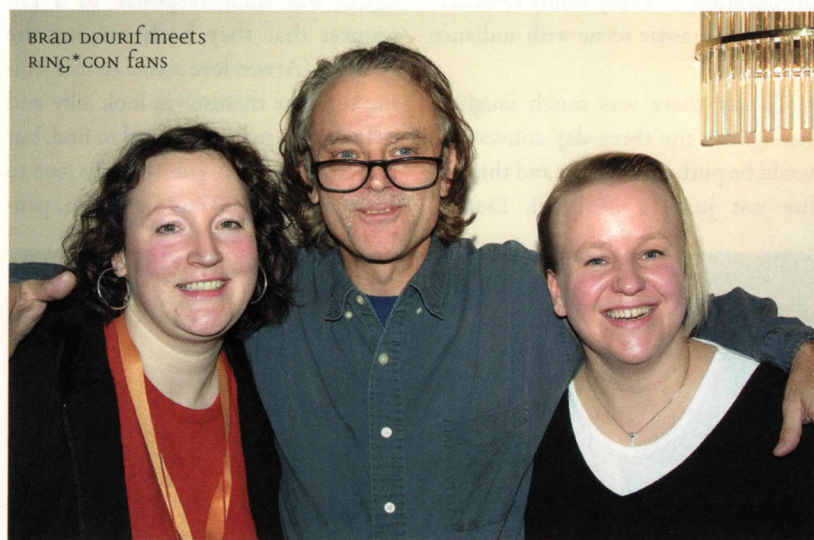
Ferguson (Gil-galad and the Witch-king), Sarah McLeod (Rosie Cotton), Craig Parker (Haldir), and Brad Dourif (Grima Wormtongue). Those worries evaporated with the appearance of Ring\*Con's first celebrity guest: Mark Ferguson strode onto the stage with his personal video camera in hand, filming the audience and exhorting them to smile and wave. Ferguson had the crowd spellbound for an hour with a Q&A session that was at times informative but mostly just plain laugh-out-loud funny. Ferguson, who had spent many days on set (much of his "prologue" material was cut but may appear on a future DVD), recalled "blacking out the first time I was thrown around a Wellington car park by a crane for three days while being simultaneously throttled by a large metal hand," not to mention general blood, sweat, and tears tales suffered through by the crew in particular during more than 300 days of shooting. No matter what the question ("Are elves and hobbits real?"), the actor had a witty retort or comedy routine.

Sarah McLeod was the second actor to charm the Ring\*Con audience, coping magnificently with far too many "closed" questions that could elicit only a "Yes" or "No" answer. She spoke enthusiastically and passionately about her time on set, particularly the long periods rehearsing the party scene, and about dancing with Sean Astin (Sam), who is apparently not as sure-footed as some might think!

The opening ceremony not only maintained the entertaining tone set by Ferguson and McLeod, but managed to surpass it. At the appointed hour, the lights went out and soon, a sense of trepidation filled the auditorium as sinister music began piping through the main speakers. Suddenly, one could discern eight dark shapes wielding long, lethal blades that glinted in the half-light. The shapes slunk through the terrified audience and onto the main stage, which housed an impressive recreation of the trilogy's Weathertop set. With fog pour-

easily have come off as amateurish but was well-rehearsed and professional.

Brad Dourif (Grima Wormtongue) followed the main opening ceremony with the first of two Q&A panels that enthralled those of us who have followed this fine actor's work ever since his Oscar-nominated performance as Billy Bibbit in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. Dourif shared several *Lord of the Rings* filming anecdotes and told the audience about the experience of collaborating with Philippa Boyens (screenwriter) and Fran Walsh (screenwriter and sometime director) on his



ing from every stage orifice, a blinding spotlight revealed something very large and sinister emerging from the fog; as eight Black Riders bowed, it soon became clear that Sauron himself was making an appearance, and the crowd went wild. The dramatization could

role. He talked of struggling with the English accent—which he found to be the most difficult part of playing the role—recounted several anecdotes about Christopher Lee and the rest of the cast, and claimed girlfriend problems stemming from having his eye-



brows shaved off every time an unexpected shoot was scheduled! Dourif went into detail about his role in *The Two Towers* and how he saw Grima ("He has a basic weakness—that he can't belong! Saruman really uses that. Grima's the only human who turns"), before going on to explain how he suggested a light rasp for the character over breakfast with Peter Jackson. He found Walsh to be one of the toughest directors he'd ever worked for, Dourif said, but said she'd also gotten some of his best performances ever as a result. He also talked about actors he has worked with, singling out Miranda Otto (Éowyn) as "one of the best—she's very strong."

Cameron Rhodes impressed everyone with a well-prepared show reel demonstrating his versatility (he's a TV actor and theatrical director, too), as well as live performances that included a spell-binding reading of the Farmer Maggot scene from the book, performance of an aria, and, perhaps most popular of all—in reaction to a fan "question"—a very funny re-enactment of his movie scene with audience volunteers.

To say there was much laughter throughout the three-day convention would be putting it mildly, and this was due not just to McLeod, Dourif,



SAURON STARS AT THE  
OPENING CEREMONY

Rhodes, and Lee, but to the incorrigible double-act of Parker and Ferguson. Individually, the actors were funny, but put them together for a panel, and the pair will have audiences laughing so hard it hurts! The duo did a merciless sendup of the movies, each other, and several fellow cast members, too. One of many "You had to be there..." highlights was their response to a fan request that they both act out the Aragorn/Arwen love scene. Actors willing to make themselves look silly and take risks in public are hard to find, but the New Zealand guests really rose to the challenge at Ring\*Con 2002, pro-

viding one "classic moment" after another. With a seemingly endless series of hilarious ad-libs and jokes, they earned the numerous standing ovations they received.

Ring\*Con wasn't perfect, of course. The lack of translations for German schedule changes was one problem for international attendees, and the talks being given in "German only" was another. But the organizers are already working on improving next year's convention for international attendees. With the German media out in full force on the opening day, helping to give the event tremendous local coverage, it was no surprise to hear a rumor circulating on the last day of the convention that New Line Cinema's parent company, Warner Bros., was considering licensing the convention. Because New Line Cinema was not officially involved in the 2002 convention, the organizers struggled a little to get the "big-name" guests they wanted. If the rumors are true, the second Ring\*Con should be even better than the first. Miss Ring\*Con 2003 at your peril! 🍷

Ian Smith is a charter member of the Fan Club from London. For more on Ring\*Con 2003—set for November 14-16 in Bonn—go to [www.ringcon.de](http://www.ringcon.de).



CRAIG PARKER  
(left) CLOWNS  
WITH MARK  
FERGUSON



# Product Update

## HARPER COLLINS

Harper Collins launched its series of four tie-in books for *The Two Towers* movie on November 6, 2002, at Waterstone's prestigious showcase store in London's Piccadilly Circus.

With all six floors of the store given over to *The Lord of the Rings* festivities, casual book purchasers in the store must have wondered what on Middle-earth was going on! Even the store staff got in on the act, dressing up as assorted elves, knights, and wizards.

The main highlight of the launch day was a series of author signings and two talks given by authors Brian Sibley (*The Making of the Movie Trilogy*) and Jude Fisher (*The Two Towers Visual Companion*). Sibley and Fisher kept the crowd thoroughly entertained with stories about the cast, the movie trickery that brought Middle-earth to life, and their respective trips to New Zealand, where the movies were filmed. The highlight for many, though, was the pair's introduction of a special surprise guest—Andy Serkis, who gave voice

and movement to Gollum, the critically praised computer-generated character featured in *The Two Towers*.

Serkis shared many anecdotes about the film shoot, revealing that the secret to his performance had been seeing one of his three cats coughing up a fur ball! Proving he didn't actually need CGI effects to enhance his performance in real life, the British actor terrified the kids (and a few of the adults, too!) when he demonstrated his Gollum voice with an unexpected "We wantssss it, my preciousssss..." It was as if a sudden chill had entered the crowded, warm book store!

Book purchasers were rewarded with signed copies and a wonderful Alan Lee lithograph of the scene depicted on the first movie posters for *The Two Towers*. The event gave Fan Club members from around the United Kingdom a great excuse to congregate, talk about the second movie, and see the new books providing fans with more details and insights about the amazing trilogy. ~ Ian Smith



FISHER, SERKIS,  
AND SIBLEY

## NECA

NECA released its newest snow globes and candle votives just before the premiere of *The Two Towers*. The new set includes a 7-inch limited-edition Argonath globe and a new



globe featuring a scene depicting Frodo and Sam's encounter with Gollum. The votive candle-holders include a sculpted 9-inch Witch-king and glowing 4-inch and 10-inch Balrogs. A NECA lunch box

is also available showing the battle scene from the prologue of *The Fellowship of the Ring*.



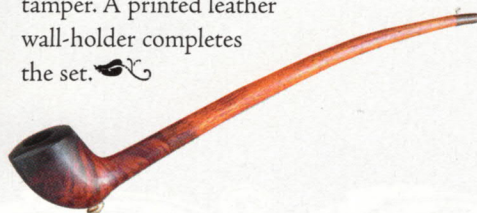
## VAUEN GMBH

On the opening day of *The Two Towers*, Vauen GmbH released an exquisite briar-and-beech-



wood Aragorn pipe to accompany its Bilbo

pipe and brass *The Lord of the Rings* tamper. A printed leather wall-holder completes the set.

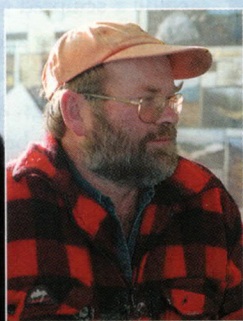




UNSUNG HEROES

# Brian Massey

## Greensmaster



*Brian Massey undertook a landscape architect's dream job  
and lived a gardener's fantasy when he joined  
The Lord of the Rings crew as greensmaster.*



BY JASON FRY,  
WITH REPORTING BY  
DAN MADSEN









MANY OF THE TREES

AREN'T REAL AT ALL.

As in nature,  
they're built from  
the ground up ...

WITH PLASTER OR

MOLDED RUBBER.

When Mother Nature sets out to create a landscape, she has untold centuries and any number of slow processes at her disposal. But it's not so for a film crew, which has to achieve a natural look in a considerably shorter period of time—and often with decidedly unnatural materials.

Just ask Brian Massey, greensmaster for the three *Lord of the Rings* movies.

"It is best to have a varied background," Massey says. "You need to have a knowledge of plants and trees, but also—because the construction of trees is quite heavy work—it's actually quite handy to have engineering and a logistical background."

The greens department takes its cue from the art director and the set designer. For a given setting, whether it will take shape outdoors or indoors on a studio set, the starting point is a set of plans and conceptual artwork by *The*

*Lord of the Rings* Conceptual Artist Alan Lee. The former gives the department a blueprint of the area, showing how features such as rocks, trees, and even streams are to be positioned; the latter tells the department what the scene is supposed to feel like.

"So we have the plan of how it's supposed to be laid out, we have an Alan Lee drawing of what it's supposed to look and feel like, and then it's left to us to create it," Massey says.

The beginning isn't unlike an ambitious landscaping project at someone's house. The "ground forms" that create the topography are laid out, typically with sandbags or plywood. Sod is put down if needed. Next come the trees, followed finally by the finishing touches—mosses and the like.

That's the basic plan, though it can be tweaked in any number of ways to create the look and feel of a given setting. One common task for the greens



department in recreating Middle-earth, though, is building trees. That's right—many of the trees in *The Lord of the Rings* movies aren't real at all. As in nature, they're built from the ground up—first come the roots, and then the trunk, a big steel armature overlaid with plaster or molded rubber. Next, the branches are constructed and hung on that steel armature. Then come the leaves. And then, finally, the dressing—the adding of mosses and bits and pieces that Massey calls “the fun part.”

“There's very little that's real on [a typical tree],” Massey says. “Most of the time, the foliage is artificial as well.”

But not everything is fake. “There are some real components, because we can't build them,” he says. “We usually use ‘found’ driftwood for the roots of the tree, and we also use real branches—just the bits that go from about 50 millimeters diameter to where the artificial leaves get wired on.”

If that sounds like a tough job, it is—particularly given the size of many of the trees in *The Lord of the Rings*. Lugging tons of dirt and hauling steel tree trunks around is physically very tough, Massey says, and the need for safety also demands a very high level of concentration. “We may have built and hung more than 400 branches over the last couple of years,” he says, “and you can't afford to have one branch fail or fall down; any one of them could take out a crew member. It doesn't matter what you've done for the last two years—if something like that happens, then that's the only thing that would count, really.”

But if most of the trees are fake, the same isn't true of the grass.

“If we use artificial grass, it tends to look very manicured,” Massey says. “It's the sort of thing you may not consciously realize on a movie, but subconsciously, you'll often think something's not quite right, even though you don't know what it is. It can be the difference between something artificial and something real that gives you that feeling.”

The most challenging set, in Massey's mind, was Hobbiton, which “was to look like it had been lived in for centuries,” he says. It's very easy, Massey explains, to make a “very tight” set that







looks very manicured, but “a wilderness-type area and a slow, slightly bedraggled, and really lived-in look is actually quite difficult to create.”

The secret of getting that look for Hobbiton? Time. “We had 12 months to make it look like it’d been there for a long, long time,” he recalls. The first step, which Massey says took three months or so, was to do all the landscaping needed to make a section of a private New Zealand farm support Hobbiton’s cottages and hobbit holes. After that, a lot of plants that had been growing in pots were laid down, followed by creepers, vines, grass, and the other foliage needed for a realistic look.

Because the farm that became Hobbiton was about a seven-hour drive from the studio, Massey and an interdepartmental team of about 70 people “basically lived up there for nine months.”

“All of us just kept building and looking after everything to make sure [the plants] were all growing,” he says. “There were things that you can’t just do overnight on a new set—of course, little bits of grass aren’t growing in the corners, aren’t growing in the cracks in the

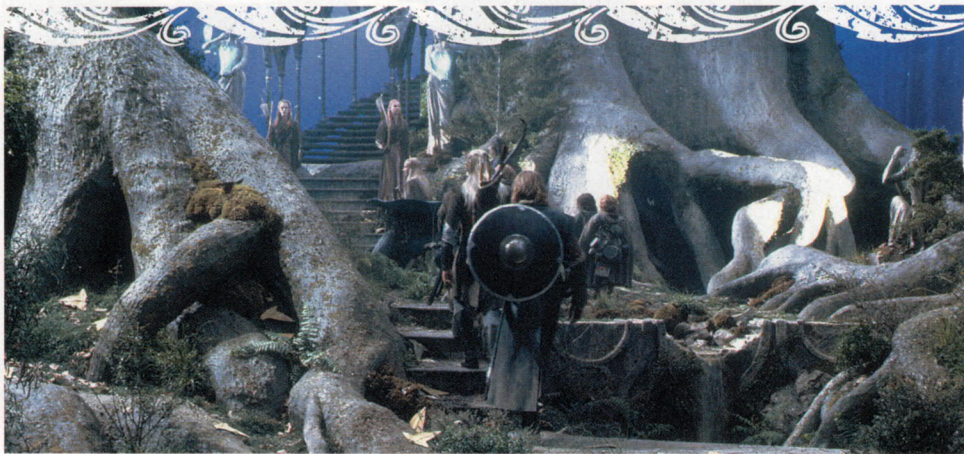
concrete. But if you’ve got time to seed it all, you can just let it [happen] naturally.”

In the summer of 2002, Massey says, he found himself on the Hobbiton farm on business and went to have a look at how much of the set remained. While the buildings had been removed, he says the outlines of the halfling village remained. “You can orient yourself very easily,” he says, adding that “all the tracks are still there that Gandalf drug up with his cart, and you can see where Bag End is—even the big stone steps that we put under Bag End are still there. With the grass growing up in between them, the sheep are running over it, but it’s there.”

On other outdoor sets, Massey and his team could start where nature left

off. For Rivendell, Massey says, “we used a lot of the existing trees, and then we built what we wanted—extra trees—and put in streams and waterfalls. And then we changed the shape of the ground where we wanted to.” Because Rivendell was shot on public land, Massey notes that the many natural plants displaced by the set had to be removed and put in nurseries.

“The thing about Rivendell is that by definition [the line between nature and] what man built is very blurred,” Massey says. “One should be merging with the other. So the set was really a challenge: Once the sets or the buildings were there, we had to wind our trees and vines around them; it was hard to distinguish one from the other.”





"IT DIDN'T MATTER IF IT WAS  
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shoveling dirt.  
EVERYONE SEEMED TO WANT  
TO DO the very best  
they could."



The third kind of set is one built wholly in the studio—*The Two Towers'* Fangorn Forest, for instance. Fangorn, Massey says, is the set that required the most time and effort from his department. The edge of Fangorn Forest was shot in a big studio on the wharf in Wellington. To get the size and the land form desired, Massey's crew had to truck in 3,000 tons of earth. Fangorn's trees were then built in place—they were too big to transport—and the branches made separately and then trucked in.

Fangorn's trees had to look quite different from the others in Middle-earth, as one would expect for the eldritch home of the mysterious Treebeard. For one thing, Massey says, "the trees almost take on human aspects, and that's a big break, really, to make artificial trees look like that."

Fangorn's trees posed a challenge for Massey and crew not just individually, but also collectively. "Not only does each tree have to be built, but also the trees are very close together, and they intertwine with each other," Massey says. "Hobbiton took a lot longer because it was a huge area, but you tended to be able to do it with big strokes. We used big machinery, and we had lots of room; Fangorn Forest, by its nature, is very contorted and interwoven, which is quite difficult to do."

Having worked both inside and out, Massey says working outdoors on location is more difficult, but notes that outside, "you actually have something

to begin with, which you are then adapting to what you want it to do. ... When you start in a studio, which is basically a concrete shell, you have to create everything. It's certainly easier in a studio, because you don't have to battle the elements, but your best sets are the ones you actually build outside and enhance what is already there."

Of course, the greens department doesn't work in a vacuum. On a complex set—a rocky valley, for instance—the construction department would arrive first, laying down the framework of the topography, then handing off to the sculpting department, whose duties included molding rocks and putting them in place. Then Massey's department came in to assemble landforms and add grass, plants, and trees. The department often had a fairly free hand in such detail work, though it was always done with Alan Lee's conceptual art in mind and in consultation with the supervising art director, Dan Hennah. (Massey had worked with Hennah and production designer Grant Major on a number of projects; he says he got the call on *The Lord of the Rings* through "word of mouth, really.")

As a set took shape, Hennah would shoot video footage to show to Peter Jackson. The director offered feedback on the work in progress and generally came in the day before shooting for a last check and to request any changes.

"Video cameras are used mainly so that Peter can keep an eye on how it's

going and see if it feels the way he wants it to feel," Massey says.

In looking back at more than three years of work, Massey says two things stand out for him.

The first thing, he says, is the spirit that seemed to motivate all those connected with the movie. "[That] is required more than money and contracts," he says. "[*The Lord of the Rings*] seemed to be a project that inspired everyone to give it everything they could. It didn't matter if it was the head of a department or someone who was shoveling dirt. Everyone, for whatever reason, seemed to want to do the very best they could."

And the second memory that will linger with Massey? "How much you can learn in three years," he says. "I know that we could make some of the sets we started with in a quarter of the time now and probably do a better job as well—and that's huge! Because it's so concentrated, you make progress very quickly."

