

The letter of the King now begins *Aragorn Tarantar* (at which Sam explains 'that's Trotter') *Aranthornsson &c. Tarantar* was altered on the typescript to *Telcontar* ('that's Strider'): see VIII.390 and note 14. Rose's name in Elvish becomes *Meril* (for *Beril*), and Hamfast's *Baravorn* (for *Marthanc*); the Elvish name of Daisy (so spelt in C) reverts to *Arien* (for *Erien*), the form in A.

Though never published, of course, this version of the Epilogue is, I believe, quite well known, from copies made from the text at Marquette University. My father would never in fact have published it, even had he decided in the end to conclude *The Lord of the Rings* with an epilogue, for it was superseded by a second version, in which while much of Sam's news from beyond the Shire was retained its framework and presentation were radically changed.¹⁰ Of this there are two texts. The first is a good clear manuscript with few corrections; it has neither title nor chapter-number. The second is a typescript, which though made by my father followed the manuscript very closely indeed; this is entitled 'Epilogue', with the chapter-number 'X' (i.e. of Book Six). I give here the text of the typescript in full.

The second version of the Epilogue

EPILOGUE

One evening in the March of 1436 Master Samwise Gamgee was in his study at Bag End. He was sitting at the old well-worn desk, and with many pauses for thought he was writing in his slow round hand on sheets of loose paper. Propped up on a stand at his side was a large red book in manuscript.

Not long before he had been reading aloud from it to his family. For the day was a special one: the birthday of his daughter Elanor. That evening before supper he had come at last to the very end of the Book. The long progress through its many chapters, even with omissions that he had thought advisable, had taken some months, for he only read aloud on great days. At the birthday reading, besides Elanor, Frodo-lad had been present, and Rosie-lass, and young Merry and Pippin; but the other children had not been there. The Red Book was not for them yet, and they were safely in bed. Goldilocks was only five years old, for in this Frodo's foretelling had made a slight error, and she came after Pippin. But she was not the last of the line, for Samwise and Rose seemed likely to rival old Gerontius Took as successfully in the number of their children as Bilbo had in the number of his years. There was little Ham,

[and there was Daisy still in her cradle >] and Daisy, and there was Primrose still in her cradle.¹¹

Now Sam was 'having a bit of quiet'. Supper was over. Only Elanor was with him, still up because it was her birthday. She sat without a sound, staring at the fire, and now and again glancing at her father. She was a beautiful girl, more fair of skin than most hobbit-maidens, and more slender, and the firelight glinted in her red-gold hair. To her, by gift if not by inheritance, a memory of elven-grace had descended.¹²

'What are you doing, Sam-dad¹³ dear?' she said at last. 'You said you were going to rest, and I hoped you would talk to me.'

'Just a moment, Elanorellë,' said Sam,¹⁴ as she came and set her arms about him and peered over his shoulder.

'It looks like Questions and Answers,' she said.

'And so it is,' said Sam. 'Mr. Frodo, he left the last pages of the Book to me, but I have never yet durst to put hand to them. I am still making notes, as old Mr. Bilbo would have said. Here's all the many questions Mother Rose and you and the children have asked, and I am writing out the answers, when I know them. Most of the questions are yours, because only you has heard all the Book more than once.'

'Three times,' said Elanor, looking at the carefully written page that lay under Sam's hand.

Q. *Dwarves, &c.* Frodo-lad says he likes them best. What happened to Gimli? Have the Mines of Moria been opened again? Are there any Orcs left?

A. *Gimli*: he came back to work for the King, as he said, and he brought many of his folk from the North, and they worked in Gondor so long that they got used to it, and they settled there, up in the White Mountains not far from the City. Gimli goes once a year to the Glittering Caves. How do I know? Information from Mr. Peregrin, who often goes back to Minas Tirith, where he is very highly thought of.

Moria: I have heard no news. Maybe the foretelling about Durin is not for our time.¹⁵ Dark places still need a lot of cleaning up. I guess it will take a lot of trouble and daring deeds yet to root out the evil creatures from the halls of Moria. For there are certainly plenty of Orcs left in such places. It is not likely that we shall ever get quite rid of them.

