

Gollum's Tale

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Vorwort

Dieses Buch ist im Rahmen eines Projektkurses an dem Siegerland-Kolleg in Siegen im Jahre 2013/2014 entstanden. Der Projektkurs, in dem es um das Werk „The Lord of the Rings“ von J.R.R. Tolkien ging, wurde im 3. Semester von Herrn Bauer ins Leben gerufen und fand über zwei Semester statt. Die Herausforderung dahinter bestand darin, dass der Kurs auf Englisch stattfinden sollte, damit alle Studierenden, denen es nicht möglich war einen Englisch – Leistungskurs zu belegen, auf ihre Kosten kommen konnten.

Wenn Sie uns fragen, hat Unterricht noch nie so viel Spaß gemacht.

Im 3. Semester haben wir die Herr der Ringe Trilogie, selbstverständlich auf Englisch, durchgearbeitet. Dazu haben wir Woche für Woche ein bis fünf Kapitel gelesen und darüber Protokoll geführt. Im Unterricht haben wir noch einmal über das Gelesene gesprochen und interessante Aspekte näher betrachtet.

Im 4. Semester haben wir uns ausschließlich um unsere Projektarbeit gekümmert.

Da uns der Charakter „Gollum“ sehr fasziniert hat und es nur wenige Informationen über ihn gibt, haben wir uns entschieden, die Hintergrundgeschichte von Gollum bzw. Sméagol zu erweitern und auszusmücken.

Die Idee kam aus dem kreativen Kopf von Nikolai Esau und auf der Suche nach einem zuverlässigen und loyalen Partner führte kein Weg an Steffen Alfes vorbei.



Aufgrund der Begeisterung von Steffen für Kinofilme wurde die Geschichte durch viele epische Filmzitate erweitert. Dies bietet dem Rezipienten zusätzlich eine interessante Facette, da dieser sich während des Lesens auf die Suche nach den Filmziten machen kann.

Die Geschichte wurde ganz nach dem Vorbild Tolkiens mit der Erzählung geschrieben und beinhaltet keinerlei Kritik, Analogie oder Sonstiges. Sie dient zur reinen Unterhaltung und zum Erhalt einer ausgezeichneten Note.

Wir hoffen, dass wir Herrn Tolkien nicht beleidigt haben und wünschen euch viel Spaß beim Lesen!

Prologue

Close your eyes and pretend it's all a bad dream. That's how I get by.

Two little shadows passed at a high pace through the night. Dark clothed with hoods on their heads. Just a very good ear could hear their skilled feet. Two hobbits, just three and a half feet high, unusually slim but very strong. Déagol, not handsome but self-confident, and his cousin, reticent and inconspicuous. Nobody could stop the rage of Déagol. They went along the big oak on the trampled path. Irises were trampled down under their boots of leather. In the background one could hear a stream running down to *Anduin*. There were the croaks of frogs, and also the calling of an owl to hear. It was a beautiful night, but not for Grigel. 'Do you really want to do it, Déagol? We can leave him alone. Maybe he won't touch me again. And maybe he wouldn't have become so angry if I hadn't taken his job.'

In a small distance they could already see the shape of a little house with a little window. The star sprinkled sky and the full moon let them see the whole field, which just had to be passed to get to the house of the victim. 'We have to get sure that nobody has to touch my cousin.'

They sneaked along the wall to the window. The two heard some laughing. Sméagol, whose cheek was still red and swelled, lifted his long haired head over the window ledge. 'He has two guests,' whispered the hobbit. 'Two men?' 'Yes, they are playing cards.' Déagol stared in a pondering silence on the ground. 'They have nothing to do with it,' said Sméagol who knew his cousin exactly. 'They are at the wrong place at the wrong time. Life is rugged' said Déagol and went around the corner to the front-door. On the way he stooped down for short. 'What are you doing?' asked Sméagol. 'I'll ask them if I may join the party.' Sméagol, who hated to fight, followed his cousin grudgingly. 'Hobbits aren't made for fighting, even less for fighting against men.' he thought. Déagol knocked at the wooden door. Immediately there fell a deep silence into the house. Footsteps on creaking timber boards came closer. 'Who's there?' 'There are two guys. One of them is knocking, and one of them will get hurt badly.'

'Déagol?' asked the man inside, and opened the door maliciously grinning. A tall man with a brown beard stood in front of them. He wore a green shirt and a pair of dirty brown overalls. 'I'm the one who knocks!' As fast as lightning, Déagol jumped into Grigel and hit him in his face. Blood sprinkled on the door, and the six feet tall man fell fiercely on his back. Sméagol, who wondered about the powerful strike of his friend, noticed a stone in the right hand of Déagol. Immediately he rushed behind Grigel to welcome the other two guys, who came fast to help their comrade. Awaiting to get hurt, he sprang with both feet ahead and hit a knee of the left one, who fell on him crying. Sméagol exploited this situation and smashed his head into the opponent's face. Trying to push the inert body down of him, Sméagol got a kick in his face and dashed puzzled on the floor again. He had never felt a hurt and a despair like that before. Déagol, who was busy with beating Grigel, saw the danger and threw the stone in his hand into the second opponent of Sméagol. He hit his cheek, but the giant didn't fall. Déagol ran up to the giant, but got hit very hard and bashed against the wall. Puzzled he got hit again, fell on the floor and got kicked again and again. Sméagol, who could manage to get free, took the stone and sprang into the giant, who was turning his back on him. With all his power he hit the head of the giant. To his astonishment, the giant stumbled but didn't fall. Instead he turned around and slapped Sméagol. Sméagol fell, but stood up instantly and flinched back to make sure not to get hit again. With the last of his strength, Déagol stood up and attacked the Balrog of man together with Sméagol. Together they could batter him down. Then they left the three men lying in their blood on the ground.