When his work on *The Lord of the Rings* was finally over, Massey planned to go back to the quieter things that he already pursues between movies—such as tree surgery and running a small nursery.

"I used to do that 90 percent [of the time], and every now and again, I'd do some film or TV work," Massey says. "But I've basically been [working on these films] full-time for the past three and a half years. I'd like to ... just let the dust settle for a while. Back to the quiet life." 🐉



*For the past several issues, Peter Jackson has been kind enough to share exciting details—and behind-the-scenes stories—about the second installment in The Lord of the Rings film trilogy. With fans' year-long wait for The Two Towers over at last, we thought it was appropriate to shift gears for this issue's update and ask the director to share some of his thoughts about the film project as a whole—and to answer more of your questions! ■ BY DAN MADSEN*





INTERVIEW | DIRECTOR

U P D A T E

*with*

P E T E R

ackson





**DO YOU REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME YOU READ *The Lord of the Rings*?**

Yes, I remember it very well because it was on a long train ride in New Zealand; I started it then and finished it up afterward. I had gotten an apprenticeship as a photo engraver after I left school, and I had to go to a sort of training school as part of my apprenticeship. It was a 12-week course, and I had to get on a train and go to Auckland, which is a 12-hour journey. I had bought *The Lord of the Rings* in paperback—it was the edition that had an image from the Ralph Bakshi film on the cover. I was about 17 years old. I remember it had the image from the film of the Black Riders on a road above Bree. I've still got that book.

**LITTLE DID YOU KNOW HOW INVOLVED YOU WOULD BECOME WITH THAT STORY!**

You are right. I would never, never have dreamt that I would be doing a film version of it. I still find it very weird to wander into bookshops. I walk past a big J.R.R. Tolkien display, and I see *The Lord of the Rings* books with photos from the films on the cover.

That's when it hits you ... it gives you a jolt because you are not thinking about the movie, in particular. You are just wandering innocently into a bookstore, and you see these familiar images of these people you know that are plastered all over the covers of *The Lord of the Rings* books. That's kind of weird.

**FAN CLUB MEMBER DAVID NIKLAS JONSSON FROM HELSINBORG, SWEDEN, ASKS: IF YOU HAD THE CHANCE TO SPEND JUST FIVE MINUTES WITH J.R.R. TOLKIEN AND HAD THE HONOR OF ASKING HIM ONE QUESTION, WHAT WOULD IT BE?**

If I could meet J.R.R. Tolkien, I would ask him if he wanted to see a film! I've got one on DVD he might be interested in!

**DO YOU THINK HE WOULD LIKE THE MOVIE?**

I hope that he would like the film. One of the touching things that happened after the London premiere of *The Fellowship of the Ring* was that one of the members of the Tolkien family came up and told me that her uncle "would be very, very happy." That was nice; it was

very simple. I don't even know her name—she was an elderly lady who had come to the premiere—but I think she was a niece of Tolkien. She didn't say anything else—she just turned and walked away. But she wanted to pass that sentiment along to me, which was very nice, and I appreciated it.

**EMILY EGGEN OF BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS, ASKS: WHO WAS YOUR FAVORITE CHARACTER THE FIRST TIME YOU READ THE TRILOGY AND WHY? WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE LANDSCAPE OF MIDDLE-EARTH?**

That's a very good question. I would think that it certainly would be Frodo. In the books, Aragorn has always been a relatively enigmatic and mysterious character, [but] Frodo was definitely the person I related to. It might be because you are going on the journey with Frodo. He would be the character that I would associate with the most. That's true of the film itself as well. I certainly feel closer to Frodo and understand that character more than I do the rest of the characters in the film.

As for my favorite landscape, I would have to answer that question in the context of the movies. My sense of landscapes is so defined now by these films that I can't remember my initial impressions of the book. My favorite landscape, which you will see in *The Two Towers*, is the plains of Rohan. In New Zealand, we didn't really have the plains of Rohan, as described in the book. I seem to remember that in the book, they are very flat and featureless and endless. They are very much like prairie land or grassland that stretches as far as the eye can see. In New Zealand, we don't really have that huge expanse of flat and featureless landscape, but what we do have is a place called Central Otago, which is in the middle of the South Island; a lot of gold mining took place there in the 1860s and 1870s. It is very much a rugged "Wild West" kind of place.







“[Poolburn Lakes] is a very remarkable landscape. ... You could turn the camera any direction—there were no telephone poles, no roads, no fences—and see incredible, open, untamed land for miles and miles.”

Then we found this amazing area, a place called Poolburn Lakes, and we thought it would be amazing for Rohan. It is slightly hillier than J.R.R. Tolkien's description, and it has these amazing jagged rocks that are sticking out of the tops of the hills and the ridges, but it is still expansive and stretches as far as the eye can see. It is a very remarkable landscape. I have always loved the time that we spent there shooting. I loved being there; it was just a wonderful place to work and shoot scenes. You could turn the camera any direction—there were no tele-

phone poles, no roads, no fences—and see incredible, open, untamed land for miles and miles.

**JESSICA PERNG OF FORT LEE, NEW JERSEY, ASKS: OUT OF THE FOUR HOBBITS IN THE FELLOWSHIP, WHICH ONE DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH MOST?**

Of the four in the Fellowship, I would say Frodo, although of all the characters in the trilogy, I probably identify the most with Bilbo; he is the closest to me in personality. I always found it hard in the books to have a strong mental image of characters like

Merry and Pippin. I think Billy and Dom are doing amazing work on the film, bringing them to life and defining them to some degree, but I always found it difficult to strongly imagine those characters. Sam is much, much easier. In a way, he is the easiest character to imagine because he is so well defined in the books, and he speaks with a voice that everybody has heard before and can understand. I sort of identify with Frodo, to some degree, because of the making of the movies. It certainly felt like we were slogging our way to Mount Doom on numerous





“I sort of identify with Frodo, to some degree, because of the making of the movies. It certainly felt like we were slogging our way to Mount Doom on numerous occasions during the course of making these films ... and it still does!”

occasions during the course of making these films ... and it still does!

LINDSAY WEST FROM INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA, ASKS: WHEN YOU STARTED THIS PROJECT, DID YOU HAVE ANY TROUBLE VISUALIZING THE CHARACTERS OR PLACES THAT ENDED UP IN THE MOVIE? IF SO, DID YOU GO BACK AND RE-READ THE BOOKS TO COME UP WITH A MORE CONCRETE IMAGE?

Frodo was the character that I found the most difficult to visualize; I suspect that everyone who reads the book has his or her own individual image of him. Unlike Sam, who is very clearly defined, Frodo is slightly more of an enigma. You could imag-

ine Frodo in several different ways, and no single way is more right or wrong. In a sense, Frodo was—and certainly is always going to be—defined by the actor who plays him. For that reason, I am absolutely delighted that Elijah came into our world at that time and became Frodo, because, for me, he is perfect. Now, I can't imagine anyone else as Frodo or any other image for Frodo. When I read the book again, I am always going to have Elijah in my mind.

Though it wasn't the most difficult to imagine, Mordor comes to mind as the most difficult place to find locations for. We did ultimately find an amazing location for the landscape of Mordor immediately outside the

black gates—which you won't see until *The Return of the King*—but it was a bit tough.

WHAT OTHER CLASSIC BOOKS WOULD YOU LIKE TO MAKE INTO FILMS?

To tell you the truth, as a filmmaker, I am not really that focused on adapting books. *The Lord of the Rings* is the first time that I have ever done it. The other movies that I have made have all been original screenplays or, in the case of *Heavenly Creatures*, the film was based on an original screenplay that was, in turn, based on a historical event. I have never really been that interested in adapting books; I don't really have other books that I want to make into films. I do have other films



that I would like to make, but I have always been somebody who thinks of original ideas and is not really looking for that sort of material.

**STEVE STONE OF MARKHAM, ILLINOIS, ASKS: BY NOW, WE ALL KNOW THAT THE "THE SCOURING OF THE SHIRE" WON'T BE IN THE FILMS DUE TO THE FACT THAT THERE CAN'T BE A SECOND, LESSER CLIMAX IN THE STORY AFTER THE LARGER EVENTS TAKE PLACE. BUT PLEASE TELL US IF YOU ARE GOING TO USE THE "SAILING AWAY FROM MIDDLE-EARTH" ENDING, WHICH WOULD AGE THE CHARACTERS A YEAR OR TWO FROM THEIR FINAL BATTLES IN THE FILMS AND PROVIDE A MORE FITTING FAREWELL TO SUCH WELL-LOVED CHARACTERS?**

The answer is "yes."

**I KNOW THAT *Star Wars: Episode II* IS GOING TO BE SHOWN IN THE IMAX FORMAT. WOULD YOU EVER LIKE TO SEE *The Lord of the Rings* SHOWN IN IMAX?**

We actually did an IMAX test, but the studio refused to move forward on it for reasons I don't understand. We did it in secret about six months ago. We had three minutes of *The Fellowship of the Ring* and some *The Two Towers* shots converted into an IMAX test. It looked amazing! We all thought it was going to happen. *The Two Towers* was going to be coming out on the same day as the 35-millimeter release—at least it was our intention to have an IMAX movie open on the same day. But, for reasons that they have never told me, New Line didn't want to do it, which I think is an enormous pity because the three minutes of *The Lord of the Rings* footage I saw in IMAX were the most spectacular thing I have ever seen as a filmgoer. It was incredible. We tried, but it didn't work.

**JIM WIMMER OF ROANOKE, VIRGINIA, ASKS: IN HINDSIGHT, IS THERE**

**ANYTHING IN *The Fellowship of the Ring* THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY?**

To some degree. Interestingly, the extended DVD edition addresses some of my problems. We released the three-hour film, but I did feel that the film didn't stop and dwell on characters enough. It had a pace that was reasonably relentless, and it gave you little ability to stop and have quiet moments with the characters and get to know them a little bit better and get to learn more about their background.

Obviously, that is a very distinctive part of the book; J.R.R. Tolkien is perfectly happy to pause and dwell on some aspect of their back-story or on

developing a character, and that is one of the amazing things about the book. In some respects, I would have liked the film to have some level of that detail, but ultimately, we just couldn't. By the time you cut the film together, and it is three and a half hours long, you realize you really have to get it down under three hours. You cut more, and that's exactly the stuff you are chopping out—the slower scenes that develop the characters. I was aware that the film had a relentless kind of pace that wasn't really the Tolkien style. But we have put nearly 35 minutes of that material back into the movie with the extended DVD edition, so if people want to see a film that has more char-







“I wanted to work with people who were nice ... We wanted to put together a team of nice people, as opposed to egotists and drama queens and people who want to attract attention to themselves and cause you problems and grief, and who complain and moan.”

acter development and more of those moments, it is definitely going to be out there and available.

**J.W. BRAUN OF MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN, ASKS: DO YOU THINK YOU’LL EVER WRITE A BOOK ABOUT THE MAKING OF *The Lord of the Rings* MOVIES?**

I would like to because there are a lot of stories that we haven’t told. There are a lot of stories that politically would not be a good idea for us to divulge. We are talking a lot in interviews about casting the film and working with the actors, but the real story of the politics behind the making of the film and the various dramas we have had with the studios—

Miramax, initially, and then New Line—is very interesting. One day, I think it would be fun to tell the truth—*The Lord of the Rings: The Untold Story!* It would be fascinating—not because there are any dirty secrets, but just because the one aspect of filmmaking that I think people don’t understand quite enough is the politics and just



what it takes to get a film like this made. It's not really a subject for the interviews and press that you do when you are releasing the film; there are a lot of interesting tales to be told that would ultimately have to appear in a book.

**MANY PEOPLE HAVE REMARKED ON THE AMAZING GROUP OF PEOPLE YOU BROUGHT TOGETHER AT THE RIGHT TIME TO MAKE THESE FILMS—MANY OF WHOM WERE WORKING ON A FILM FOR THE FIRST TIME. HOW DID YOU GATHER ALL THESE TALENTED PEOPLE IN NEW ZEALAND?**

My answer is going to sound pretty sappy, but I just felt very strongly at the beginning—and this applied to the actors as well—that if we were going to be working with these people for several years, I wanted to work with people who were nice. I know that sounds silly, but we wanted to put together a team of nice people, as opposed to egotists and drama queens and people who want to attract attention to themselves and cause you problems and grief, and who complain and moan. There are some of those people out there, and a lot of them do

actually work in film, unfortunately. It's okay to work with people like that if it is a three- or four-month gig because you can put up with it, and they are usually very good at their jobs, so you get the benefit of that. Knowing that we were going into this for three or four years, we just wanted to work with nice people.

**JACOB WILLIAMS OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA, HAS A QUESTION REGARDING THE ELVES: HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT DECIDING ON THE EYE AND HAIR COLOR FOR THE ELVES? HOW DID YOU DECIDE THAT LEGOLAS WOULD BE BLOND?**

I have always imagined Legolas being blond, and I don't know why. I know there are all sorts of debates about whether he has blond hair or black hair, and I am not even particularly sure of what the ultimate answer is, but my image of him from reading the books was always as a blond elf. I guess a lot of the illustrations that various people have done that painted him as blond would have been an influence as well; I just figured that is what he should be. We just decided that the eye

color should be blue, and that most of the elves that we cast should have blue eyes. The irony of it is that almost all of the actors had brown eyes; Orlando, Liv Tyler, and Hugo Weaving all have brown eyes. They were all wearing contacts. There was just something about blue eyes that felt very Elven, very cold and sort of pure and piercing.

**WILL YOU EVER MAKE ANOTHER FANTASY FILM?**

I would love to. I don't have a fantasy film project lined up, but it would be fun. I love the genre, and I don't see why not. If I can find the right project, the answer would be "yes."

**WHAT IS THE GREATEST COMPLIMENT THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED TO DATE?**

Rather than any singular moment in time, what I have really appreciated and been very, very touched by are people who look upon *The Fellowship of the Ring* with great fondness. There is a difference between seeing a movie and admiring it in some way, or being entertained by it, or just saying, "Yeah, that wasn't a bad film." But there is a difference between that and actually loving the film and becoming incredibly affectionate toward it and feeling like the film is something special—that it is a special experience in your life. There are some people who have told me that *The Fellowship of the Ring* has done that for them, and that they regard it as a movie-going experience unlike any other they have ever had; it has magic and has reminded them of what it was like when they were children seeing a film. I feel incredibly happy about all of those things. If I could dream of any reaction, it would be that—people getting lost in the movie and, for the length of the film, people forgetting that they are in a theater and getting swept away into an imaginary world. That's really the ultimate you can hope for when you are making a film like this. 🍷









# Thwarted Heroine

"Éowyn is still the same character as in the book," director Peter Jackson says. "We haven't changed her personality or her character [in the film]. We have stuck pretty much to the Éowyn that people know from the book."

Australian actress Miranda Otto, charged with embodying Éowyn in the historic *The Lord of the Rings* film trilogy, would have been happy to play Éowyn exactly as she was portrayed in the book, down to the minutest detail. After receiving the coveted role of the White Lady of Rohan, Otto quickly picked up J.R.R. Tolkien's masterpiece and read it from cover to cover. Not only did she love the noble character of King Théoden's niece, but she was enamored of many of her lines in the book—so much so that she asked Jackson to add some of them into the film. The result is a collaboration between director and actress that fully realizes the potential of what is, arguably, the strongest female character in J.R.R. Tolkien's mythical saga.

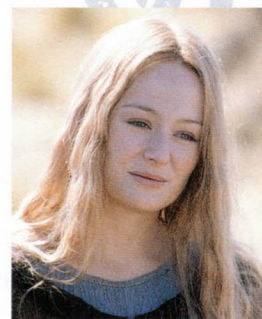
Otto is a pretty strong character herself. Born in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, she is the daughter of famed Australian actor Barry Otto. She graduated from the prestigious NIDA Theatrical School, which boasts such alumni as Mel Gibson and Judy

Davis, and she has been nominated for best actress four times by the Australian Film Institute. For a decade, Otto built a career on stage and screen in Australia, where she is a well-known figure with roles in *The Girl Who Came Late*, *The Well*, *In the Winter Dark*, *Love Serenade*, *Dead Letter Office*, *Doing Time For Patsy Cline*, and *The Last Days of Chez Nous* to name but a few. She has since moved into the international spotlight by being featured in such films as *What Lies Beneath* with Harrison Ford and Michelle Pfeiffer; *The Thin Red Line*; HBO's *Jack Bull* opposite John Cusack; and *Human Nature* alongside Tim Robbins and Patricia Arquette. Recently, Otto finished projects on both sides of the Atlantic. She will be seen in *Julie Walking Home*, *The Three-Legged Fox*, and *Doctor Sleep*—a thriller that also stars Goran Visnjic of the popular U.S. TV series, "ER."

Otto talked with the magazine shortly before the release of *The Two Towers*, discussing her role and the experience of co-starring in what will surely be one of the biggest film projects of all time.

Miranda Otto on playing The Two Towers' passionate, yet frustrated, warrior

■ ■ ■  
BY DAN MADSEN





MIRANDA, WHY DID YOU CHOOSE ACTING AS A PROFESSION? WHAT KEEPS YOU GOING?

My father is an actor, so I have been around acting all of my life. I really drifted into acting in some ways. As a child, I would perform amateur things with my friends—we would make stuff up and put on shows. When we were kids, we saw this movie, *Bugsy Malone*, and we loved it. That was what inspired us, as kids, to act, because that film was kids playing grownups and gangsters. I think that was probably a big moment for us. We thought that that would be really fun to do. When I was a teenager, we would perform things just for our own fun; I was never a professional actor as a child. From there, I got asked to go in on something, and I started working a bit. Then I went to drama school, but, in some ways, I kind of drifted into it. It has always been a part of my life.

HOW WERE YOU CAST FOR THE ROLE OF ÉOWYN?

