

# FAERIE MAGAZINE

*Celebrating the Extraordinary*

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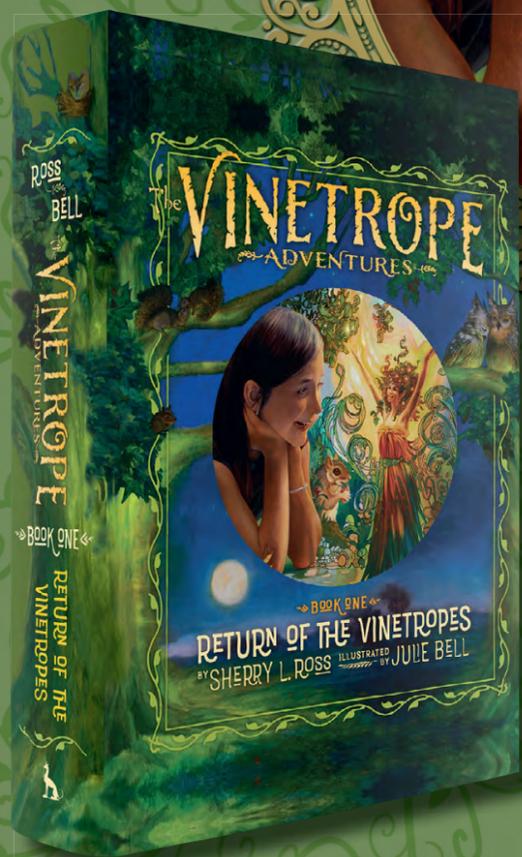


*the*  
**J.R.R. TOLKIEN**  
*issue*

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The fairy world has returned! They call themselves Vinetropes!  
Clean energy runs through their veins and they will change the course of history!  
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# The VINETROPE ADVENTURES



» BOOK ONE «

## RETURN OF THE VINETROPES

BY SHERRY L. ROSS ILLUSTRATED BY JULIE BELL

*Return of the Vinetropes*  
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*“There are no safe paths in this part of the world. Remember you are over the Edge of the Wild now, and in for all sorts of fun wherever you go.”* —J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit*

The elven, starlight-haired artist and model Ian Hencher might have stepped right off a Tolkien-penned page, and when I saw the results of a gleaming photo shoot with him and Victoria Fielder, captured by Bella Kotak, I knew we had a cover—and a theme for this spring issue. What could be more faerie than a world populated by both glittering elven royalty and the cozy, homebody hobbits? In this special Tolkien issue, we present both, in their most dazzling lights.

We have the elven world: not only the elegant Lothlórien elves of the cover shoot, but some earthier Mirkwood elves from Ana Isabel de Fontes Correia (with Hencher making his second elf appearance), along with an elven tea party with Janne Eikeblad, an elven crown tutorial from JoEllen Elam Conway, a DIY elven hairstyle from Marita Tathariel, and a primer on elven sleep from Massie Jones. Laren Stover even visited a school for elves in Iceland, learning, among other things, that they enjoy jam-filled pancakes, at least in that part of the world—a fact that makes all of us at *Faerie Magazine* suspect we might secretly be elves too.

And we have the hobbit world: from the elaborate (and filling!) hobbit breakfast from Sara Ghedina to the carved wooden spoons of Giles Newman; the snug, firelit hobbit holes of Hobbiton, photographed glowingly by Shaun Jeffers; and the charming hobbit art sprinkled throughout from Guinevere von Sneeden, whose own warm, comfy stone house in New England (shared in our 2016 spring issue) might have come straight from a Tolkien tale. Rona Berg and Shveta Thakrar take us deep into forests that Tolkien’s hobbits might have wandered through, while Alex Hester shares some tips on planning an epic journey of your own.

We also talk to some Tolkien superstars: Laura Marjorie Miller sits down with legendary artist Alan Lee, who among other things won an Oscar for his production design on Peter Jackson’s *The Return of the King* film, while Grace Nuth interviews the incomparable Daniel Reeve, who did all the calligraphy for these films as well as for *The Hobbit* series. Theodora Goss tells us about Tolkien and fairy stories—and his belief that fairy tales are not about fairies but *Faërie* itself, “which contains many things besides elves and fays, and besides dwarves, witches, trolls, giants, or dragons: it holds the seas, the sun, the moon, the sky; and the earth, and all things that are in it: tree and bird, water and stone, wine and bread, and ourselves, mortal men, when we are enchanted.”

Of course, this is the vision of *Faerie Magazine* as well: to not just feature fairies but all things of the earth, and of mortals, when we are enchanted. To that end, we hope that this special issue—devoted to the master of enchantment and the beauty of the world he created—works its own small magic too.

Love,

*Carolyn Turgeon*





# FAERIE magazine

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## CONTRIBUTORS

Faerie Magazine's J.R.R. Tolkien Issue



**JoEllen Elam Conway**

JoEllen Elam Conway is the mind behind the couture studio Firefly Path, which was featured on the cover of last summer's issue of *Faerie Magazine*. Working out of her whimsical studio in Los Angeles, she has crafted hundreds of gowns and accessories for fantasy-loving clients around the world. She's published her original sewing patterns with Simplicity Patterns, and, for this issue, is excited to share a design for an elven branch circlet you can make at home. "When I first read about the wood elves in *The Hobbit*," she says, "it sparked an obsession. I wanted to be a part of that world! I try to incorporate a little elven aesthetic in each of my designs."



**Janne Eikeblad**

Janne Eikeblad is a wood elf living in Norway, where she runs a small mushroom farm with her partner. A permaculturist, eco-village designer, forager, artist, and photographer, she spends as much time in nature as possible, always looking for the next plant to forage. She's continuously aiming for green living and homesteading and numerous DIY projects as well as establishing her fairy-tale eco-village. She's hopelessly passionate about elves, fairies, and all the mystical aspects of life—and shares that love (and her Tolkienesque home) in this issue of *Faerie Magazine*. "I got a bit carried away," she says, "and decided to throw an elven tea party, too!"



**Ana Isabel de Fontes Correia**

Ana Isabel de Fontes Correia is an internationally published fine art portrait photographer. Although currently living in London with her partner William and their two cats, she was born on one of the islands of the beautiful Azores archipelago in Portugal. She has always been attracted to legends and mythology and has a strong passion for women's rights—all of which have influenced her art. "I had always been a fan of the fantasy world and its magical creatures," she says of her work for this issue, "and so being able to portray and capture the love between two elves within the Tolkien universe was, in reality, a dream come true to me."



**Theodora Goss**

Theodora Goss is the World Fantasy and Rhysling Award-winning author or editor of seven books, including the short-story collection *In the Forest of Forgetting*, the poetry collection *Songs for Ophelia*, and her debut novel *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter*. She teaches at Boston University and in the Stonecoast MFA program, where she specializes in fantasy, fairy tales, and the Gothic. "I've loved J.R.R. Tolkien since I was a teenager," she says. "When I heard *Faerie Magazine* was planning a Tolkien-themed issue, I knew I had to write about his essay on fairy tales. Tolkien believed that fairy tales were deeply, fundamentally true—and I agree!"



**Bella Kotak**

Bella Kotak is a fine art, fashion, and portrait photographer based in Oxford and London. From the moment she picked up a camera and started sharing her work online, she was hooked by this medium that translates thoughts and imagination into tangible form. Inspired by fairy tales, nature, and strong feminine characters, Kotak's pictures (including our cover shot) remind us that there's magic in the most ordinary of spaces. "I've read *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* series several times over the years," she says, "and I loved creating a series that channels Tolkien's world and my love of elven magic, golden sunset light, and beautiful English woodland."



**Marita Tathariel**

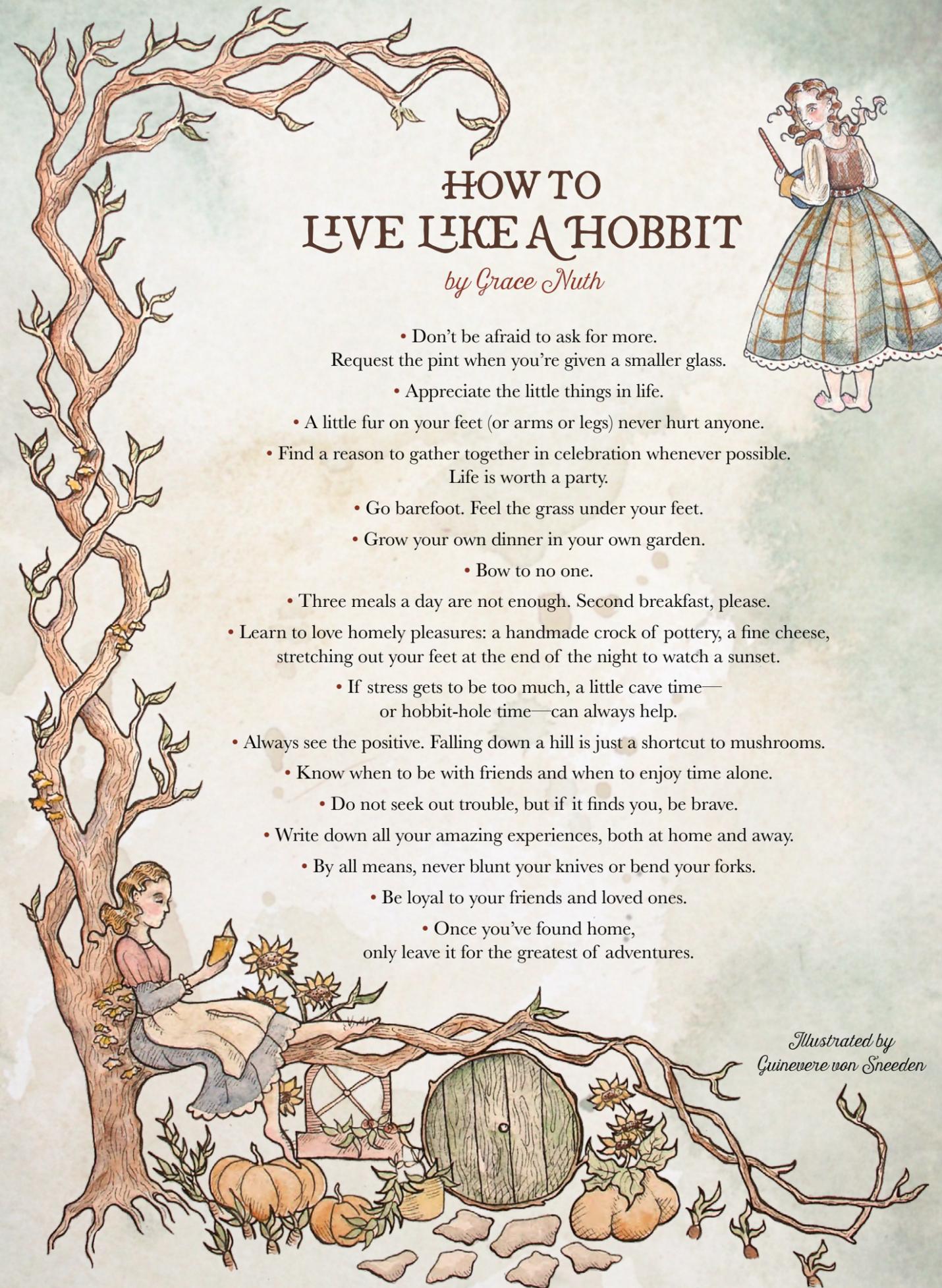
Marita Tathariel is a special effects artist, model, and actress from the deep woods of Norway. She's worked as a TV host for TV-Norge, appeared in several plays and TV shows around the world, and achieved the level of mastery in sculpting through the Stan Winston School of Character Arts. She's also a pianist and marital artist. The works of J.R.R. Tolkien have been a huge part of her life since early childhood. Creating the elven hair tutorial for this issue was a lovely experience, she says. "I hope the readers of *Faerie* have loads of fun re-creating the look. Remember, never be afraid of expressing yourselves through looks or creativity!"

## HOW TO LIVE LIKE A HOBBIT

by Grace Nuth



- Don't be afraid to ask for more. Request the pint when you're given a smaller glass.
- Appreciate the little things in life.
- A little fur on your feet (or arms or legs) never hurt anyone.
- Find a reason to gather together in celebration whenever possible. Life is worth a party.
  - Go barefoot. Feel the grass under your feet.
  - Grow your own dinner in your own garden.
  - Bow to no one.
- Three meals a day are not enough. Second breakfast, please.
- Learn to love homely pleasures: a handmade crock of pottery, a fine cheese, stretching out your feet at the end of the night to watch a sunset.
  - If stress gets to be too much, a little cave time—or hobbit-hole time—can always help.
- Always see the positive. Falling down a hill is just a shortcut to mushrooms.
  - Know when to be with friends and when to enjoy time alone.
  - Do not seek out trouble, but if it finds you, be brave.
- Write down all your amazing experiences, both at home and away.
  - By all means, never blunt your knives or bend your forks.
  - Be loyal to your friends and loved ones.
  - Once you've found home, only leave it for the greatest of adventures.



Illustrated by  
Guinevere von Sneed

# A Celebration of Moss

by The Wondersmith

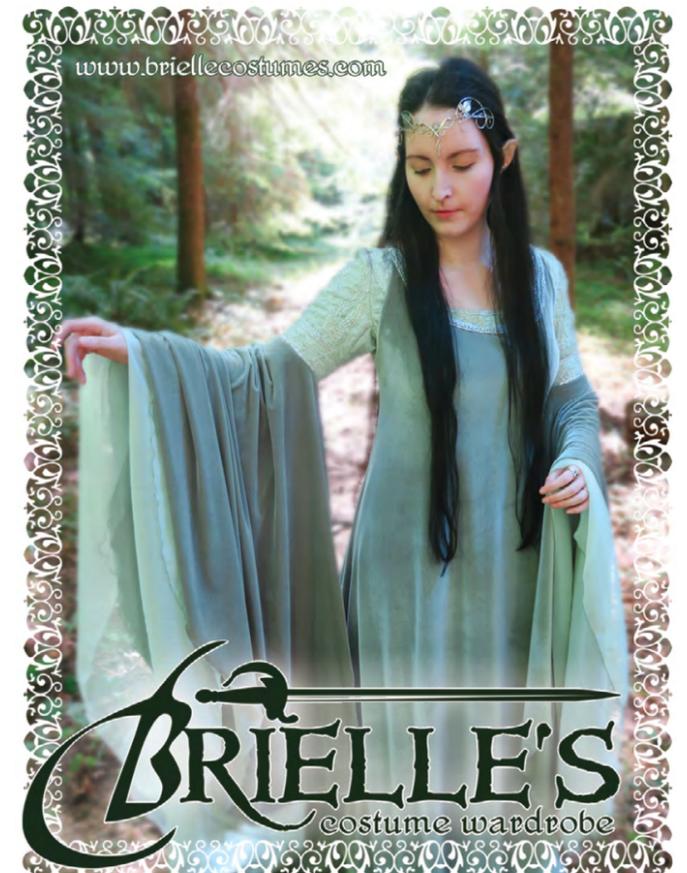


## A MOSS-GAZING DINNER FIT FOR ELVES

Imagine you're on a journey through Mirkwood Forest, and you and your companions stumble across a small clearing and find this magical, mossy scene ... Here you might take a moment to reflect on the smaller things before continuing on your way.

This table, laid by The Wondersmith, an artist from the Pacific Northwest, evokes that sort of Tolkienesque magic. The Wondersmith creates surprise, curiosity-fueled dinners (or unexpected parties) for unsuspecting guests: strangers that stumble upon invitations in out-of-the-way places. Each meal is full of wild flavors and local ingredients. At the dinner seen here, she highlighted the art of moss-gazing—and had her guests make a point to notice the minute and the tiny, the dramatic landscapes found within the soft carpet of moss underfoot and the diversity of flavors hidden under a decaying log. Everything they dined on (and dined out of) was inspired by the delicate wonders of the forest floor, transformed through the poetry of manipulated ingredients and silica. Just remember, she says, if you're having trouble seeing the big picture, just look closer.

Learn more about The Wondersmith at [thewondersmith.com](http://thewondersmith.com).



On Our Cover  
ELVEN ROYALTY

BY GRACE NUTH  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BELLA KOTAK



*“The hobbits sat in shadow by the wayside. Before long the elves came down the lane towards the valley. They passed slowly, and the hobbits could see the starlight glimmering on their hair and in their eyes. They bore no lights, yet as they walked a shimmer, like the light of the moon above the rim of the hills before it rises, seemed to fall about their feet.” — J.R.R. Tolkien, The Fellowship of the Ring*

Long before the elves of Middle-earth departed to the West, never to be seen again except through legends and tales, they dwelled in forest cities of unimaginable beauty, a society at once awe-inspiring and secretive, insular. They were one with nature and glowed with the radiance of every twilight, bathed in the dew of every sunrise. Their beauty and their magic were beyond the understanding of mortal men. And among them there were some who shone with light above the rest, like stars with their own orbits. These kings and queens of the elves in their incandescent days of glory were a beauty unlike anything Middle-earth would ever see again.

The idea of creating a photo shoot with the goal of visually embodying such a scintillating grace would be intimidating to any photographer, but Bella Kotak was clearly up to the challenge. On a chilly morning, models Ian Hencher and Victoria Fielder gathered at Kotak’s home in Oxford, England, and there Hencher transformed himself and Fielder into visions of immortal loveliness. “We were portraying Thranduil and his wife—both Lothlórien silvan elves, elegant and shimmering,” he says. Wearing ear tips from Madhouse FX Studio, they garbed themselves in a gown with a white gossamer cloak and a tunic by The Dark Angel Design Company. Hencher wrapped up in a silver cloak from Rowans Closet, and as a finishing touch, the two wore glorious elven crowns seemingly spun from ferns and dew, by Freckles Fairy Chest.

This was not the first time Hencher has played the part of elven royalty. “The elven aesthetic is merely a dress code for my childish imagination, provoked by the world around me,” he says. “Tolkien gave us a beautiful formula to discover ourselves as artists, and a world for the most literate of minds to melt into.”

Once properly garbed in the late afternoon light, they, along with Kotak’s partner, Pratik, walked to Shotover Park in Oxford.

“The woods were quiet, tree branches still bare from winter’s grip. However, there was a sweet smell whispering of a coming spring,” recalls Kotak. “While wandering, we found a tree covered with tiny blossoming flowers, and it was there, with the light of a setting sun peeking through, where we captured the cover image of this issue.”

It seemed fitting to Kotak to create this homage to Tolkien’s most elegant of races in her hometown of Oxford. “It gives me great pleasure to live in the very city where Tolkien lived, worked, and wrote these magical books,” she says. “There’s something in the air here—it’s one of my favorite places in the world.”

Hencher was similarly moved. “It was such a fun experience and also emotional. The fantasy and realism in Bella’s work has the power to move viewers, and the people who are captured feel that too. The expectations we set for ourselves were high. We paid great attention to detail during the makeup process to portray elven royalty—and bring this vision to life.”

The elves were indelibly linked with the natural world in their culture, magic, and arts, so Kotak is constantly aware of this connection in creating her own work. “Nature inspires art, and art inspires our nature. Intrinsically linked, we will forever be connected, and I try to channel that connection in all my work,” she says. “I used natural light alone to set the mood in this shoot, following the sun until its golden light kissed our elven pair before slipping in the magical blue-hued twilight hour.”



*Grace Nuth is a writer, artist, and model living in central Ohio with her husband, black cats, and a garden full of fairies. She is also co-author of The Faerie Handbook. To follow her projects, please visit [gracenuth.com](http://gracenuth.com).*



Models: **Victoria Fielder and Ian Hencher**

Stylist and Photographer: **BELLA KOTAK**

MUA: **Ian Hencher**

Wardrobe: **Caroline Angel at The Dark Angel Design Company**

Silver cape: **Rowans Closet**

Crowns: **Freckles Fairy Chest**

Retouching: **Bella Kotak Photography and Solstice Retouch**





# Hobbit Breakfast

Recipes and photography by Sara Ghedina  
(a.k.a. One Girl in the Kitchen)

As anyone who's ever dined with hobbits knows, second breakfast is one of the six most important meals of the day. Hobbits take their breakfasts seriously, piling their scrubbed wooden tables with bowls of fresh berries, stacks of oatcakes and seedcakes, pots of honey and crocks of sweet clotted cream butter, toast and freshly baked breads, cheese boards, cold chicken, pies both savory and sweet, grilled mushrooms (recently pilfered from the nearest farmer's field, of course), sliced tomatoes, honey cakes, pitchers of cream, and the drink! Oh, the drink! Pots of tea, pitchers of foaming ale, white and red wines, coffee, mead—you need only ask your hobbit host for your desire and it will appear, as though by magic, from the well-stocked larder.