I: An unexpected party

The next morning, Sméagol woke up after he heard a terrible loud bang. It took nearly two minutes after he had all the synapses clearly together again and was able to think in the way he normally did.

‘Damn,’ he thought, ‘what the heck was that?’

Sméagol started to look around, but there was nothing that could explain the loud bang.

‘I’m still dreaming,’ he said to himself and closed his eyes again.

Just before he was able to sleep again, it popped again.

‘That can’t be true. What the heck is going on here?’

This time he could assign the bang, it came from outside. He stood up very quickly and made his way out of his shack.

‘Could it be, that it was this big, annoying, old Wizard, who appears from time to time and drives the villagers into madness with his little magic box?’ he thought to himself.

Just when Sméagol went out of his shack, he sensed a wet surprise from above. A bucket full of water that Déagol had expertly installed above the door made him look like a wet bag.

‘No, please no. That bloody idiot, he finally did it,’ flashed through Sméagol’s head.

He heard laughter from everywhere, the whole village stood in front of his shack. Suddenly Déagol popped out of the crowd with a victorious grin.

‘I got you, Sméagol,’ said Déagol. ‘Finally! I never thought this would really happen, but look at you right now, I GOT YOU. After all your sneaky pranks, I finally got my revenge.’

At first Sméagol was really mad at him, but then he thought that he deserved his moment, because over the last few months Sméagol had done really bad things to him, and every time he wanted to prank him. Sméagol got his number. The only thing that bothered Sméagol was that Déagol did that on his birthday, but otherwise he took it very well, he never expected his revenge on his birthday.

‘Sméagol, I know you’re angry, but you have to let it pass me,’ said Déagol.

He was right, but Sméagol was still a little mad.

‘Go ahead, make my day, my revenge will not be long in coming,’ he said.

Déagol started smiling like he expected that answer.

‘I know, I know. But let us forget our little prank war for the next few hours.

Today, I want to put a smile on your face. I’m going to make you an offer you can’t refuse because I didn’t forget that it is your birthday today. Would you like to go fishing in the Gladden River, and you get everything we catch?’ said Déagol.

There was no reason to be mad at him anymore. He knew how much Sméagol loved fishing, and how rarely they got the chance to do it.

‘The last few days, I did nearly everything to build a nice boat for us. And now, look behind your shack. I made it! It now belongs to you!’ Déagol surprised him. Sméagol couldn’t believe it. He ran as fast as he could around his house. He nearly stumbled of excitement, and then he saw it. Déagol really did his best, it was a very big and nice boat. Sméagol couldn’t wait to get on the river.

‘When do we take it to the water?’ were his first words.

‘Relax,’ said Déagol. ‘Let us first eat something. The march to *Anduin* is long and arduous, and we need to be in forces.’

He was right. They first ate something, then packed their bags and made their way to the Gladden Fields. It was a very nice trip. They caught a good day, the sun was shining and the air was fresh. Sméagol really enjoyed the march with Déagol. They were best friends. Both had known each other from childhood until today, they were even related. Their families had been here a long, long time. When they were kids, they often played in front of their parents’ shacks and had a really good time together. They were thick as thieves and did everything together, both really had a great childhood. After three hours, Sméagol and Déagol finally reached their destination, the Gladden River. What a beautiful place. The birds were chirping, and the river rippled so sweet - it sounded like a concert of nature. They brought their boat in position and pushed it on the river. The Gladden River, known for its abundance of fish. In their childhood, they were often at that river. They really enjoyed that time and both always remembered these days fondly, but since then, both of them had not had any chance to be there again. Sméagol was very happy that Déagol could arrange this trip. As both sat in the boat now, they rowed into the middle of the river and threw their rods out. ‘May the Force be with you!’ said Déagol. For nearly one hour, nothing happened. Really, absolutely nothing. Not even

one fish could take pity and hang on their hooks. It was frustrating; they had been waiting a long time for this day, and now this. Then, everything turned upside down from this moment on. The rod of Déagol stood silently in the water. However suddenly, without warning, something drew him into the river. 'What the -' Sméagol heard him saying before he disappeared in the river. Sméagol was shocked. He screamed for him nearly half a minute, but nothing happened. Then Déagol suddenly appeared back above the surface and swam to the bank. Sméagol rowed to the bank immediately and debarked to see how he was doing, and if he needed some help. Déagol was gasping for air and could not understand what had just happened. Strangely, he did not ask himself what kind of creature had pulled him into the river. His eyes and his view were focused on something in his hand.

'What the dickens was that? Are you okay, Déagol?' asked Sméagol.