It was an incredibly painless process compared to lots of auditions, where you have to go back many times. I only auditioned once. They rang me in December of 1999. I had heard about the project when I was in America. I had heard about people going in to audition months and months before, and I had heard general rumblings about it. When I worked with Robert Zemeckis, he knew Peter Jackson really well, and he would talk to me on the set and say, "Do you know Peter Jackson?" And I said, "No, but I know his work." He told me, "Well, he's doing this *Lord of the Rings* thing and is about to start shooting." I kept hearing about it, but, in some strange way, it was in the back of my consciousness so much that somehow I thought I would eventually have something to do with it; it was too weird the way it kept coming up in conversation. I was then asked to audition; I auditioned in Australia around Christmas. I just went in, and



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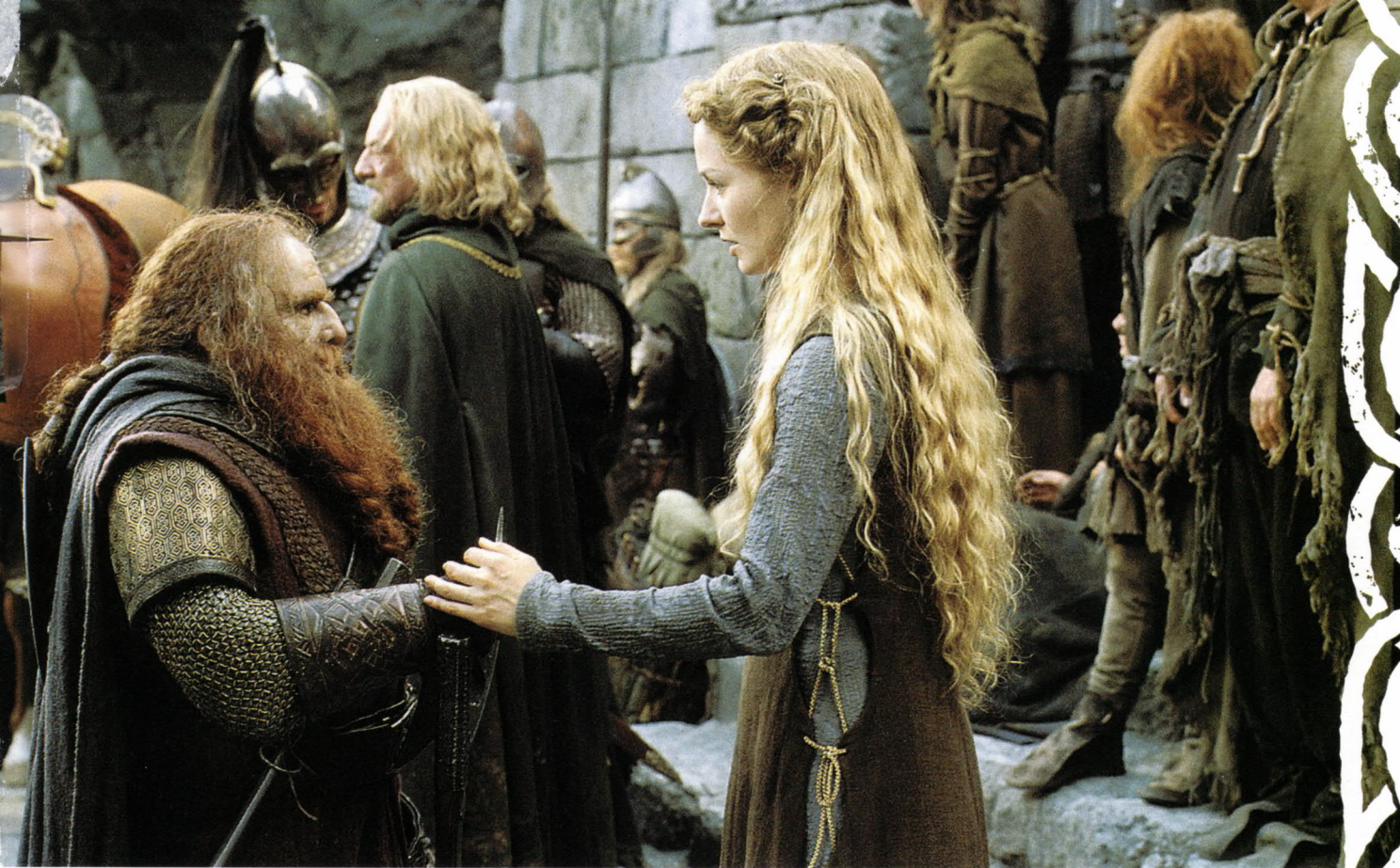
another actor read opposite me; Peter wasn't there, because he was already filming in New Zealand. I spent about an hour reading the lines many times; I chose the ones I really liked, and we sent [a tape] off. It was just after Christmas that they rang back and said, "We're offering it to you." I didn't realize what a huge break it was. I just thought, "Oh, that would be interesting to do." I didn't realize that it was such a big movie! I think it is a bit of an Australian thing that you never imagine anything bigger is going on in New Zealand than would be going on in Australia. New Zealand has made some really great films, but I guess I didn't realize what a huge production it was. A lot of Peter's other films have been much smaller—sort of independent types. When I finally got to the set, I was completely impressed!

YOU JOINED THE CAST AFTER THEY HAD ALREADY STARTED FILMING. WHAT WERE YOUR IMPRESSIONS ON YOUR FIRST DAY ON THE SET?

First, I was brought over there after I was cast—in February or March of 2000—for three days for fittings and to have a meeting with Peter and the writers and talk about what they were going to do; they were going to change stuff from the script that I had read. They showed me some footage that they had already shot, which was fantastic! They then took me through Weta Workshop, which is where they make a lot of the creatures, the armory, and the prosthetics; I then realized that I was in this enormous movie. At the time, the thing I sort of likened it to was finding out that you were going to be a part of *The Wizard of Oz* or something. [It has] that sort of timelessness of a wonderful fantasy and such attention to detail. I was just amazed.

I was then brought back about a month later to do a week's shooting. I then went away to do another film in the United States and came back in





August; that was when we really started properly.

**HOW DID YOU PREPARE FOR THIS ROLE? WERE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE BOOK BEFORE YOU GOT THE ROLE?**

I started reading the book before the audition, but I didn't get it finished; I had two days to prepare something. I had some scripts that I was reading—I actually read them back to front because I had the wrong numbers on the front. I read one, three, then two, and was completely confused! I was trying to read the whole book, but I couldn't do it in two days. So, I started dipping into it and trying to find anything about Éowyn or anything relating to the Rohan. Of course, after I was cast, I read the whole book. I actually became quite fanatical about the book and went through it and photocopied all of the pages that I was involved in and then did several cut-outs of everything that was said about Éowyn by the characters, what she said about herself, everything that J.R.R. Tolkien said about her, every line of dia-

logue she had, etc. Obviously, the film is different from the book in parts—it is not word-for-word. I certainly pushed for certain lines to be put in because I thought they were so good in the book.

**HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE ÉOWYN TO SOMEONE WHO KNEW NOTHING ABOUT THE CHARACTER?**

She is the White Lady of Rohan—the niece of King Théoden. Character-wise, I would say she is idealistic, spirited, high-minded, brave, and slightly lonely. She is very strong and capable.

**SOME OF OUR FAN CLUB MEMBERS HAVE SUBMITTED QUESTIONS FOR YOU. EMILY HAGINS OF AUSTIN, TEXAS, ASKS: DO YOU SEE ANY SIMILARITIES BETWEEN YOURSELF AND ÉOWYN?**

Often, when I play characters that are very strong, I am in awe of their strength and wish I was as strong as they are. That was true of Éowyn as well.

**WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN PLAYING ÉOWYN?**

To be honest with you, the biggest challenge in working on this film was the ever-evolving nature of it. The time we first went into it, and I was given the original script, there were a lot of different things in there having to do with Liv [Tyler's] character, Arwen, who was originally written in a different way than Liv wanted her to be. Everyone decided that they should change that, and that affected my storyline. It gave me more things to do and different things to do. One of the hardest things for me on this film was just going with the flow. I had to accept that there were so many characters and so much writing going on that you received things quite late and were always trying to find out information about what was going to be happening to your character. Sometimes, you would get scenes that were previous to other scenes that you had shot, and you would think, "Oh, gosh, if I had known this scene was going to be like that, I would've played the other scene differently." But you just had to trust with Peter that he





“The bits of time that they get to spend together are clouded over by the fact that there is this war and invasion and refugees ... They haven’t got time to lie around and get to know each other.”



would get what he wanted, and he would make it all work. That was sort of the hardest thing, for me—the fact that it can’t be exactly like the book.

**HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ÉOWYN AND ARAGORN? WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO WORK WITH VIGGO MORTENSEN?**

Viggo is really fantastic. He *was* Aragorn, and I think everyone would tell you that; he just really turned himself into that character. He completely gave himself over to it, and, for someone who arrived late in the shooting, he knew so much. His apartment was just full of books on myth and legend and J.R.R. Tolkien. He was extremely knowledgeable. He is also very physically commanding. He is quite an incredible swordsman, and he became a great rider. He is also a very kind and generous person to work with—he doesn’t seem to have a huge ego. He is very open to working on things.

With regards to Éowyn’s and Aragorn’s relationship, I think the number one thing is that Aragorn is deeply bound and in love with Arwen, and that prefaces everything. I think, perhaps if he hadn’t ever met Arwen, and that [relationship] hadn’t happened, maybe there would have been something between Éowyn and Aragorn. Éowyn is certainly extremely attracted to Aragorn, not only for who he is but for everything he represents—he would be the king of men! He is of that lineage. She senses in him that sort of greatness, that courage and strength and ability to take everything back to the way that it was—to regain that kind of dignity and valor in Middle-Earth. In the end, when it doesn’t happen, she says that she no longer wishes to be a queen. I think she has this wish, early on, to be a queen and be with Aragorn and make changes and bring everything back to the way it was. The bits of time that

they get to spend together are clouded over by the fact that there is this war and invasion and refugees ... there is so much life-and-death stuff going on that the love stuff is difficult. They haven’t got time to lie around and get to know each other. Whatever information they pick up about each other along the way is how their relationship is formed. She is wary of him at first and then becomes more and more fascinated with the sort of man he is. He is an extremely fascinating character—on the one hand, he is so incredibly courageous and strong and capable and such a good fighter, but, on the other hand, he is quite mysterious and introverted. It is hard to know everything that is going on with him, which makes him very fascinating.

**HOW DID YOU LIKE THE SWORD FIGHTING AND HORSEBACK-RIDING?**

That was fun! I really enjoyed the sword fighting. It was a great way of getting into the character. I really loved it. It was a great thing for a woman to be able to do.

**FAN CLUB MEMBER ROBYN GILLETTE OF SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA, ASKS: HOW DID YOU TRAIN FOR THE SWORD FIGHTING?**

They had stunt people there who would train with us. We started with sticks and went through various moves. We learned the basic positions, and there was a certain style of fighting that we were doing; I think there is probably more of my sword fighting in the third film. A lot of Éowyn’s story is that she is thwarted from doing all of that. She feels that she is extremely capable and wants to fight. One of the lines from the film is, “I fear neither death nor pain.” What she really fears is a cage and inactivity. She fears not being able to fight. One of the struggles for her in this film is that Théoden doesn’t want her to [fight] and is continually trying to protect her and force









her to be with the women and the children. She has been brought up, in many ways, like a man. She is capable of doing all of these things that a man can do yet, at this moment, she is being treated like a woman.

**WAS IT FUN TO DO THINGS BOTH FEMININE AND MASCULINE?**

Yes, it was. I think all women like to do those kinds of things if they get the chance.

**YOU SHOT A LOT OF YOUR ROLE ON LOCATION. CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE SETS AND LOCATIONS YOU FILMED IN?**

A lot of the locations in the first film I didn't see because I wasn't there. Edoras, though, was just incredible. It was exactly as it was described in the book. They made such an effort on it. Peter really wanted to make it real; he wanted to make the story very real. He wanted the people to look real and sound real so that they didn't end up looking like film fantasy. He wanted it to be more of an historic story. He decided that he wanted this place to be built so that he could shoot it for real and not do CGI backgrounds. It was

"Éowyn has been brought up, in many ways, like a man. She is capable of doing all of these things that a man can do yet, at this moment, she is being treated like a woman."



amazing! They built this whole village on top of a rocky hill in the middle of all of these plains. It took an hour and a half to get to it every morning from the nearest place that we could stay. There were gale-force winds on top of it. It was amazingly windy up there—it was quite difficult to keep the wigs on! It was just great to be in a place that was meant to be your home and to have it be fully realized for you with such incredible detail. You had such a sense of the story being real for you. It was movie-making on a grand scale. A lot of the interiors were done in a studio, but they were absolutely huge! There were enormous sets for the Golden Hall and places like that.

**DID THE GRANDEUR OF THOSE SETS INSPIRE YOU TO FEEL LIKE YOU WERE A PART OF SOMETHING VERY BIG?**

Yes, definitely. There was a great sense of that through the whole shooting. But, as an actor, it is always wonderful to have so much of that work done for you. I don't have to imagine all of that—it's there! I can see it, and I know what it feels like to stand out in front of it. I don't have to do that with



a blue screen and imagine what it would look like. It is actually there.

**DID YOU EXPERIENCE ANY PARTICULARLY FUNNY OR BIZARRE MOMENTS WHILE YOU WERE IN NEW ZEALAND?**

Well, I did a sword-fighting scene where I was fighting all these Orcs, and I stabbed a guy in the leg. He had prosthetics on, and he told me that he was fine. I was mortified, and he said, "No, no, it's fine. It is just a prosthetic on my leg." I found out afterward that it wasn't, and that he had just been very brave and didn't want to tell me that I had stabbed him in the leg. He thought I wouldn't fight as hard, so he lied! He

more blue-screen and required a fair amount of imagination as to what it would look like and what I was fighting.

**FAN CLUB MEMBER "EIRIEN HOB-BITELF" FROM TORONTO, CANADA, ASKS: WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE SCENE TO FILM?**

I loved shooting outside of Edoras because that was one of the first places I filmed. I really enjoyed that. There was such a great sense of power standing in front of that Golden Hall on that hilltop. But there is also a scene with Aragorn in the Golden Hall with swords. That was a favorite, too. There was also a scene with Wormtongue that I really liked.



was a very big man and built like a house, so I think he was okay.

**AS YOU MENTIONED, THERE WASN'T A LOT OF FILMING WITH BLUE SCREENS. HOW DID THAT AFFECT YOUR ACTING?**

It really helped. You don't have to overact, because you can actually react to what's there. There were some blue screens, of course, and some CGI characters, but even when they worked with Gollum, there was actually the actor there who was creating the role to work with rather than just imagining something that wasn't on the set. There is some stuff in the third film that was

**WAS THERE ANYONE IN THE CAST THAT YOU WERE PARTICULARLY EXCITED ABOUT WORKING WITH?**

Probably the main person I would've known was Ian McKellen. I had seen Elijah in *Ice Storm*, which was a favorite film. I wasn't that familiar with a lot of the people working on this film; I'm not someone who follows everything. I didn't even know Viggo. I was really knocked out by everybody when I got to meet them and see what they were doing.

**WHAT WERE YOUR IMPRESSIONS OF NEW ZEALAND? HOW LONG WERE YOU THERE FILMING?**

I was probably there for about six months. I loved being in New Zealand. I don't know if you could've made that film anywhere else; it certainly would have cost a lot more money to make it somewhere else. It was amazing to me, because I'm from Australia, and the landscape there is just so different. It is quite amazing. New Zealand is really beautiful and yet quite wild in parts, which really suited the story. New Zealand crews were just fantastic and really willing to do anything to make it work. Everyone was so involved in the project. There wasn't a lot of bitching or complaining. People were just so excited to be a part of it that they worked incredibly hard and put in long hours and were willing to do crazy things to try to make the film as good as possible. I just had a great time there—I didn't want to come home! It was our own little world, and when we were in Wellington, whenever we would go out, we would run into people we knew. It was like a big family.

**WHEN YOU WATCHED *The Fellowship of the Ring*, WAS IT HARD TO HAVE TO WAIT TO SEE YOUR PART OF THE TRILOGY?**

That was actually fine to me. It was nice to actually just be there as a fan without having to feel the pressure. When you are in it, you feel so much more vulnerable. I really enjoyed just standing back and watching it unfold. I enjoyed audiences getting to see it for the first time and me feeling the excitement that I had the first time I came on the set and I saw that this was going to be this incredible film; I really thought from the beginning that this would be a huge success.

I think the film was a bit of an underdog in some ways. People didn't realize what was being made and, because we were so far away from everybody, there wasn't much reporting, and there was a great deal of secrecy. Even when I was in L.A. after I had finished



shooting it, people didn't seem to think it was going to be one of the big movies; they really didn't have any concept of what a huge blockbuster it would be. It was fun sitting back and watching it without getting nervous for myself and getting to see people react to it.

**WAS IT ENCOURAGING TO SEE HOW SUCCESSFUL *The Fellowship of the Ring* WAS?**

Definitely! But I wouldn't be surprised if the next two films are even better, as they must have learned so much from doing the first one. I like the story more and more as it goes on. I like the darkness of the story, so it is exciting to me to be in the second and third films. I'm not into all this stuff at the beginning of *The Fellowship of the Ring*. I like this story when it gets really dark and serious with all the fighting and the big battles; I know that Peter excels at that sort of stuff. It was exciting to see the first one because, even though I had seen footage, I had no idea of all the effects and all the other things that Peter was going to do with the music, etc. I have to admit—it did feel like, “Wow, I am going to be a part of this!” I think all actors would like to think that they have been involved with something that will last in some way. You can be in good things, but they are topical, and people don't watch them again. I feel this film will be something that people will watch over and over again. They will buy the DVD and keep the set and show their kids. It is

timeless. It is such a brilliant story, and you're working from such a great book. It is a story that has captivated people for 50 years. You take people like Peter Jackson and the writers and fabulous actors and this incredible attention to detail and brilliant art directors, and you have all the right things going with it—how can it go wrong?

**YOU ARE VERY WELL RESPECTED IN AUSTRALIA, AND YOU ARE STARTING TO MAKE A NAME FOR YOURSELF OUTSIDE OF THE COUNTRY. WHAT IMPACT DO YOU THINK YOUR ROLE IN *The Lord of the Rings* FILMS WILL HAVE ON YOUR LIFE?**

I have no idea. I try not to second-guess these things. Being a part of making those films was an incredible experience in my life. It was something I am so glad happened to me. Nothing can take that away from me; I think that is the most important thing. Anything that happens as a bonus from that will be wonderful. The thing that I am interested in is working with more inspirational people like Peter and some of the other people I have had a chance to work with. If it makes it easier for me to get good work with really interesting directors, then that would be fantastic. That is what I am really interested in. It is hard to tell. I have been around the business long enough not to be sucked into all of the hype.

**HOW DOES IT FEEL TO HAVE YOUR OWN DOLL?**

I just received one of those yesterday; they are actually selling them already. It's not a bad likeness. They originally sent the head to me, and we made a few changes. I have to say that the people who made these dolls are great. They actually gave us time to look at it and tell them about a few things we thought were not correct, and then they went back and changed them.

It is a bit weird. On a comical note, I guess I imagine the day I go into a toy store, and I see a million of them with the price super reduced because they can't sell them! They're giving them away! I went into a Virgin Megastore the other day, and they had made dolls from this show, “Pop Stars”, and they were basically selling them for one pound to get rid of them! The other side is that you are walking down the street one day, and you see one in the gutter with its nose bitten off and its arm broken and its hair cut! Maybe it will be some strange kind of voodoo doll!