Here are three recipes—featuring the fresh, homespun ingredients that hobbits love (and a vegan substitute or two)—to get you started on your own hobbit-approved feast.



## MUSHROOM AND VEGAN SAUSAGE POT PIES

This recipe uses vegan protein but can be made using regular Italian sausage as well—just be sure to cook it thoroughly before removing the skin and crumbling it in. You can make charming individual pies or throw everything into one big pie, messy but just as hobbit-friendly (and scrumptious)!

# HOBBIT DAILY MEAL SCHEDULE

- 7:00 a.m. ★ Breakfast
- 9:00 a.m. ★ Second Breakfast
- 11:00 a.m. ★ Eleveses
- 1:00 p.m. ★ Luncheon
- 4:00 p.m. ★ Afternoon Tea
- 6:00 p.m. ★ Dinner
- 8:00 p.m. ★ Supper





**HONEY WALNUT CAKE**

This delicious cake is light and not too sweet—perfect for a hobbit breakfast or mid-afternoon snack. Skip the honey glaze to make it less sweet, or dust the cake with sugar instead for the opposite effect. Whipped cream and raspberries don't hurt, either. (Hobbits love both!)



## ROASTED TOMATO SOUP

This intense, summery soup can be made lighter if you leave off the croutons and cheese and use fresh chopped basil instead—or you can add cream for something hearty enough to fill any hobbit appetite. Any kind of fresh tomato works well; canned, peeled tomatoes work in the colder months, too.

## MUSHROOM AND VEGAN SAUSAGE POT PIES

for four individual pies, five inches in diameter

For the crust:  
 1½ cups flour  
 1 stick butter, cold  
 5 tbsp. iced water  
 pinch of salt

For the filling:

1 pound cremini mushrooms, sliced  
 1 pound vegan ground protein  
 1 onion  
 3 cloves garlic  
 1 carrot, diced  
 2 stalks celery, diced  
 3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil

To finish:  
 1 egg yolk  
 1 tbsp. water

3 or 4 sprigs of thyme  
 ¼ cup dry white wine  
 1½ cups vegetable stock  
 2 tbsp. all purpose flour  
 2 tbsp. butter, room temperature  
 2 tbsp. chopped parsley  
 salt and pepper, to taste

For the crust: In the bowl of a food processor, combine flour and salt. Cut butter in small chunks, add it to the mixture and process until it resembles coarse meal, 8 to 10 seconds.

With machine running, add water in a slow, steady stream. Pulse until dough holds together without being sticky; be careful not to process more than 30 seconds. If it is still crumbly, add more water, a few drops at a time.

Shape dough into a ball, flatten it out to a disk, and wrap in plastic. Transfer to the refrigerator and chill for at least 45 minutes.

For the filling, heat olive oil in a large pan, add onion and garlic, finely chopped, and cook for 2 minutes. Add celery and carrot and cook at medium heat for about 5 minutes, stirring often. Add mushrooms, thyme leaves, salt, and pepper and cook for another 5 minutes until vegetables are soft. Add crumbled vegan protein and cook just until it gets hot. (It should be already cooked.) Add wine, and stir for a few minutes until alcohol evaporates, then add vegetable stock and bring to boil. Add flour and butter to the pan and cook for 5 minutes until sauce thickens, stirring often. Add fresh parsley, adjust seasoning, and turn off the heat.

Grease with butter each of the ovenproof pans, and distribute the filling equally among them.

Remove the dough from the refrigerator and place on a lightly floured surface, divide it in 4 pieces, and roll them out to a circle about ⅞ inch thick and ½ inch larger than the pan diameter. Gently place them on top of each pie and pinch the edges together to seal. Mix egg yolk with water and brush the mixture on top of the pie crust. Using a sharp knife, cut a few vents on top.

Bake at 400°F for about 40 minutes until the crust is golden brown. Serve hot.

## ROASTED TOMATO SOUP

for four people

3 pounds pearl tomatoes  
 5 or 6 garlic cloves  
 4 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil  
 1 large red onion  
 3 tbsp. tomato paste  
 4-5 cups vegetable stock  
 1 tsp. smoked paprika  
 1 tbsp. oregano  
 ½ tsp. sugar  
 salt and pepper, to taste  
 croutons and crumbled goat cheese to serve

Preheat oven to 425°F. Cut tomatoes in half lengthwise and place them cut side up in a baking pan; peel garlic cloves and scatter them over the tomatoes. Drizzle with 2 tbsp. olive oil, and season with salt, pepper, smoked paprika, oregano, and ½ tsp. sugar.

Roast for about 35 minutes, tossing until garlic is soft and tomatoes are jammy, tossing them halfway through.

Heat remaining oil in a large pot over medium-high heat, add sliced onion, and season with salt and pepper. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring often, then reduce heat to low, cover with a lid, and keep cooking for 15 to 20 minutes until onion becomes very soft. Stir regularly. Add tomato paste, cook for 2 minutes until it gets darker, then add the roasted tomato mixture with all its juice to the vegetable stock. Cover and bring to a boil. Simmer for about 10 minutes until flavors blend. Let cool slightly, then puree the soup in a blender until the texture is creamy. Add a few tablespoons of vegetable stock if needed.

Serve it hot, topping each bowl with homemade croutons and a tablespoon of crumbled goat cheese.

## HONEY WALNUT CAKE

for a nine-inch springform pan

For the cake:  
 1½ cups flour  
 1 stick and 3 tbsp. unsalted butter, room temperature  
 ¼ cup raw sugar  
 ¼ cup honey  
 3 eggs  
 1 cup coarsely chopped walnuts  
 ½ cup plus 1 tbsp. milk  
 1½ tsp. baking powder  
 ½ tsp. baking soda  
 pinch of salt  
 ½ tsp. ground cinnamon

For the glaze:  
 ¼ cup raw sugar  
 3 tbsp. unsalted butter  
 ⅓ cup honey  
 ⅓ cup coarsely chopped walnuts, toasted

Butter and flour the cake pan and set aside.

In a large bowl, beat butter with sugar until smooth and fluffy, add honey and eggs, one at a time, and keep whisking.

In a medium bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon. Stir into the cake mixture, along with the milk. Whisk until the batter is smooth and then fold in walnuts using a rubber spatula.

Pour batter into prepared pan. Bake cake at 350°F until golden brown on top and the cake tester inserted into center comes out clean, about 45 minutes.

Transfer pan to a wire rack and let it cool for about 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, prepare the glaze: Place butter, honey, and sugar in a medium saucepan, cook at low heat until butter is melted and sugar is dissolved completely, about 5 to 7 minutes. Remove cake from pan, and place on a serving plate. Using a spatula, gently spread the glaze on top of the cake and on its sides. Sprinkle walnuts all over and serve.

When she's not at farmers markets, or stirring yet another jam, or photographing an artichoke, Sara Ghedina, a.k.a. One Girl in the Kitchen, might be running in Golden Gate Park or in warrior pose. Find out more at saraghedina.com.



# STORYBOOK SANTARELLA

by Laura Marjorie Miller

Photography by Ren Nickson Photography

*“The path was now plain before them, well-tended and bordered with stone. It wound up on to the top of a grassy knoll, now grey under the pale starry night; and there, still high above them on a further slope, they saw the twinkling lights of a house.”*

—J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*

What do you reckon Tom Bombadil’s house looks like in *The Fellowship of the Ring*? In my imagination, it looks like Santarella in the Berkshire Mountains of Western Massachusetts—or Santarella looks like *it*. The first time I caught sight of this house, I was driving along looking for the trailhead of a close-by branch of the Appalachian Trail. It was like seeing a figment of your dreams made real, a fantasy drawing come to life. I almost drove off the road.

As much as we may like the dream that buildings like Santarella simply emerge fully formed from nature, they are *created*, and how they are can be fascinating—and inspirational!

Santarella was brought into being by English-born sculptor Henry Hudson Kitson in the 1920s: an 1880s carriage house that he renovated to use as a studio and teaching space, and conceived as a retreat for resident artists. Kitson’s sculptural work is familiar to travelers throughout New England. He sculpted the Pilgrim Maiden in Plymouth, the Minuteman in Lexington, Roger Conant in Salem, and the statue of Robert Burns in Winthrop Square in Boston. In the interior of Santarella’s great hall, a sketch for a bust drawn in chalk peeks from beneath some hanging grapevines as a ghost-like reminder of Kitson’s artistic process.

Although Kitson’s sculpture is classical in form and formality, Santarella unfolds in a storybook style. As naturally occurring as it *seems*, it is a style that is *accomplished*: Santarella’s curved and rolling shape is created by an armature. (Of course a sculptor would use an armature!) It has concrete walls, and the white of the exterior is plaster. Indoors, a gabled roof of wood timbers soars above the hall. The materials that make up Santarella and its surrounding buildings derive from local sources: stones donated by local farmers from their fields and walls, sheathing reclaimed from old barns to reinforce the antique silos—and the silos themselves, old even at the time of their installation, were delivered by wagon from nearby Pittsfield.

When I arrive at Santarella, the long afternoon light casts conical shadows of the turrets of the silos along the ground. The blooms of the front garden have been hit by a first frost yet are still vibrant in color. On the other side of the stream that meanders through the property, a furry Siamese cat is hunting intently, humped up in the green grass, eyeing the underbrush. Behind the main house is a grove of lilac trees that are bare for the season.

Kitson continually morphed his property. He enlisted local farmers to grow rye for thatch to replicate the cottage roofs of his

native Britain, but the crop went bad, so he used *tons* of asphalt to shape Santarella’s roof, cutting each tile by hand into a wave-like shape and laying on three layers of different-colored shingles.

The effect is real: The roof looks like thatch, organic, spilling all over itself in waves of intensely layered multicolor shingles, intricately patterned and laid by hand. The lines of Santarella flow gracefully with the landscape, sinking and surging, its roof mirroring the rolling line of mountains in the distance, the colors of the shingles like patches formed in the forest of trees of different species, “which he designed to look like the hillside,” current owner Denise Hoefler tells me. “The greens and the silvers of the conifers, and the golds and the oranges.”

Hoefler and her husband, Dennis Brandmeyer, take turns walking me around the grounds and buildings. Santarella is a *sculpted* landscape. In the back garden is a concrete bench poured and reinforced by Kitson, and a natural bridge that is a wide slab of stone across the clear, running stream, leading to a nature path into the woods. Nearby, a broad lily pond reflects the sun and the trees.

“He was fascinated by stone,” Hoefler explains. And indeed Santarella has stone buttresses: jagged, rearing reefs of stone that make the house look as if it has burst forth from the earth.

The interior of Santarella is a wedding hall, a feasting hall. Kitson imported old stained-glass windows from England, and the delicious late-autumn light flowing through them casts pools of color on the floor. The building is true to form as a former carriage house. In the

upstairs loft you can see the outlines of a hatch through which hostlers used to pitch hay down to the horses, and the faint tracery of former carriage bays on the concrete floor.

Treasures are everywhere to discover. In both silos are fairy windows, bottle-bottoms or glass globes that form portholes through knots in the wood.

I ask if there are any enchanted occurrences about the property. Hoefler pauses to reflect, then tells me her favorite delights. In the spring, the front garden froths with tulips and violets. In the summer nights, fireflies form constellations of golden light against the forest and over the stream.

Santarella became Kitson’s eccentric passion, and by the end of his life it had consumed his fortune. After his death the house was abandoned. It was brought back from dereliction—local kids used to have parties in it, and it was in such disrepair that the town considered burning it to the ground—through the care

“The lines of Santarella flow gracefully with the landscape, sinking and surging, its roof mirroring the rolling line of mountains in the distance, the colors of the shingles like patches formed in the forest ...”





of a series of owners. Hoefler and Brandmeyer—a remodeling contractor, who restored it—are transplants to the Berkshires from California and have made a project of taking the building back to its original shape. The couple lets out the great hall as a wedding and event space, and you can book the silos for overnight stays at Airbnb. Lie in the grass, and in the summer watch for fireflies.

To book the Silo Studio: [airbnb.com/rooms/1238125](https://airbnb.com/rooms/1238125)  
 And the Grand Silo Tower Suite: [airbnb.com/rooms/1216130](https://airbnb.com/rooms/1216130)  
 Would you like a fairytale wedding at Santarella? Try the property's main page at [santarella.us](https://santarella.us).  
 If you'd like to be the next owner of Santarella, contact the broker Steven Weisz at [SWeisz@WPSIR.com](mailto:SWeisz@WPSIR.com) or call 917-670-6339.

Discover Ren Nickson's work at [rennicksonphotography.com](https://rennicksonphotography.com).

Laura Marjorie Miller is an inner-and-outer explorer. She has been kissed by a wild manatee calf, turned into a vine in Peru, and danced with dolphins off Hawai'i and Bimini. Her work has been published in Utne Reader, Outpost, Parabola, Misadventures, Yankee Magazine, and The Boston Globe, and she is currently at work on her first book. Find her on twitter and Instagram @bluecowboyyoga and at [lauramarjoriemiller.com](https://lauramarjoriemiller.com).



## THE WORK OF HIS HANDS: GILES NEWMAN'S CARVINGS

by Grace Nuth

A hobbit's favorite tool is his own hands, whether working in his garden or knitting a sweater, carving an intricate design in the curved lintel of his hobbit hole, or chopping vegetables to go in a stew. Welsh artist Giles Newman knows the joy firsthand of working with his hands to create something out of raw material, but his hobbit-like methods result in intricately carved pendants and spoons, works any elven king or queen would be proud to use. Newman chooses logs of wood from the forest of Coed Tegid in North Wales and, sitting by an open fire in a clearing, begins his journey with a small ax, cutting into the wood in seemingly random directions. He eventually replaces the ax with a knife, and the shape of an ivy vine, a dragon wing, the arched curve of a

horse's neck, emerges from the wood.

Newman had childhood dreams of becoming a ranger or woodsman, and when his office job in the city as a graphic designer became too overwhelming for him, he escaped on the weekends to the small forest his father owned. He would wander the woods, clearing the streams of debris, making sure paths were clear, and enjoying the opportunity to be in an environment that brought him such peace. He began to gather small pieces of wood and whittle with them, cutting points. It wasn't until a weekend gathering with friends in Lancashire, when he saw them cutting wood into spoons and using them to eat food cooked over the campfire, that his own fire of fascination was lit.



His first spoon more closely resembled a spatula, Newman says, but he persisted. He filled a sketchbook with designs for spoons and pendants and used up all the “good” wood in his woodpile in his first attempts—he refuses to cut good wood from a tree for a project—so he was forced to turn to the misshapen and odd pieces. He completely altered his artistic process when he realized that the wood should tell the artist what it wants to be, rather than vice versa. Stunning organic leaves and trees, deer antlers, and foxglove bells emerged from these pieces of rejected material, and the intricacy of his work soon caught the attention of admirers.

Newman set up an Etsy store and sold all his wares. Soon he found himself unable to keep up with demand for his work while maintaining it as a weekend hobby. With some nervousness, he put in his notice at his office job and followed his forest-loving passion. Interest in his work continues to grow, as the joy he feels creating each new piece translates to a growing audience. His Instagram account now has almost 60,000 followers, and each Etsy update sells out almost immediately. In an increasingly fast-paced society, Newman has stepped off the grid and into another time, a slower pace. Hobbit or no, his work is filled with Middle-earth magic.



Follow Giles Newman on Instagram @giles\_newman or visit his website at [gilesnewman.com](http://gilesnewman.com).

# PLANNING AN EPIC JOURNEY

by Alex Hester



While it's true that some of the best adventures can come out of the blue with little planning or preparation, most greatly benefit from a little bit of both, along with first answering a few important questions.

**Where?** A great first step in the dreaming phase is picking your destination. Is there a place you've dreamed about visiting since you were a child? Has some book or movie inspired a passion for a particular site, experience, or pilgrimage? Or do you just crave some new magic that only distant shores or peaks or sunrises can provide? Those are all perfectly good reasons to pick a place and start to plan a trip.

**When?** Timing can affect some trips much more than others. Temperatures in places like Bangkok stay pretty much the same from season to season, while an Alaskan summer is vastly different from an Alaskan winter. Other seasonal details, such as rainy or dry seasons, holidays, tourist traffic, major political affairs, or even allergens present, can all affect pricing and availability for everything from hotels and restaurants to local attractions and excursions.

Fortunately, all these things can be easily found out with a quick web search or two. *Note:* Be aware of potential risks but also remember that just about anywhere you could go is full of wonderful people and other travelers and is probably much safer than you think.

**What to bring?** The best gear definitely depends on the nature of your adventure and how long you're intending to be gone. A week on the beach would need different equipment than a month of backcountry mountaineering or jungle trekking.

A few key pieces of advice carry over pretty well for most kinds of adventures:

**Pack light.** The weight of gear adds up really fast. Start with well-fitting, comfortable shoes and a sturdy backpack or rucksack or duffel that is lightweight and comfortable. Make sure it's fitted properly, especially if your epic journey involves a lot of walking or public transportation. If you aren't sure about backpacks or other equipment, check out some travel guides or blogs for your specific destinations. And stop into your local outdoor-supplies or sporting-goods store, as they will probably have well-trained associates to help point you in the right direction and help fit you with gear.

These days, ultralight backpacks, sleeping bags, and mats, as well as towels, clothing, and even camping equipment are all available in increasingly better quality and price. You rarely need as much as you think, and most everything can be bought along the way if you decide you do need it. Laundry services are super cheap in most parts of the world, so you can usually get by

with fewer clothes. Don't forget to leave some room in your bag for souvenirs!

**Bring your own light.** You know yourself and what you need. If there's something you just can't live without, bring it. Even the best, most exciting journeys have down time, canceled plans, and homesick nights—sometimes a phone or tablet preloaded with your favorite jams or Emma Stone movies can really help you feel grounded and could be a fun way to connect with new friends on a long bus ride or a rainy day in your hostel. I once had an already magical night exploring moonlit sand dunes in the Moroccan Sahara transformed into a positively ethereal experience when my new Turkish friend began playing the soundtrack from his favorite video game of all things. The desert camping trip became an even greater memory because of that personal gift he chose to share with me. Of course, maybe

the light you need isn't media, but your trusty pocket coffee grinder, yoga wheel, or crochet hooks. Whatever it is, be real with yourself and plan accordingly.

**Be light.** Wherever you go, try not to just take but to give something back. Maybe you can find an opportunity to share something you love with locals or fellow travelers. Being receptive to meeting new people or trying new things can open up doors to life-changing

experiences and relationships. Organizing group meals or excursions with people in hostels, or on buses or tours, can be a great way to learn about new people. There is real magic in the stories of other sojourners, as well as in sharing your own knowledge and experiences. Are you a coffee pro? Can you lead a vinyasa or teach merengue? Do you have an encyclopedic knowledge of Paul Rudd movie quotes? Whatever special light you hold inside you, the world will be better for having you shine it, and adventures are great opportunities to let that light show.

**Be open to new light.** Open yourself up to new opportunities. Swim with sharks. Hike a little farther to see if there's a different view. Try the strange food from the cart that smells so amazing. Talk to the stranger with the artisanal necklace. Ask the tour guides about their favorite restaurants. Check out that culture night or dance class or ghost walk. Try CouchSurfing or MeetUp or other resources to try to connect with other people.

Wherever you find yourself on your adventure, breathe deep of your present experience.