But Déagol did not answer his question. His eyes were still focused on something in his hand.

'Déagol, are you okay? Now, if you'll excuse me, I'm going to go home and have a heart attack! What was that?'

He still did not react. Sméagol had enough of it and had a look in Déagol's hands.

Then he suddenly forgot everything around him. It was incredible. Between all the dirt and grime in his hands lay a ring. It was so beautiful, and it had an incredible allurements. They just stared at the ring with open eyes and mouths wide open. It was a magnificent moment. It seemed like the world around them stood still, and there were just them and this ring. But then Sméagol felt something inside him. He wanted that ring, it belonged to him. It was so beautiful and attractive. Sméagol felt that something inside him took over. He could not explain why, but this ring controlled him. He wanted it so bad, but Déagol did not react to him. Suddenly he started to get angry, really angry about Deagol's behaviour.

'Déagol, answer me right now! What is it and where did you find it?' he shouted at him.

'Answer me, or I will punch you in your face, I am serious.'

'Why so serious, Sméagol? Were you talking to me?' answered Déagol.

'I found it on the bottom of the river. After I was drawn in the river by a large fish, I was able to hold the rod for a few seconds, but then I could not hold it anymore and was left at the bottom. I wanted to re-emerge directly, but then I

noticed a sparkling thing in the mud and grabbed it. It seemed to me as if the ring was prepared there for me, so that I could take it.'

Sméagol smiled at him, but his inner voice was not the same like before. It changed. Completely.

'It's yours. It belongs to you. Your sneaky little friend doesn't deserve it. It's special, the stuff that dreams are made of.' went through his head.

Sméagol thought about opportunities how to get the ring away from him.

'Well Déagol, today is my birthday, and I think you can give the ring to me, as a present. I mean, we are best friends,' he said to him.

'I don't think so, Sméagol. This whole day is my present to you, but what I found here belongs to me, whoever finds it gets to keep it,' answered Déagol.

Sméagol became furious. 'It is not yours, save by unhappy chance. It could have been mine! It should be mine! Give it to me!' But Déagol only laughed at him. Just when he wanted to grab the ring, Déagol pushed him away and Sméagol fell very hard on his head. Sméagol could not believe that Déagol did that to him.

'Stand up and take what belongs to you. Take it, without mercy. TAKE WHAT'S YOURS!' said that voice again.

Sméagol noticed that Déagol did not even look at him after he pushed him away. He stood with his back to him and still only focused the ring. It looked as if the world had stopped around him.

The voice inside Sméagol's head still wanted him to chase after the ring. He wondered how he could get the ring, but nothing occurred to him.

'Kill him. Kill that unworthy ring finder. It deserves to you!' said the voice again. Sméagol had never murdered anybody, but the anger about Déagol and the desire for the ring were too strong.

He choked the life out of him. Normally Déagol was stronger, but this time he could not defend himself against Sméagol. He did not know where that sudden force came from, but Sméagol never felt that strong as in this moment. Déagol had no chance, and after a minute he was dead. He was just dead. Sméagol killed his best friend. But all that did not bother him, because he got what he wanted. He finally got his ring, his precious.



The wind blew through the trees, and a small stream gurgled. It was a magnificent place, but Sméagol could not think straight. He was paralysed. The ring had drawn him into its spell. They both were finally united.

‘Look, how beautiful you are. You’re mine, forever.’ he said to the ring.

It took nearly one hour until he could think straight again and was able to take his eyes off the ring. Next to him lay Déagol. He looked like always, only with the exception that he was dead. His best friend, his relative, his companion.

‘Why didn’t he just give me the ring?’ he thought to himself.

He leaned over him, grabbed him by the collar and shook him.

‘You bloody idiot! Why didn’t you just give me what belongs to me? This is my ring, Déagol, you took it without the right to do so! The Ring was waiting for me, not for you.’ he screamed at him.

‘Now you see what you got from it. It could have been much easier, but you did not want that. That was your own fault. You either die a hero, or you live long enough to see yourself become the villain.’

He stopped shaking him and left him in peace.

‘Well done my friend, you deserve the ring more than anyone else,’ whispered that creepy voice inside his head again. ‘But take care my friend, make sure that no one will ever find out what happened here before.’

Then Sméagol realized a problem. Was he the only one here in the area or were there any witnesses?

He hid the lifeless body of Déagol in a bush and went on a little tour around the area. It was very quiet, and he could not find a trail on the forest floor. It seemed as if within five miles there was not a single living being.

‘Very good,’ he thought. ‘If this incident gets known, an angry mob will kill me.’

‘But what shall I do with the corpse of Déagol?’ was the next question that rushed through his head.

After Sméagol returned to the place where everything had happened, he sat down on the grass and thought about how he could hide the body best.

‘Should I throw him into the water?’ he thought to himself.

‘No, too difficult. He must remain on the river’s bottom, otherwise he could be found too fast. But here aren’t enough stones around to give him weight, so that he stays at the ground of the river.’

For nearly ten minutes, he had no idea. What should he do with him?

Then it occurred to him that there were many caves around there. Sméagol went on a search, and after a while he discovered a hidden cave entrance.