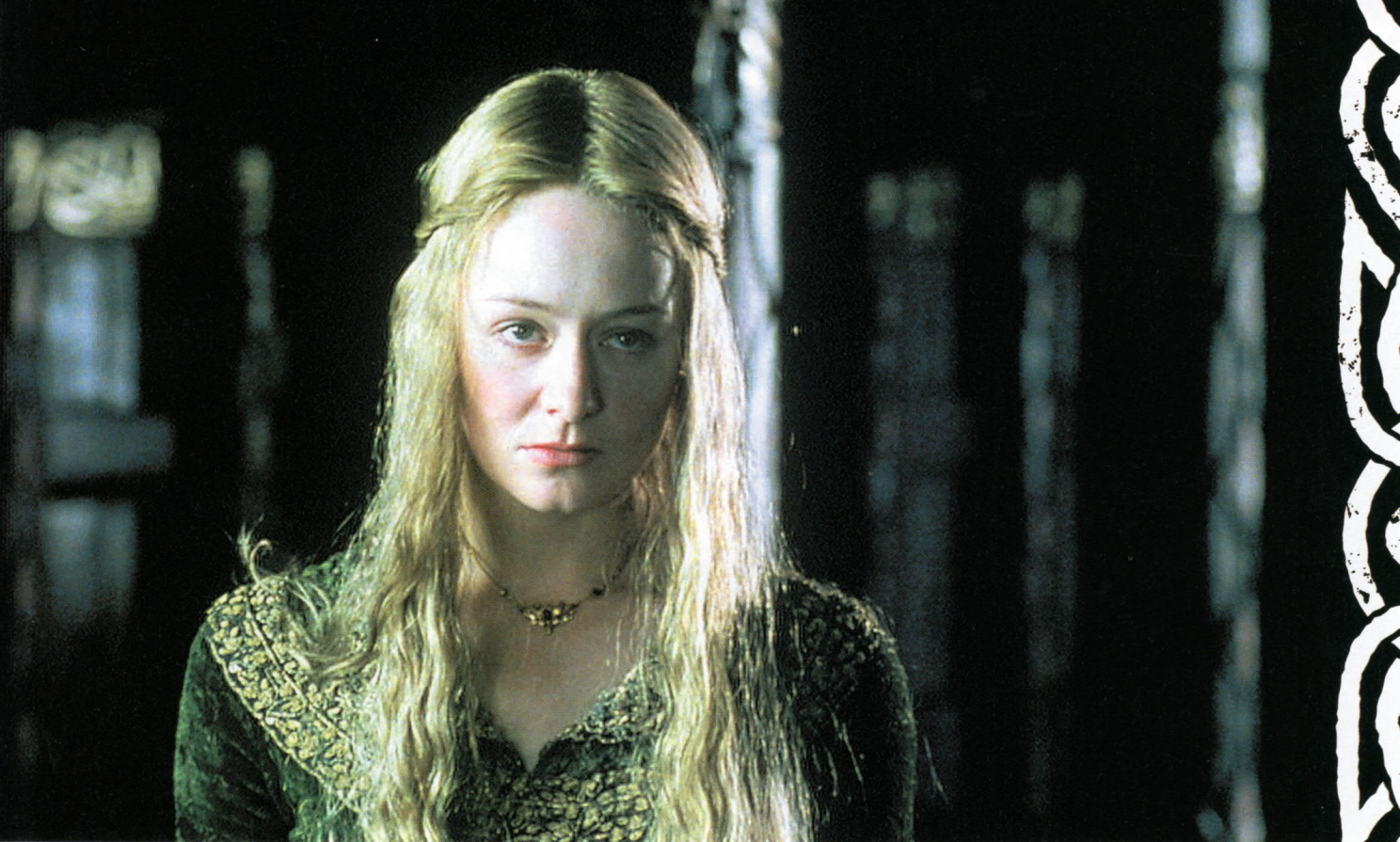
**WHAT WILL BE YOUR LASTING MEMORY OF WORKING ON *The Lord of the Rings*?**

The thing that really struck me is that I was actually going through a bit of a rough time when I arrived there in New Zealand, [and] for me, it was being a part of a huge family—and being a part of something where there were amazing people with so much knowledge. Anything you wanted to ask them about ... there would be someone who knew, say, old English or somebody who knew about this or that. There were just incredible resources there.

I guess it was working on something where people didn't have to compromise. We didn't have to just make do—when they built Edoras, we didn't just make do with a blue screen, we actually went down and made it. To actually work on something that big where you can fully realize the breadth







of the story was a really big high. By the end, everyone was really sad to leave. Although they were tired, everyone was very sad to be finishing. I think New Line is quite incredible for financing this; most big-budget movies these days are quite a cynical exercise—they get someone who is one of the 10 biggest stars to be in it, and they get the scripts written by one of the 10 big writers. They go out and do their demographics and figure out what people want to see; the whole thing is structured around ensuring that they get their money back. Even though I felt that this would always be a big success, it was sort of more of a gamble because it was something that is literary, and even though Ian McKellen is well-known, a lot of other people in the film are not huge action stars. Working on something that actually had some money behind it to fully realize it, but wasn't a cynical project, was a great experience. People really cared about it and believed that if they did the best job they could, people would come and see it.

**"I think New Line is quite incredible for financing this; most big-budget movies these days are quite a cynical exercise ... the whole thing is structured around ensuring that they get their money back."**

#### WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOU?

I haven't stopped working since *The Lord of the Rings*. I did four things in England and Europe and, at the beginning of this year, I did a play in Australia and a film. I decided that I would just take a break until the end of the year. I have had a few offers, but I am leaving it open. I am waiting for the right thing. I have worked so hard in the last couple of years that I feel like it has to be the right thing for me to go back to it after doing so many projects that I have really enjoyed. I can't just pick up and do anything.

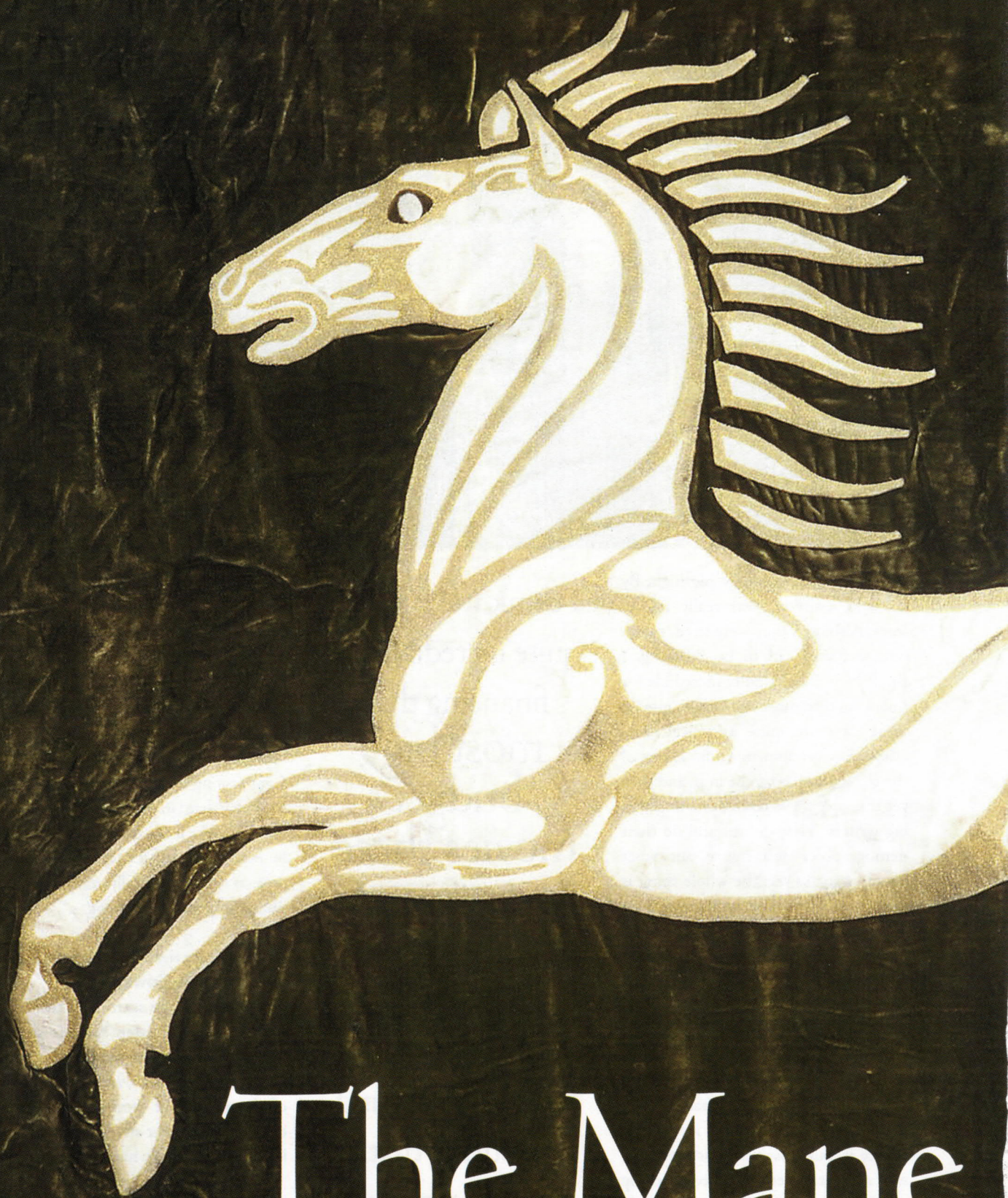
#### THE FANS CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOUR PORTRAYAL OF EOWYN.

Oh, that really scares me! She is a great female character, because she is not just saved by the men. She is very strong and goes her own path. In a lot of these kinds of stories, the women don't get to be that strong. I think that is why people really like her character.

#### MIRANDA, THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR TIME.

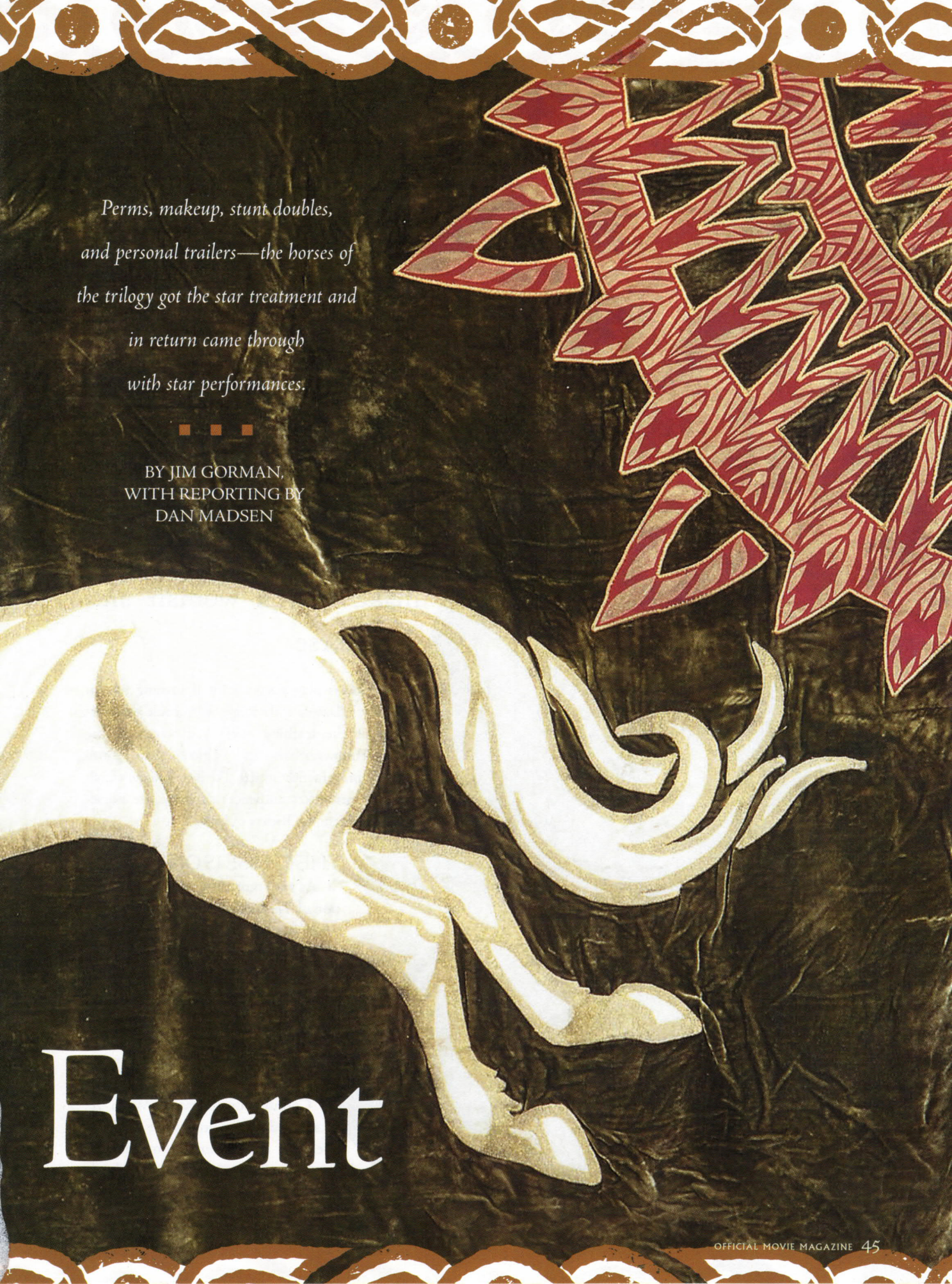
Thank you. I've enjoyed it! ☺





# The Mane





*Perms, makeup, stunt doubles,  
and personal trailers—the horses of  
the trilogy got the star treatment and  
in return came through  
with star performances.*

■ ■ ■  
BY JIM GORMAN,  
WITH REPORTING BY  
DAN MADSEN

# Event





The costuming, set design, and computer-generated magic that went into the making of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy has earned a lot of attention, as well as several well-deserved Oscars. But to pull off some of the series' most exciting scenes, the filmmakers relied on that old Hollywood standby, a man and his horse—make that a woman and her horse.

Horses play a significant if unsung role in *The Fellowship of the Ring*—who could ever forget the frothing, wild-eyed steeds of the Ringwraiths?—and figure even more prominently in the *The Two Towers*, which introduces audiences to those ace horsemen, the Riders of Rohan.

#### THE CHASE IS ON

As with most aspects of the production of *The Lord of the Rings*, much more went into getting horse and rider onto the screen than meets the eye.

A perfect example is the chase sequence featuring Arwen, played by Liv Tyler, and the Dark Riders. The production process began many months before filming, when Horse Trainer and On-set Coordinator Grahame Ware, Jr., scouted the countryside of New Zealand and Australia for talented horses to buy. "For a liberty horse [a horse that rides without a bit], I look for an animal





that's trainable," Ware says. "It's nice to have a pretty horse, but you want trainability. The horses that really shine during training we'll pull to the side and work them as trick horses." Another absolute requirement in selecting Ringwraith steeds: black or very dark coloration.

For the chase scene, 25 black horses were trained for the Ringwraith roles—a lead horse and spare for each of the nine horse characters, plus extras. Among the 25 horses, some were selected for their superb jumping skills or galloping speed, while others made the cut for their excellent rearing, ability to fall while at a gallop, or to lie down and stay down.

While the horses were being trained by Ware and other wranglers, auditions took place to select the actors who would become Dark Riders. From hundreds of aspirants, only the most skilled

horsemen became one of the 25 finalists. "You had to be capable of getting on any horse, at any time, on any day and making it happen," recalls professional rider Len Baynes, who saddled up as a Dark Rider. "You couldn't just be a good dressage rider, show jumper, or a farm hand rider. You had to be capable of doing everything, because some of the scenes we did were very action-oriented."

Next came specialized drills between the 25 black horses and 25 Dark Riders for the chase sequence and other action. "From the time the horses got on the set until we started shooting, we took a month for training—every day, seven or eight hours a day in the saddle," recounts Baynes. Horses and riders had to become comfortable with each other, and both had to become comfortable with special harnesses, saddles, and

## BEWARE THE CROSS- DRESSING RINGWRAITHS!

Battle scenes in the recently released *The Two Towers* feature pulse-quickening charges by masses of mounted Ringwraiths and Rohan warriors. The action is fast, furious, and convincing, yet moviegoers were oblivious to a major sleight of hand pulled off by the ever-innovative production team: nearly all of the horsemen are women.

"Ideally, we wanted guys who were 6 feet tall with long hair and long beards to ride the horses," says Steve Old, head of the film series' Horse Department. "On New Zealand's South Island, though, it's mostly females who ride the horses. In the end, we probably had five guys and the remaining 250 or so riders were women dressed as men! And the average age of the women was about 50."

The female Rohan riders did double duty, playing the part of a horde of Ringwraith riders. "That's something that people watching the movie won't realize—they're watching 50-year-old women come riding down," says Old. "Be very afraid of these 50-year-old women—they looked pretty scary!"





# MEET THE HORSES OF MIDDLE-EARTH



**ASFALOTH** ARWEN'S SPEEDY MOUNT. Three horses were used to portray Asfaloth: Florian, a grey Andalusian, was relied on for stunt work and close-ups; Hero was used during galloping sequences; and Odie starred when Liv Tyler was filmed atop her horse.



**BILL THE PONY** SAM'S OVERLOADED PACKHORSE. Two horses—a small pony and a large horse—were employed to portray Bill, depending on whether the shot called for dwarfing or enhancing an actor's size. Makeup artist Mark Kinaston-Smith ensured that both versions of Bill were identical, right down to false blazes, white socks, and mane.

**SHADOWFAX** GANDALF'S MAGNIFICENT STEED. Shadowfax was played by Blanco, a white Andalusian, a horse variety bred by the Spanish for

intelligence and as a warhorse. "Blanco is cunning with a little spirit in him," says Horse Coordinator Steve Old. "I wouldn't call him an honest horse—we always had to watch him." Blanco's double required a perm to create a similarly crinkled mane.



**SNOWMANE** THEODEN'S RIDE IN *The Two Towers* AND *The Return of The King*. Snowmane was played by Percy, a Percheron Cross, a horse variety bred for hunting.

**ZEE** ONE OF 25 DARK-COLORED HORSES USED TO PORTRAY THE NINE STEEDS OF THE RINGWRAITHS. For the sequence in *The Fellowship of The Ring* in which Frodo and friends hop a ferry to escape the Dark Riders, Zee charges onto the dock wearing special shoes that allow him to come to a skidding stop.



costumes. Horses, skittish by nature, don't immediately take to faceless men draped in black. Once familiarity was achieved, it was time to roll film.

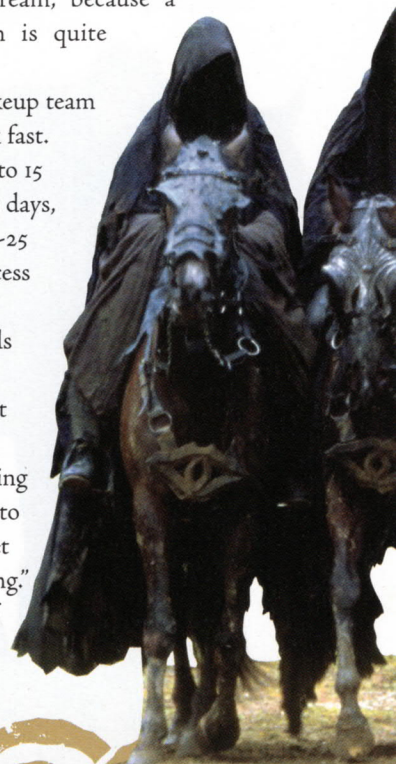
## MAKEUP AND PERMS

To look their parts, Dark Riders and their steeds spent hours each day in the costume and makeup trailers. For the horses, custom-made saddles and specially fitted armor were strapped on. Beneath, layers of padding and foam protected the horses' hides. To further ensure the safety of the horses, the props department made all Ringwraith weapons out of rubber.