*Alex Hester is an Alaska-based writer, acroyogi, and adventure enthusiast, currently pursuing an MFA in creative writing at the University of Alaska Anchorage.*

*“It's a dangerous business, Frodo, going out your door. You step onto the road, and if you don't keep your feet, there's no knowing where you might be swept off to.”*

—J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*

# Professor Tolkien

## AND THE *Fairies* BY THEODORA GOSS

J.R.R. Tolkien believed in fairies. At least, he speaks of them as though they were real in his essay “On Fairy-Stories,” first given as the Andrew Lang lecture at the University of St. Andrews in 1939, then published in 1947, after the horrors of World War II. You may not have heard of Andrew Lang, the Scottish writer, literary critic, and collector of fairy tales, but you’ve probably read his fairy-tale books of various colors, starting with *The Blue Fairy Book*, then going on to *Red, Green, Yellow*, and so on. Tolkien, not one to back away from an intellectual fight, took issue with Lang’s books, which included stories he did not consider fairy tales and which he thought continued an English tradition of diminishing the fair folk. For fairies, Tolkien insists right at the beginning of his essay, are not small, or not unless they want to appear so. Neither are they the benevolent nature spirits imagined by Victorian literature—he had no patience for dainty flower fairies. Imagine instead the Queen of Elfland meeting True Thomas by the Eildon Tree and binding him to her service for seven years—that was Tolkien’s idea of a fairy. Indeed, he did not particularly like the word “fairy,” which was too modern and probably too French; he preferred the good old English “elf.” At the time Tolkien gave his lecture, *The Hobbit* was already a success, and he was starting to work on what would become *The Lord of the Rings*. In this essay and in “Smith of Wootton Major,” published in 1967, he explored the nature of fairies and *Faërie*, “the realm in which fairies have their being.” Although many Tolkien fans have not read these shorter, quieter works, they show us what Tolkien believed about fairies and how real they were to him. They reveal the theories that shaped the glorious elves of Middle-earth.

“Smith of Wootton Major,” the last of Tolkien’s stories published during his lifetime, is the closest he came to writing a fairy tale. It’s about a village named Wootton Major, so-called “because it was larger than Wootton Minor, a few miles away deep in the trees.” This village has a Master Cook named Nokes, and Nokes has an apprentice named Alf, whom everyone simply calls Prentice. Every twenty-four years, the Master Cook bakes an enormous cake for the Festival of Good Children. One festival, Nokes puts a small metal star on the cake, laughing when Prentice warns him that it’s a fay-star, from Faery itself. The fay-star is swallowed by one of the children, who grows up to become the smith of the village. Like his father before him, he is called Smith. For a long time, he lives an ordinary

life, although he has particularly beautiful eyes (the light of the fay-star shines out of them), and the things he makes have a grace and lightness not usually seen in smithwork. But eventually he finds his way into Faery, telling only his wife and children about his journeys. Tolkien writes that Smith “had business of its own kind in Faery, and he was welcome there; for the star shone on his brow, and he was as safe as a mortal can be in that perilous country.”

Faery itself is described as unimaginably, almost indescribably beautiful. On one journey, Smith comes to a “Sea of Windless Storms where the blue waves like snow-clad hills roll silently out of Unlight to the long strand, bearing the white ships that return from battles on the Dark Marches of which men know nothing.” On another, he sees “a great hill of shadow, and out of that shadow, which was its root, he saw the King’s Tree springing up, tower upon tower, into the sky, and its light was like the sun at noon; and it bore at once leaves and flowers and fruit uncounted.” One day he is brought before the Queen of Faery herself: “She stood there in her majesty and her glory, and all about her was a great host shimmering and glittering like the stars above; but she was taller than the points of their great spears, and upon her head there burned a white flame.” She greets Smith, addressing him as Starbrow, and sends him back to Wootton Major with a message: He must tell the King that it’s time to choose another child to bear the fay-star. On his way home, Smith meets Alf and realizes that the humble Prentice has been the King of Faery all along. Smith lives out the rest of his ordinary life; Nokes has one more uncomfortable confrontation with his former Prentice; and the fairy gift moves on to another, giving him greater insight than is usually given to mortal men.

What does this fairy tale have to do with “On Fairy-Stories”? By the time Tolkien gave his lecture, fairy tales had been consigned to the nursery. They were considered children’s stories that boys and girls would eventually grow out of as they took on the responsibilities of adulthood. They were certainly not the sort of literature that linguistics professors at Oxford were supposed to read—or write. But this state of affairs did not satisfy our particular linguistics professor. In his essay, Tolkien takes on all the Nokeses of the world, who cannot see the importance of either Faery or fairy-stories. He begins by contradicting the venerable Oxford English Dictionary, which tells us that fairy tales are “stories about fairies.” Tolkien says



© Brian Froud

they are not about fairies but rather about *Faërie* itself, “which contains many things besides elves and fays, and besides dwarves, witches, trolls, giants, or dragons: it holds the seas, the sun, the moon, the sky; and the earth, and all things that are in it: tree and bird, water and stone, wine and bread, and ourselves, mortal men, when we are enchanted.” Most fairy tales are concerned with the adventures of mortal men and women in *Faërie*—or, of course, their misadventures, because as Smith realized, *Faërie* is a perilous realm. There you may find yourself marrying a bear, or climbing a glass hill in iron shoes, or sailing to the ends of the earth to fetch a golden apple from a tree guarded by dragons. You may have to clean Baba Yaga’s hut or answer riddles posed by a ferryman named Death. It’s a long way from “once upon a time” to “happily ever after.”

Who, then, are fairy tales for? According to Tolkien, like *Faërie* itself, they are not necessarily for children. After all, Smith could only truly experience the fairy realm and meet its Queen once he was an adult. Tolkien specifies that he himself was not particularly drawn to fairy tales as a child. He liked them about as well as he liked stories concerning foreign lands and strange languages and adventures of all sorts. But he preferred Arthur and the knights of the Round Table or tales of the Norse gods. Only as an adult did he come to appreciate the gifts fairy tales can give us. Tolkien calls these gifts “Fantasy, Recovery, Escape, Consolation, all things of which children have, as a rule, less need than older people.” It is adults who can truly benefit from these fairy gifts and the glimpse of *Faërie* they provide.

The easiest of these to understand is Escape: Which of us has not escaped from the problems of ordinary life into the pages of a book, where we can run away from home dressed in catskins or speak with dragons on an island of Earthsea? Tolkien defends fantasy specifically against the charge of escapism, arguing that we have a right to escape, particularly if our modern lives have grown ugly or dull: “Why should a man be scorned if, finding himself in prison, he tries to get out and go home?” This language must have particularly resonated in 1947, when it would have conjured up images of wartime prison camps. An escapee, Tolkien asserts, is not a deserter—escape is our right and may even be our obligation. For Tolkien, there is a sense in which *Faërie* is our true home, or a version of it. We belong there as much as we belong in the Woottons, Major or Minor. Once we have escaped into the world of a book, we can return to our ordinary lives refreshed, restored: That is Recovery. Getting away for a while to the fantastical can teach us to see the ordinary in a new light. Meeting Pegasus can help us see the nobility of the horse; encountering Ents can teach us something important about trees. Recovery is a



regaining of clear sight. And it can be more: It can lead us to create beautiful things, like Smith’s fairy-influenced smithwork, or even to change whatever it is we find dull or ugly about our lives. It can lead us to rebel against or attempt to reform the societies we live in. Recovery can lead to revolution.

Consolation is the possibility of a happy ending, and it is so important to Tolkien that he creates a new word for it: *eucatastrophe*, the fortunate turn. This is when everything that has gone wrong

suddenly begins to go right. The lassie who has followed her bear husband to the ends of the earth finds him, and he recognizes her, and they escape from the troll princess who would have been his bride. The trolls are so angry that they explode, like fireworks. Fairy tales console us for all the happy endings we did not have and promise that “happily ever after” is out there, if we’re brave enough to find it. We may just have to climb a couple of glass hills first.

What, then, is Fantasy? It’s what creates and sustains the story itself, the art that makes *Faërie* accessible to us mortals. Through a kind of fairy craft, the storyteller weaves a spell, creating a world for us to live in, a journey for us to go on—perhaps with a reluctant hobbit and a company of quarrelsome dwarves. According to Tolkien, creating a fantastical world that feels real is even more difficult than describing the real one we live in. Fantasy, to him, is a higher and more difficult art than realism.



Indeed, he likens it to the art of the elves—to enchantment. Of course, we have the proof of his theories in his own work. Tolkien has enchanted millions of readers with a world so real that we can map it, learn its languages, care deeply about its inhabitants and their destinies. We can dread what Frodo must do and gaze in wonder at Galadriel in the forest of Lothlórien.

In “Smith of Wootton Major,” only Smith gets a fay-star, but in “On Fairy-Stories,” Tolkien implies that we can all have one. We just have to accept the fairy gift. We can’t be like Nokes, who refuses to believe in magic even when the King of Faery stands before him, a more fearsome and splendid version of Alf Prentice. We have to pick up the book, enter its spell, believe in

the magical landscape that spreads before us, with its perilous seas, and mountains that reach the sky, and trees that flower and fruit on the same branches. We have to join the elven maidens in their intricate dance. All those things can be ours, as long as we’re willing to be enchanted. Tolkien himself is our King of Faery, with the fay-star in his hand, saying, Come, eat a slice of cake, let the light shine from your eyes. Come see your true home.



*Read more at [theodoragoss.com](http://theodoragoss.com).*



# Elven Hair

## TUTORIAL

BY MARITA TATHARIEL

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# Elven Hair Tutorial

Marita Tathariel



The elves are known for having beautiful, long hair, often with intricate braids. Follow along as I teach you how to create your own elven hairdo, step by step. At the end, you'll look as if you stepped out of Rivendell's finest hair salon! This hairdo is easiest to create with straight hair, and of course it's even easier if your hair is tangle-free. (Trust me, it will make everything much easier!) So let's start by detangling and brushing out our luscious locks. Once that's taken care of, onward to the main quest!



## STEP 1

### Braid six small three-strand braids.

Two on each side, right above your (soon-to-be) pointy ears. Two higher up on the sides of your head, and the last two right next to each other, centered on the back of your head.



## STEP 2

### Do a fishtail braid.

- Pull your hair back into a half ponytail at the back of your head. Use an elastic band to hold it in place (one that you can cut off with scissors at the end of your elven hairstyling journey).
- Divide the ponytail into two equal sections.
- Separate a small piece of hair from the outside of the right section.
- Pull this piece over the top of your right section, and bring it to the inside of the opposite section.
- Next, separate a small piece of hair from the outside of the left section. (The tinier the piece is, the more intricate your braid will appear.)
- Pull this piece over the top of your left section, and bring it to the inside of the opposite section.
- Keep moving small pieces from each side into the inside of each section.
- Repeat these steps until you reach the end and finish by tying the hair with an elastic band.

Although I do appreciate a roughed elven warrior look, try to make this braid look tidy and even. If your hair isn't behaving nicely, slightly mist it with a wee bit of water for better friction, and remember to pull tight as you go. Once you're done, you can tug the sides of the braid to even it out.

## STEP 3

### Cut off the upper rubber band.

Use a scissor, and be very careful not to cut any of your hair off!



STEP 3





#### STEP 4

##### Arrange the six small braids.

(This is the fun part where the magic happens!)

- ☞ Grab the two braids located on the sides of your head. Pull them back and loop them around the main two sections of the fishtail braid.
- ☞ Overlap the two small braids on the backside of the fishtail braid, fasten with a bobby pin, and crisscross them all the way down. Finish by tying the hair with an elastic band.
- ☞ Next, grab the two braids located above your ear tips. Pull them back and attach them about halfway down on the backside of the fishtail braid with bobby pins. Bring the same two braids out again, and attach the ends of them as far down as possible on the fishtail braid, making sure they create wee loops on the sides.
- ☞ Grab the two braids located on the very back of your head—they should be hiding behind your fishtail braid. Pull them through the big loop that the second pair of braids made and attach them with a bobby pin a bit further down and behind the fishtail braid.
- ☞ You can be creative with this part! Twist, loop, and arrange your mini-braids however you like. Just try to make the design symmetrical.



#### STEP 5

##### Braid two small three-strand braids in front of your ears.

Almost done! Finish off your elven hairstyle with a pair of iconic braids in front of your ears.

Feel free to decorate your braids with beads, tinsel, or anything your immortal heart desires. Let's use that imagination and have fun. Now that your hair is as glorious as can be, put on your favorite elven ear prosthetics, Middle-earth inspired garments, and (just in case of orcs) some nifty armor!

*“Hannon le” for following along  
I hope you have fun!*

Follow Marita Tathariel on Instagram @tathariel.



A green wooden door with a circular window looking out onto a sunset landscape. The door is on the left, and the window is on the right. The landscape is a rolling green valley with a sunset sky. The door has a large brass handle and many small brass studs. The window is framed by a wooden arch. The landscape is a rolling green valley with a sunset sky. The door is on the left, and the window is on the right. The landscape is a rolling green valley with a sunset sky.

# HOBBITON

A PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY  
WITH SHAUN JEFFERS

by Rona Berg

*“Do you remember the Shire, Mr. Frodo? It’ll be spring soon. And the orchards will be in blossom. And the birds will be nesting in the hazel thicket. And they’ll be sowing the summer barley in the lower fields ... and eating the first of the strawberries with cream. Do you remember the taste of strawberries?”*  
—Sam, *The Lord of the Rings*

Perhaps there is nowhere on earth—or at least on Middle-earth—that is more beautiful than the Shire. A visit to Hobbiton, a pastoral paradise in a bucolic corner of New Zealand, makes Sam and Frodo’s yearning for their hobbit home very easy to understand. A place this beautiful could be a film set. Oh, but wait—it is.

The Hobbiton, built on a 1,250-acre working sheep farm near Matamata, New Zealand, was home to Bilbo Baggins, Frodo, and Samwise Gamgee in Peter Jackson’s *The Hobbit* trilogy. There, fans can visit hobbit holes, enjoy the glorious gardens and trees, and relax with a mug of ale at the hobbits’ favorite drinking spot, the Green Dragon Inn, where Bilbo Baggins meets Thorin Oakenshield before they head off on their great adventure to reclaim the Ring. It’s even possible to tour the charming cozy cottages of the Shire and, if you book ahead, enjoy an evening banquet with “traditional Hobbit fayre.”

“Peter Jackson is a New Zealander, and we’re known here for our vastly different landscapes,” says Shayne Forrest, spokesperson for Hobbiton. “Jackson was scouting locations, and he saw the tree, the lake, and the large house on the Alexander family farm. He said, ‘Yep, this is how it was described in the books,’ and he knocked on the door.” The rest is (hobbit) history. As Jackson has said, “I knew Hobbiton needed to be warm, comfortable, and feel lived in. By letting the weeds grow through the cracks and establishing hedges and little gardens a year before filming, we ended up with an incredibly real place, not just a film set.” According to set designer Alan Lee, “It was satisfying to see that it had taken on something of the look of the Devonshire countryside I’d lived in for the past twenty-five years.”

The twelve-acre Hobbiton attracts 500,000 visitors annually—not bad for a patch of farmland that’s forty-five minutes from the nearest city, and two hours from Auckland. The farm is home to 13,000 sheep and 300 Angus beef cattle, and the land is still farmed today. Most guests come from New Zealand, Australia, China, and the U.S., and the only way to access Hobbiton is through a guided tour—“it’s a movie-set experience,” says Forrest—where guests learn how the movies

were filmed and put together. The set for *The Lord of the Rings* was built and torn down, but then the film crew came back and rebuilt it for *The Hobbit*, and that became Hobbiton, which is permanent.

Jackson and his crew filmed in more than 158 locations around New Zealand for *The Lord of the Rings*, and covered forty-eight or forty-nine for *The Hobbit*. They scoured the countryside for the most hauntingly beautiful spots in which to create Middle-earth, knowing that the land is so diverse, topographically, that in one to two hours you can be in a completely different ravishing environment. Tolkien described the roaring rivers, mythical forests, and jagged mountain ranges so perfectly—and Jackson knew New Zealand so well that he was able to lovingly re-create those landscapes with different parts of the country.

Matamata became Hobbiton because of its rolling green hills, which was how the Shire was described in Tolkien’s books. The volcanic region of Mount Ruapehu turned into the fiery Mount Doom, and Queenstown, New Zealand’s adventure-sports capital, was the setting for shoots that included the Eregion Hills, and the Pillars of Argonath. The epic scene where the dwarves plummet down the river in barrels was shot at Pelorus River, Marlborough. Turoa on Mount Ruapehu was the entrance to the lonely mountain in the Desolation of Smaug. And Arcadia Station, Paradise Valley; Lake Pukaki; and Mount Cook were also featured prominently. Hobbiton is the only location set built for filming that remains.

“We don’t add things for the sake of tourism, we want to keep it as authentic as it was for the filming,” says Forrest. “We turn away a few hundred people a day to make sure it doesn’t feel crowded.” Indeed, Hobbiton is no Disneyland, and you won’t find yourself shoulder to shoulder, trapped in a heaving mass of humans.

“It is a magical feeling—you feel transported to Middle-earth,” says Forrest. “It feels like you could see a hobbit walk around the corner at any moment.” Who knows? At Hobbiton, it feels like anything is possible.

#### Shaun Jeffers, Photographer

Shaun Jeffers was a fan of J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* ever since he was a child growing up in Liverpool, England. The twenty-seven-year-old photographer, who says he was “obsessed,” came to New Zealand to visit Middle-earth five years ago. He emailed the folks at Hobbiton and asked if he could take some pictures there. “We looked at his photos, thought they looked really cool, and he became our official photographer,” says Forrest. Jeffers has shot Hobbiton every which way, at all hours, and his rich, saturated images have earned him the moniker “the Hobbit Guy” on Instagram. Now based in Auckland, Jeffers returns to Hobbiton every six weeks to shoot new images for different events at all times of the day, but one thing stays the same: His pictures are transporting, stunningly beautiful, and well worthy of the hobbits.





*“The Road goes ever on and on  
Down from the door where it began,  
Now far ahead the Road has gone,  
And I must follow, if I can,  
Pursuing it with eager feet,  
Until it joins some larger way  
Where many paths and errands meet,  
And whither then? I cannot say.”*  
—J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*





# ELVEN BEAUTY

*By Alise Marie*

It was in the Northern Lands of old, where a change of light can shift perception, that starlight and sea first awakened the world of the elves and their immortal beauty. The magnificent enchantment of spring brings a similar shift.

As you shed the cloak of winter, preparing to greet the season of awakening with sleepy eyes and a languid stretch, you begin to come *alive*. The flutter of wings has roused you from slumber! The first, tiniest buds open to great new adventures, embracing the sun, the misty rains, and the scented moss, activating the dreams you've carefully woven during the cold months.

*Tolo, govano ven! Come, join us!*



*Evening Star Face Masque*

# Elven Beauty

Alise Marie

## THRANDUIL'S ELIXIR

His name means “vigorous Spring,” and though the elf king can appear steely, he is the very essence of strength and endurance. This fresh, vibrant, tart-sweet blend imparts energy and vitality, and will keep you satiated while still feeling as light and swift as an elven archer!

*¼ cup chia seeds*  
*2 cups spring water*  
*1 tbsp. rose hips*  
*1 cup raspberries*  
*1 cup kale, chopped*  
*1 tsp. pure maple syrup*

First, make the chia into a hydrating gel: Combine the chia seeds with one cup of spring water and stir well. Let it sit a few minutes, then stir again. (This will help prevent clumping.) Allow the mixture to sit for at least 15 minutes while you make the rose-hip tea.

For the tea, bring one cup of spring water just to a boil, then place the rose hips in the cauldron and allow them to steep for 20 minutes. Strain, and let the mixture cool.

When it is ready, pour the rose-hip tea into a high-speed blender. Add in the kale, raspberries, 2 tbsp. of the chia-seed

gel, and maple syrup. (You can use the rest of the chia in smoothies later—it will keep refrigerated for several days.) Blend well. Sip it slowly. Now there’s some elvish medicine!

*\*Note: If you desire additional sweetness, add stevia to taste. If you are sensitive to natural sugars, please substitute the maple syrup for stevia, which has a zero glycemic index score.*

Superfood kale wears the king’s crown here, as it is one of the most nutrient-dense plant foods in existence. With immense levels of both vitamins A and C, it is a superior immune booster, antioxidant, and beautifier, fighting disease and the signs of aging with the finely crafted sword of well-being.

Venusian raspberries appear granting love, happiness, protection, and another powerful dose of vitamin C and antioxidants, along with the ability to boost brain power. Every king needs his queen, after all.