‘This could be a good hiding place for Déagol,’ he thought.

It looked as if the cave had never been used or even been found by anyone. The cave was hard to find from the outside, it was in a dense forest, which looked lifeless.

‘There is also a big rock which I maybe could use to hide the entrance.’ he thought.

Said and done. Sméagol returned to the dead body of his friend and pulled him behind him. He was a little heavier than Sméagol, so it was a very difficult task. It nearly took half an hour to get him to the cave.

‘It ends here my friend, this chapter is now closed.’ he whispered to Déagol.

Sméagol threw him into the cave, and wanted to push the rock in the entrance. But he failed.

The stone was too heavy for him. He could not even move it for a single inch.

‘Damn, this can’t be true.’ he said to himself.

‘I need to hide the entrance of the cave somehow, otherwise someone will find it. But how?’

Then he realized something. How could he kill Déagol before? Déagol was stronger than him, but at this moment, something inside him took over, and he felt invincible. How can Sméagol feel this way again? Then he thought about the thing to which he owed the whole situation. There was something magical inside it, and Sméagol asked himself how he could use it to his own profit.

Sméagol put the ring on and was now trying to push the stone in the entrance. It worked like a charm. He felt an incredible force inside, but he was also aware that he would have to keep it hidden. Sméagol also let the boat go and made his way back to their home.

He did not know what expected him there, but on his way home, he started to make up some scenes which could have happened to Déagol.

II: The troublemaker

Back at home he closed the door very swiftly. He wanted to avoid to meet his grandmother. 'Sméagol, where have you been?' He turned around, afraid. 'You look terrible! What have you done?' His hand drew to the ring in his pocket. He wanted to put it on. The mix of fearing to get unmasked and the desire to put on the ring made him sick, but also astonished. 'We were fishing' he answered and vanished in the bathroom. He looked into the mirror and asked himself if it was him who he was seeing in front of him. The hobbit he saw thought and did very strange things lately. He decided to drink something. So he went to the '*Swallowing Barrel*'. The loud atmosphere made him angry. 'Shut up' he thought and wanted to hurt every single person in the inn. He sat down in front of the barkeeper. 'One pint' he ordered staring at the big round belly after a short look at the face of the barkeeper in front of him. It wasn't strange to order a pint, because the inn was often visited by men, who didn't like to drink out of 'teacups,' as they called them. But the fact that he ordered a pint said everything about the customer. He had a bad day, he is angry and he wants to get drunken. So the barkeeper just moved quietly and filled a pint for the broken man who was visiting him. Sméagol just drank and looked at the wooden surface of the bar. He thought about nothing for a while. Then he had to think about the last painful sounds that Déagol made. His hands cramped and he felt like he was killing him again. Finally he heard the fat belly in front of him talking to him. 'Sir? Sir? Are you okay?' He was gasping of fear. 'Just one more beer.' The sounds around him went up again. But the laughter became normal and didn't anger him anymore. He got his beer, emptied the mug, stood up and went dizzy to the exit. He wanted to flee from the light. The light could make his doings known. If the other villagers learned what he had done, he could not stay them all. So he went into the night, alone.

The next morning, Sméagol woke up in his shack. The rays of the sun broke through the window exactly on his head. Slowly he opened his eyes and wanted to stand up. But then the activities from the night before made him stay in his bed. His head grumbled as hard as if Beorn was inside, and his belly felt very dull.

'Oh no, not again. I should really stop drinking that much beer,' he whispered to himself.

For nearly one hour, he laid in his bed and did not move an inch. Rarely before he had such a hangover. Then suddenly, somebody knocked against the door.

'Wake up Sméagol, you worthless liar,' a voice screamed from outside.

'Wake up and open the door. Otherwise I will come in after I kicked your door into pieces.'

Sméagol was alarmed and now suddenly awake.

'Damn, who is that?' Sméagol thought.

'My head nearly explodes and this idiot bothers me in my well-earned rest.'

Sméagol got up quickly and put on his clothes.

'Who is there?' screamed Sméagol.

'You know very well who this is,' said the voice outside.

Then Sméagol realized. It was Déagol's father.

'Oh no, what shall I do?' thought Sméagol.

Déagol's father was a highly respected hobbit in their village. His family had seven sons, Déagol was the oldest. Between Sméagol and their family there had always been a good relationship, they had been friends since their childhood. Normally, they both liked each other a lot, but since Déagol had disappeared, their relationship would change.

'Open the damn door!' he screamed from outside. Sméagol took another deep breath and tried to concentrate, because he was still a bit drunken.

'Be careful my friend, try to keep your lie and avoid ill-considered statements,' the voice inside his head said.

Sméagol knew that he had to do it, the voice was right. He opened the door and wanted to say something, but he did not get the chance to speak. He got a hard blow exactly on the nose and fell backwards into his shack.

'Where is my son?' screamed Déagol's father at him. 'Where is he? I can't stand your lies anymore!'

Sméagol slowly got up again and tried to think clearly.

'Calm down. What is wrong with you? You nearly broke my nose, you bastard.'

'You little spawn of Ungoliant. Where is my son? Where is Déagol?' he said.