Then the makeup department took over. "For the Dark Riders' horses, we mostly did blood, mud, and pus," says Mark Kinaston-Smith without a trace of irony. Kinaston-Smith worked on set as a horse makeup artist, a specialty that most people likely didn't know existed. He learned his trade while prepping show horses in New Zealand. "We had to create 'wounds' on the horses—whip marks and that sort of thing," says Kinaston-Smith. "They had to have bleeding noses and pus around the eyes. I use hypoallergenic makeup applied over a barrier cream, because a horse's skin is quite sensitive."

The makeup team had to work fast. "We did 10 to 15 horses most days, and it's a 20-25 minute process to do each horse," recalls Kinaston-Smith. "So it was quite intense getting them ready to go on the set each morning."

Most of the horses







To look their parts, Dark Riders' steeds spent hours each day in the costume and makeup trailers ... "It was quite intense getting them ready to go on the set each morning."



endured the makeup process stoically, although a few objected to the most invasive procedures. "Several of the black horses got antsy when I'd stick my fingers up their noses, which I had to do quite frequently to achieve that bleeding nose effect [with the make-up]," he says. "It didn't hurt, but it was a case of coaxing them into believing that." (A monitor was on set at all times "to make sure the horses were being looked after and that not too much was asked of them," says Steve Old, Horse Coordinator and head of the Horse Department.)

What nature didn't endow the horses with, Kinaston-Smith and

company compensated for. "The horses had to have mane extensions [a wig-like hair piece woven into the horse's hair], and a couple required tail extensions to give us the long, full tails we wanted. We also dyed a lot of the horses to make them look entirely black."

"Doubling," however, is really where Kinaston-Smith's artistry was put to the test. Cast horses have doubles that perform tricks or do certain tasks, like galloping. The double and the star horse must look identical. "The most complex work we did was with Shadowfax's double," he says. "The lead, or 'hero,' horse had a crinkly mane and





## ANATOMY OF A SCENE

In *The Two Towers*, there is a touching scene in which Aragorn's horse finds his master, rolls him over, and then lays down beside him. This interaction between horse (Brego) and actor (Viggo Mortensen) took weeks to choreograph and prepare for, says horse trainer Graham Ware Jr.

"We break it down into two stages for the horse," Ware explains. "The first stage would be the push, and the second step would be the lay-down. For the push, we [first] teach the horse to lower his head." It took only two or three days before Brego was lowering his head at Ware's command.

The trainers then put a block in front of the horse, teaching him to nuzzle it and push it away with his nose; when he did, Brego was praised and rewarded. This conditioning continued for about two weeks before the trainers replaced the block with a body dummy. "Safety is important," says Ware. "If you put a human in front of him, you don't want the horse to get frightened and step on the person by accident; there's a fair bit of confidence-building that has to take place." Next, Brego was taught to lie down, a process achieved in several steps: first bowing, then kneeling on two knees, and eventually going to the ground."

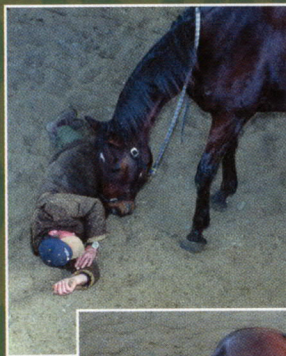
That is a lot to ask of a horse, Ware says. "When you get a horse down on the ground, you're totally taking his defenses away," the trainer explains. "He can't run, so he has to know what he's

doing and know that once he's down, nobody's going to hurt him. So we teach him about confidence and trust. Once we have the two separate training behaviors down, we start to work them in together."

At a certain point, in this case three or four weeks, Ware can go no further on his own. "I need to introduce how that scene's going to actually work," the trainer says, "and that's where Viggo comes in."

Mortensen, who is rumored to have purchased the two horses he rode in the films, worked closely with Ware, offering sugges-

tions along the way—input welcomed by the trainer. "Viggo and I set this scene up," he says. "It's nice that we had time to work together that way."



tail. It was quite a mission to get the horsehair on the double to look crinkly like the hero horse's."

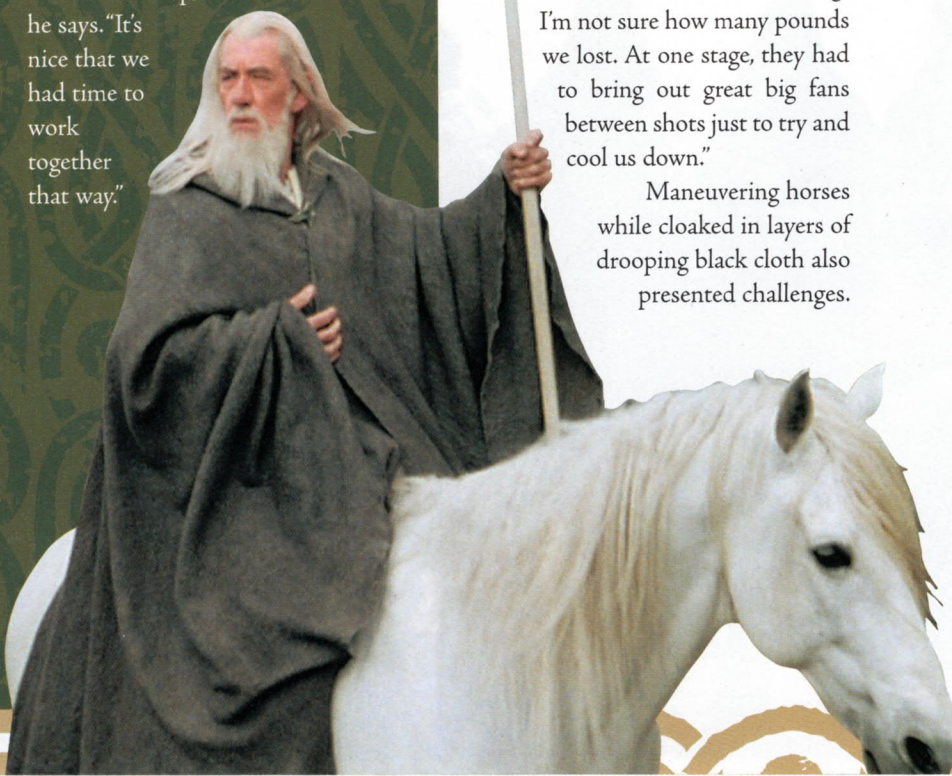


### LIFE IN THE HOOD

Makeup wasn't much of a concern for the human Dark Riders. Black makeup was applied to their faces each morning, but that was it. Costumes were the main preoccupation.

"We had something like six or eight layers of wool or silk on and these big capes with hoods," says Len Baynes. "The hood was incredibly warm. A lot of the days were very warm, and the costumes, being all black, were hot. Due to perspiration during the seven weeks of shooting, I'm not sure how many pounds we lost. At one stage, they had to bring out great big fans between shots just to try and cool us down."

Maneuvering horses while cloaked in layers of drooping black cloth also presented challenges.









## WHO HAD HORSE SENSE?

*We rate the riding abilities of key actors to separate the studs from the greenhorns.*

### VIGGO MORTENSEN (Aragorn)



"He was a good rider prior to filming and became a very good rider as he got his confidence up," says professional rider Len Baynes, who saddled up as a Dark Rider. "Viggo's stunt double became redundant."

### BERNARD HILL (Théoden)



"He got to be quite a good rider," says Baynes, who nonetheless did all of the riding stunts for Hill during tricky sequences, such as the escape from Helm's Deep in *The Two Towers*. "As time went on, Bernard wound up doing a lot of his own riding."

### LIV TYLER (Arwen)



Tyler trained at Te Horo Stables to brush up her riding, but for the dramatic chase sequence in which she eludes a pack of Dark Riders, an experienced equestrian did the actual riding. Tyler rode a barrel covered with a horsehide and rigged to shock mounts to capture shots of her on horseback.

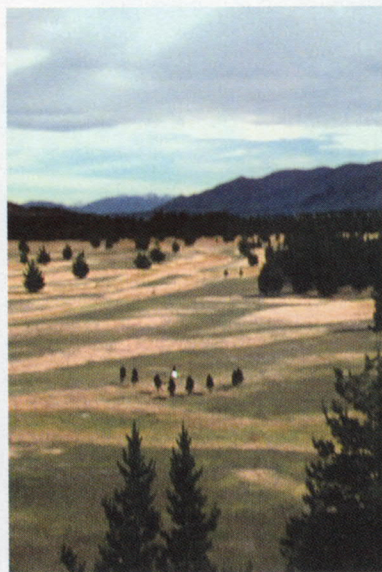
### IAN MCKELLEN (Gandalf)



"We used a double for Ian a lot," says Steve Old, Horse Coordinator and head of the Horse Department. "He just wasn't a horse-riding person."



"We had no peripheral vision, which was the hardest part of being a Dark Rider," Baynes says. "The hoods came out quite far, so we couldn't see to either side. You had to have a lot of faith in the riders next to you. But we got so used to the costumes in the end that wearing them was almost second nature. But we certainly did heat up in them!"



### FULL GALLOP

Location scouts scoured the South Island looking for the perfect field to accommodate the intricate choreography of the horses as well as the camera vehicles that would travel beside them. Once the ideal spot was found and negotiations worked out with the landowner, the movie production staff cleared the pathway of rocks, roots, animal burrows, and branches that might trip or hurt one of the horses. Some grading was done to guarantee good footing. Each horse and rider was assigned a color-coded route, which they walked at first. As the horse teams became more confident, they increased their speed.

"Because Arwen's horse was faster than all of ours, we were going full-speed most of the time during filming," recalls Baynes. "I'd say we were doing 40 miles per hour across rela-

tively flat terrain. Everything would be at a standstill, and then we were at full gallop on big, long runs with sidetracking vehicles, weaving in and out of trees and ducking and cutting across each other. It was very exciting."

Because Liv Tyler is not an experienced rider, she was "doubled" by New Zealander Jane Abbott for galloping and trick riding during the chase scene. To capture realistic images of Tyler riding hard to escape the Ringwraiths, she rode a barrel covered in horsehide, which traveled the chase course atop a vehicle. Spring mounts on the barrel allowed Tyler to recreate a convincing riding motion. (In case you wondered if the horses were in the least bit endangered by the flash flood that Arwen summons to sweep away the Dark Riders at the conclusion of the chase, rest assured they weren't. The horses waded into a real stream, which had been checked for solid footing before filming. The wall of water and drowning horses, though, were entirely computer-generated.)

In the end, all of the many months of training, seven weeks of filming, countless tons of hay and oats, and gallons of Dark Rider sweat added up to exactly one minute and 30 seconds in the final cut of *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Was it worth it? Any devotee of the series knows that answer is a resounding, "Of course."

Or you can ask Len Baynes. "Regardless of all the battle scenes we did, the chase sequence, riding-wise, was by far the biggest adrenaline rush of anything we did."

### HELM'S DEEP LEAP

Equine stars also play a huge role in Part 2 of the trilogy: *The Two Towers* was challenging for both horses and riders, particularly in the spectacular Battle of Helm's Deep scenes.

In addition to his Dark Rider duties, Len Baynes was also a riding double for British actor Bernard Hill,



“Everything would be at a standstill, and then we were at full gallop on big, long runs with side-tracking vehicles, weaving in and out of trees and ducking and cutting across each other. It was very exciting.”

who debuted as Théoden in *The Two Towers*. Along with riding work in the second film's battle scenes, Baynes and his fellow riders also did a lot of sword-fighting, he says, “especially on the wide shots in the middle of Helm's Deep and the big charges at Pelennor Fields.”

There was one particularly heart-stopping moment during his work on the Battle of Helm's Deep, Baynes says.

“We had to charge out of Helm's Deep on horseback when it was invaded,” he explains. “We had to ride out of the courtyard and down the steps, which were at quite an angle, so we put a ramp down the steps for the horses. The ramp was about 5 meters in length, and on about the third take, we charged out of there.” But when they got to the top, Baynes' horse decided that he wasn't going to go down the ramp. “He jumped from the top!” Baynes recalls. “He took one stride off the top and landed all of the way down—in one jump! I was supposed



to do a ‘slice the head off an Orc’ [move] halfway down the ramp, and the guy was still standing there waiting to be beheaded. I found myself sort of in mid-air, but I still managed to get the slice in and take the head!”

The excitement didn't end there, Baynes says. “At the bottom of the ramp was a very sharp right-hand

turn, so there was no room for any movement,” he recalls. “But the horse I was riding was so amazing! We hit the bottom of that ramp, did the sharp right-hand turn, and managed to get all the way up the courtyard, and of course, everybody behind me had to follow at that speed as well. It got everyone's adrenaline running!”

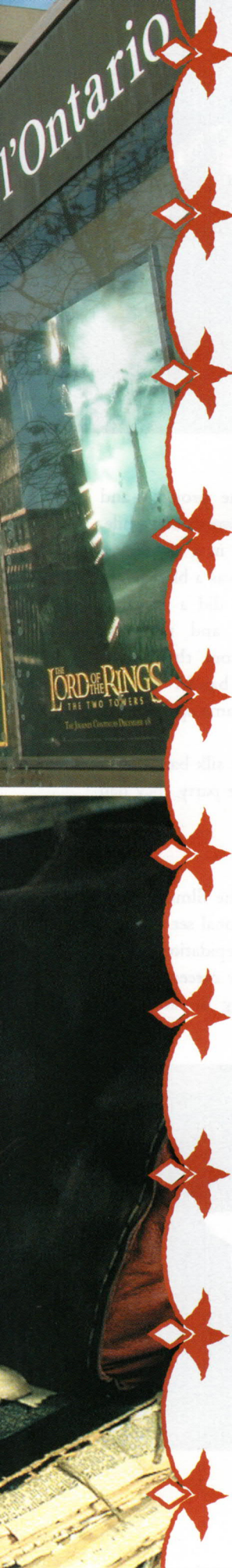
Look for more coverage of the horses of *The Lord of the Rings* in future issues!











# Jack<sup>of</sup> All Trades

Wellington, New Zealand, resident Judy Alley had just sold her business when she heard about *The Lord of the Rings* production. She sent her resumé in to various departments and ultimately heard from Dan and Chris Hennah in the Art Department. Something had come up, they said, that would be a great match for her past experience—a production manager's job involving fabric-based props. "I was a fashion designer," she explains. "I manufactured and also imported and exported women's fashions. I had a mix of business and production and management skills."

Alley joined the crew in May 2000, thinking of her new position as "my little retirement job." With several international trips and job titles behind her, not to mention more long days and nights than she can count, Alley's work on *The Lord of the Rings* has not turned out to be anyone's idea of a retirement job! This past fall, Alley was kind enough to share with us a few of her many adventures behind the scenes of *The Lord of the Rings*.

■ ■ ■  
BY JUDY ALLEY

"Even Orcs have feelings."

When I heard this on my first day of work on *The Lord of the Rings*, I knew this was to be no ordinary job.

The film was already underway when I started, and I had missed most of the Prologue and *Hobbit* action. We were now starting on Elves.

I began work in an area known as the Bacon Factory, which was responsible for all the dyeing, sewing, screen-printing, and leather-working

required to make props for the Art Department. My job was to supervise production and purchase all the necessary materials. Like everyone else working on this movie, I was soon grappling with the "scale" issue. The Elven bed covers and pillows we were making for Caras Galadon had to be created according to two scales: oversized covers and pillows for the Hobbits and Gimli, to make them look smaller, and normal-size covers





and pillows for the actors portraying humans. The fabric was a beautiful fine silk that was dyed and then screen-printed; up to 17 different screens were used to place the arrangement of leaf decoration on the covers.

Apart from the matching pairs of scale covers, every pattern differed slightly. Peter Jackson was a “warts and all” director: Nothing was to look mass-produced, and nothing was to look like it had just been made for the movie. Everything was made and then aged down. We cut the leaves for the outside of the covers from leather, dip-dyed them several times, and then wet-molded them with our fingers into leaf shapes; the veins on the leaves were then scratched on with a sharp needle. After almost five weeks on this project, I began to appreciate the total commitment to detail that was to characterize these movies.

Most of the fabrics we used were silk, velvet, cotton, or cashmere, and we dyed them all using only colors that were of “the time and place.” We would make 180 beautiful velvet saddle blankets with a detailed silver trim, and then splatter them with mud and tear the edges to give them that “I’ve been sitting on this for five years” feeling. We were constantly discovering new ways, or rediscovering old techniques, to make banners and flags or carpets and tapestries.

Every day there was a new challenge, but this never daunted the talented and committed team in the Art Department, which never missed a deadline.

The months sped by, and the principal filming came to an end; our work was finished. It was with a terrible sadness that we said our farewells. Two of us remained behind on that last day, packing up and labeling boxes for storage. We had just finished and were set to leave when we had a phone call. A request had come in for 60 long silk banners for *The Lord of the Rings* crew wrap party that night.

Out came the rolls of silk and the banner patterns, and then it was over to the dye factory. A couple of hours of frantic sewing began as the two of us attempted to do the work of many more.

We completed the project—and staying was certainly worth our while. The party that night in a warehouse down on the harbor was a blast. Peter Jackson and the cast did a Haka [a Maori war dance], and then we watched bloopers from the movie. There were several bands, and we danced until the sun came up. It was all over too soon.

I never did see the silk banners. In the rush to set up the party, they had been forgotten.

## SET DRESSER

At one point in the filming, there was a need for additional set dressers, and so, with great trepidation on my part, I began my new career as a Set Dresser, first working on additional Bag End scenes.





“We were constantly discovering new ways, or rediscovering old techniques, to make banners and flags or carpets and tapestries.”



The two scale sets of Bag End were rebuilt in the studio, and our job was to dress them exactly as they had been for the first shots.

Bag End is a friendly clutter of knick-knacks, and in the two sets, there must have been over a thousand props. Continuity was essential. Not only was each prop placed in the exact position as it had been for earlier filming, but it had to be placed in exactly the same position in both the large-scale and small-scale Bag End sets. We had two identical props, of course—one large and one small. Even the pickled onions and gherkins in jars on the kitchen shelves were scaled in size.

Sets disappeared overnight, and new ones would replace them on almost a daily basis.

Saruman's Orthanc Chamber was another challenge, for in addition to the creepy assortment of wizardry, this set was highly polished until not a speck of dust was to be seen. We spent hours up ladders and on our hands and knees spraying and wiping every surface. Seeing my name in the credits as one of the set dressers on *The Lord of the Rings* was a thrill!

## CANDO CANNES

Suddenly, *The Lord of the Rings* was going to the 2001 Cannes Film Festival; we took a 20-minute show reel of the Mines of Moria footage and planned to

stage the biggest and best party Cannes had ever seen. It was back into the props store to fill containers of props for the party, and at the very last moment, I had an opportunity to go along and experience the festivities firsthand.

I was warned accommodations were a bit tight, and that I might end up sleeping on someone's floor or even in the bath. I didn't care. I was going to the Cannes Film Festival!

After 38 hours of traveling, we arrived in Cannes. The next morning, we walked through old, narrow, cobble streets for coffee and croissants, and then it was off to work.

“Work” was 30 minutes from Cannes, at Castellaras Castle, the site of our party. Our construction team had arrived earlier and built magnificent sets of the Prancing Pony, the Green Dragon, and Bag End. The swimming pool at Castellaras had been transformed into Rivendell, complete with Galadriel's boat floating in the pool. It was stunning.

It was a reunion of sorts, as several former Art Department staffers who had been traveling around Europe came to Cannes to complete the set-dressing team.