Rose hips are also gifts from the goddess of love and beauty, empowered with anti-aging benefits, which further fortify this most divine blend. Protein-rich chia seed is blessed with vitamins, minerals, fiber, and essential fatty acids, and is surprisingly filling. Expansive Jupiter rules the maple tree, which gives us its nectar in the form of a delicious anti-inflammatory full of vitamins and minerals. I especially like maple syrup for new-to-full-moon magic. (In case you were wondering, maple wood is also an *excellent* choice for wand-making.)



### BEAUTY WITCH SECRET

Fluorite crystal, native to the northern lands, should be present while you concoct these potions, not only for its illuminated beauty but for its energizing powers and the ability to help you gain mental clarity and focus, so your visions can begin to take form.

## LADY OF THE GOLDEN WOOD HAIR MASQUE

Named for the Lady Galadriel and her glorious, glimmering tresses, this potion treats your hair to rich, nutritive oils, which deeply moisturize and strengthen your mane. Use this to restore hair any time you like. It is particularly effective at the new moon.

*½ banana, very ripe*  
*1 tbsp. grape-seed oil*  
*6 drops lavender essential oil*  
*3 drops rosemary essential oil*  
*4 drops ylang ylang essential oil*

Mash the banana in a bowl until it becomes very smooth and creamy. Ideally, use a mortar and pestle to really get it soft and silky, but if you don’t have one, a fork or potato masher will do. Add in the grape-seed oil, and whisk it together until the mixture gets fluffy. Drop the essential oils in one at a time and blend slowly in a clockwise direction. Massage first into your scalp joyously, with visions of full, lustrous new hair growing, then work the potion through the ends of your hair, paying special attention to dry tips. Pile hair loosely on top of your head, and place beneath a plastic shower cap. Leave the cap

on for 20 minutes. Remove the cap and give your head another slow, sensual massage. Step into the shower, and wash with a gentle botanical shampoo. Rinse well. You can add a drop of your favorite natural conditioner here as a sealant and rinse again with cool water.

The humble banana is actually an ancient sacred food in the East, closely tied to spirituality. It is said to bring luck and heighten feelings of love. Bananas also make a wonderfully rich hair treatment for their combination of high water content and natural moisturizing oils, which help repair damaged strands and increase elasticity. Mineral-rich grape-seed oil feeds the scalp with proteins and vitamin E but is light enough to impart shine on all types of hair without feeling greasy. Lovely lavender, also known as “elf leaf,” protects hair from thinning and loss while simultaneously aiding in new growth. It holds powers of love, peacefulness, protection, and longevity—not surprising given its namesake!

Interestingly, lusty rosemary is *also* known as “elf leaf,” bearing love, healing, intellect, and youth. It arrives here for these palpable gifts but also for its ability to increase cellular metabolism in the scalp, stimulating not only mystical prowess but bountiful, healthy hair growth. The fragrant, sweet dew of the ylang ylang star flower is a beautiful natural conditioner that strengthens hair and assists new growth.

## Elven Beauty

Alise Marie

### EVENING STAR FACE MASQUE

The first thing elves laid newly awakened eyes upon were the stars, as the sun and moon were not yet created. Enjoy this facial exfoliant masque in the spirit of eternal love to bring pure celestial shimmer to your skin.

8 fresh raspberries  
¼ tsp. grape-seed oil  
1 tbsp. hazelnut flour  
6 drops carrot-seed essential oil

Using the same method as with the banana, mash the raspberries into a bowl, making sure to get the berries as smooth as possible. Whisk in the grape-seed oil, which will help it blend. Now mix in the hazelnut flour until a paste is formed. Drop in the carrot-seed oil and blend.

Massage into a freshly cleansed face in small circular motions, paying particular attention to dry or clogged areas. As this masque has a bit of texture, you may wish to press a second layer into your skin. Leave it on for 20 minutes while you relax, perhaps in a warm bath. Remove gently with a warm cloth, then rinse thoroughly with cool water. Pat dry with a clean towel, then follow with your favorite natural toning mist, serums, and moisturizer.

Raspberries can be used topically to soften fine lines, fade sunspots, and give an instant firming lift to tired skin. Eight are chosen to symbolize eternal beauty. Grape-seed oil is a fabulous, lightweight firming oil that also helps unclog pores, while carrot-seed oil appears as a sorceress with the power to lessen existing wrinkles and keep new ones at bay. Hazelnut flour, though a bit pricey, is an amazing nutritive exfoliant that brings wisdom along with the ability to use it. It also makes a wonderful gluten-free baking flour, so its dual design makes it worth the investment.

Treat your skin to this glowing potion at a full moon, and whenever you need to shine!

*\*Note: Carrot-seed oil is highly active, which adds to its efficacy, but it can irritate sensitive skin. If you are sensitive, try experimenting with one or two drops first. If you find that your skin tolerates it well, you can try increasing the amount next time. If it's too much, eliminate it altogether. The masque will still benefit you greatly.*



Alise Marie is an actress, writer, and certified holistic nutritionist. Potions and rituals like these can be found in her forthcoming book, *Luna Beauty: The Moon, The Stars, and Your Heavenly Body*. She can be found at [thebeautywitch.com](http://thebeautywitch.com)

### SPRING AWAKENING

*"Spring has returned. The Earth is like a child that knows poems"*  
—Rainier Maria Rilke

As the world blooms, in the spirit of spring renewal, so does your beauty—with a little help from these delicious masks, which add much-needed nourishment to skin and hair coming out of hibernation after the long winter.

#### **Kenza Prickly Pear Nourishing Hair Mask**

A bit of Morocco in a jar, this light and lovely mask, with prickly pear, argan, black seed, and jojoba oils, is rich and creamy, conditions and strengthens the hair, and will leave it soft as silk. Plus, a portion of proceeds helps support positive social change for women in Morocco, who work in collectives to extract the argan oil.

[kenza-international-beauty-nyc.com](http://kenza-international-beauty-nyc.com)

#### **Innersense Beauty Hydrating Hair Mask**

A mix of tamanu, flaxseed, and monoi oils, along with quinoa protein, shea butter, and coconut and avocado oils, this intensely rich mask will leave your dry, damaged, thirsty hair refreshed and revitalized.

[innersensebeauty.com](http://innersensebeauty.com)

#### **OSEA Red Algae Mask**

With organic red algae, red wine, and red and pink clay—so pretty!—along with antioxidants and enzymes, this stimulating face mask will slough off dead cells and leave skin looking bright, refined, and luminous.

[oseamalibu.com](http://oseamalibu.com)

#### **Round Barn Apothecary Soothing Mask**

A super-hydrating mask, especially potent for dry skin, with hyaluronic acid, jojoba, vitamin B, and aloe vera, which your skin will drink right up!

[roundbarnapothecary.com](http://roundbarnapothecary.com)

—Rosie Shannon

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## Simbelmynë

by C.L. Redding

Photography by Paul Barson

*Even here the glimmering simbelmynë grows  
in the ghostly pale green meads and haunted hollows  
far from the hallows somber in their ordered rows  
where our old bones the cold earth slowly swallows.*

*Of certainty indeed no living person knows  
and none but guess what after long life follows  
yet, even here the glimmering simbelmynë grows  
in the ghostly pale green meads and haunted hollows.  
Ages pass, and generations—so life ever flows,  
sire and son, one after the other follows;*

*Echoing faint, hooves thunder out of meads and hollows...  
The Dead also remember, in our long repose:  
Even here, the glimmering simbelmynë grows.*

*A Middle-earth "ex-pat" for over fifty years now, C.L. Redding has written around seventy poems exploring and sharing the lyrical wonder of the Professor's invented world. She tries always to be true to his intent and vision while dreaming her own dreams of Middle-earth.*

Follow Paul Barson on Instagram @paulbarson.



# ALAN LEE: ARTIST OF MIDDLE-EARTH

by Laura Marjorie Miller

If I were to say to you, “A woman robed in white, standing next to a bowl, holding a silver ewer,” you would likely know exactly which scene I am referring to. It is a tableau conjured by J.R.R. Tolkien from the mythic consciousness, iconic as an image from the tarot, yet what rises in your mind—Galadriel hovering over her mirror of water—likely has been in some way shaped and touched by the imagination and artistic hand of Alan Lee.

Lee has become one of the best known illustrators of Tolkien’s work, beginning with the 1991 *The Lord of the Rings* Centenary Edition, and then revisiting his contact with the author’s work with *The Hobbit*, *The Children of Húrin*, *Tales of the Perilous Realm*, and *The Tale of Beren and Lúthien*, released last June. He is renowned for his achievements as one of the chief conceptual designers for Peter Jackson’s epic *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* trilogies, and he won an Academy Award for Best Art Direction in 2004 for *The Return of the King*.

Lee’s mythic bona fides are substantial. He has illustrated an edition of the medieval Welsh legend cycle *The Mabinogion*. His *Merlin Dreams* is a collaboration with famed fantasy writer Peter Dickinson, and *Faeries* is his storied and stunning partnership with fellow Devon artist Brian Froud. Lee’s collaboration with David Day on the 1984 work *Castles* visually interpreted the writings of Mervyn Peake, Bram Stoker, and Edgar Allen Poe, in addition to giving the world its first glimpse of his interpretations of Tolkien.

From nature scenes to war scenes, Lee’s art spans an incredible range, just as Tolkien’s books do. And like the author, the artist also has a recognizable orientation through his hand: A lover of trees and forests, Lee frequently entangles his scenes with nature. Even his war scenes can be part of a cyclic, natural world.

For our special Tolkien issue, *Faerie Magazine* is proud to present our conversation with Alan Lee, who has had such a profound effect on many imaginations. We ask him a question that he has never been asked before as we talk with him about things that were, things that are, and things that shall yet come to pass.

**Laura Marjorie Miller: Please describe for us the atmosphere in Devon, where you live, and tell how you draw upon it for your illustrations of Middle-earth.**

**Alan Lee:** Chagford is a small town close to the moor and the beautiful Teign valley. You can walk in any direction and within a short while find yourself in surroundings that look like the setting for a medieval romance, a fairy tale, or an ancient pagan legend. The landscape of Dartmoor has been inspiring stories and artists and writers for very many years. There is something very Shire-like about the way the farms and villages are half hidden in the valleys and sometimes half buried in the side of a hill, under their heavily thatched roofs. Having all this reference to hand is very useful, and I rarely go out without a sketchbook in my pocket.

**LMM: What is your favorite kind of leaf to illustrate?**

**AL:** This is the first time I’ve been asked this question. When illustrating “Leaf by Niggle” for *Tales From the Perilous Realm*, I used beech leaves, but I think the ones I enjoy drawing most are autumnal leaves, desiccated and decomposing.

**LMM: Is there a difference in your experience between drawing from your imagination and evoking specific landforms, like in New Zealand, when you were designing for the films?**

**AL:** They are both enjoyable and feed off each other—the real landscapes provide information and inspiration to make the imaginary places more believable and rich in credible detail, and the stories I’m trying to evoke in my work seep into the real landscapes I’m walking in or flying over! It is the real landscapes of Dartmoor, Scotland, or Wales that I find most inspiring though. Partly because they have had a longer influence and place in my life, but also they evoke so strongly the myths and other stories that have had such a big role in forming my imagination.

**LMM: How much research is involved with getting details right for architecture and costumes?**

**AL:** Research isn’t the most enjoyable part of what I do, but it is necessary. In pre-Google days I would make many trips to locations, museums, and libraries, and photograph and sketch to collect material that may be useful for a particular project or for something that may be needed later. I really don’t like working



from photographs. It is essential at times but no substitute for sitting in front of a person, place, or object and sketching it from life.

**LMM: Have you ever done illustrations for Tolkien books that didn't get used?**

**AL:** There have been a few illustrations that didn't make it into print and a huge number of sketches, doodles, and working drawings that weren't done for publication. Some of these are now in *The Lord of the Rings Sketchbook*, and I hope that more of them will be published in another volume. Because they are not subject to the same pressures as work done for print, they have a light and exploratory quality that I enjoy.

**LMM: Do you reread Tolkien? What is your rereading process like? Do you read parts, go deeply in? Is there any Tolkien that you haven't read?**

**AL:** I haven't started Tolkien's translation of *Beowulf*, or *The Fall of Arthur*. I've reread the books, but mostly in a piecemeal way, as I've been working on various representations of the stories and characters, rather than from start to finish. It's important to keep on going back to the text rather than relying on impressions and memories of it. There's always something new to discover.

**LMM: What is the first rendering of Tolkien you ever did? What were the circumstances?**

**AL:** The first images were done for a book called *Castles*, which came out in 1984. This is a look at castles in myth, folklore, and literature—the abodes of giants and enchantresses. I made drawings of Barad-dûr, Minas Tirith, and Cirith Ungol. It was published by Bantam in the U.S. and the U.K. publisher was Unwin Hyman, Tolkien's publisher. Those pictures found their way into one of the annual Tolkien calendars. About five years later, Jane Johnson, who ran their Tolkien list, approached me with the idea of illustrating the planned Centenary Edition of *The Lord of the Rings*.

**LMM: Has your interpretation of Tolkien evolved over the years?**

**AL:** I still concentrate on the landscapes and avoid over-elaborating the details, leaving as much to the viewer's imagination as possible, just creating an atmosphere and setting the scene for the drama to unfold in. The only major change to this was in working on the films, where the details had to be fully realized. There was no avoiding pinning things down.

**LMM: Are there images you have done in the past that you would like to redo?**

**AL:** If I started revisiting them it may never stop—it's usually healthier to move on and try harder with the next subject.

**LMM: Are there images you would still like to do?**

**AL:** Oh, yes—I feel I've hardly scratched the surface!

**LMM: Who is your favorite character to illustrate and why? And who is your favorite character in general?**

**AL:** I don't really think in terms of characters as much as stories and places. There are some characters so completely associated with places that they become very compelling to draw, such as Treebeard.

**LMM: Can you talk about drawing and painting elves? How did you decide what your elves would look like, more human or more strange?**

**AL:** I don't see them as supernatural beings, more as an extinct—or very elusive—type of human.

**LMM: May I ask you about illustrating Galadriel? The Galadriel in the Sketchbook is different from the Galadriel in the Centenary Edition: more organic. She looks like she has leaves all over her!**

**AL:** I did quite a few studies for how Galadriel may appear at different points in the movies, reflecting her multifaceted nature.

**LMM: The sketches at the end of The Return of the King: Did you do those from photos? You prefer not to work from photos—but they are so beautiful!**

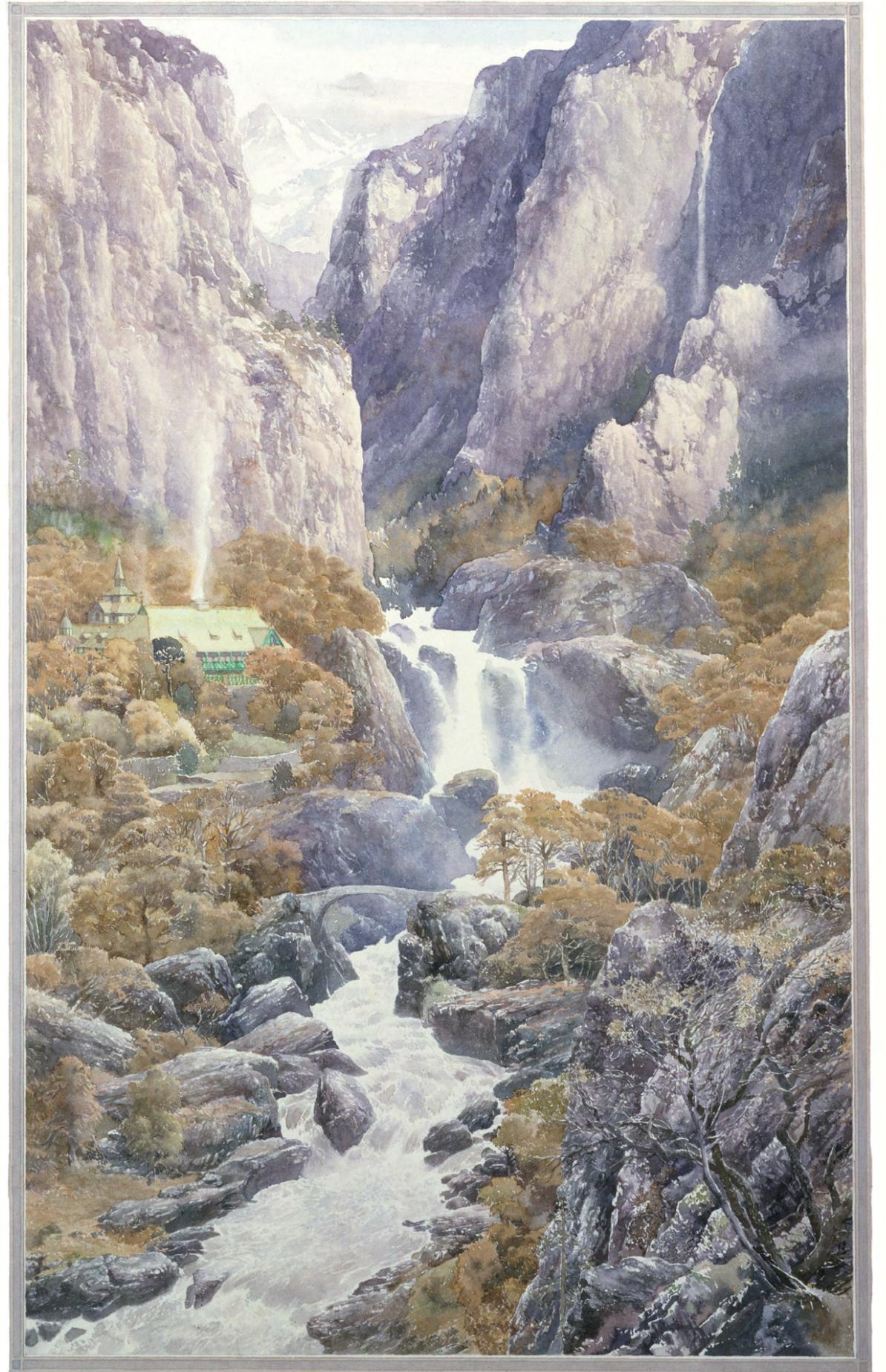
**AL:** Yes, they had to be done from very specific reference material—actual frames in the films—I didn't want to mess around with those carefully constructed and well-chosen moments.

**LMM: You work both in pencil and watercolors. What do you like best about each and what are the differences in how they allow you to express?**

**AL:** They are both drawing mediums and so allow a more searching and exploratory or playful approach, but usually the watercolor is just a later stage in the creation of an illustration. The nice thing about working in pencil is that you have all the enjoyment of discovering the essence of an image before the more painstaking process of actually rendering it really begins in earnest. What I like about working in film is that the drawing only needs to be finished to a point where it communicates its vital information to the next person who will be drafting a plan, or sculpting a statue, or working on a miniature. This is a very satisfying way of working and means that I can quickly get on with the next sketch.

**LMM: You have a very distinctive signature hand that is quite recognizable. Do you render the way you see the world or do you create a certain kind of world**







**in your rendering that is created by your particular physical skills?**

**AL:** Thank you! I have never tried to develop a style as such, just to attempt to draw as well as I possibly can. There are influences, but I think that temperament and physical and other aspects of personality also play a part. I think if I been a keen amateur boxer in my youth rather than an effete dreamer, my drawings would have a bit more punch.

**LMM: What do you think of Tolkien's drawing style?**

**AL:** I like Tolkien's drawings very much. It's obviously useful to look at his drawings to have a clearer picture of how he is imagining the places and characters he has invented, but they are also beautiful and unique.

**LMM: Some of your fellow Tolkien illustrators, such as Ted Nasmith and John Howe, have very different styles from you: They make the text "sound" different**

**or contribute different energies to it based on their styles. What are some of the qualities that your fellow artists bring that you admire?**

**AL:** Ted is particularly strong on landscapes. When I saw his originals for the first time, I was amazed at how small they were. I had imagined that they would be several feet wide, as there is so much detail and a terrific sense of scale. John is great at capturing the dynamic moment—he's a master of composition and drama.