'Since you both went away to the Gladden Fields and only you returned, I can't stop thinking about Déagol. You have indeed told me that he has left you to start a better life in another region, but I cannot believe this. This isn't Déagol.'

He was a very decent person, he would never leave his family alone without saying anything.'

'Damn you. That's how it was. I even remember his words very clearly. He said that he has enough of this boring life which he lives right now. I tried to persuade him all the time to stay with me, but he wanted to get away urgently. Even when I tried to hold him back, he pushed me and ran away. I fell very unlucky on a stone and was unconscious for a short time. When I got up again, Déagol wasn't there anymore. I've been looking for him all night, but he was gone.' said Sméagol.

'You can tell that fairy tale to an orc, but not to me. Déagol was happy here. He loved it.' Said Déagol's father and grabbed Sméagol at the collar.

'Tell me right now where Déagol is or I'll kill you, seriously,' he said and had a mad look on his face. He pushed him to the ground and pulled out a knife from his pocket. Just before he could hit Sméagol with the knife, the people on the road noticed the scenario. Somebody came from behind and took the knife from Déagol's father.

'He has my son on his conscience! Where is he?' he screamed again and even started to cry.

Sméagol said again that he did not know, but the people standing around them started to think about it. Hardly anybody noticed that Déagol had disappeared, because in the past he had often been away for a long time, because he built up shacks in other villages. When Déagol's father repeated his question and Sméagol still answered the same way he did before, the crowd sided with the father because Déagol was also well known in the village, and nobody could believe that he had run away from home.

Sméagol was still not able to answer this question.

'That's all I can say to you. It really happened this way,' said Sméagol desperately.

The general mood calmed down a bit, but nobody was fully satisfied with Sméagol's response.

'Tread lightly, Sméagol. We both know, that something happened. I'll find out the truth and then may woe betide you. I'll be back!' threatened Déagol's father.

When he turned around, the people went directly to the side and made him a passage through the crowd. For nearly one minute, there was just silence. Everybody stared at Sméagol. Some shook their heads, others looked very

disappointedly at him. Sméagol was paralysed, he could not move from the spot. It was as if the stares would eat him up inwardly. Then the first people left the angry crowd. Sméagol was still not able to move, as if petrified he stood in front of his shack. It took nearly five minutes until the whole crowd went away. Sméagol still could not think straight, too many thoughts raced through his mind.

‘Sméagol. I told you so. I’m the only one around here you can trust. The people in your village are against you,’ said this creepy voice in his head suddenly.

‘It is right. I have to be very careful. They’re all against me.’ whispered Sméagol. He returned to his shack and closed the door behind him.

‘That was close, Sméagol; too close. Now consider each of your steps very thoroughly,’ said the creepy voice in his head.

Sméagol nodded.

‘I should first stay in my house and avoid the public,’ said Sméagol to himself.

‘But first of all, I should eat something, I’m very hungry. Where are my mushrooms?’

Sméagol stood up and went to his food storage. He loved mushrooms, like every hobbit in his village. He prepared a delicious meal with mushrooms and bread, and he drank a beer. After he emptied three plates, he was finally full.

‘That was delicious, well done Sméagol,’ he said to himself. ‘After this good meal you deserve a nap.’

Said and done. Sméagol took the dirty plates to the water tub and then laid down on his bed. It lasted not even two minutes until he fell asleep.

Outside, the rain pattered against the window of his hut. After his few beers, Sméagol had a very deep sleep. However, it was also a restless sleep. He dreamed of Déagol and the ring. Repeatedly he heard the now familiar voice, which had been accompanying him since his birthday. The voice always repeated the words: ‘It belongs to us. *We needs it.*’ These words burned into Sméagol’s head. The ring and Sméagol now belonged inseparably to each other. He was very happy about that.

Suddenly he woke up. It was dark in his shack, and so it was outside. Instead of a nap, Sméagol had slept very long and deep. He slowly opened his eyes, but realized immediately that something was wrong. He reached for a match and lit several candles. Sméagol could not believe that he had slept that deep. He calmed down a bit, because in his house everything was the same. In order to

make sure, he wanted to look around outside his house, too. He took his long raincoat, lit a candle in a lantern and went on his way out.

What he found there shocked him to the death. His whole garden was devastated. Someone had destroyed his fence, his garden workshop and most of his tools. Sméagol was shocked. Then he wanted to look after his animals, but they were gone.

‘You see Sméagol. I’m the only one around here you can trust. These people are against you,’ said that voice inside his head again.

It was very clear who did this. Sméagol could classify this fact very well, the whole village joined together to fight against him. Sméagol now looked in the dark, but he could not see anything. However, he knew that someone was watching him.

With an angry face, he went back to his house, knowing that he should better prepare himself for the following days. After he had entered the house, he sat down at his table, filled a mug of beer and thought about the current situation. He asked himself all the time how he should behave in the next few days, because a normal coexistence with the other villagers was now no longer possible.

Sméagol thought about that until the early morning hours, but could not find a satisfying solution.

After he stood up and finished his breakfast, he went to his grandmother to talk about the present situation. His grandmother lived in the same shack, because Sméagol once had built his own house attached to the home of his grandmother. Every time Sméagol had a problem, he could rely on his grandmother. He knocked on the door and a few seconds later, his grandmother came to the fore. She did not look very happy and looked at him with a stern expression.