Q. *Legolas*. Did he go back to the King? Will he stay there?

A. Yes, he did. He came south with Gimli, and he brought many of his people from Greenwood the Great (so they call it now). They say it was a wonderful sight to see companies of Dwarves and Elves journeying together. The Elves have made the City, and the land where Prince Faramir lives, more beautiful than ever. Yes, Legolas will stay there, at any rate as long as Gimli does; but I think he will go to the Sea one day. Mr. Meriadoc told me all this, for he has visited the Lady Éowyn in her white house.

Q. *Horses*. Merry is interested in these; very anxious for a pony of his own. How many horses did the Riders lose in the battles, and have they got some more now? What happened to Legolas's horse? What did Gandalf do with Shadowfax?

A. *Shadowfax* went in the White Ship with Gandalf, of course. I saw that myself. I also saw Legolas let his horse run free back to Rohan from Isengard. Mr. Meriadoc says he does not know how many horses were lost; but there are more than ever in Rohan now, because no one steals them any longer. The Riders also have many ponies, especially in Harrowdale: white, brown, and grey. Next year when he comes back from a visit to King Éomer he means to bring one for his namesake.

Q. *Ents*. Elanor would like to hear more about them. What did Legolas see in Fangorn; and does he ever see Treebeard now? Rosie-lass very anxious about Entwives. She looks for them whenever she goes in a wood. Will they ever be found? She would like them to be.

A. Legolas and Gimli have not told what they saw, so far as I have heard. I have not heard of any one that has seen an Ent since those days. Ents are very secret, and they do not like people much, big or little. I should like the Entwives to be found, too; but I am afraid that trouble is too old and deep for Shire-folk to mend. I think, maybe, Entwives do not want to be found; and maybe Ents are now tired of looking.

'Well dear,' said Sam, 'this top page, this is only today's batch.' He sighed. 'It isn't fit to go in the Book like that. It isn't a bit like the story as Mr. Frodo wrote it. But I shall have to make

a chapter or two in proper style, somehow. Mr. Meriadoc might help me. He's clever at writing, and he's making a splendid book all about plants.'

'Don't write any more tonight. Talk to me, Sam-dad!' said Elanor, and drew him to a seat by the fire.

'Tell me,' she said, as they sat close together with the soft golden light on their faces, 'tell me about Lórien. Does *my* flower grow there still, Sam-dad?'

'Well dear, Celeborn still lives there among his trees and his Elves, and there I don't doubt your flower grows still. Though now I have got you to look at, I don't hanker after it so much.'

'But I don't want to look at myself, Sam-dad. I want to look at other things. I want to see the hill of Amroth where the King met Arwen, and the silver trees, and the little white niphredil, and the golden elanor in the grass that is always green. And I want to hear Elves singing.'

'Then, maybe, you will one day, Elanor. I said the same when I was your age, and long after it, and there didn't seem to be no hope. And yet I saw them, and I heard them.'

'I was afraid they were all sailing away, Sam-dad. Then soon there would be none here; and then everywhere would be just places, and'

'And what, Elanorellë?'

'And the light would have faded.'

'I know,' said Sam. 'The light is fading, Elanorellë. But it won't go out yet. It won't ever go quite out, I think now, since I have had you to talk to. For it seems to me now that people can remember it who have never seen it. And yet,' he sighed, 'even that is not the same as really seeing it, like I did.'

'Like really being in a story?' said Elanor. 'A story is quite different, even when it is about what happened. I wish I could go back to old days!'

'Folk of our sort often wish that,' said Sam. 'You came at the end of a great Age, Elanorellë; but though it's over, as we say, things don't really end sharp like that. It's more like a winter sunset. The High Elves have nearly all gone now with Elrond. But not quite all; and those that didn't go will wait now for a while. And the others, the ones that belong here, will last even longer. There are still things for you to see, and maybe you'll see them sooner than you hope.'

Elanor was silent for some time before she spoke again. 'I did not understand at first what Celeborn meant when he said

goodbye to the King,' she said. 'But I think I do now. He knew that Lady Arwen would stay, but that Galadriel would leave him.¹⁶ I think it was very sad for him. And for you, dear Sam-dad.' Her hand felt for his, and his brown hand clasped her slender fingers. 'For your treasure went too. I am glad Frodo of the Ring saw me, but I wish I could remember seeing him.'