**LMM: Your collaboration with Peter Jackson is well-documented, but how did you first decide you wanted to work with him, and what did your consultations look like? Did you ever have to adjust something according to his vision?**

**AL:** It was all about trying to help put Peter's vision on screen, and there were a lot of meetings. At the beginning it was a two-hour meeting every day with all the Weta designers, and Grant Major [production designer on *The Lord of the Rings*] and Dan Hennah [production designer on *The Hobbit*]. Peter is always intensely interested in the whole process of creating designs and gives a lot of feedback. I liked his film *Heavenly Creatures* when I saw it for the first time—there is a wonderful freshness and a liveliness to it which made me think that working for him would be enjoyable and fulfilling, so I was very happy to go to New Zealand for a while. I wasn't expecting to get quite as involved, and for such a prolonged period—six years on *The Lord of the Rings* and a further six on *The Hobbit*—but it was a wonderful immersion into another enterprise, country, and way of working.

**LMM: What is the next project up for you?**

**AL:** I'm currently working a limited-edition book of Anglo-Saxon poems. It is a good opportunity to spend some time with poems like "The Wanderer" and "The Ruin," and to go right back to the earliest English literature.

**LMM: Could you ever in your wildest imaginings as a book illustrator imagine you would be winning an Academy Award?**

**AL:** It still seems a bit surreal, especially following my return to life in rural Devon, books and damp landscapes. Wonderful memories, but a little dreamlike now.



# FOREST BATHING

by Rona Berg

Photography by Inge Bovens

**F**lves and fairies have long embraced the magic of the forest, living as they do under wild mushrooms and toadstools, on mulchy ground carpeted with spongy moss, near sparkling waterfalls and fresh mountain springs.

In recent years, perhaps we humans haven't quite appreciated that magic, or we wouldn't abuse nature the way we do. But it seems as if that may be starting to change, as more are drawn to "forest bathing," or "bathing in nature," which has nothing to do with water and everything to do with a cleansing of another sort. Forest bathing is a slow, serene, and thoughtful walk in the woods to connect with nature and refresh the mind and spirit. And now, there are documented physical benefits too.

Forest bathing began in Japan, where the term *Shinrin-yoku* translates to "forest bathing" or "taking in the forest atmosphere." It was coined by the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries in 1982 and integrated into the National Public Health Program there to help improve public health by encouraging leisurely strolls through the forest—believed to offer great physiological benefits.

Japanese researchers conducted field experiments in twenty-four forests across Japan to study those benefits. The first day, six subjects were sent to walk in a forest, and the rest walked in the city. On the second day, they switched. The researchers measured cortisol (the "stress" hormone), heart rate, blood pressure, and pulse before and after each walk. Not surprisingly, results showed that a walk in the woods lowered pulse rates, blood pressure, parasympathetic nerve activity, and cortisol, compared with the city walk. The presence of phytoncides (antimicrobial oils emitted by trees and plants) appears to bolster the human immune system. The results were so striking that a field of research dedicated to "forest medicine" is being developed as a means of preventive medicine and healing. And it's now catching on in the U.S.

A lifelong city dweller, I have long been drawn to the forest, especially my forest in the city—Central Park. I love to wander the Ramble, a thickly wooded stretch strewn with boulders, branches, and trickling streams. Landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted designed Central Park and Brooklyn's Prospect Park with a deep understanding that even in the midst of our cities, we need the wild. Even in the city—especially in the city!—we need to escape. And when I leave New York, there's a good chance you'll find me under the forest canopy in some ethereal woodland, breathing the pine-tinged air, feeling the mist and morning dew, the feathery ferns brushing my skin. I am happiest when I see the sun dapple through the branches and speckle the ground in the Amazon Rainforest in Peru, the Humboldt Redwood Forest in California, the Black Forest in Germany, the Monkey Forest in Ubud. The resonating quiet in the forest can be scary, but when you learn to embrace the stillness, you feel its most powerful effect.

Knowing this, I signed on for a "forest bathing walk" with Nina Smiley, the director of mindfulness programming at the Mohonk Mountain House in New Paltz, New York, and author of *Mindfulness in Nature*. Mohonk, a historic Victorian lodge founded by Albert Smiley, a Quaker, in 1869, has always reminded me of the Overlook Hotel in *The Shining*—which was actually inspired by the Timberline Lodge in Mount Hood, Oregon. It is a commanding structure, a bit foreboding, but very warm and welcoming at the same time.

The Shawangunk Mountains near Mohonk are covered with thick foliage. As we walked along, silently and companionably in the forest, every once in a while Smiley would remind us to pay attention: "Call on your senses. Allow the spaciousness of nature to become the spaciousness of your mind as you let your thoughts go. Hear the ripple of the wind on the water. Feel the stones, smell the buds in bloom." Once I let it all sink in and shook off my initial doubts, I could feel my shoulders loosen, my breath slow, and eventually, my perception sharpen.

At Blackberry Farm, near Knoxville, Tennessee, I walked through the lush Smoky Mountains, forest bathing with spa director Amanda Meyers. There I also breathed deeply, focused on the moment, and felt the chatter in my head come to a full stop, while the world looked just a bit brighter and I felt incredibly relaxed and at peace. Walking barefoot in the woods, an experience known as earthing, is also beneficial. Studies have shown that connecting barefoot with the earth allows the body to absorb free electrons from the soil, which act like antioxidants, with healing properties.

Forest bathing is magical and medicinal. The point is to slow down and pay attention, to become attuned to nature. It is not hiking; it is not a workout; it is not striding purposefully toward a two- or four- or eight-mile marker. It is about being mindful, in the moment, feeling the roughness of bark and snapping twigs, inhaling the forest smells, heightening awareness of your surroundings, appreciating nature and absorbing the peace that can be found there. It is cleansing, in a metaphysical way, and offers tangible, physical benefits. It creates the sense that new beginnings are possible as every bud, lichen, and bit of new growth in the forest makes you feel reborn or at least evokes the feeling that you can begin again where you are.

That is, as long as you allow yourself to be mindful, to be aware of the moment, what you touch, what you smell, what you see. There is a magic in mindfulness, after all. Environmentalist Paul Hawken said, "Ralph Waldo Emerson once asked what we would do if the stars only came out once every thousand years. No one would sleep that night, of course. The world would become religious overnight. We would be ecstatic, delirious, made rapturous by the glory of God. Instead the stars come out every night, and we watch television."

Now perhaps more than ever, we need to slow ourselves down and reflect on the interconnectedness between one



another and the living things in our world. I recently read an incredible book, *The Hidden Life of Trees*, by Peter Wohlleben, a German forester and ecologist. He writes about how trees are ecosystems, communities, maybe even families. They are able to communicate by sending electrical impulses to one another—which can be very slow, especially when the trees are hundreds of years old. Trees can taste the saliva of leaf-eating insects and respond by sending out a self-protective chemical signal that attracts predators to feed on that type of insect. According to Wohlleben, trees even experience something similar to emotions.

"When one tugs at a single thing in nature, one finds it attached to the rest of the world," the great naturalist John Muir said. We are part of the weave of nature, and we forget that sometimes. But a walk in the woods—forest bathing—brings us back. In order to slow ourselves down, be well, and sustain what we have, we need to take care of nature, and she will care for us in return. And that's where forest bathing comes in.

See more of Inge Bovens's work at [facebook.com/IngeBovensPhotography](https://www.facebook.com/IngeBovensPhotography).

Follow Rona Berg on Instagram @ronaberg



# daniel reeve:

## writing the words of middle-earth

By Grace Nuth

The universe that Tolkien created included its own mythos, languages, and cultures, and an eons-old history of literature, lore, exploration, maps, and the written word. When Peter Jackson set out to create a convincing series of films about this world, he turned to New Zealand artist and calligrapher Daniel Reeve. Reeve meticulously created virtually every written word you see in a Peter Jackson Tolkien film, from the “No Admittance Unless on Party Business” poster on Bilbo’s front gate to the burglar contract Bilbo signs in *The Hobbit*. We were eager to ask him some questions about his experiences and art form—and about how he got the job.

**Faerie Magazine: Can you tell us about how you got the position of official calligrapher and cartographer for the Peter Jackson Tolkien films?**

**Daniel Reeve:** When I heard that Peter Jackson was making my favorite book into a film, I made a couple of example pieces of elvish calligraphy and sent them to the film company in Wellington. My phone rang immediately and they invited me to an interview. I came away from that meeting with the job of calligrapher for the films!

**FM: What items did you make? Was the Red Book of Westmarch your work? The One Ring text? The dwarven journals in Moria?**

**DR:** For *The Lord of the Rings* I started as the calligrapher, making all the things you're familiar with—the Red Book, the Ring inscription, the dwarven book in the Chamber of Mazarbul, Saruman's book, party invitations and replies—and also many things that are less known or not seen at all: labels on Gandalf's fireworks, all the documents in the Minas Tirith library, the books in Rivendell, Eomer's arrest warrant, inscriptions on many of the sets. I even designed Elrond's elven telescope.

When I discovered that they needed a map of the Lonely Mountain, I took it upon myself to create it—and I have been the mapmaker ever since. There are many maps throughout *The Lord of the Rings*: in the prologue, in Bag End, in Rivendell, Minas Tirith, Dunharrow, Ithilien. Then there was the famous merchandising map of Middle-earth.

Following all this were the film titles, then DVD titles and chapter names, as well as many other related projects.

Then, for *The Hobbit*, my role expanded even more: I was a one-man graphics department! So in addition to the books, maps, scrolls, inscriptions, calligraphic set dressings, inventing of language alphabets and writing styles, I also made other artwork that the camera sees: paintings, drawings, diagrams, illustrations, portraits. It was a very full and varied set of tasks, and very satisfying.

**FM: Can you tell us about your affinity for Tolkien? Has he been a lifelong subject of appreciation for you? How did you get started with calligraphy?**

**DR:** I read *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* when I was about thirteen years old, and they immediately became my favorite books. I was instantly drawn to the runes I saw in *The Hobbit*, and when I saw the Ring inscription and other Tengwar pieces in *The Lord of the Rings* I knew I had to learn how to write this way. And thus was born my interest in calligraphy in general.

When we made *The Lord of the Rings*, I discovered that not just myself but many of the crew were Tolkien fans. I think this helped to infuse the whole project with an enthusiasm and commitment to quality that shows through in everything that was created for these films.

**FM: Did you have any memorable interactions with Peter Jackson, the cast, or anyone involved in The Lord of the Rings or The Hobbit that you'd like to share?**

**DR:** During the filming of *The Lord of the Rings* I had the pleasure of coaching Sir Ian Holm and Elijah Wood at writing in the hobbit style, with a quill, so that they could write on screen. They were both lovely to work with and did well in their respective writing scenes. I remember noticing, when we were

practicing in his trailer, that Elijah had a missing finger, and I wondered what terrible accident had befallen this young actor. Only later when we were shooting on set did I realize his finger wasn't missing at all but had simply provided "Gollum's second breakfast" and was hidden by the clever trickery of the makeup department. The fact that I had been fooled at very close range showed what an amazing job they did!

I had my own turn at writing the Red Book on camera during *The Hobbit*. We needed the writing to be mine, to match my already well-established Bilbo style, but my hands don't look sufficiently like Ian Holm's hands to be seen on screen. But for several reasons Ian Holm was only able to do a restricted amount for this film, so in the end "old Bilbo" is played by four people: Ian Holm for face shots, Martin Freeman (dressed as "old Bilbo") for wide shots, Frank the hand double for shots of Bilbo's hands (striking a match, dipping quill into ink, etc.), and me for the actual writing shots. It was a memorable afternoon's filming. I was being directed by Andy Serkis that day, and he too was great to work with.

**FM: What moment would you say was the most surreal or emotional when seeing your work on screen in the finished films?**

**DR:** Seeing *The Fellowship of the Ring* for the first time was incredible—it's packed with my stuff, and it was the first time I had seen my work on the big screen. Another surreal moment was visiting stores with my young son, when the merchandise from that first film started appearing on the shelves. The Middle-earth map that I had made on a \$10 sheet of paper in my garage was now the wallpaper on every piece of merchandise to do with the film—it was staring back at me from hundreds of items in every shop, and I knew it was the same all over the world. We bought a cave troll so that my son could have the action figure, and I could have the packaging!

**FM: What piece was the biggest challenge to create in Tolkien's world?**

**DR:** There have been so many! Some large, some small. A memorable example is the burglar contract in *The Hobbit*. In Tolkien's book it is very short—three clauses, I think. I made a version using the text from the book; Peter Jackson immediately asked if I could make it longer. I made a longer version and was then asked if I could make it two pages. Each time I made a new version, they would ask for more text—"Make it longer! Fill up all the blank spaces with smaller writing!" So finally, I rolled up my sleeves and said to myself, "Okay, if they want a lot of text, I'll give them a lot of text!" and I embarked on the long and complicated document that you see in the films. Great fun to create—I was not only physically writing it but authoring it as well. It was an important prop, so when it was finally done and was "PJ approved," naturally I had to make it again!



**FM: Any chance you'll be working on the new The Lord of the Rings series?**

**DR:** It's too early to make any comment about it—I wouldn't expect to be approached for a while yet. We'll have to wait and see.

**FM: For anyone wanting to start in calligraphy, do you have any tips or advice?**

**DR:** Try everything. After your first dabbings with a broad-edged pen, try all the many hands and styles, all the numerous writing instruments, the different mediums, the various surfaces. Really explore the field; it's more extensive than you think.

Don't just write endless alphabets for practice; write words and sentences, whole pieces. Spacing and layout are just as important as individual letterforms.

And when you *do* make a "finished" work, do what you're most passionate about—you'll get your best results by doing something you care about.



Find Daniel Reeve's art at [danielreeve.co.nz](http://danielreeve.co.nz).



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JANNE AND RUBEN EIKEBLAD

# A WOODLAND HOME INSPIRED BY TOLKIEN'S MIDDLE-EARTH

BY JANNE EIKEBLAD

*We asked the Norwegian wood nymph to tell us about her elven home and garden and share some tips on how to make your home more Tolkienesque, and she threw the elven tea party seen here in our honor. She tells us how to do that too.*

**I** bought a hundred-year-old log house four years ago with a completely overgrown garden that nobody had been living in since the 1990s. But I saw potential: It was located directly by a beautiful Norwegian fjord, the garden was huge, and just outside the door was wilderness, the mountains, and fields. There was a massive job to be done, and the house was uninsulated and freezing cold. During these past years my boyfriend Ruben and I have restored the house and done quite a lot in the garden. We now have a couple of kitchen gardens, many fruit trees and berry bushes, and we've established a little mushroom-farm business on our land. We enjoy living here together with our two white cats and four ducks.

I've been a huge lover of fantasy since I started to read, and the author that has been my greatest inspiration in life is J.R.R. Tolkien. The world of Tolkien and Middle-earth greatly influenced my path and was how I found my life partner and most of my friends, style, artwork, and outlook on life. Tolkien helped deepen my love for nature, which in turn made me want to dedicate my life to it. Many people are not aware just how much Tolkien loved nature, trees, and everything that grows, and how he, ahead of his time, deeply incorporated environmental concerns and inspired in his readers a love for beauty and nature. Many of his works are submerged in mystique and wonder and the feeling that there is something more to life—especially in regard to the elves, his biggest passion.

It seems I had this subconscious urge early on to find a unique path in life. I used to feel utterly alone in regard to my elven and fairy-inspired style for a long time, although in recent years that has changed, all thanks to the internet. But living in a remote part of Norway far away from friends and family is not always easy. Still, it is important to be yourself and not care too much about what other people think. I hope to inspire others to follow their own path as well.

In my early teens I just really wanted a home that felt like living inside an enchanted forest, and so I created one. The attic

where I lived was mossy green and filled with trees, ivy, treasures, flowers, antique paintings, lanterns, and draped fabrics. Instead of a stream I had a fountain with running water. As the years have passed, my style has become slightly more practical and allergy-friendly, but it is still based on the same principles.

I am aiming for an everyday kind of magic. I don't want to wait for special occasions and events or that one day when I have more time or money to live out my dreams. I try to merge the elven and the fantastical elements into daily life, and you can too. On the next page I share some ideas for making your own home (and world) more Tolkienesque.

First, here are the dwellings and locations in Middle-earth that have most inspired me:

- ✦ Rivendell, where the outdoors and interiors merge together in a state of perpetual autumn and the colors are warm and the designs are based on Art Nouveau, Gothic arches, and the elegant shapes of nature.
- ✦ Hobbiton, this joyful and green place, with organic shapes, medieval furniture, and a cozy country style.
- ✦ Rohan, with beautiful wooden structures, knotwork, and Viking style, and a color palette of green, gold, brown, and white.
- ✦ Lothlórien, a myriad of magical lights, ethereal gardens, and homes merged with nature, slightly Eastern-inspired and with massive trees.
- ✦ The revitalizing ent home of Treebeard, which is totally like a house made of trees, with a moss floor, magical lights, rippling water, bottles, and a forest bed.
- ✦ Beorn's house, an abundant homestead garden filled with homegrown produce, bees, and flowers. Rustic, but with intricate details. And what about Radagast's super-whimsical home and Thranduil's halls?



## HOW TO CREATE A MORE TOLKIENESQUE OR ELVISH HOME

### Grow a garden and care for the environment

Let trees grow majestic and tall! Let pieces of the wild have a place in your garden—wildflowers, ferns, birds, fairies, and elves. Look into permaculture and gardening without pesticides, try to work with nature and not against it. Make small magical places with lanterns, banner garlands, fairy string lights. Make your own campfire place if you can. Tolkien's elves love the night and the stars, so adorn a place with small enchanting solar lights and pillows and spend some late hours outside. I've also made several woodland paths in my garden and created curved bridges over a stream—like my own little enchanting forest. Additionally I made a pond close to a natural spring, with a simple lighted fountain.

### A natural house

Look into the amazing and low-cost ways to build a hobbit house out of straw bales or cob, which offer almost endless sculptural and creative possibilities. Or look into ways to make your house more environmentally friendly and inspiring. Incorporate more rustic wood, organic shapes, plants, and rocks. Try to make it blend into the landscape and have a low impact.

### Thrifting and upcycling

I have never in my life bought a new piece of furniture. Almost every single thing and item of clothing I own is thrifted, which is good for the planet and your economy and makes for the most unique pieces. I am very skilled at making the most of a budget. But for this to work you have to be patient. My wardrobe and home have been in the making for most of my life. Often you have to upcycle or redesign a piece to fit your needs or aesthetic.

I always look for pieces that feel old, antique, with natural colors as well as bronze, and I have a particular love for Art Nouveau, woodcarvings, anything Celtic, and things from a wide range of older time periods. I also have an affinity for certain exotic Eastern elements.

### Inspiring, healthy, and cozy meals

Let the food be based on local produce and learn to make a lot of things from scratch. It does not have to be time-consuming or expensive. Get inspired by medieval recipes, the beauty of raw food, or find a hobbit cookbook. Incorporate lots of greens, mushrooms, berries, wild edible plants, and flowers. If you eat meat or dairy, try to get it as cruelty-free as possible.

### Those magical lights

Lights totally set the atmosphere of your home. Essentially you want to go for dim, warm, and inviting lamps. I have a wide range of flower lamps and antique lamps, as well as numerous lanterns, fairy lights, and candle lights.

### More is more—just say no to minimalism

I guess I am rebelling a bit against this past decade's obsession with minimalism by adorning my house with an abundance of whimsical decorations. Let your surroundings feel meaningful and pleasing, but also practical and useful. Today's overconsumption is not to be taken lightly, but I feel it is something else to truly love your things and take care of them and cherish them for the rest of your life.