‘What do you want, Sméagol?’ she said with a harsh tone in her voice.

Sméagol was confused.

‘What’s wrong with you? Have I done something wrong?’ he asked.

‘You ought to know best, right? My confidence in you is broken. I’ve been watching you yesterday during the discussion with Déagol’s father. I’ve known you from a young age and know exactly when you’re lying. I do not know what happened, but just leave me out of this story. I will not betray you, but I will not help you. Your workshop has already been destroyed, there are a lot of rumours

that you have killed Déagol and that you are stealing things from the other villagers. I do not want anything to do with it. Don't ever come close to my home again, you're dead to me. Mark my words!'

Déagol was shocked. He left the door of his grandmother without a word, did not even look back, and went to his door. He was now aware that the whole village was against him, even his own grandmother. Again Sméagol thought about a solution for his problems, but he could not find a good one.

'Use the ring!' whispered the creepy voice inside his head.

A short time passed until Sméagol could take up this line of thought.

'All that happened here is only because of the ring. There is something bigger behind this, it will be a good help for me in the future. The ring gives me strength, I should use this to my advantage.' thought Sméagol.

'The other villagers are talking about me; it would be interesting what they have to say about me.'

The plan was simple. Under cover of invisibility he wanted to listen to the other villagers. In the darkness he wanted to put this plan into action, but right now it was noon, so he had to wait. To overcome the time until then, he went outside his shack and started to repair his damaged garden workshop with the leftover tools. During the time until evening, many contemptuous looks hit him. It was hard for Sméagol, even closely related people shunned him. While repairing his garden workshop, he could be distracted at least for a few hours. When it finally got dark, he wanted to do it. Of course, he could have eavesdropped on them during the day, but first of all he wanted to take advantage of the darkness.

After a hearty meal, Sméagol put on the ring and went out. He closed the door quietly behind him and went to the main road that led through the village.

Almost everywhere, the lights in the houses were out, only occasionally a candle was to be seen.

This, of course, only covered the shacks where the villagers lived in, in the inn there was still light. One could hear the rumble of some villagers up on the street. Suddenly two kids ran across the street exactly in Sméagol's direction. 'Oh no. They're coming right at me. Stay calm and do nothing!' he said to himself.

Sméagol was really afraid of being detected by the two. They came closer and closer, but Sméagol just stood there. He held his breath and closed his eyes. However, nothing happened, the two kids ran right past him without so much as looking at him. 'Am I invisible?' he asked himself. To be sure, he ran in front

of the children again and crossed their way. Nothing happened. The children just walked their way.

This incident reinforced his connection to the ring, he felt invincible.

He approached the inn and opened a window in the rear area, where no hobbits were staying. It was the kitchen, where he climbed in, which had remained cold today. He easily reached the door to the common room.

Sméagol opened it softly, and crept to the group of hobbits.

There at the table sat seven of them. They drank beer and there were still a few remnants of mushrooms. They all looked saturated and satisfied. After a brief moment of silence a hobbit began to talk. It was Déagol's father. He raised his mug and turned to his friends.

'Well done today, my friends. However, this was only the first step in the war against Sméagol. He knows what has happened to my son, I could see it in his eyes. We will engage him systematically, until he comes out with the truth. But until then, to us!' said Déagol's father.

Everybody raised up the mugs and they all drank their beer.

'What are we going to do next with him?' asked one of the hobbits at the table.

'That's a good question.' said Déagol's father.

'We should think about it more precisely. But not right now, we've all had enough beer for this evening, this affects our calculated plan. Let us enjoy this evening, drink some more beer and discuss tomorrow how we will proceed.

What about the same time like today?'

The other hobbits agreed with this proposal, and the innkeeper brought another round of beer.

Sméagol had heard enough. He was angry, but had to keep it under control to do nothing unconsciously and crept back through the kitchen to the outside.

When he had climbed out the window, he noticed the shed of the innkeeper.

'Do something. Do not let yourself be beaten,' said the creepy voice suddenly.

Sméagol thought about that and noticed that the voice was right.

'If I remember correctly, the beer reserves of the innkeeper were inside the shed,' said Sméagol to himself.

He suddenly had an idea. What annoys the hobbits probably the most? Of course, the loss of their beer reserves. With a grin on his lips he climbed through a window of the shed. Then he took out his knife and stabbed a tiny leak into each of the two large barrels. The beer now began to run continuously from the barrels.

‘Water is healthier anyway,’ said Sméagol with a big grin on his face.

He glanced outside and went out then. Before he went back he wanted to use this new power a little more. So he entered some houses where he always wanted to be in, watched the people inside, heard what they were talking about and stole some things.

‘That will be trouble for me,’ he said to himself.

Then he went to a secret hiding place, which he had created long before. It was a small chamber, which was under his workshop in the garden, and had at that time the purpose to hide from Déagol. When he entered his workshop, he took off the ring and immediately went to his hideout. Sméagol was satisfied, he was safe and had his ring.

However, he also thought of the next day and the consequences of his actions, especially in the shed of the innkeeper.