'It was sad, Elanorellë,' said Sam, kissing her hair. 'It was, but [it] isn't now. For why? Well, for one thing, Mr. Frodo has gone where the elven-light isn't fading; and he deserved his reward. But I have had mine, too. I have had lots of treasures. I am a very rich hobbit. And there is one other reason, which I shall whisper to you, a secret I have never told before to no one, nor put in the Book yet. Before he went Mr. Frodo said that my time maybe would come. I can wait. I think maybe we haven't said farewell for good. But I can wait. I have learned that much from the Elves at any rate. They are not so troubled about time. And so I think Celeborn is still happy among his trees, in an Elvish way. His time hasn't come, and he isn't tired of his land yet. When he is tired he can go.'

'And when you're tired, you will go, Sam-dad. You will go to the Havens with the Elves. Then I shall go with you. I shall not part with you, like Arwen did with Elrond.'

'Maybe, maybe,' said Sam kissing her gently. 'And maybe not. The choice of Lúthien and Arwen comes to many, Elanorellë, or something like it; and it isn't wise to choose before the time.'

'And now, my dearest, I think that it's time even a lass of fifteen spring-times should go to her bed. And I have words to say to Mother Rose.'

Elanor stood up, and passed her hand lightly through Sam's curling brown hair, already flecked with grey. 'Good night, Sam-dad. But'

'I don't want *good night but*,' said Sam.

'But won't you show it me first? I was going to say.'

'Show you what, dear?'

'The King's letter, of course. You have had it now more than a week.'

Sam sat up. 'Good gracious!' he said. 'How stories do repeat themselves! And you get paid back in your own coin and all. How we spied on poor Mr. Frodo! And now our own spy on us, meaning no more harm than we did, I hope. But how do you know about it?'

'There was no need for spying,' said Elanor. 'If you wanted it kept secret, you were not nearly careful enough. It came by the Southfarthing post early on Wednesday last week. I saw you take it in. All wrapped in white silk and sealed with great black seals: any one who had heard the Book would have guessed at once that it came from the King. Is it good news? Won't you show it me, Sam-dad?'

'Well, as you're so deep in, you'd better be right in,' said Sam. 'But no conspiracies now. If I show you, you join the grown-ups' side and must play fair. I'll tell the others in my own time. The King is coming.'

'He's coming here?' Elanor cried. 'To Bag End?'

'No, dear,' said Sam. 'But he's coming north again, as he hasn't done since you was a mite.¹⁷ But now his house is ready. He won't come into the Shire, because he's given orders that no Big Folk are to enter the land again after those Ruffians, and he won't break his own rules. But he will ride to the Bridge. And he's sent a very special invitation to every one of us, every one by name.'

Sam went to a drawer, unlocked it, and took out a scroll, and slipped off its case. It was written in two columns with fair silver letters upon black. He unrolled it, and set a candle beside it on the desk, so that Elanor could see it.

'How splendid!' she cried. 'I can read the Plain Language, but what does the other side say? I think it is Elvish, but you've taught me so few Elvish words yet.'

'Yes, it's written in a kind of Elvish that the great folk of Gondor use,' said Sam. 'I have made it out, enough at least to be sure that it says much the same, only it turns all our names into Elvish. Yours is the same on both sides, Elanor, because your name *is* Elvish. But Frodo is *Iorhael*, and Rose is *Meril*, and Merry is *Gelir*, and Pippin is *Cordof*, and Goldilocks is *Glorfinniel*, and Hamfast is *Baravorn*, and Daisy is *Eirien*. So now you know.'

'How wonderful!' she said. 'Now we have all got Elvish names. What a splendid end to my birthday! But what is your name, Sam-dad? You didn't mention it.'

'Well, it's rather peculiar,' said Sam. 'For in the Elvish part, if you must know, the King says: "Master *Perhael* who should be called *Panthael*". And that means: Samwise who ought to be called Fullwise. So now you know what the King thinks of your old father.'