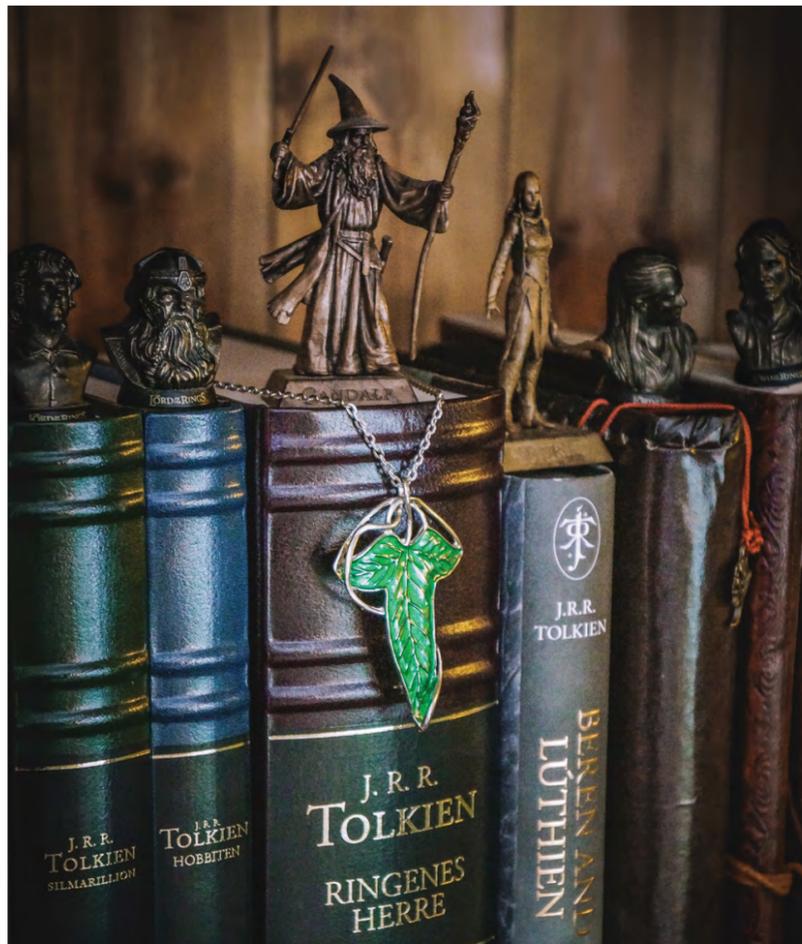
### It's all in the details

Another thing I do to make my home feel more Tolkienesque is to put on music that sounds like it could be straight from a faraway elven land. I have many paintings on the walls as well as the obligatory big map of Middle-earth and various replicas from the movies. I prefer to do my own interpretations of elven dwellings, and I'm also quite influenced by everything fairy, so I don't really try to copy things from the movies.

I find having lots of books, musical instruments, and art in general makes the look. A lot of pillows, tapestries, and draped curtains are crucial. Try to avoid or cover up anything too modern looking and technological. Fill your home with glass jars and bottles in all shapes and colors to replace the use of plastic. Most of my tableware is basically shaped as leaves or flowers. I work a lot with herbs and go foraging, and I love the look of dried bundles of hanging herbs. Go wild decorating with branches, vines, and ivy.

Any respectable Tolkienesque elvish household has its own symbol, and that is why we designed our own personal elven banner, which is based on the elven star (a septagram with an ancient sevenfold symbolism of unity, often associated with what is elusive, hidden, and mystical in this world). I'm even lucky enough to have a boyfriend who made his own elven language and an elven calendar, if you want to take the lifestyle to new heights.







## THE ELVEN TEA PARTY

**M**ake sure to occasionally host inspiring parties and sometimes invite friends over to eat good food, dance, play roleplaying games, and sit around the campfire. Please note that elves in Tolkien's writings are usually so much more welcoming and festive than how they are portrayed in the movies, which is kind of unfair.

This winter I was fortunate to have a visit from a fellow Tolkien lover all the way from Australia, a truly enchanting elven lady with floor-length hair called Rocaille (Amy Earl). We spontaneously decided to throw a small elven tea party in honor of *Faerie Magazine*. This cold winter day just called for snuggling up on the sofa with warm tea and comforting food and the company of cats, creating a sanctuary from the busy modern world. My cats' names, by the way, are Zelda and Ori. Zelda is the one with the elven circlet. She is an absolute queen and a fierce huntress, but don't be deceived by those badass eyes. She loves to cuddle, and she gladly joins us for long walks in the forest. Ori is her young son that is already twice her size and a total sweetheart.

We dressed up in elven gowns of mossy green velvet, golden trims, and wide sleeves; adorned ourselves with elven jewelry, and braided each other's hair. And, of course, we never miss a

chance to put on some elf ears. Then we brewed some herbal tea from the garden and the forest, and sprinkled it with dried edible flowers (see recipe below). We had some sweet potato brownies (I always bake without sugar), raw food chocolate nut balls, chopped fresh fruits (apples, pears, grapes), and raspberries as well as dried fruits (figs, apricots, dates) and nuts. Later in the evening we watched *The Lord of the Rings* while having some snacks, like chopped veggies, dried salted lamb meat, mushrooms, and cheese—the only thing lacking was Lembas! We also found the time to spend a delightful evening by the campfire, roasting some herbal stick bread.

I live for these out-of-the-ordinary moments. I believe the world is in urgent need of re-enchantment; a restoration of our sense of connection with the sacred and mysterious, but also with our body, with the earth and with each other. It is a way to change from within and moving outward to transform the world. Connecting with the elven energies inside oneself is one way of doing it, and I hope this article has inspired you to go one step further.



Follow Janne Eikeblad on Instagram @voiceofnature.



### For elven tea, brew:

- 1 liter water
- 3 tbsp. dried peppermint leaves
- 1 tbsp. birch leaves
- 1 tbsp. meadowsweet
- 1 tbsp. fireweed
- A few violets
- Pinch of stevia leaves





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# ELVEN BEDTIME RITUAL

by Massie Jones

Elves don't require sleep to maintain their shimmering beauty, but that doesn't prevent them from bestowing the most lovely night's rest on their most fortunate guests. If, say, you stop in Elfland in the middle of an epic and magical quest, you'll be treated to a meal that fairly sparkles with fruits and wine and Lembas before you float off to bed beneath canopies of green and the most ancient stars in the night sky. There you'll have the deepest, most restful and luxurious sleep of your life, filled with the most enchanting, luminous dreams.

Though we cannot transport you to Elfland ourselves (much as we try!), here are some tips that will help you have that same magical starry sleep you might experience deep in the elven forest. As some of the elves say, "*Losto mae,*" or "sleep well!"

- ✦ When the moon shines on your window, open the curtains and sleep in moonlight.
- ✦ Wear white linen or cotton pajamas.
- ✦ Light white votive candles in your bedroom.
- ✦ Read poetry in bed.
- ✦ Fluff your pillows. Put them in the dryer with a tennis ball, then leave them outside in the sun or in a sunny window.
- ✦ Make lavender water and iron your sheets with it.
- ✦ Keep soothing plants in your bedroom, like jasmine (has a soothing effect on mind and body), snake plant and aloe (emits oxygen at night and remove toxins from the air), gardenia (removes anxiety and promotes sleep), valerian (promotes restful sleep), peace lily (increases air moisture up to five percent and suppresses airborne microbes that trigger allergies), and lavender (obviously).

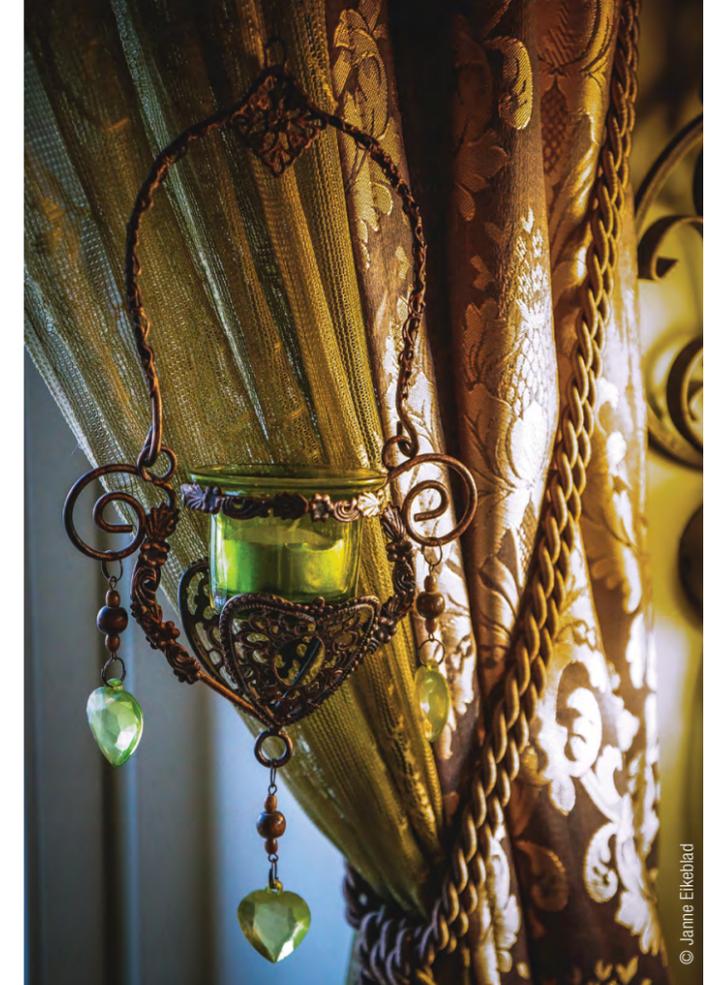
### Recipe for Lavender Water

Put 10 drops of lavender oil in a spray bottle. Add ¼ cup vodka. Close the bottle, and give it a good shake. Let it sit at room temperature for a day. Add two cups distilled water and give it another good shake. Store in the refrigerator for up to six weeks.

### Recipe for Elven Sleep Tonic

Macerate six raspberries in your favorite teacup (other berries may be substituted to taste) with 1½ tsp. honey. Add a tsp. of lemon and stir. Pour boiling water to top of teacup and stir.

*Massie Jones is a fiber artist and gemologist and is pursuing a degree in cellular and molecular biology.*



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STINGING NETTLE

Moss Cake

BY THE WONDERSMITH

This stunningly magical nettle moss cake might have been served at the Last Homely House in Rivendell, or spotted growing at the edge of a hobbit garden. It's also really easy, full of nutrition, and tastes wonderful. The cake is a vibrant green without the use of any food coloring and is incredibly easy to decorate. Don't let the stinging nettles intimidate you. They grow plentifully in the springtime and are completely safe (and very nutritious) to consume once they've been cooked. A fresh citrus flavor makes this cake extra scrumptious.

STINGING NETTLE MOSS CAKE:

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups shortening or unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 6 eggs
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 4 tbsp. lemon juice
- zest of two lemons
- 2 cups nettle puree (or spinach puree) - see below
- 4 cups flour
- 4 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. salt

Directions:

Preheat your oven to 325°F and prepare two nine-inch cake pans and one smaller pan (any shape) by lightly greasing and dusting with flour. Cut out a circle of parchment paper to fit the bottom and grease it as well.

In a large bowl, cream the shortening and the sugar. Add the eggs, one at a time, until they are well combined. Add the vanilla, lemon juice, and lemon zest and mix well. Add the nettle puree.

In another bowl, sift the flour, baking powder, and salt. Mix well, then mix into the nettle mixture.

Pour into baking pans and bake until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, or about 25 minutes.

DOUGLAS FIR GRAPEFRUIT BUTTERCREAM:

Ingredients:

- 1 cup shortening or butter, at room temperature
- 1/4 tsp. salt (if using unsalted butter or shortening)
- 1 tbsp. ground fresh Douglas Fir needles
- 1 1/2 tbsp. grapefruit juice
- 4 to 5 cups powdered sugar (1 lb.)

Directions:

Cream the shortening, salt, and fir needles until smooth and creamy. Add 4 cups powdered sugar and mix at low speed until incorporated to make a stiff dough.

Add the grapefruit juice and mix until smooth. Assess the consistency and add more powdered sugar or grapefruit juice as desired.

To ice and decorate the cake, first allow it to cool completely. With a long bread knife, trim the tops of the cake so that they are flat. Place one cake onto a serving plate and place strips of waxed paper around the cake for easier cleanup later.

Spread a layer of frosting over the top of the cake, then carefully set the other cake on top. At this point it can be helpful to place the cake in the fridge for an hour or so for it to firm up. Meanwhile, crumble the scraps from the tops of the cake and the smaller extra cake into coarse crumbs using your hands or a food processor.

Spread the rest of the frosting over the entire cake and press the crumbs into the surface to look like moss. Remove the strips of waxed paper and serve.

Notes:

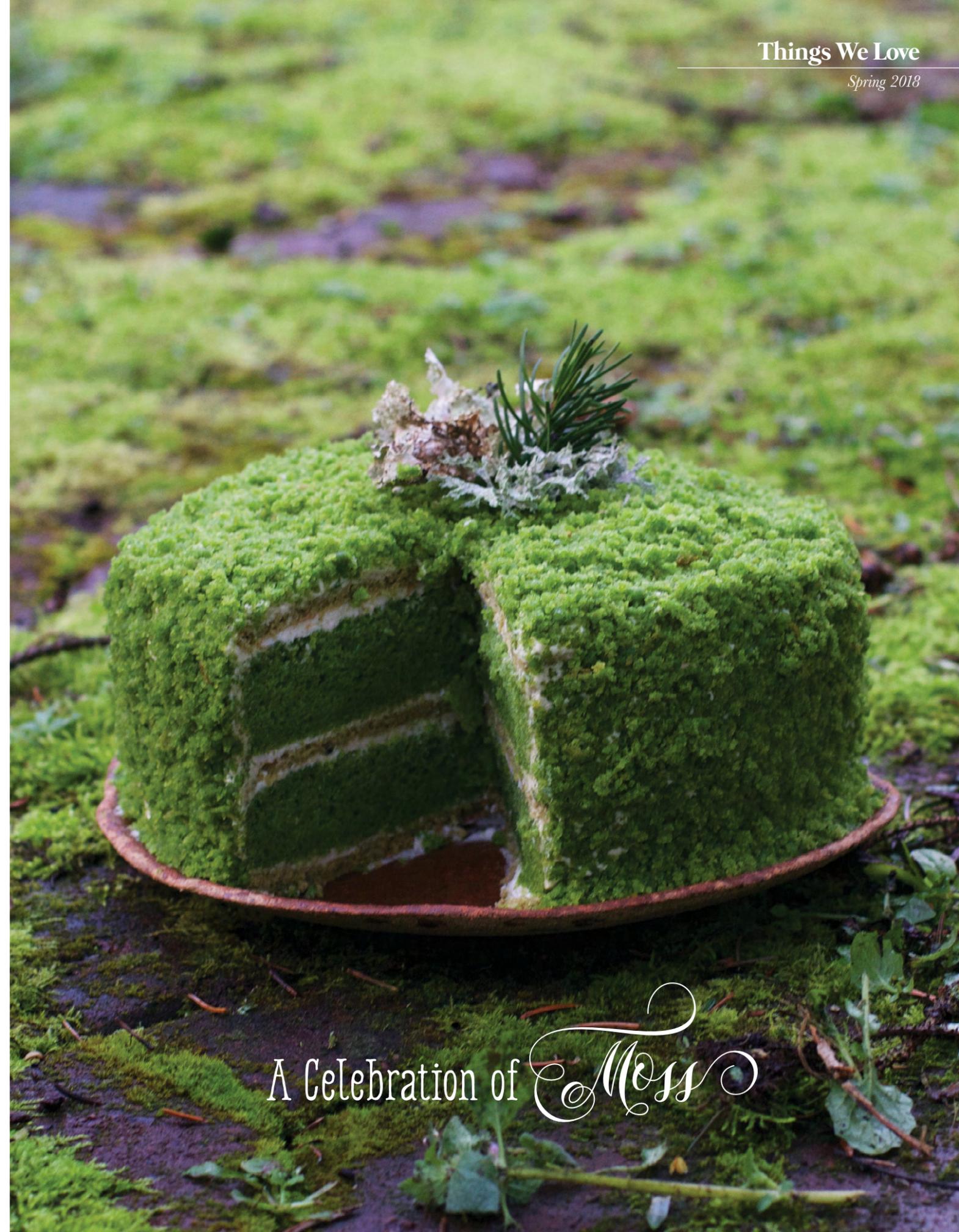
To make stinging nettle puree, pick off all the leaves (wear gloves!), then boil them for a couple of minutes. Strain and immediately plunge into an ice bath to cool. Puree the cooked leaves into a smooth paste in your blender. You may need to add a

tablespoon of water to get them to grind properly. To make a spinach puree, just blend raw baby spinach leaves in a blender with enough water to get them to form a smooth puree.

Make sure to note the lower baking temperature of this cake. Baking it at a lower temperature for longer helps it

retain the fresh green color.

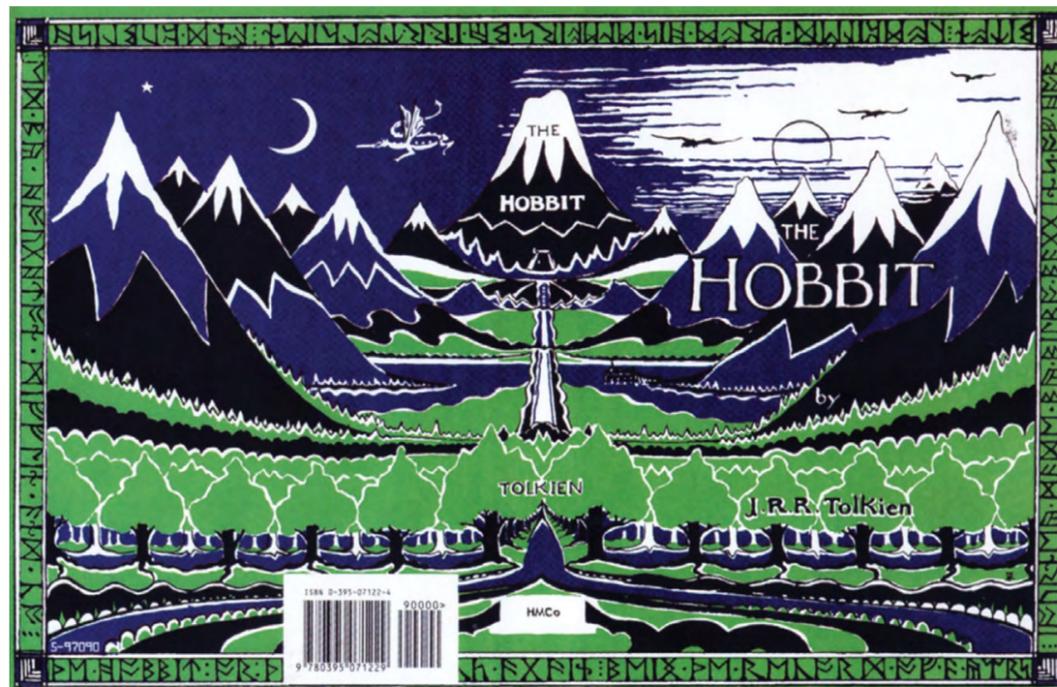
If you are unable to forage or purchase stinging nettle, spinach works just as well. And don't worry about your cake tasting like salad: The green veggies add a very subtle flavor that is accented nicely by the bright citrus. You'll barely notice them.



A Celebration of Moss

# THE ECCENTRICITIES OF GENTLEMEN

EPHEMERA AND APOCRYPHA FROM THE NOTES OF TIMOTHY SCHAFFERT, ESQ.



## STRANGE DIALOGUE: PICTURE AND PROSE

Springtime (when fancies turn to thoughts of love) is high time to swap that dog-eared, fly-specked, bookworm-infested copy of *The Hobbit* you've been carting around since the fourth grade for something befitting the sophisticate you are, something more likely to get that sexy librarian's bun undone hands-free. (As of press time, a first edition of *The Hobbit*, containing a letter signed by Tolkien, can be yours for \$65,000, plus \$10 shipping, via Quintessential Rare Books of Laguna Hills).

To revolutionize your bachelor- or bachelorette-pad bookshelves in a way that respects your Tolkien worship, we

herewith offer a short shopping list compiled in the spirit of Tolkien's genius as both storyteller and illustrator, books that offer a dynamic and idiosyncratic approach to word and image. As with *The Hobbit*, these editions aren't only illustrated; they're enhanced by art that offers a depth of perspective beyond the text. In describing Leonora Carrington's *The Milk of Dreams*, her son Gabriel Weisz nicely articulates that magical play of picture and prose: "There are two narratives: one is written and the other is illustrated, the two converse, one with the other, and have a strange dialogue to be discovered."

(Prices range from \$15.95 to \$30,000.)