‘I need some sleep. That’s very important. However, if I sleep in my shack, it could happen that the other hobbits appear and attack me. This is not a safe place for me anymore,’ said Sméagol to himself.

He was right. But this night, nothing happened. The other hobbits did not notice the loss of the beer that evening. Even by the next morning it hadn’t been noticed. Accordingly, nothing happened to the shack of Sméagol.

The next morning, Sméagol woke up in his hiding place. He thought about his next moves. For safety, he put on the ring again. Sméagol opened the hatch and stepped out from his hiding after he had assured himself that no one was in his workshop. Then he looked out of his window and noticed that nothing had happened to his house. This really surprised him.

‘What? They didn’t notice the loss of their beer? I thought they were heavier drinkers,’ said Sméagol to himself with a grin on his face.

‘But they will. I have to be very careful now.’

Suddenly, while Sméagol was looking out of the window, he noticed one of the hobbits who had sat at the table the evening before in the inn. He ran in a quick pace towards to the inn. Usual, nothing strange, but it was still very early in the morning.

‘That’s my chance. I have to be there, this must be about the loss of the beer.’ Sméagol opened the door and ran after the hobbit. On the road there was no one else, the sun had not yet risen and the dew was still on the leaves. It was a beautiful morning, but nobody cared about that fact. In front of the inn there

were the same men who had sat in a cosy round in the inn last night. From the distance, they looked very angry. Sméagol grinned and sneaked to the hobbits. He hid behind a rain barrel and overheard the seven.

‘That was Sméagol. That was this little bastard!’ screamed one of them.

The other hobbit, whom Sméagol had followed, joined the group now.

‘What has happened?’ he asked.

‘It was Sméagol, only he could have done that. We currently have no other disputes,’ another hobbit said.

‘Okay, but what exactly happened?’ the hobbit asked again.

‘Our precious beer is gone. It’s gone. I can’t believe it,’ answered the second one.

‘Oh no, please no. Not our delicious beer!’

They were all devastated and considered how they could take revenge on Sméagol.

The anger grew in them and they went to Sméagol’s house. Sméagol, of course, followed them and continued to watch them. When the group of hobbits reached the house of Sméagol, one of them knocked on his door. Nothing happened. For them, it looked as if Sméagol was not at home.

‘Open your damn door, you little bastard!’ screamed Déagol’s father.

‘You’ve crossed the line. The thing with the beer was the straw that broke the horse’s neck. From now on, I do not care. Where is my son? And if I have to beat you up, I want to know it now. OPEN THE DOOR!’

Nothing happened. Unfortunately, even Sméagol’s grandmother was not at home. She could have calmed down Déagol’s father, but she was visiting some relatives. With a crazed look in his face, Déagol’s father went to his house, took a hammer, returned and knocked one last time at Sméagol’s door. Still nothing happened.

‘That’s it. You asked for it.’

Déagol’s father totally freaked out. He reached out and hit repeatedly against the shack. After a few moments, the other hobbits joined him. They left all their fury on the shack. When they saw that Sméagol was nowhere in the hut, they simply continued destroying the shack. It took nearly twenty minutes. Nothing remained left, everything was destroyed.

Sméagol was paralysed. He stood a few meters away from his house and watched the hobbits who destroyed his hut. Sméagol could not take it anymore.

The hobbits just destroyed his childhood memories and he stood there and watched them. They even destroyed his grandmother's home. Then he remembered what power the ring gave to him when he was removing Déagol's corpse.

Just before Sméagol wanted to attack the hobbits, the disturbing voice came again:

'Stop it. These hobbits are not worth it. That would attract too much attention.'

It was a hard task for Sméagol, but he knew that the voice was right.

'The chapter ends here. You should move to another village, but before you go, you should defend your honour.'

And again the voice was right. After the hobbits destroyed the house completely, they moved on. They asked everywhere for Sméagol, but no one knew where he was. An angry mob that set out to search for him formed.

Sméagol thought about his present situation.

'The voice is right. I should move on, this isn't the right place for me,' he said to himself.

'But before I go, the people should pay for their act.'

Sméagol thought about his revenge. He also thought of his grandmother, whose house was also destroyed. What would be bad for the people here? Then an idea flashed through his head: 'Burn down the inn!' The inn was a place loved by every villager.

Said and done. While the others were searching for Sméagol, he put his plan into action.

It was an enormous fire. Sméagol did a really good job. The people tried to extinguish the fire, but they did not make it. Sméagol enjoyed the fire from a more remote place, took the ring off and went his way.

III: A new friend

Sméagol was not sure if he should welcome the rising sun. On the one hand, the sun would bring the danger to be seen. Moreover, the wilderness was unknown to Sméagol. He had often heard about dangers in the forest. Mostly from his grandmother. He was glad that he thought about packing a bag with some bread and cheese. Water he could drink from the *Anduin*. He also took a hammer, a folding rule, a saw, an angle, and a torch with him. If he was in another village, he would need to work. Normally, a carpenter had to bring his tools himself.