The party theme was Bilbo's birthday party at Hobbiton. There were truckloads of Party Field furniture, barrels, tents, lanterns, and bunting to unload and set up.

The local French crew was somewhat horrified to see our mainly female crew unloading and carrying heavy props up the hill to the party site again and again. At first there were cries of “Donnez! Donnez!” (“Give them to us!”) as they tried to wrestle benches and tents from us, but eventually they left it to us and stood there looking quite confused. Toward the end of the week, one of our guys asked one of the French crew what he thought of Kiwi women. “They make me very afraid,” he answered. Although we scored low in the femininity stakes, we did a superb job setting up for the party!

We were still attending to the final details as the red carpet was rolled out, and the stars and VIPs began to arrive by the hundreds. After the party was over, with only a couple of hours of sleep, we were soon taking down tents and loading up trucks with furniture and other props to be returned to the containers.

And where did I end up sleeping in Cannes? Well, after sharing an apartment for a couple of nights, I ended up having the best room at Castellaras Castle all to myself—but, ironically, without a bath to use, as all of the dozens and dozens of flowers brought in for the festivities lived in my bathtub for three days before the party!





"[For the] New Zealand premiere of *The Fellowship of the Ring* ... up went the tents, the lanterns, and the buntings, and out came the Hobbiton barrels for the beer. It was a labor of love, and it looked fantastic!"



## CANNES TO CANADA

After Cannes, the next big event for 2001 was the exhibition of *The Lord of the Rings* props in Toronto in November. My lucky star was still shining bright: I was asked if I'd like to go and stay with the exhibition for the three-week duration. I didn't have to consider it for a second!

The exhibition was spread over three floors of Casa Loma Castle and in the old stables, which are linked to the castle itself by a long underground tunnel. Alliance Atlantis, the distributors for New Line films, organized the exhibition in Toronto. These people know how to do business, and I was thrown into the world of film. Stretch Limos. Nightclubs. Dinner with *The Lord of the Rings* stars, media interviews, and people asking for my autograph just because I had worked on the film.

My days at the exhibition were action-packed. Thousands of people went through, lining up for hours to get in and see the props, despite the "Sold Out" signs. I met hundreds of people who knew every detail of J.R.R. Tolkien's book; we had brought the book alive for them, they said, which was satisfying to hear!

## WELLINGTON PREMIERE

My second year working on *The Lord of the Rings* was drawing to an end, but the best was yet to come: the New

Zealand premiere of *The Fellowship of the Ring*.

The crew received tickets to special showings of the movie at the Embassy Theatre in Wellington, which had been newly renovated for the event. The Art Department showing was at 8AM, and there were frantic phone calls trying to organize a reunion of the Art Department props makers who had worked together the year before. At last, we would see our work on the big screen! (If you look carefully, you can see the odd flash of banners, Elven bed covers, and saddle blankets!)

Three hours later, we emerged into sunshine and stood around too shell-shocked to speak. We had finally seen what it had all been about, and we couldn't believe it. Most of the ex-crew spent the rest of the day in cafés and then moved on to bars to celebrate. But I rushed back to work, as we were setting up for the Wellington premiere party for media and VIPs.

The theme was again—as you might have guessed—the Party Field. The Greens Department had transformed one of our large studios into a large grassy field, complete with little hillocks



cast and crew reunited at castellaras castle: (sitting, l to r) dominic monaghan, peter jackson, billy boyd; (standing, l to r) viggo mortensen, richard taylor, sean astin, john rhys-davies, elijah wood, ian mckellen, liv tyler, sean bean, screenwriter philippa boyens, christopher lee, orlando bloom. producer barrie osborne





sean bean mingles  
with orcs at the  
cannes party



peter jackson cavorts  
with his hobbit hosts at  
castallaras castle

and paths and had reconstructed one of the huge Hobbiton trees in the corner.

Up went the tents, the lanterns, and the buntings, and out came the Hobbiton barrels for the beer. It was a labor of love, and it looked fantastic! When the guests arrived, they were quite overwhelmed.

We had decided to resurrect Bilbo's party cake for the night, and we decided to place it on a table under the big tree. When all the guests had arrived, we would light the 111 candles on Bilbo's cake.

We left the cake until last, and there was a moment of dismay when we carried the huge cake upstairs to a kitchen above the studio and unwrapped it. It was looking pretty grim, as it had taken a few hard knocks. We had to disguise the damage, so we decided we would cover it in whipped cream and then decorate it with flowers and leaves.

We raced out and bought several large containers of cream, and as I stood with an electric beater in each hand, Chris Meder and Stan Alley used builders' trowels to apply the cream.

The guests were due in 15 minutes, so it was a race against time. Finally it was finished, and then our hearts sank. The three of us had carried the cake sideways up the stairs and through the door. Now it was covered in cream and 111 candles and could only be carried horizontally with great care, and, of

course, it wouldn't fit through the door or down the stairs.

We had all started work at 7 AM, and it was approaching midnight. There were only two solutions. We could either laugh or cry. So we laughed. And then someone spotted a fire exit, and with one dangerous tilt through the door, the cake was carried head-high down the outside steps of the building, and eventually took its place of honor just as the VIPs began to arrive.

The three of us changed into our party clothes and were looking forward to a glass or two of champagne and a mingle with the party guests. Suddenly, I remembered the candles. We were going to light the candles on Bilbo's cake, but where were Chris and Stan?

Unfortunately, we had overlooked one small detail. We had not organized security passes for ourselves, and my two workmates had been unceremoniously escorted from the party by security. To avoid the same fate, I slipped away into the night, the candles unlit.

## A WHOLE NEW WORLD

In January 2002, I went back to work, this time as the Merchandising Assets Wrangler for New Line Cinema. I would be finding reference material and information for licensees, and an important requirement was a good understanding of the dreaded props storage.

It was "Goodbye, Art Department,"

and "Hello, Production Office." I had an office, a desk, and a computer, and in time, a whole new understanding of another side of the film business.

I was soon a regular visitor at Weta Workshop, Weta Digital, and the Editorial and Miniatures Departments. A whole new world of post-production at *The Lord of the Rings* opened up.

In March, the daily routine was broken when we had our own Oscar party in Wellington to watch the awards. It was a "Dress as if you were there" party at the Grand, a large bar that we rented. Given the time difference in Los Angeles [it was daytime in New Zealand], the crew took the day off to celebrate.

There were tears and cheers throughout the day, with large amounts of champagne, wine, and beer disappearing. The Oscar nominations were an acknowledgment of the thousands of people who had been involved in making *The Fellowship of the Ring*, and the long hours, the difficulties, and the passion. And we came away with four Oscars to boot!

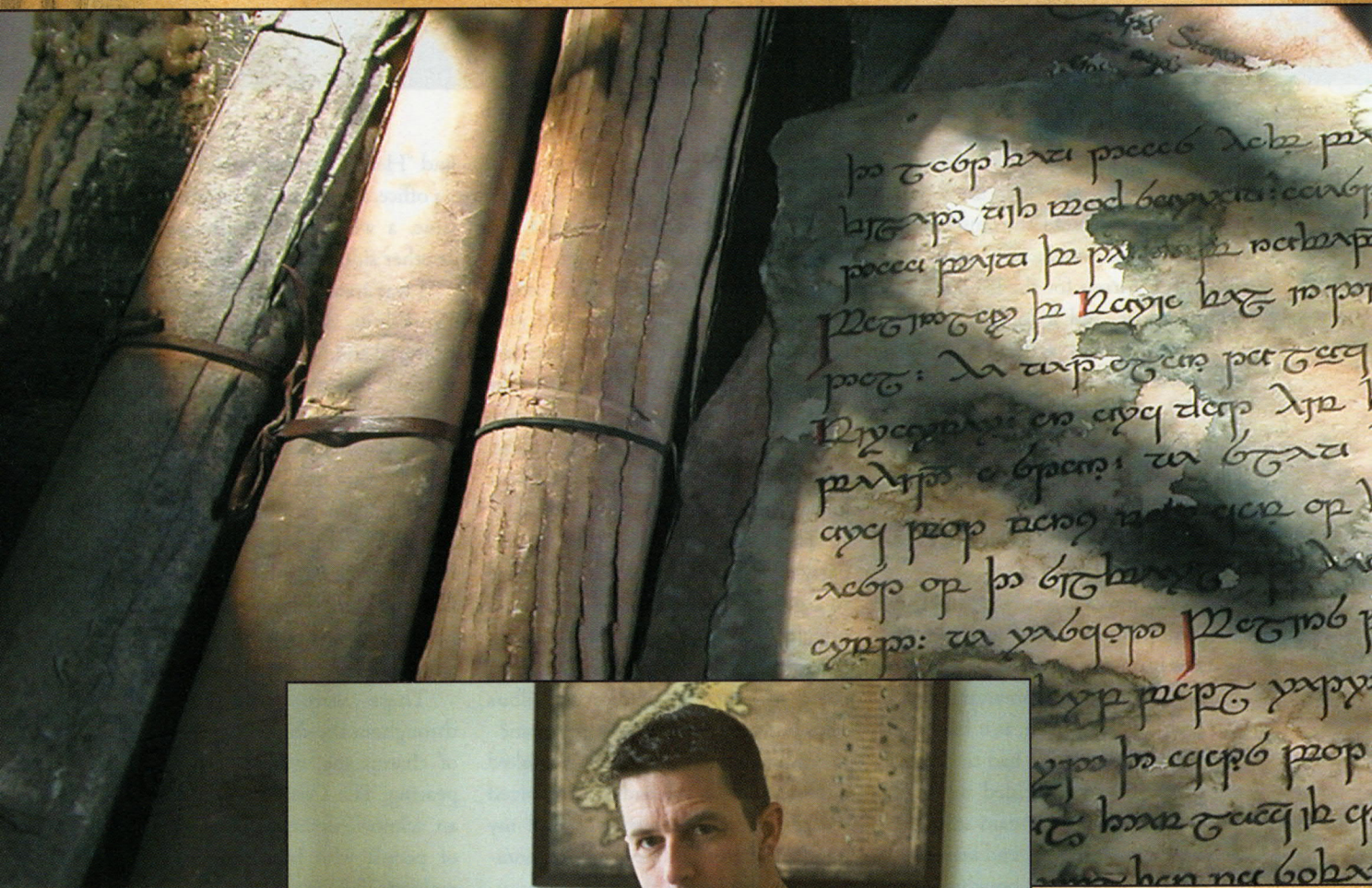
Round one was over, two more to go.

Meanwhile, as I write this, 2002 marches on. Containers are packed and ready for another Toronto exhibition, and we have begun preparing for the premieres of the second movie, *The Two Towers*.

I got so lucky. 🍀

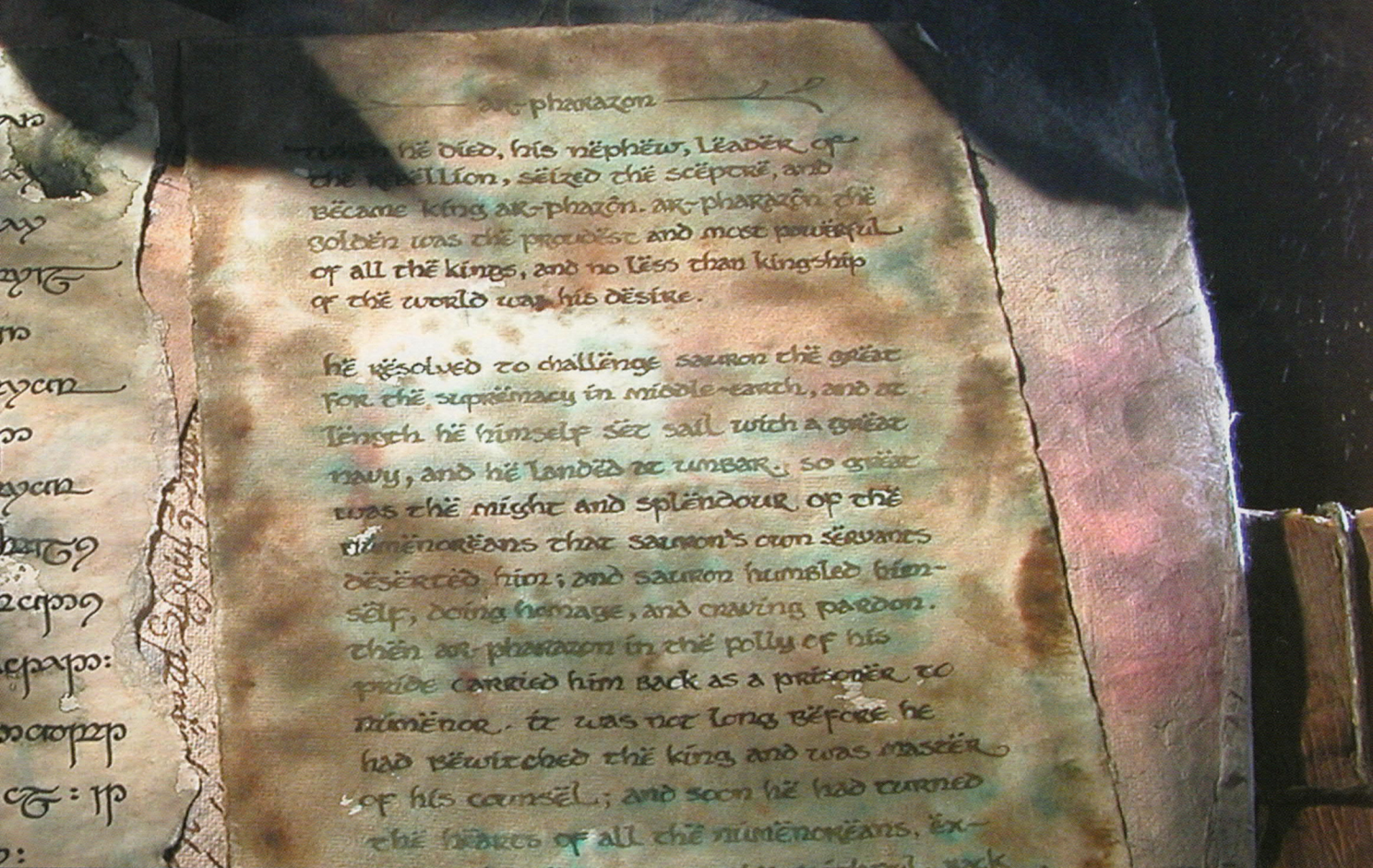


# UNCHARTED





# TERRITORY



## THE MAPS and CALLIGRAPHY of MIDDLE-EARTH

More than 25 years ago, the elegant strokes of J.R.R. Tolkien's Elvish language enchanted New Zealander Daniel Reeve, and the spell has never broken. The vivid imagery of *The Lord of the Rings* had Reeve drawing and writing his way into Middle-earth even in his youth. As with so many of *The Lord of the Rings* crew members, Reeve's interest existed long before he had any idea that he'd get the chance literally to walk through Middle-earth. When he found that his hobby would grant him access to the set of Peter Jackson's masterpiece, nothing could keep him away. Dan Madsen talked with Reeve about his work during a visit to New Zealand last summer. ■ ■ ■ BY DAN MADSEN





This was not my full-time job—I had another job. I was doing all of this part-time—after hours and in the middle of the night. When Nick would phone up and say, “This is what we need—come on in and see me immediately,” away I would go! I would take the project home and bring it back the next day or in the next couple of days.

WHO APPROVED YOUR WORK ONCE IT WAS COMPLETED?

Usually, they used what I did without any second attempt. Now and then, [Conceptual Artist] Alan Lee would suggest a correction and style to stay within his view of the look of things. Since he had an overall understanding of the look he wanted for each race in Middle-earth, he would sometimes make a little suggestion or tweak before we sat down to do the final thing. But usually, I just produced it, and it was used as is.

DID YOU KNOW HOW MUCH OF YOUR WORK WOULD BE SEEN ON SCREEN?

They made me understand that it was going to be central to the films and appear several times. Peter wanted quality down to the “nth” degree—there was attention to detail through every part of the film. It was incredible.

HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT WRITING THE ELVISH LANGUAGE? WHAT WAS THE INSPIRATION FOR THE WAY THE LETTERS ARE FORMED?

That came originally from J.R.R. Tolkien. There were enough samples of

DANIEL, HOW DID YOU BECOME INVOLVED WITH *The Lord of the Rings*?

I sent in a sample of my work and a letter introducing myself and saying, “This is what I can do guys. Do you need any Elvish calligraphers?” Immediately, [Art Department Manager] Chris Hennah called up and said, “Come in—we need this sort of stuff.”

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND. HOW DID YOU LEARN TO DO THIS SORT OF WORK?

I read J.R.R. Tolkien’s books when I was about 15 years old, and I immediately latched onto the beautiful ring inscription and the Elvish on the front of the book. It was just one of those things that I liked. I straight away decoded it, as I liked riddles and decoding things. I was always making maps—my brother and I made a map of Middle-earth. All of this happened 25 years ago! I really didn’t do much with it—just the occasional little scroll in Elvish over the years—and I never dreamed anything would come of it. Now, as a result of *The Lord of the Rings*, I do exhibits and sell my paintings regularly—watercolors and traditional art of buildings and boats, etc. I also do acrylic panels, which tend to be more close-up. I have always loved calligraphy, but the

Elvish was just one of those things I couldn’t leave alone over the years.

HAVE YOU STUDIED WRITING FROM EARLIER TIMES?

Yes, a little bit. I’ve owned a set of calligraphy pens for ages, and I’ve learned a lot more since starting the movie. I’ve been to the library numerous times and learned a lot.

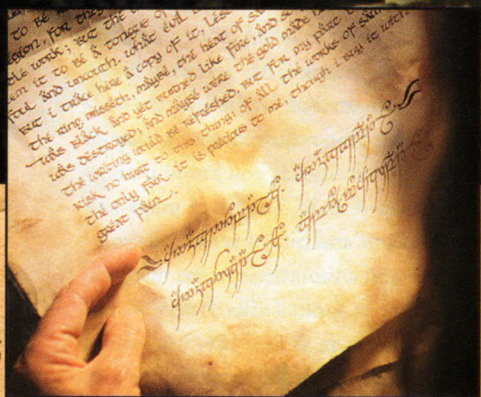
WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST *The Lord of the Rings* ASSIGNMENT?

Gandalf’s fireworks labels. They had a little piece of text that they wanted written in Elvish. Things had to be made in two sizes, identical in human size and hobbit size, so that they could shoot the things twice—once in Gandalf’s hands and then in Bilbo’s hands. That happened with a lot of props.

HOW WOULD A PROJECT COME TO YOU?

[Props Master] Nick Weir would look at the script, see which props he needed, and then call me to discuss it. For instance, on some of the scrolls I did, he said, “We need a whole bunch of scrolls for the Minas Tirith library. The hero’s piece will be Isildur’s scroll tracing the Ring writing, and Gandalf will look at it.”





ISILDUR'S SCROLL WITH THE  
ONE RING INSCRIPTION

his different styles amongst numerous books to fathom it all out. There was the Ring writing and various other things, including the Moria gate inscription. There are about three different styles. I have taken those and put my own stamp on them, but basically, they are as J.R.R. Tolkien described them; I just fleshed them out.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE YOU TO WRITE A SIMPLE SCROLL IN ELVISH?

Well, depending on the complexity, it can take a half-hour to an hour. I write it out once, sort out the spacing, and then do it again properly.