To read the work of **Leonora Carrington**, or to gaze upon her art, is to be alternately soothed by its childlike, fairy-tale charm and startled by its wisdom and treacherous wit. Her stories are peopled by mysterious old women in peacock-feather hats or fighting in the street, "pinching each other like a pair of angry black lobsters," or moving darkly through gardens with decaying statuary and strewn with "old toys, decapitated and destitute." The sweet animals of her forests might turn beastly. And the beastly might turn sweet. In Mexico, Carrington painted landscapes and creatures on the walls for the entertainment of her sons. Before the walls were whitewashed, she re-created the images in a notebook, accompanied with stories and rhymes that were eventually published as *The Milk of Dreams* (New York Review Children's Collection, \$15.95).

**Pablo Picasso**, felled by the flu in his Paris apartment in 1941, his city occupied by Nazis, wrote an absurdist play while confined to his sickbed, a fever dream he titled *Le Désir attrapé par la queue* (or *Desire Caught by the Tail*). Though some have called the play unperformable, it has nonetheless been performed, most notably in 1944 with a cast that included Simone de Beauvoir, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Picasso himself, playing characters with names such as Skinny Anguish and Fat Anguish. (That propitious gathering seemed more enticing than the play itself to Los Angeles playwright David Jette, who created his own adaptation in 2010, titled: *Wednesday Night at the Home of Michel Leiris a Reading of the Play "Desire Caught by the Tail" by the Painter Pablo Picasso*.) Many who've seen a production of *Desire* warn others from doing the same, but even these critics allow that it might make for better reading. Many good copies of the playbook can be had, and they include illustrations by the author himself, making the book a compelling artifact of the artist's wartime impoverishment and anxiety. Look for the first English-language edition, published by Rider and Co. in 1950, to set you back from \$25 to \$30. A copy of the 1969 paperback, with a signature and original sketch by the author, sold a few years ago for under \$500.

Jazz is both a subject and an influence in the lesser-known prose work of poet **Langston Hughes**, who wrote several newspaper pieces about a character named Jesse "Simple" Semple, who reflected on the sights and sounds of Harlem in the 1940s and '50s. Simple's sensibility was informed by vaudeville too, with its comical beats. Simple, like his creator, was more than a little political. Hughes would eventually rile the ire of the infamous Senator Joe McCarthy, who was suspect of African Americans who voiced criticism of the nation's treatment of black people. The 1961 compilation volume,

*The Best of Simple*, features snazzy, Populuxe line drawings characteristic of mid-century style by Bernhard Nast, all cocktails and neckties. These were perhaps enlisted to slightly and merrily mask the text, due to Hughes's own anxieties provoked by McCarthy's hostilities. In his *Historical Guide to Langston Hughes*, Steven C. Tracy writes, "Nast's drawings put Simple in a depoliticized frame, emphasizing the aspects of Simple as a lover and hanger-around, rather than as a worker and commentator on race and class relations." For the illustrated editions, seek out the hardcovers from the 1960s (rather than the 1990 reprint), at anywhere from \$5 to \$50, or visit Second Story Books in Washington, D.C., for a first-edition signed (inscribed "to Maude") for \$750.

**Henri Matisse** illustrated a special edition of **James Joyce's *Ulysses***, but Matisse lifted his concepts from Homer's *Odyssey* (relying on some "Homeric correspondences" outlined by a Joyce scholar). The Limited Editions Club sold 250 copies signed by both the novelist and the artist for \$15 each in 1935. The Manhattan Rare Book Company currently has a copy available for \$30,000.

**Henri Toulouse-Lautrec**, famous for his portraits of the cancan dancers of the Moulin Rouge, frequented the brothels of Paris, depicting the women in a controversial way—which is to say, without judging them. In his portraits, he neither romanced nor condemned; he was drawn to *La Fille Elisa*, the 1877 novel by Edmond de Goncourt, in which the heroine, a prostitute, murders a soldier. The novel strove for realism, with Goncourt insisting in his preface that the book was serious, fact-based, impolite, and not at all intended "for the amusement of the young ladies riding in railway trains." Henry James, meanwhile, criticized the novel as "intolerably unclean ... profoundly distasteful to healthy appetites." The imagery in the book was believed to have been inspired by the drawings of soldiers and prostitutes by Constantin Guy; in turn, the novel's imagery inspired artists such as Edgar Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec. When the novel was to be reissued, Toulouse-Lautrec offered to illustrate; the author rejected the proposal, so the artist simply illustrated his own copy of the book, with watercolor and crayon, in 1896. A facsimile edition of this illustrated copy would be published later by Librairie de France, in 1931. Copy 31 of the 175-copy limited run can be had for \$1,500 from the Heritage Book Shop in Tarzana, California.

*Timothy Schaffert is the author of five novels, most recently The Swan Gondola. He is a professor of English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Learn more at timothyschaffert.com.*



*Seeking Elves in*  
**ICELAND**

*by Laren Stover*

If you're looking for elves, Iceland might be the place for you. Editor-at-large Laren Stover reports on elf whisperers, hidden people, an elf author, and elf tea. And yes, there is even elf school in this land of sagas, mystical lava fields, and northern lights.

On a late November day, fellow editor-at-large Paul Himmelein and I drove from Reykjavík over frost-bitten land shimmering with orange-blue arctic light to visit Ragnhildur Jónsdóttir, who prefers to go simply by Ragga and is affectionately known as the elf whisperer. I was in Iceland in search of stories about elves, nature spirits, and *huldufólk* (hidden people), and Ragga—famous for mediating between the elves and civic engineers when human construction threatens an elf church or habitat—was my introduction.

Well, not quite my introduction. Óli, a fair young man with glacial blue eyes who drove us to the Átak car rental, told us that Icelandic people believe in elves. (We were also kindly warned of the infamous wind that can blow off car doors.) Fifty-four percent of Icelanders, in fact, believe in elves and other nature spirits, according to Professor Magnús H. Skarphéðinsson who runs the Elf School—but more about him later.

After an hour of driving, we saw a sign marked Álfagardur (elf garden) and turned up a steep drive. Ragga, with wispy silvery hair and clear blue eyes, emerged with her two dogs from a white cottage with trim the color of the nearby sea to greet us. The first thing she did was show us her stone circle and elf garden—moved from her previous home closer to the city—surrounding what she explained was a ley line, an energy path connecting the earth’s chakra points.

She stood on a flat stone and spread her arms as if she were getting ready to levitate or be transported to another world. Then she invited me to stand on the same stone. A curious gentle energy shot up through my legs, and I am not sure if this happens to everyone, but I felt an impulse to make a wish.

Behind the cottage were the elf dwellings. “Here is where Fróði lives, he’s an author,” she said. A large ruddy stone rosily glowing with the last of the day’s sun sat handsomely in the snow. Fróði, a small troll elf, has written books in the elf world but instructed Ragga to create one for humans. The title is certainly catchy: *What Does It Take to See an Elf?*

Quoting Fróði she said, “To see us elves, you need only three things: a touch of joy in your heart, a permission from the grownup inside of you to allow your inner child to go out and play, and an elf willing to be seen.”

She led us to three large pointed red stones. “Here,” she said, “is the palace of a lady elf medicine woman, Púlða.” Ragga has known this elf—actually a *huldufólk* woman—since early childhood.

“Many in my family had what are called invisible friends. So my parents were not shocked when I had one,” Ragga said. “My mother told me the story that when I was almost two years old and we were coming home, she closed the door behind us and I started crying, ‘No, Púlða is outside.’ My mother had never heard that name before, but she opened the door again, and I was happy and started talking with someone. And Púlða and I, we are still friends.”

Púlða’s triumvirate of stones did look rather palatial, and

when Ragga said that the elf was adding a mother-of-pearl tower to her home, I could almost imagine it jutting up from the stones in nacreous transparency against the pale blue snow.

“It’s rather small for a palace,” I said.

“That’s just how it looks on the outside,” Ragga assured me. “Elf dwellings are much, much larger on the inside.”

The story goes that when Ragga moved to this place, a sort of middle-of-nowhere spot that was once a B&B, last spring, the elves moved with her. She even brought their rock homes along.

Inside the cottage (which, magically, looks much bigger inside than outside), Ragga made us elf tea of wild Icelandic thyme, angelica, and birch leaves, all of which she had gathered herself. The recipe was courtesy of Púlða. The elf lady also designs protective jewelry; she had instructed Ragga to make a necklace with stones in both the front and the back to protect her heart chakra on both sides.

Ragga has published two illustrated books, one in Icelandic—*Alfheimir Hellisgerdis*—with pictures of Púlða, and another that she “channeled” through Fróði. It was published in both Icelandic and English and is sadly out of print. Beautifully meditative, one page instructs us to “Listen to the wind play in the grass and the leaves of the trees.”

Just how does one write a book for an elf?

“The way he did it was that he made me so drowsy, I just fell asleep. And when I woke up an hour later, I had this little book in my head. And Fróði and some friends of his circled around me and I had to sit up and write everything down. And when I was going to change even a word he said, ‘No, no, no, this word.’ So he made sure I got it all right.

“*Fróði* means someone who knows many things, very knowledgeable,” she said, opening the book to an illustration of him. He looks strangely hobbit-like and even has hairy feet, which Ragga says he combs. Even his name, Fróði, sounds like a version of Tolkien’s hobbit Frodo. Not a coincidence, Ragga said. She told us that as Tolkien was growing up, he had an Icelandic au pair who opened the realm of Icelandic sagas to him. “He read all the sagas, and he drew names for the dwarves and for Gandalf and Frodo from them. There are no hobbits in the sagas, but some descriptions are from the old stories.”

According to Ragga, the veil between worlds is thinning as more and more elves and *huldufólk* have come out of hiding to work with humans because they are opposed to the destruction of the planet. The elves have traveled with Ragga by plane (in orb form, no ticket needed) to New York’s Central Park to accompany her on elf walks and to do a workshop.

“We need to take care of the planet. Pesticides are poison for them,” Ragga says. “We really are an impossible species, when you think about it, trying to destroy what gives us life—poison our food, poison the air, the water, the land. It’s like a suicide wish for the whole species, for the whole planet. So the elves want to remind us. They say that we humans are nature beings. We just have forgotten.”



All photos by Paul Himmelein except where otherwise noted

The next day we drove west on a snow-dusted ribbon of a road, past fields of shaggy Icelandic horses huddled in the subfreezing wind and munching icy grasses, to Búðir, a small hamlet in the Búðahreun lava fields on the Snæfellsnes peninsula, to see the aurora borealis. We checked into the Búðir Hotel, which is nestled in a fairytale landscape near a mystical glacier; our room overlooked a frosted ocean inlet and otherworldly lava fields.

The hotel has a wonderful service: They wake you up to see the aurora borealis whenever it decides to put on a show. Thankfully, we weren’t corralled at 3:00

a.m. to see the magical lights; the call came just as we were leaving the dining room, around 10:00 p.m. Hotel staff handed out thick warm blankets so we could rush into the frigid blasting winds and see the supernatural green waves like curtains opening to the heavens.

Afterward, we came in to warm up with a pot of tea and chatted with Smári, a local musician, by glow of fireplace and candlelight. He spoke of sensing the elves frolicking out on the lava fields behind the hotel around the famous black church that was originally built in 1703. He told me there was an old photo in a nearby town of an actual elf. He and his mystical and nature-loving friends plan to open a yoga studio nearby and rescue and rehabilitate a

baby *refur*—one of the five Icelandic words for fox he taught me. Elves, of course, do not approve of trapping or hunting animals.

In the lounge area, I became enchanted by a collection of mystical paintings by elf-seer witch Sigríður Gísla and learned that she has seen the elves trooping over the lava fields. The next morning we popped into the “witch shop,” a cozy little red shack in the back of our hotel where you can buy cards by the artist, as well as Icelandic moss, herbs, handcrafted soaps, magical charms, crocheted masks, and tiny brooms to whisk away bad spirits. Agnes, who runs the shop, was busy brewing up a loose

tea of witchy elven herbs and making some of the little brooms that were for sale. We could have spent hours there, but with less than six hours of daylight and the black church and lava fields to explore, it was time to go. We still had a three-hour drive ahead of us to get to Álfaskólinn or Elf School.



We arrived at the school just in time. There were six students—two other Americans (who also attended troll school), a Canadian, and an Italian attending class. Headmaster Magnús H. Skarphéðinsson, former history professor at Reykjavík University, handed us the Icelandic Fairytales Studybook, the illustrated “textbook” he compiled,



## Seeking Elves in Iceland

Laren Stover



complete with his own inspirational quotes. The “school” room, which was on the second floor of an office building, was lined with books and filled with gnomes and elfish knick-knacks. The bespectacled Skarphéðinsson, an imposing figure of a man with a crew cut and a closely cropped beard, has a kindly but commanding presence (with more than a pinch of impish humor) and revealed that Icelanders have had a long friendship with elves and *huldufólk*—which he described as tall elegant humanlike elves that live in another dimension but sometimes can be seen by humans and vice versa. (Both humans and elves must be psychic to see each other.) Many Icelanders have seen and talked with elves and hidden people, and sometimes they have been invited into their homes and even eaten food there. Elves don’t drink coffee, but *huldufólk* do. “Sometimes they had a cup of coffee”—it must be organic, according to Ragga—“with jam-filled pancakes,” Skarphéðinsson told us. Halfway through the class his assistant served us the same pancakes while Skarphéðinsson regaled us with true tales of human-elfin contact that he has collected over decades while scouring the Nordic island country like a lone Grimm brother. At one point an “elf pot” was produced as proof that the hidden folk helped a 1940s vacationing family who forgot their cooking paraphernalia. An elf had placed it on the family’s kitchen table while they slept. It looked like an ordinary, albeit old, enamelware pot with two holes in the bottom. He told us it was going to be part of an elf museum exhibit.

The class concluded with a group photo of all of us students holding up our diplomas, surrounding our instructor, who supported a large plaster garden gnome on his lap. Skarphéðinsson told us he has never seen an elf but believes in them wholeheartedly. He certainly has devoted his life to them and is making a documentary film on the subject.



On our last full day in Iceland, we took an elf tour in the town of Hafnarfjörður, a twenty-minute drive south of Reykjavík. The town’s tag line is “Where men and elves live in harmony.” There is a Hidden Worlds Map, not so terribly hard to get a hold of if you happen to take Sibba Karls’s elf tour of Hafnarfjörður. The map was created by the late elf seer Erla Stefánsdóttir (1935-2015) who said Hafnarfjörður has one of the richest elf and spirit populations of all the towns in Iceland. According to her map, elven beings, from *huldufólk* and gnomes to dwarfs and light-fairies to angels and lovelings, can be perceived in gardens all over the town.

When Stefánsdóttir was a child, she said, she played with elf children and shared their food. She found their elf cakes especially delicious, sweet and shimmering with natural coarse sugar that glittered like diamonds. She used to give her house elf a bowl of porridge once a year. He took from it radiant



energy, leaving it otherwise untouched and looking quite the same to those unable to see this energy. The map she later created was to point out the best places to sit and contemplate the nature spirits and maybe even see them.

We encountered a troll and a dwarf’s home on the tour among other elven-populated places and learned four meditations to help put you in touch with nature spirits. On the tour, Karls—wearing a red gnome-style pointed hat—told us that the mayor of Hafnarfjörður is teasingly called “Lord of the Rings” because the town has so many little roundabouts. Karls sees elves in her dreams and says she has received gifts from them, one being the gift of travel, as she is always being sent to places afar to talk about elves, which she considers their doing.

Back in Reykjavík at the vegan restaurant Gló, I asked Brynja, a young counterperson who also happens to be a model, if she believes in elves. Of course she does. “I believe they can help you when you have difficulties, and they’re probably everywhere,” she said. Brynja then came to our table to introduce the manager to us, who wanted to tell us her elf story. They even brought out a kitchen worker, who told us that he has *seen* elves. Apparently, you don’t need to look far to find elf believers. This is Iceland!

*A new edition of Laren Stover’s illustrated Bohemian Manifesto, A Field Guide to Living on the Edge is being released by Echo Point Books & Media this summer 2018. Follow her on Instagram @faerie\_style.*

What will Death do when he learns to love?

**Death: A Love Story**

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# Forests, Fertility, and The Hope of Good Fortune

AN EXPLORATION OF THE YAKSHA

BY SHVETA THAKRAR

Folklore and mythology rarely fit into the simple boxes and binaries modern categorists with black-and-white sensibilities might wish for. In fact, developing and transforming alongside and through people as they do, these stories and beliefs frequently contradict themselves. For example, there exist at least 300 different versions of the epic *Ramayana*, each with its own variances in plot and theme. It is a very tricky way to be, eluding classification much like a butterfly might resist being ensnared and pinned to a mat. The Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain figure of the yaksha (the feminine of which is *yakshi* or *yakshini*), which I will explore in this article, is no different.

Mischievous, ardent, and occasionally fierce, yakshas are the custodians of their provinces, whether a lake, a grove of trees, or even a city. Though originally linked to water and cosmic liberation from illusion—a celestial role—they are now propitiated and worshipped both for their earthly ties to fertility and the riches they safeguard. Intertwined with nature as they are, yakshas make their thrones at the bases of trees, where they care for the essence of life that flows through the roots and trunk and branches and leaves.

The yakshini, who today is most often encountered in statuary—a curvy figure associated with woods, mountains, and trees—ranked among the earliest numinous beings to be depicted in Indian art. Even later, when she and her male counterpart came to be regarded as more nature spirit than deity, they both remained significant as protectors of the treasures hidden among the roots of trees and buried within the earth. They are considered benevolent, if playful, and icons of fecundity.

Indeed, the *salabhanjika* style of art illustrates that well. This style originated in Buddhist architecture but later became adopted into Hindu stone sculpture, depicting a young woman under an ashoka tree dancing, grooming herself, or playing a musical instrument. The ashoka—“sorrowless”—tree (*Saraca asoca*) is considered sacred across the Indian subcontinent, the subject of many religious and poetic texts, and is prized for its beauty and the splendid orange-yellow hue of its clustered flowers. It is also linked with the yakshini, the two inseparable in sculptures found at the gates of and on pillars in Hindu and Buddhist temples. Similar to a dryad, the nubile, inviting

yakshini stands in union with her tree, with one foot lodged firmly on the trunk while she grasps the flowering branches. She is both guardian and symbol of sensuality and fertility, and so is habitually represented with a heavy bosom, a narrow waist, and wide hips as well as intricate hairstyles and a surfeit of jewelry. Her tree, too, may be ornately stylized.

For his part, the yaksha is portrayed in Indian art as either a strong, turban-wearing prince or a chubby dwarf. Early Buddhist iconography, particularly monuments, shows him as more benign and less the fearsome warrior. Yet either way, he, too, is affiliated with the creative principle and fertility embodied in a tree. This tree, like a pillar or pole, acts as a bridge used to deliver sacrificial offerings from the earth to the gods in the heavens in return for the boon of fecundity in all its forms: children, crops, creativity.

Of course, abundance manifests in different ways: fertility on the one hand and cold, hard cash on the other. In Hindu and Buddhist cosmology, yakshas, like their cousins the nagas, serve as guardians of treasures and wealth. Arcane knowledge such as the melting down and refining of gold, the gathering of jewels, and even alchemy all falls within their domain. The king of the yakshas, Kubera (or Kuvera or Vaishravana), is the guardian deity of wealth and merchants—but paradoxically also the lord of thieves and criminals. Kubera presides over the northerly direction from his throne in the mythical kingdom of Alaka, located on Mount Kailash in the Himalayas and brimming over with pleasures (song, dance, feasting) and all manner of beauty. He is depicted as white of skin, with only eight teeth and three legs, the latter necessitating his special flying chariot Pushpaka, and a large belly suggesting abundance and fine fortune. Furthermore, even as he compassionately rains down valuables over the poor, Kubera is shown as a jovial drunkard in his cups.

As demonstrated by these seemingly opposing facets of Kubera, yakshas may wear more than one face, and in moving from sculpture to literature, their mischief commonly turns to malice. Skilled magicians and shape-shifters, they are kin to other demonic beings—rakshasas and pishaaches, monstrous creatures who eat flesh and drink blood. Like ghosts, these less charming yakshas and yakshinis haunt well-traveled routes, lying in wait for the moment when they can pounce upon, capture,



© ephotocorp / Alamy Stock Photo

# An Exploration of the Yaksha

Shveta Thakrar



and consume their unsuspecting victims. Like nagas, they are also quite the lustful lovers. This morally ambiguous aspect of yakshas can be seen in the Buddhist Jataka tales, a collection of fables that examines subjects and characters both ghastly and chilling. Here the same female beauty revered in statues is viewed as a dangerous weapon, a lure of the hungry to entrap the hapless. In Hindu stories, yakshas often represent savagery but also function as foils for the nobility, ultimately underscoring the sovereignty of kingly heroes.