'Not a bit more than I do, Sam-dad, *Perhael-adar*¹⁸ dearest,' said Elanor. 'But it says the second of April, only a week today!¹⁹ When shall we start? We ought to be getting ready. What shall we wear?'

'You must ask Mother Rose about all that,' said Sam. 'But we *have* been getting ready. We had a warning of this a long time ago; and we've said naught about it, only because we didn't want you all to lose your sleep of nights, not just yet. You have all got to look your best and beautifullest. You will all have beautiful clothes, and we shall drive in a coach.'

'Shall I make three curtsies, or only one?' said Elanor.

'One will do, one each for the King and the Queen,' said Sam. 'For though it doesn't say so in the letter, Elanorellë, I think the Queen will be there. And when you've seen her, my dear, you'll know what a lady of the Elves looks like, save that none are so beautiful. And there's more to it even than that. For I shall be surprised if the King doesn't bid us to his great house by Lake Evendim. And there will be Elladan and Elrohir, who still live in Rivendell – and with them will be Elves, Elanorellë, and they will sing by the water in the twilight. That is why I said you might see them sooner than you guessed.'

Elanor said nothing, but stood looking at the fire, and her eyes shone like stars. At last she sighed and stirred. 'How long shall we stay?' she asked. 'I suppose we shall have to come back?'

'Yes, and we shall want to, in a way,' said Sam. 'But we might stay until hay-harvest, when I must be back here. Good night, Elanorellë. Sleep now till the sun rises. You'll have no need of dreams.'

'Good night, Sam-dad. And don't work any more. For I know what your chapter should be. Write down our talk together – but not to-night.' She kissed him, and passed out of the room; and it seemed to Sam that the fire burned low at her going.

The stars were shining in a clear dark sky. It was the second day of the bright and cloudless spell that came every year to the Shire towards the end of March, and was every year welcomed and praised as something surprising for the season. All the children were now in bed. It was late, but here and there lights were still glimmering in Hobbiton, and in houses dotted about the night-folded countryside.

Master Samwise stood at the door and looked away eastward. He drew Mistress Rose to him, and set his arm about her.

'March the twenty-fifth!' he said. 'This day seventeen years ago, Rose wife, I didn't think I should ever see thee again. But I kept on hoping.'

'I never hoped at all, Sam,' she said, 'not until that very day; and then suddenly I did. About noon it was, and I felt so glad that I began singing. And mother said: "Quiet, lass! There's ruffians about." And I said: "Let them come! Their time will soon be over. Sam's coming back." And you came.'

'I did,' said Sam. 'To the most belovedest place in all the world. To my Rose and my garden.'

They went in, and Sam shut the door. But even as he did so, he heard suddenly, deep and unstilled, the sigh and murmur of the Sea upon the shores of Middle-earth.



In this second Epilogue Sam does not read out the King's letter (since Elanor could read), but associated with it (as is seen from the name-forms *Eirien*, *Perhael*, *Panthaël*) are three 'facsimiles' of the letter, written in *tengwar* in two columns.

The first of these ('I') is reproduced on p. 130. It is accompanied by a transliteration into 'plain letters' of both the English and the Sindarin. The transliteration of the English does not precisely correspond to the *tengwar* text, for the former omits *Arathornsson*, and adds *day* where the *tengwar* text has 'the thirty-first of the Stirring'. The words *and Arnor*, *ar Arnor* were added in to both the *tengwar* texts and are lacking in the transliterations. As my father wrote them they read as follows:

Aragorn Strider The Elfstone, King of Gondor and Lord of the Westlands, will approach the Bridge of Baranduin on the eighth day of Spring, or in the Shire-reckoning the second day of April. And he desires to greet there all his friends.

In especial he desires to see Master *Samwise*, Mayor of the Shire, and *Rose* his wife; and *Elanor*, *Rose*, *Goldilocks*, and *Daisy* his daughters; and *Frodo*, *Merry*, *Pippin* and *Hamfast* his sons.

To Samwise and Rose the King's greeting from Minas Tirith, the thirty-first day of the Stirring, being the twenty-third of February in their reckoning.

A · E ·

Elessar Telcontar: Aragorn Arathornion Edhelharn, aran