I UNDERSTAND YOU CREATED VARIOUS ALPHABETS FOR THE RACES?

Yes, I created various styles of alphabets—the Shire and Elvish English—so that the props they wanted in Elvish were readable on the screen. I did an alphabet for Gondor, too, as well as others.

WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THE ONE RING INSCRIPTION?

I did the Elvish writing on the One Ring twice—one for the movie [that was] reflected onto Elijah's face and digitally placed on the ring itself by Weta Workshop, and another very clean version for New Line merchandising. You've used it in both issues of the [Fan Club] magazine so far, and it is on almost as many pieces of merchandise packaging as the map of Middle-earth. But the real credit for the beauty of the piece goes to J.R.R. Tolkien, of course.

HOW DO YOU GET THE LETTERING SO STRAIGHT?

Well, I start by doing the lettering by hand. I have developed a system that allows me to scan my lettering and tweak it on the computer so the letters

are all the same width and such. It is not really computer work because the main work is getting the look for any particular font by hand; the computer just neaten it up.

WHY DO YOU USE QUILL PENS?

If it is supposed to look like it is written with a quill, then you have to use a quill. For a lot of the handmade papers that were being used, the quill was the most efficient way to get ink to stay on the page. I would cut the quills and use techniques to make them work better.

It was done the way it was done long ago, just as the swords used on the film were forged like they were in days of old.

HOW LONG DID IT TAKE YOU TO COMPLETE *BILBO'S JOURNAL*? I'VE SEEN THAT PROP, AND THE AMOUNT OF DETAIL IS REALLY QUITE AMAZING.

I've read *The Hobbit*, *The Silmarillion*, and *The Lord of the Rings* a number of times. As soon as I started working on the movies, I read all of them again, so





that everything was fresh in my mind, and I would know where to go to find reference material. I would say the journal took me more than a week's work. At first, I spent a lot of hours finalizing Bilbo's style of writing; I would do some samples with different quills or with calligraphy pens, and they were sent off to a meeting with Peter and came back with quotes like, "Less scratchy," or "More ink logs," etc. Eventually, we set a style, and then it came down to what to write. I sat down with *The Hobbit*, just rereading the whole thing page by page, and, having read it many times, I knew that there were always lots of references to food and "Where can I get my nice relaxing ale?" I just put that flavor into it as seen from Bilbo's point of view. I sat there for hour after hour composing it and then writing it onto the journal.

With Bilbo's journal, they said, "We want 60 pages, full of illustrations." Often, they asked for more than what would end up in the shot, but they [still] wanted all the detail there so it could be used if needed. I think I ended up doing 30 pages of the journal, and only five or six pages showed up on the screen in the end.

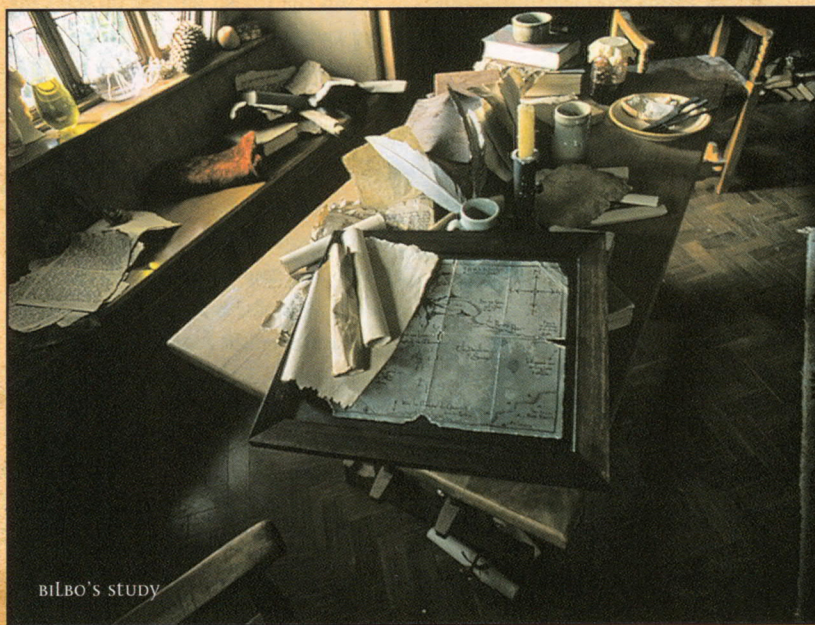
I also taught Ian Holm [Bilbo] his little bit that he had to write in Bilbo's journal on screen. I got him to use the

quill correctly and showed him how the entry should be written and how Bilbo would do it. The next day, he wrote it on the set—that little bit of the entry in his journal is on the DVD release. At different stages, I had to train Elijah [Wood] to write with his quill, too, and do his little bit in the journal. Those days were fun.

#### HOW DID YOU KNOW WHAT ILLUSTRATIONS TO ADD TO THE JOURNAL?

A lot of thought went into Bilbo's journal. I gathered from conversations I

had that Peter wanted lots of illustrations and maps—he seemed to be pretty keen on that. In the end, the only thing that was required was a map of the Shire because, as you know, there is a close-up of that. The more maps and illustrations and bits of verse and crossing out and annotations in the margins, the more it looked like Bilbo would have written it in real life. He would have gone back and crossed things out, added bits, and come back later on and added things; it was how Bilbo would have done it. As with many other







things, there was also a lot of time pressure—you know, “We need this for that shoot on Monday.” After having established the style, when it came down to the wire, there was probably a week to actually make the journal. There were some long nights doing that one!

TELL ME ABOUT ISILDUR’S VERY BEAUTIFUL BOOK FOR THE LIBRARY AT MINAS TIRITH.

I did a set of scrolls. I was able to just take J.R.R. Tolkien’s words and write Isildur’s comments on finding the Ring, exactly as described in the book. We devised several different styles of writing for hobbit, Rohan, and Gondor. So, for the Gondorian writing, I made up a sort of Celtic script.

DO ALL OF THE FONTS YOU CREATED HAVE A CELTIC FEEL TO THEM?

Yes, all of them have a Celtic flavor. I kept a consistency with each alphabet so that, for example, Rohan and Gon-

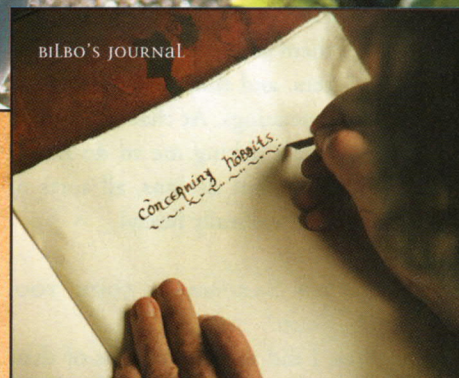
dor were closely related but had enough quirks to distinguish them.

WHICH DO YOU PREFER?

The Elvish is fun to do and always looks graceful. I had already made a pretty comprehensive study of Elvish and all its little quirks. I really enjoyed getting a different look. Every scrap of writing that I did for the movie actually says something, usually from *The Lord of the Rings* or *The Silmarillion*, or [is] my paraphrasing of J.R.R. Tolkien. Every little single thing that I wrote in Elvish



THORIN’S map



said something meaningful. Some of the Dwarvish that I hid around the rooms was sort of random, but instead of trying to fake it and write the Elvish randomly, it was easier to write something meaningful.

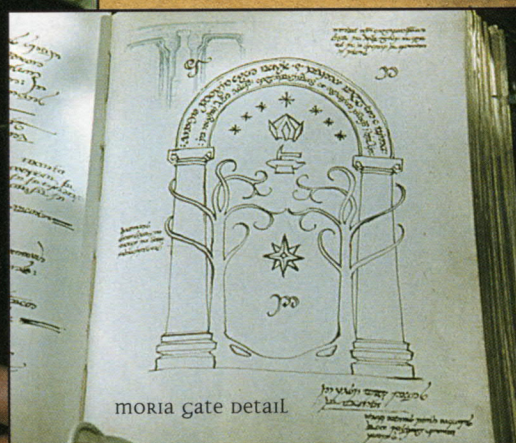
WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MORE INTERESTING THINGS YOU DID FOR THE FILMS?

Well, some of the things I did weren’t for the films at all. I did a piece for Sean Astin that was a gift from the Makeup Department. They asked me to create something with the logo that would accompany a gift they had for him. It was to go at the top of a board





THORIN'S map



morja gate detail

full of prosthetic ears and all sorts of things they gave to him! I also wrote [out] letters that Elijah Wood had composed for the other eight members of the Fellowship. They were his Christmas gifts to the other members—he wrote them as Frodo to each of their characters, and they had all sorts of double meanings. At that time, there were people asking me to do tattoo designs, T-shirt designs, all sorts of things—it was really funny!

YOU DID SARUMAN'S BOOK TOO, DIDN'T YOU?

Yes, I did several versions of that. Something got lost in the translation from Peter to Alan to me, and I first did it as almost a Middle-earth encyclopedia. But what Peter actually wanted was a private journal of Saruman's. So my first endeavor was scrapped, and we did it again with a very harsh, handwritten, scroll-smudged kind of thing. Alan painted the Balrog on one page, and I did the Moria Gate and the text all the way through it.

DID YOU DESIGN THE LOOK OF THE MORIA GATE INSCRIPTION?

They took it straight out of the book, and they got me to reproduce the inscription. [It went] from my drawing of it to what actually ended up

on the set [and] was changed again from there.

TELL ME ABOUT THE LARGE BOOK PAGES YOU CREATED FOR THE STORY OF TURIN TURAMBAR IN THE RIVENDELL CHAMBER.

They were used to decorate the dressings for the Rivendell set. The Elvish verse of the Fall of Gil-galad, which I had to create to follow the first two that J.R.R. Tolkien did in *The Lord of the Rings*, was interesting. I did that in black and gold calligraphy. The list of Numenorean kings ... there are all these details on the Rivendell set. The large book sitting on a lectern in Elrond's chamber opens on a page. I also designed the Elven telescope that is seen in

Elrond's chamber. That was one of my favorites. The finished article wasn't done by me, but I had drawn an Elven telescope, and the next time I turned up, there it was! I saw this beautiful brass telescope, and I said, "Wow, I designed that!" The main props designer was away for a few weeks, and Nick Weir called me and wanted me to do some prop design for a few weeks, but I was only able to do a few things, including the telescope. I just drew them up, and Nick took them away and had them made.

TELL ME ABOUT THE BOOK OF MAZARBUL.

I made about a dozen pages in different "hands," styles, and colors, which [Props Buyer] Nick Riera then silk-screened onto hundreds more pages to make up the bulk of the book. Then I made the three "hero" pages—copies of J.R.R. Tolkien's own versions of the pages from which Gandalf reads in the



ELROND'S CHAMBER



original story. I inserted my own text where the originals were made illegible by smudging and made left-side and right-side versions and several backup copies of each. I gave Nick photocopies of them with translations written in, so he'd know which bits he could smear and which bits should remain legible to be "read" on screen.

J.R.R. Tolkien prepared some pages of this book to be included in an illustrated version of *The Lord of the Rings*, but they never were. I knew nothing of them until the movie came up and I was given copies and told, "We need these hero pages—go out and produce them, please." They had in them another version of Atani writing, the Elvish that I hadn't encountered until then, and I was able to add that to the two [kinds of Elvish] I already knew about; I was fascinated by this third method of writing Elvish.

I can't recall now whether any except the last page are seen on screen.

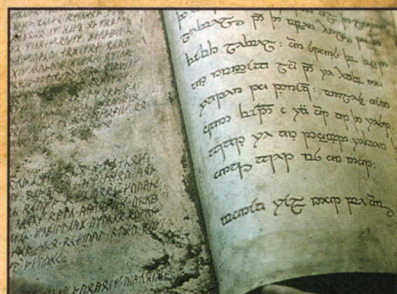
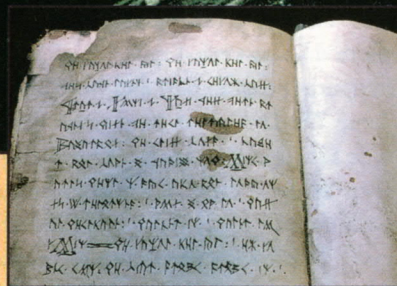
**WERE YOU INVOLVED IN NOT ONLY CREATING THE PAGES BUT ALSO AGING THEM TO LOOK LIKE THEY ARE OLD OR HAVE BEEN USED?**

Yes, I was. Since I was already a watercolor artist, I had pretty good techniques. I knew how paint was going to behave on the page, and I experimented with which inks were waterproof and which ones weren't. I would pre-age a page and then work on it, or I would



BOOK OF MAZARBUL

work on it first and then throw things at it to make a mess of it! Early on, they wanted Thorin's map. I made the map and knocked it back hugely; it was stained and battered and torn and really discolored and old-looking. I brought it over and showed Nick Weir, and he looked at it and said, "Thorin's map! This is great! Can you do it twice more in different sizes?!" So I ended up doing three! At the end, there was a fourth ... because Peter wanted a close-up to show the mountain looking more like a mountain and the dragon looking more life-like than what was in J.R.R. Tolkien's original. I did all of the aging myself.



barely seen in the movie at all. It's just another little detail.

**WHAT WAS THE MOST CHALLENGING TASK YOU WERE GIVEN?**

I don't think they threw anything at me that I couldn't do. The main pressure was time—they wanted everything to look fantastic, but they needed it yesterday. That was the most difficult thing. We were finishing the book for the Rivendell set a day before the shoot, and I was also writing the inscriptions over Alan Lee's paintings on the Rivendell set with this gold paint [that day]; there were no second chances if you messed it up. That was pretty challenging, and it is something that will be

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PIECE?**

Now that I look back over the list, I'd probably have to say Bilbo's—and Frodo's—journal would be the most satisfying and best part of my work for the movie. I had complete freedom over the text and illustrations and would quite happily have re-written Bilbo's entire story if there'd been more time. [Plus] it is central to the movie, rather than a background filler. I became Bilbo—and Frodo—as far as handwriting and narrative style goes, at least. There was a lot of time and research and care taken to get that book just right.



elven telescope



I'm also very proud of the Middle-earth map I made for merchandising, with its huge exposure and the likelihood that it will become the most recognized map of Middle-earth.

THAT MAP HAS BEEN SEEN EVERYWHERE! YOU WERE INSPIRED BY J.R.R. TOLKIEN'S WORK AS A YOUNG MAN, AND NOW YOU ARE CONTRIBUTING TO THAT WORLD YEARS LATER.

Yes, that's a great feeling. New Line prepared a style guide that uses a lot of my work. When they needed me to work on that, it became too much for me to do part-time. I quit my job as a computer programmer and have been doing *The Lord of the Rings* work full-time as a freelance artist and calligrapher. When it came down to it, I just couldn't walk away from this kind of work. I had been intending to break away from my computer programming and pursue my art career, and I was gathering momentum when all of this came along. It was just the perfect opportunity to jump on and ride the wave and see where it would lead.

YOU MUST BE PROUD OF THE WORK YOU HAVE DONE.

As soon as I was onboard here and saw how much effort everyone else was putting into this, I realized that it was a very special project. I am very proud to be working on these films.



RIVENDELL LIBRARY set featuring alan lee fresco

WHERE DO ALL THESE BEAUTIFUL THINGS YOU CREATED END UP?

I believe they are all in the props storage. A few of them have been around to some film festivals and, hopefully, someday there will be a *Lord of the Rings* museum or tour that will feature things like that. It would be nice to think that those things could end up [being seen] rather than [remaining] locked away.

HAVE YOU EVER YEARNED TO TAKE HOME ONE OF THE PROPS YOU CREATED FOR THE FILMS FOR YOUR OWN COLLECTION? *BILBO'S JOURNAL*, FOR INSTANCE?

I jokingly asked if there was any way I could keep the journal, but there was no way!

WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON NOW?

I am doing some of the book pages for *The Fellowship of the Ring* DVD—titles and menus. I've got the third style

guide coming up from New Line very soon and another one of several spin-off projects—this one is to create all of the artwork and lettering for Hasbro's version of the game *Risk*. Hasbro got me to design the board and other elements, which I have just done in eight languages! That's been a fun project.

WHAT WILL BE THE LASTING MEMORY YOU TAKE AWAY FROM WORKING ON THESE FILMS?

Possibly the contrast with [the place] where I had worked for the last 20 years—I was at a bank doing computer programming, and it was just full of lawyers and business people in suits and ties. At 3 Foot 6 [the production company for *The Lord of the Rings*] and Weta Workshop, I was surrounded by these creative, energetic people sitting around carving and painting and drawing. They had creativity oozing out of them! It was such a contrast to where I had come from. I entered into a whole different world. It was such a jump for me and something I knew nothing about until that point. My son is a *Lord of the Rings* nut, so he is excited that I am involved. He is about to turn 13, and he has collected a lot of the products from the film. He tells all of his classmates that his dad was involved with the films.

DANIEL, THANK YOU FOR YOUR BEAUTIFUL WORK AND FOR TAKING TIME TO TALK WITH US.

It's been my pleasure!



eregion map detail



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*YOUR QUEST BEGINS WITH  
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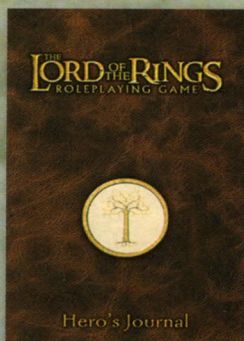
## *THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING™* SOURCEBOOK

- 128-page guide to the characters, events, and places seen in both the film and the first novel
- Includes over fifteen full-color maps of key locations



## NARRATOR'S SCREEN

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- Digest-sized character journal
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Look for these other  
*The Lord of the Rings*  
Roleplaying Game resources  
to release later this year:

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- FELL BEASTS AND WONDROUS MAGIC BOOK
- THE TWO TOWERS SOURCEBOOK
- MORIA (BOXED SET FOR THE CORE GAME)
- HELM'S DEEP SOURCEBOOK

# THE LORD OF THE RINGS ROLEPLAYING GAME



DOWN THE ADVENTURE PATH

# FOILED



**F**or more than five decades, the Topps Company has been associated with America's favorite pastime, answering baseball fans' passion for the game with the much-loved trading cards it began producing in 1951.

But Topps has never been all about baseball. Its line of entertainment trading cards has fed the enthusiasm of youth and collectors through decades of television and film, from Davy Crocket to Star Wars. Given this impressive history, it was only fitting that Topps—founded in 1938 as Topps Gum, selling everything from Bazooka gum in the late 1940s to Push-Pops in modern times—should be the guardian of the collector's card line for the historic The Lord of the Rings film trilogy.



# AGAIN

BY STEPHEN BLACKMON

## Topps Goes to Middle-earth

### FANS AT THE HELM

When Topps teamed up with New Line Cinema to produce *The Lord of the Rings* collector's cards, the company was able to entrust the project to two true fans of the story.

Matthew Saunders, editor of entertainment cards for Topps and the project manager for *The Lord of the Rings* card series, says he was aware of the books when he was growing up, but didn't start reading them until much later. When he did, he was hooked. "It's a wonderfully complex, richly layered fantasy world that is so fully realized and—although this might sound contradictory—realistic, that you have no trouble immersing yourself in it,"

Saunders says. "Like the best sci-fi/fantasy literature, it has an escapist element to it, an entertainment element, but you don't have to check your brain at the door. ... It has everything one could ask of an epic tale: humor, romance, action, adventure, and so on. There's a reason that it's a classic and has been endlessly imitated and borrowed from for so long now."