Early examples of the yaksha in literature include the fifth century poet Kalidasa's renowned Sanskrit lyric text *Meghaduta* ("Cloud Messenger"). In this work of 115 stanzas, yaksha king Kubera has sentenced the narrator, who has been neglecting his duties as the king's subject, to a year of exile while his wife remains behind in the kingdom of Alaka. Unable to stop yearning for her, the narrator cleverly convinces a passing cloud to deliver a message to his wife by detailing all the beautiful sights the cloud would encounter on the journey to Alaka.

In the epic poem *Ramayana*, penned by sage Valmiki, demonic King Ravana's half-brother Vaishravana (another name for Kubera) sends an army of yakshas to force Ravana to stand down and end his reign of terror. Unfortunately, Ravana slays them all.

And in *Yaksha Prashna* ("The Yaksha's Questions," a portion of the great epic *Mahabharata*), the five Pandava brothers, while in pursuit of an errant deer, make camp near a lake guarded by a crane. One brother ventures to the lake to quench his thirst, but the crane demands the brother answer a number of moral riddles before he partakes of the lake's water. The brother laughs at the crane, drinks the water without answering, and dies. When he never returns to camp, another brother sets out in search of him. This cycle repeats until finally, only wise Yudhishthira is left. Now it is up to him to answer the questions and rescue his foolish kin. He does so, at which point the crane reveals itself to be a tutelary yaksha, who in turn unmasks himself as Yudhishthira's father, Lord Yama, god of death and lord of judgment, and restores the four dead brothers to life.

Lastly, for a more modern take, Sukanya Venkatraghavan's fantasy novel *Dark Things* stars a yakshini on a quest to learn the truth of her destiny and herself.

Who knows where they might appear next?

So, dear reader, the next time you find yourself in the forest, keep a sharp lookout—perhaps you, too, might chance upon a yaksha or yakshini prepared to bestow a blessing while sitting atop a cache of gold and gems!



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*Shveta Thakrar, a part-time nagini, draws on her heritage, her experience growing up with two cultures, and her love of myth to spin stories about spider silk and shadows, magic and marauders, and courageous girls illuminated by dancing rainbow flames. Learn more at [shvetathakrar.com](http://shvetathakrar.com).*

## Elven Branch Circlet Tutorial

by JoEllen Elam Conway  
of Firefly Path



# Elven Circlet Tutorial

JoEllen Elam Conway

## Materials:

16 millinery velvet leaves  
Approximately 6 inches floral wire  
(22 gauge)  
Approximately 6 inches floral tape  
Mod Podge glue  
Green glitter, small grade  
Gold acrylic paint  
Hot-glue sticks  
Moss  
2 yards of 1-inch wide sheer ribbon

## Tools:

Paint brush  
Wire cutters  
Round-nose pliers (optional)  
Hot-glue gun

## Size:

One size fits all

## Finished measurements:

10 to 13 inches wide  
4 to 5 inches tall



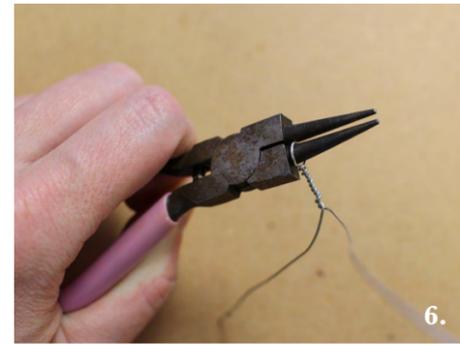
1. Pull apart the cluster of millinery velvet leaves to individual leaves.
2. Twine together two leaf stems at the center, so that the leaves face away from each other.
3. Twine the bottom-right stem around the middle of a new leaf stem. Repeat on the opposite side.
4. Repeat step three. Keep branching out from the middle, twining the stems together to lengthen the circlet in both directions.



# Elven Circlet Tutorial

JoEllen Elam Conway

5. Be organic with where you twine together your branches. The circlet should not be uniform. Play with bending the stems in different ways, twining them together at varying points.
6. Using the round-nose pliers, wrap the floral wire around the pliers to form tie loops for each end of your circlet. Twist the wire together a few times and leave the ends open.
7. Wrap the floral wire around the longest stem on each side and trim excess.
8. Leaving the loop open, wrap the wire with floral tape.
9. Coat both sides of the stem with Mod Podge and sprinkle green glitter. Let dry.
10. Using the gold acrylic paint, randomly paint parts of the stems. The goal is to make the stems look like magical branches with the glitter showing through only seldomly.
11. Pull apart little bits of moss.
12. Using hot glue, randomly glue down strands of moss to the stems.
13. Thread the sheer green ribbon on each side.



Learn more about JoEllen Elam Conway and Firefly Path at [fireflypath.com](http://fireflypath.com).



# VERONICA VARLOW

*Life of a Love Witch*

**A**dventure. Magic. Courage. Fellowship. The ability to brave obstacles toward a greater destiny. These are the elements that carefully crafted Tolkien's most celebrated work, the trilogy of *The Lord of the Rings*.

The magic of camaraderie speaks to our bones. Our desire to push past fear and rise up to our best lives is a core theme of humanity. We crave the stories of good triumphing over evil, of the underdog taking the lead and rising, of the misfits finding their strength by banding together.

We are all misfits in some way or another. Alone. Misunderstood. The obstacles and odds against us.

If you're reading this, chances are that you are a wild creative, someone who lives for imagination, who romances the magical, who weaves the golden threads of your own hero's journey into your days.

Your eyes hold momentarily at two words in that last sentence: *hero's journey*. The hero's journey is messy. It's facing our deepest fears and letting them beat us on some days. It's daring to dream and reach higher with our wildest imagination. It's doing things we've never done before and failing. Then trying again. It's doing things we've never done before and succeeding. It's putting ourselves out there, terrified at first, and then confident. It's looking into our truest selves. It's taking off the old worn coat that society has put on us, the one that shows who we are supposed to be, what we are supposed to do, and how we are supposed to live our lives. It's stepping into the unknown. It's being true to ourselves. It's having the courage to get up every day and step forward with hope and the spark of our dreams out there in the distance. The call of those dreams is the song of our souls.

*The Lord of the Rings* is an epic time-worn

tale, because we recognize ourselves in the band of misfits struggling to achieve a seemingly insurmountable goal.

Now, how can *you* create the magic of a fellowship to boost you to achieve your own hero's quest?

I created this visual spell years ago and it has helped me when I needed it the most, so I wanted to pass it on to you. I call it the Circle of Seven because it includes: "*Me, plus three, plus three.*" The number seven is the number of completion. In tarot, the seventh card is the Chariot, and it symbolizes taking the reins of your own life. Also, there are seven colors in the rainbow. So seven is magic, action and getting it *done*.

**Step one:** The first step of this visual spell is to ask yourself: *What is one thing that you are working on that you feel you could use some help or guidance with?* Your answer could be anything in your life—from getting the courage to apply for that circus arts school or nailing that promotion at your job.

**Step two:** Ask yourself, *If I could come up with my "Dream Team" to help me, who would they be?* These people could have lived anytime in history. They are the people that you look up to—who have achieved the goal you visualized in the first step. These are people you want on your

side, your Creative Cohorts, your Army of Awesome. *Enlist them in your mind.*

**Step three:** Print out a photo of yourself where you exude your own vibrance. Then print out your favorite picture of each person in your badass gang of inspiration.

**Step four:** Clear a special spot in your home to set up your Circle of Seven. It can be on a single shelf, on top of an old trunk, or on a pretty piece of fabric in a private corner of your room.

**Step five:** Put your picture in the middle so that you can visually see yourself surrounded by support. This is important.

**Step six:** Use this as your Altar of Encouragement. Light candles in front of the photos to "call in" that inspiration to you as you take the steps to further your goal. Take a picture of your Circle of Seven. My photo is my current desktop, so no matter where in the world I roam, I can open up my computer to work on my book and there's my Circle of Seven smiling at me, encouraging me on. Good luck, fellow magician—know that I am out here in the world also rooting you on.

Read more about Veronica Varlow's Witch Camp and workshops on [lovetwitch.com](http://lovetwitch.com). Instagram: [@veronicavarlow](https://www.instagram.com/veronicavarlow).





## TO ASK THE FAE

by Juleigh Howard-Hobson

You will need a dozen white stones. If you have rose quartz that would be even better. You will also need three pink ribbons, which you will leave for them. Along with a few red rose petals, elderberry blooms, or Hawthorn flowers. Hold the ribbons; speak your wish aloud. Make a circle of the stones. Place the pink ribbons in the center. Arrange the blooms or the flowers all around in the stone circle. If you can, interlace them with the ribbons. Sit. Slowly, a strange low flutter will come. That's how they begin to let you know they're interested. State your desire, offer the gifts. Then wait.

## HOW TO MAKE A THREE-FOR-LUCK CHARM BAG

by Juleigh Howard-Hobson

Photography by Harmony Nice

First of all you must gather: three oak leaves, dried egg shell and a rock the same size as the egg used to be, three thin candles (these cannot be black), a drawstring pouch that has enough cord to be knotted three times and enough room to hold everything except the candles. When you have all this in hand look out for when the next full moon is set. On its eve, and just before midnight, light the candles. With the rock, fine crush the shell, and sprinkle it on the leaves. Thrice recite: "Oak, stone, shell—by you three, make my luck well." Put the 'three' in the pouch, knot the cord three times. Snuff flames. Hang the charm where none will see.

Juleigh Howard-Hobson's otherworldly writing has appeared in *The Liar's League*, *New Witch*, *Enchanted Conversation*, *History Is Dead* (Permuted Press), *Mandradora* (Scarlett Imprint) and many other places. She lives by a deep dark forest in the Pacific Northwest, magically living and writing among natural standing stones and sacred circles.

See more of Harmony Nice's work on Instagram @peachycinnamon.



# the ELVES of MIRKWOOD FOREST

by Ana Isabel de Fontes Correia

“I still remember the first time I saw *The Lord of the Rings* in the cinema,” says Portuguese photographer Ana Isabel de Fontes Correia. “I had not yet read the books back then, but right away I was pulled into its world. At this time, I was going through a spiritual transformation and was learning about paganism, which all the mystical creatures in the Tolkien universe stem from.” She was most attracted to the elves, she says, “their grace, their magical abilities, their connection with nature.”

It was Ian Hencher who first approached Fontes Correia with the idea of the shoot seen here—featuring the Mirkwood elves, as opposed to the Lothlórien elves of the shoot with Bella Kotak (page 10). “I knew in my heart that I could not say no,” she says. She chose a location close to her current home in London: a butterfly garden that has at its entrance a wooden, flower-covered arch that could bring the romanticism to life. The clothes that Dress Art Mystery designed for the shoot made everything more special, she says: “Deep greens and the amazing silver dress. As soon as I laid eyes on Sorcha in it, I was in total awe. She was an absolute vision.”

The results seen here allowed Fontes Correia “to be transported into the realm of the elves and magic once again.” We hope that her stunning, swoony images do the same for you!

*“After a good deal of creeping and crawling they peered round the trunks and looked into a clearing where some trees had been felled and the ground levelled. There were many people there, elvish-looking folk, all dressed in green and brown and sitting on sawn rings of the felled trees in a great circle. There was a fire in their midst and there were torches fastened to some of the trees round about; but most splendid sight of all: they were eating and drinking and laughing merrily.” —J.R.R. Tolkien, The Hobbit*

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Photographer: ANA ISABEL DE FONTES CORREIA

Models: Ian Hencher and Sorcha Verey

Wardrobe: Dress Art Mystery

MUA: Ian Hencher

Elf Ears: Madhouse FX Studio





# THE LIFE OF TOLKIEN ON THE BIG SCREEN

by Colleen Smith

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien died in 1973. Now, forty-five years later, the film *Tolkien* will bring him back to life onscreen. For the time being, Fox Searchlight Pictures is keeping fans in the dark about the film. The studio is nearly as secretive about the biopic as Frodo Baggins was about the storied magic ring. In postproduction since December 15, 2017, the film was slated for release in 2018, but even that wasn't confirmed by Fox Searchlight.

"It's a bit too early for us to be able to participate [in an interview]; the studio has not yet set a release date for the film," Nicole Wilcox from Fox Searchlight Pictures media relations wrote in an email.

The studio also is keeping official photography as guarded as the gates of Mordor, but some images from production have shown up in media outlets. And IMDb includes basic details about the Tolkien biopic.

*Variety* reported that David Gleeson and Stephen Beresford wrote the *Tolkien* screenplay, in development since 2013. Dome Karukoski is directing the film. He's considered one of Finland's finest directors, and *Variety* listed him among their ten "directors to watch."

Nicholas Hoult plays J.R.R. Tolkien, the man behind the mythology. Hoult also has a role as the Beast in *X-Men: Dark Phoenix* and stars as Nikola Tesla in *The Current War*. Tolkien's love interest and eventual wife and muse, Edith Bratt, is played by Lily Collins, the daughter of the pop star Phil Collins. Bratt inspired Tolkien's elven princesses in his *The Lord of the Rings* saga.

The biopic will dramatize Tolkien's adolescence, early twenties, and

his service in the First World War. According to *Deadline*, the film "explores the formative years of the orphaned author as he finds friendship, love, and artistic inspiration among a fellow group of outcasts at school. This takes him into the outbreak of World War I, which threatens to tear the 'fellowship' apart. All these experiences would inspire Tolkien to write his famous Middle-earth novels."

The film's IMDb profile notes that Lasse Frank Johannessen served as the film's cinematographer, and Colleen Kelsall designed the costumes.

Tolkien's epic tales, fantastical settings, and archetypal characters are not new to the silver screen. *The Fellowship of the Ring*, the first installment of the Peter Jackson-directed trilogy, won four Academy Awards.

Initially, two Tolkien biopics were in development. The first announced



Nicholas Hoult will play the role of J.R.R. Tolkien in the upcoming film, *Tolkien*

was *Middle Earth*, to be directed by James Strong of the esteemed television series *Downton Abbey*. A studio insider who asked for anonymity revealed that *Middle Earth* came to a halt when the Fox Searchlight project gained much more traction. The *Middle Earth* source also said that the Tolkien estate rejected participation in their biopic because they deemed the life of Tolkien less than extraordinarily dramatic.

"They don't think Tolkien was exciting enough," said the studio source.

Yet another film, titled *Tolkien and Lewis*, about his long-term friendship with fellow fantasy writer C.S. Lewis, is in development. And *Tolkien's Road*, a short, was released in 2014.

The writer clearly garners widespread interest, having penned one of the most popular novels of all time, with more than 150 million copies of *The Lord of the Rings* sold. *Forbes* formerly listed Tolkien as one of the top-earning dead celebrities. His work generated a worldwide cult of followers, so *Tolkien* the film has a built-in audience of fans in the cult of the writer's enthusiasts. The challenge of the biopic lies in bringing to life a professorial man whose most interesting aspects may have existed inside his head.

Tolkien's genius inspired countless artists in almost every discipline: calligraphers, illustrators, actors, authors, and filmmakers, including the similarly initialed George R.R. Martin, who created *Game of Thrones*. Speaking about Tolkien and fantasy literature at the 2014 Edinburgh International Book Festival, Martin said, "I revere *The Lord of the Rings*. I reread it every few years. It had an enormous effect on me as a kid. In



© Look and Learn / Bridgeman Images

some sense, when I started this saga I was replying to Tolkien, but even more to his modern imitators."

Josh Mann, an award-winning actor and screenwriter based in Los Angeles, eagerly anticipates the Tolkien biopic. Mann went so far as to compare Tolkien to the bard.

"No writer besides Shakespeare has captured the magical qualities of writing that Tolkien has. As a writer, I am in awe of him. As an actor, I find the fantastical and magical quality of his work an inspiration of creativity and imagination," said Mann.

He hopes the biopic will offer glimpses into Tolkien's process and some understanding of motivation behind Tolkien's life choices.

"J.R.R. Tolkien was one of the most revered and imaginative writers of our time. His stories are profound, prolific, and rich with incredible symbolism. I would think that many people would be

very interested in the life and the reality behind these magical stories," Mann said. "The timeliness and the allegorical components of his writing not only make his work extremely relevant, but politically significant and ahead of its time. I think understanding the man behind *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* is a compelling story in itself."

Will Hoult embody the essence of Tolkien? Will the biopic shed light on Tolkien's authorial and artistic process? Will Tolkien's illustrations and calligraphy figure into the film's visuals? Fans with a hobbit habit will wait a bit longer for answers to these and other questions about *Tolkien*.

Colleen Smith earned her degree in English at the University of Iowa, where she studied in the Iowa Writers' Workshop. She's the author of the novel *Glass Halo* and the whimsical gift book *Laid-Back Skier*.

# FROM OUR READERS

We recently asked our readers to tell us what they love most about *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*—and how Tolkien's world has influenced their lives.



Illustrations © Guinevere von Sneeden

I love that Middle-earth resembles our world enough to shed light on the magic of our natural surroundings.  
—Abby Ruth

In 1965, when I was thirteen, I walked toward a girl who, when we met up, bowed and said, “Bilbo Baggins at your service.” To which I replied, “Frodo Baggins at yours.” We are now sixty-four, lifelong friends continuing the adventure! —Paula Sellers-ronkin

When I first read *The Lord of the Rings*, it resonated so deeply within my being that I felt some part of me could have written it if I could only have accessed it. It was more than a story, it was something remembered.  
—Carol Lyons Sholly

I love the adventures. Frodo and Bilbo and their friends are always off to a new place (often scary) but learn so much more about themselves along the way! Everyone deserves an adventure of a lifetime, my precious! —buckeyehatboy



I opened the door to Middle-earth when I was only nine, and now almost thirty years later, there are still so many adventures to be had. I read at least one of his books every year. Following this path has given me a love of lore, mythology, and language that I would never have found without Tolkien, as well as a yearning for that world with all my heart. —Ami M. Scott

Simplicity, warmth, loyalty, friendship, and magic. —Kristine Summers

Middle-earth is where I go when the real world gets too dark. It's been my constant escape ever since I was a teenager, my source of comfort when I feel broken or beaten down. It reminds me that when things seem so terrible, there is always hope and there is always light even in the deepest darkness.  
—missragdoll305

I love this hobbit proverb as recited by Sam in *The Lord of the Rings*: “Apples for walking, and a pipe for sitting.” —thebertolini



*The Lord of the Rings* has given me a lifetime of inspiration in my own artwork, photography, and creative writing. The vast world Tolkien created can be carried on and built upon infinitely through the hearts of his many fans. —Sarah Chisholm

It taught me about true friendship. About being brave when you feel scared. About sacrificing for something that is bigger than you are. And the delights of second breakfast. —Sharon Greenawalt

I love the beauty and grace of the elves and their world. They live in such a wonderful symbiosis with their natural environment and there's nothing in their life without a meaning. —Claudia Langels



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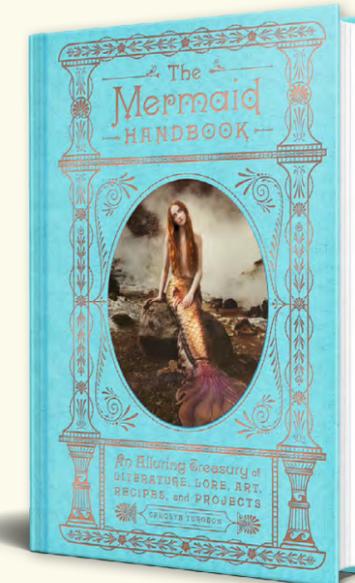
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A full-page photograph of two mermaids in an underwater setting. The mermaid in the upper half has long, wavy blonde hair and is wearing a colorful, patterned top and a tail with iridescent scales transitioning from green to blue. She is posed with one arm raised and the other extended. The mermaid in the lower half has long, wavy purple hair and is wearing a shimmering, iridescent top and a tail with iridescent scales transitioning from purple to blue. She is posed with her arms slightly raised. The background is a deep blue underwater environment with green seaweed and bubbles.

*In our Summer 2018 issue:*

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