John Williams, supervising editor of entertainment cards for Topps, read the book in junior high and felt a deeply personal connection to the story; he was obviously very excited when Topps began pursuing the license for *The Lord of the Rings* film project four years before the release of the first movie.

"Well, I'm 5 foot 6, so I'm practically a hobbit," Williams says with a laugh.

"Honestly, I think the most appealing theme in the story is that, even in the face of incredible adversity, one individual can make the world a better place. This is a very simple theme that, in less capable hands, would seem trite. However, J.R.R. Tolkien pulls it off brilliantly, mainly because he doesn't sugarcoat it. There's a certain amount of grit to this world he created—and Jackson brought to life—and that makes it seem very real. It's a story about good and evil, but it's not black-and-white. Good men fall. Kings are deceived."

### THE CREATIVE PROCESS

At the heart of the Topps design process is New Line Cinema's "style guide" for each film in the trilogy, which provides patterns, icons, symbols, color schemes, borders, imagery, typography,

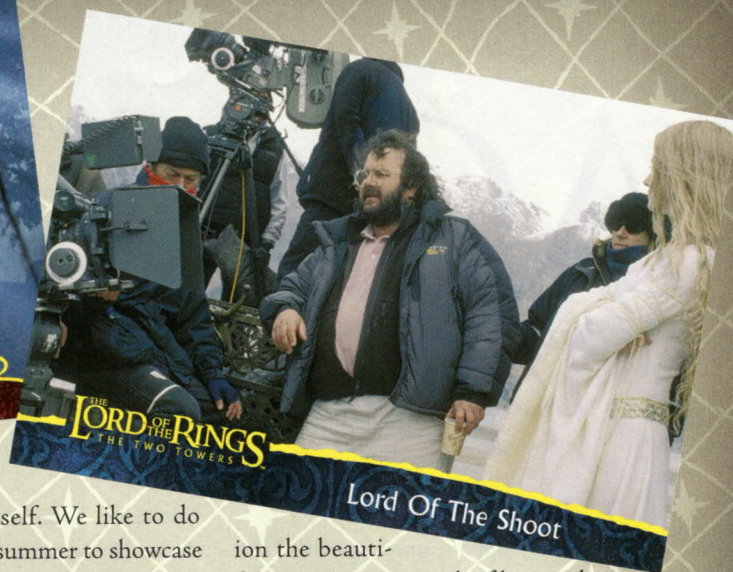
and more for all of the various characters, races, and locales that encompass Middle-earth, as well as the guidelines that Topps and other licensees need to follow when designing their products.

Topps had a wealth of material to choose from in designing its cards, says Saunders, so the first step is sitting down with Williams and Topps publisher Ira Friedman to hammer out the basic design direction for the card set. Next, Topps' designers do their part with input from Saunders and Williams along the way.

"In terms of content," says Saunders, "there are three areas we wanted to emphasize in the main set—characters, storyline, and behind-the-scenes. The main set is broken down into subsets of each, with an







additional checklist/title card thrown in at the end of the whole set. The subsets are self-explanatory. We introduce the characters with brief bios and update them as the movies continue. The story of the movie is highlighted in the storyline cards. And the behind-the-scenes cards delve into the movie-making magic and candid moments of the production."

Topps tries to make sure there is continuity between the cards in each set, particularly the storyline cards, Saunders says. "But we also want each card to make sense on its own, as an individual unit," he explains. "If someone picks up a card, they should understand what is going on in the imagery and text. And as they look at additional cards in the set, they can then see how it all ties in and flows together. In the same sense, this also means that all the designs need to be complementary. The storyline card design will be different from the behind-the-scenes card design, but they look like they come from the same family."

Of course, Saunders and his Topps colleagues have to concede to a higher power on some design decisions: Peter Jackson gets to decide what material will *not* be seen on a Topps card before it is unveiled at the theater! "Certain shots, characters, and/or scenes have a moratorium on them," Saunders says. "At the end of the day, it's still all about the movie, and Peter Jackson wants to save certain goodies for audiences to see

first in the film itself. We like to do Update sets in the summer to showcase this additional material that wasn't available the first-time around."

Topps works closely with John Mayo, creative director at New Line Cinema, every step of the way until the company has New Line's blessing on the final designs that fans will see in their favorite card shops.

### SPECIAL TOUCHES

In a way, the collectors themselves are part of the design process because the Topps team is always considering what it can do to excite *The Lord of the Rings* fans.

"Prismatic foil cards seemed fairly obvious to us, early on," Saunders says. "The foil accents metal and metallic surfaces, and with so much armor, weaponry, and what-not in the films, it seemed only natural to do a special set of cards that takes advantage of this. The prismatic foils are truly beautiful, sharp-looking cards."

Prismatic foil "has been around for a while," Williams adds. "The key issue is deciding which areas you want the foil to show through completely, partially, or not at all. We generally don't want the foil showing through faces but do want it to show through metallic surfaces like armor."

Memorabilia and Autograph cards are the most special additions to Topps card sets. Memorabilia cards incorporate swatches of the fabrics used to fash-

ion the beautiful costumes seen in the films, and autograph cards are, of course, signed by cast members. Each card is one of a kind, and understandably, there are limited quantities of these special card types in Topps sets.

"The autograph and memorabilia cards are a nice extra for the fans," Saunders says. "This is a way that we can give them a piece of the movie, so to speak. Having that little swatch of material is a [particularly] nice bonus: Fans can own an 'actual' piece of Middle-earth!"

### THE TWO TOWERS

We caught up with Williams and Saunders a few weeks after our initial interview, checking in after *The Two Towers* debuted in December to see what they thought of Film Two in the trilogy.

"*The Two Towers* is breath-taking," Williams says. "You really can't compare it to *Fellowship*—they're so different. I was on the edge of my seat through the entire film. Gollum is the best digital creation that I've ever seen—and Andy Serkis' performance is incredible."

Saunders agrees. "Gollum is the first digital character that was also truly an actor's performance," he says. "[Serkis] breathed life into the character and deserves the highest accolades, including consideration for an Oscar on the same level as any other non-CGI-layered actor would!"



# THE LORD OF THE RINGS

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### The Two Towers NEW ZEALAND STAMP SET

Just released! *The Two Towers* New Zealand stamp set is framed in black, double-matted, and includes a brass plaque with series name and release date. The stamps include Aragorn and Éowyn, Orc Raider on Warg, Gandalf the White, Easterlings, Frodo captured, and Éowyn at Edoras.

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[A] SET 100276	\$89.95
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[B] SHEETLETS:	
100288 Strider	\$39.95 each
100285 Boromir	\$39.95 each
100289 Gandalf/Saruman	\$39.95 each
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# THE LORD OF THE RINGS

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[A] Frodo	
100040	\$49.95 each
[B] Middle-earth Map	
100037	\$49.95 each
[C] Elven Script	
100038	\$49.95 each
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Exclusive lithographs measure 16" x 12" and are printed on archival-quality, acid-free paper. The Cave Troll lithograph is a limited print run of 1,500 pieces. The Witch-King and Sauron are limited to 3,000 each.

[D] Cave Troll	100009
[E] Sauron	100010
[F] Witch-king	100011
	\$20.00 each
Member Price	\$18.00 each

**Exclusive!**

**[A] Frodo**  
100040 \$49.95 each

**[B] Middle-earth Map**  
100037 \$49.95 each

**[C] Elven Script**  
100038 \$49.95 each  
Member Price \$44.95 each

**[D] Cave Troll**  
100009 \$20.00 each  
Member Price \$18.00 each

**[E] Sauron**  
100010 \$20.00 each  
Member Price \$18.00 each

**[F] Witch-king**  
100011 \$20.00 each  
Member Price \$18.00 each

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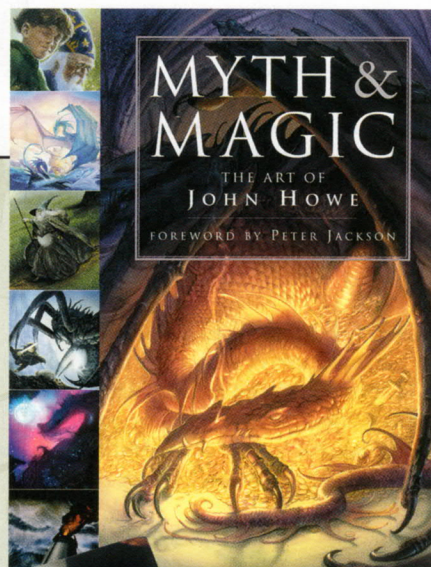
RECENT FORGERIES  
VIGGO MORTENSEN

A



COINCIDENCE OF MEMORY  
VIGGO MORTENSEN

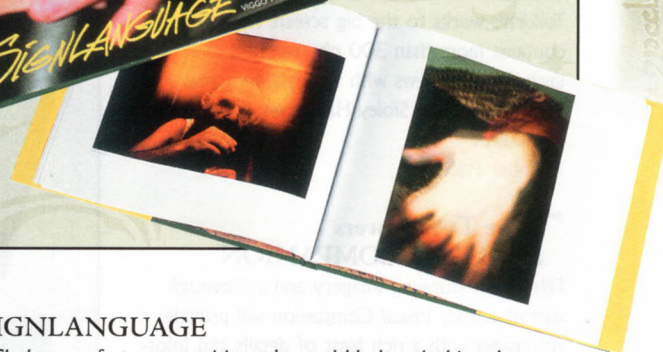
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D



C



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[A] 103141 \$25.00

Member Price \$22.50

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[D] 103143 \$29.99

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# THE LORD OF THE RINGS

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### THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO MIDDLE-EARTH

An A-Z guide of all things Middle-earth, this companion to Tolkien's world is an essential guide for all who love Middle-earth, its characters, and its surroundings. Written by Robert Foster. Softcover, 592 pages.

[A] 103114 \$12.95  
Member Price \$11.65

### ATLAS OF MIDDLE-EARTH

An exhaustive atlas of every important location in Middle-earth, this revised volume by Karen Wynn Fonstad contains page after page of maps and diagrams that are an essential reference for any *The Lord of the Rings* fan. Softcover, 210 pages.

[B] 100278 \$24.00  
Member Price \$21.60

### The Lord of the Rings: THE MAKING OF THE MOVIE TRILOGY

With a foreword by Sir Ian McKellen, this chronicle of the making of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy tells the exciting tale of the exhilarating, often exhausting quest to bring Tolkien's works to the big screen. The book contains more than 300 photographs and exclusive interviews with the cast and crew. Written by Brian Sibley. Hardcover, 192 pages.

[C] 103144 \$29.95  
Member Price: \$26.95

### The Two Towers VISUAL COMPANION

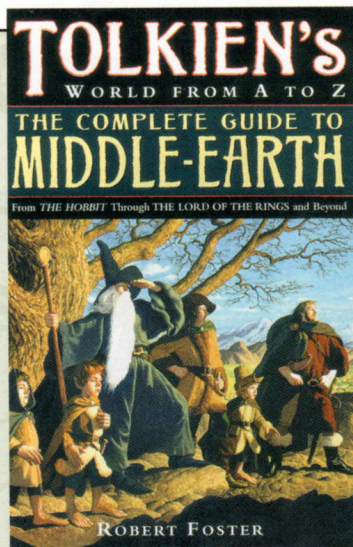
Filled with stunning imagery and a thorough narrative text, *Visual Companion* will provide the reader with a rich feast of details and information. Written by Jude Fisher. Hardcover, 72 pages.

[D] 103145 \$18.95  
Member Price \$17.05

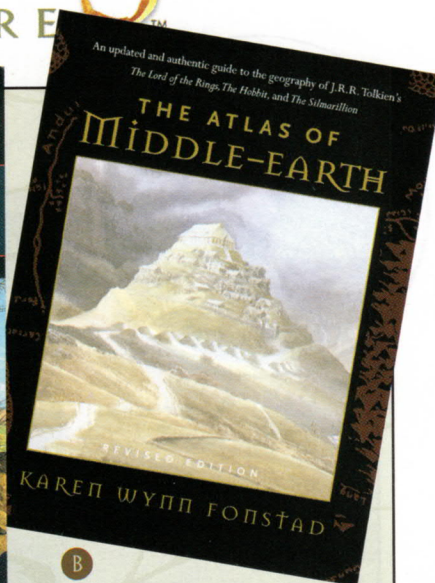
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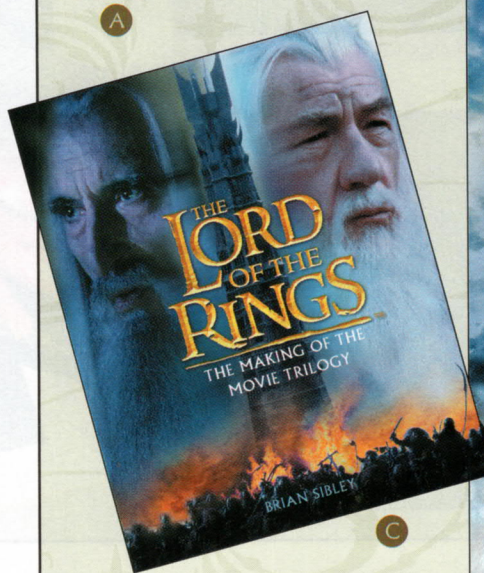
[E] 103146 Tree of Gondor \$12.95  
[F] 103147 One Ring \$12.95  
Member Price \$11.65



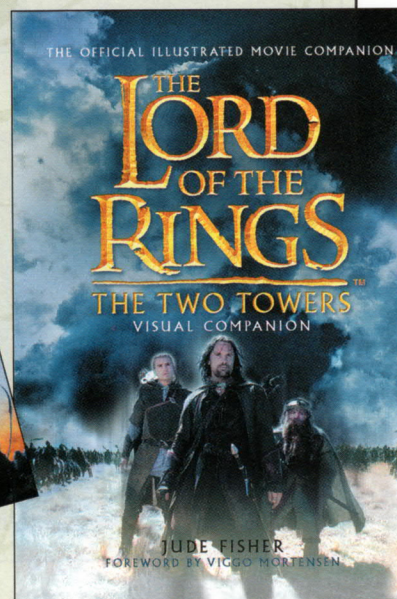
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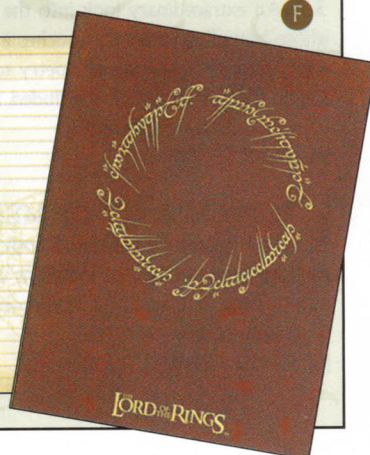
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100070 FOTR– Aragorn	\$10.99 each
100069 FOTR– Gandalf	\$10.99 each
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100129 Mines of Moria – Gandalf	\$10.99 each
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[C] 100197 The Two Towers – Théoden	\$10.99 each
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[G] 103100 Elven	\$20.00 each
103101 Isengard	\$20.00 each
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Member Price	\$18.00 each

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[H] 1000264	\$30.00 each
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103057	\$4.50
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# THE LORD OF THE RINGS

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### The Fellowship of the Ring VINYL MODEL KITS

Imported from Germany, these 1:6 scale *The Fellowship of the Ring* vinyl model

kits allow you to add your own creative touch to *The Lord of the Rings* saga. Each kit comes unassembled and unpainted. Pieces are sculpted with a wealth of detail and are easily glued together. Paint is not included. Finished models measure approximately 12" high. A stand with a name plaque is included. Outside Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, these kits are available only through *The Lord of the Rings* Fan Club.

[A] GANDALF	100029
[B] SARUMAN	100030
[C] FRODO	100031
[D] URUK-HAI	100282
	\$50.00 each
Member Price	\$45.00 each

### The Fellowship of the Ring RESIN MODEL KITS

Resin Kits are the same scale and design as the vinyl kits, but are already painted. Some assembly required.

GANDALF	100279
SARUMAN	100280
FRODO	100281
URUK-HAI	100283
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103274 (singles) \$1.99 Member Price \$1.79  
 [A] 103275 (display box of 24) \$43.00 Member Price \$38.70

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### The Fellowship of the Ring PLATINUM SERIES SPECIAL EXTENDED DVD EDITION

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[C] 100269 \$39.99 Member Price \$35.99

### The Fellowship of the Ring COLLECTOR'S DVD GIFT SET

The five-disc Gift Set contains the four discs of the Special Extended DVD Edition, as well as *The Lord of the Rings* Fan Club charter member screen credits; two bookend sculptures by Sideshow-Weta; the *National Geographic Beyond the Movie* DVD; an exclusive Hobbit-sized edition of *The Lord of the Rings* Fan Club Official Movie Magazine; and several collectible Decipher trading cards—all enclosed in a collector's box specially designed by Alan Lee.

[D] 100270 \$79.99 Member Price \$71.99

THE  
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# Quoteworthy

A sampling of our favorite quotes from this issue...

"I GUESS [MY LASTING MEMORY] WAS WORKING ON SOMETHING WHERE PEOPLE DIDN'T HAVE TO COMPROMISE. WE DIDN'T HAVE TO JUST MAKE DO—when they built Edoras, we didn't just make do with a blue screen, we actually went down and made it. To actually work on something that big where you can fully realize the breadth of the story was a really big high." [Miranda Otto, Éowyn]



"IF I COULD DREAM OF ANY REACTION, IT WOULD BE THAT; IT WOULD BE people getting lost in the movie and, for the length of the film, people forgetting that they are in a theater and getting swept away into an imaginary world. THAT'S REALLY THE ULTIMATE YOU CAN HOPE FOR WHEN YOU ARE MAKING A FILM LIKE THIS." [Peter Jackson, Director]

"THE FEMALE ROHAN RIDERS DID DOUBLE DUTY PLAYING the part of a horde of Ringwraith riders. THAT'S SOMETHING THAT PEOPLE WATCHING THE MOVIE WON'T REALIZE—THEY'RE WATCHING 50-YEAR-OLD WOMEN COME RIDING DOWN. Be very afraid of these 50-year-old women—they looked pretty scary!" [Steve Old, Horse Coordinator and Head of the Horse Department]



"I WAS AT A BANK DOING COMPUTER PROGRAMMING, and it was just full of lawyers and business people in suits and ties... CONTRASTED WITH 3 FOOT 6 AND WETA WORKSHOP, WHERE I WAS SURROUNDED BY THESE creative, energetic people sitting around carving and painting and drawing. THEY HAD CREATIVITY OOZING OUT OF THEM!" [Daniel Reeve, Artist and Calligrapher]

## COMING UP

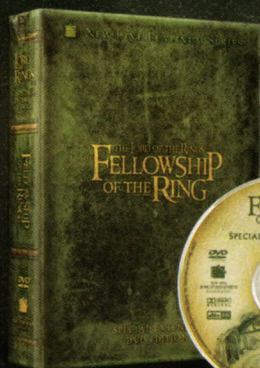
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