When he had walked a couple of hours, he heard a howl from a direction he couldn't locate. 'If the wolves get me, they will also get my -.' he grabbed in his pocket to make sure that the ring was still there. He pulled it out of his pocket and stared at it. 'You are so beautiful. You are the best thing that ever happened to me. I can't imagine that something like you was committed to me.' He closed the ring in his fist and was sure that he would protect the ring from each creature he would meet. Then he went on the lonely walk through the forest and the bushes. He decided to avoid the street, because he feared that the villagers could run after him and get him. After what he had done, they would kill him, and nobody would even think about him. Not even his grandmother. He thought about Déagol's father. 'Stupid fat hobbit! You had better left me alone!' At the same time he thought about Déagol. He had never had a friend like him. He had often dreamt about starting a journey together with Déagol. And now he was on way, but without a friend that he could trust in.

When he realized that it started to get cold, he felt panic again. He had never made a fire. He suddenly grabbed some branches that were lying on the ground. Fortunately, most of them were not wet. One of them was very wide and had also a hollow. 'Perfect!' he muttered. He also took some very dry grass and put it into the hollow. Then he took a long and straight branch and started to circle it between his hands. He noticed very fast that it was not as easy as he thought. When he started to be tired, he thought about changing his strategy. He took the branch with both hands and began to rub it over the surface. He

got faster and faster. After a short time he saw some smoke coming up and blew into the hollow. But then it stopped immediately. Disappointed but motivated, he started to rub again. When he saw smoke again, happiness grew inside of him. But suddenly the branch broke, and at the same time he pushed his hand by accident into the broken branch and knew, full with adrenalin, that he had hurt himself. A second later he saw blood and became very angry. He totally lost control of himself. He screamed loudly, threw the halves of the branch away, kicked the rest of the wood away, jumped and stamped in his rage. 'You need a better technique.' he heard somebody saying behind him. Simultaneously everything became absolutely silent, and Sméagol turned frightened to the voice. There was a big hobbit in front of him. He looked very bad, because he wore ragged and shabby clothes, and he had long greasy hair. 'Who are you?' asked Sméagol, hearing fear in his own voice. The hobbit in front of him smiled very friendly. 'Just a helping hand.' 'Why do you think that I need help?' he replied, went to his bag and picked up his hammer, not letting the stranger out of his view.

'Relax!' answered the stranger laughing and started to pick up the scattered wood. Then he took the same wide wood billet with the hollow like Sméagol had done and put it on the ground. Also, he put some dry grass into the hollow. Then he went to a tree and broke a – hobbit – long but thin branch from the tree. After that he took a cord out of his pocket, bent the branch and bound one end of the rope to one end of the branch and the other one to the other end. It looked like a bow. Then he went to the potential fireplace, took a similar thin branch like Sméagol had used, bound it with an interesting technique with three fingers between the clutched rope and spat into the connection. He put one end of the branch into the hollow, on the other end he pushed the branch with a thick piece of wood, so that the branch could not slip away. Then he used his new tool like a saw and moved it forward and backward.



Sméagol saw, that it was possible this way to rub the branch much faster and also much easier. He packed his hammer away slowly, because he didn't want to show the strange person that he distrusted him. Not a minute later they saw smoke, and after a while a little flame was seen. The stranger laid his tool fast aside and put some small pieces of wood to the flame. Very soon they had fire. Suddenly the stranger jumped up, lifted his arms and cried 'yeeeah, look what I have created! I have made fire! I have made fire!' Sméagol was a little shocked about it, but it also made the stranger likeable, and he had to laugh about it.

They created a comfortable fireplace and were sitting around the fire. 'What's your name?' asked Sméagol? 'I've got several names.' replied the stranger. 'So how can I call you?'

'Vardtir.'

'Vardtir? That's a strange name for a hobbit.' Said Sméagol. Vardtir smiled and replied 'Yes and so am I. What about you? What's your name?' Sméagol thought a second about it. Maybe he should give a false name if he was going to start a new life. But he answered 'I am Sméagol.'

'And what are you doing here in the wilderness so late in the evening?' asked Vardtir curiously.

Sméagol didn't like the question, so he answered 'I'm moving.'

‘Alone? That’s dangerous in this region.’

‘Yes, I was disappointed several times in the past, so I’m alone now. But we don’t fear to be alone!’

‘I’m a warrior’ he added.

‘And where are you moving to?’ asked Vardtir? ‘To a city in the north I heard of.’

‘Let me escort you to the city. I think I can help you.’ said Vardtir. Sméagol had no reason why he should disagree. At least no reason that he could mention. So he agreed. Then he shared his provisions with Vardtir, but he ate just the half of his normal portion because he feared that it could not suffice for both of them until they were in the town. They kept on talking for a while and then laid down to sleep. But one of them could not sleep. Sméagol lied down under some leaves. The leaves should keep him warm and also cover him from the dew. Beside him were his tools.

The next morning Sméagol was woken up by a cool breeze. Besides there was complete silence. Just some birds could be heard. He lifted his head to see if Vardtir was already awake, but he couldn’t see him. He stood up immediately. ‘Vardtir?’ There was no answer. ‘Strange,’ he thought. The fire was quenched. So he just took his bag and the new tool to make fire and went on.

After a few hours he reached an enormous river. ‘That must be the *Anduin*,’ he thought. He drank a bit of water and went on upstream along the river.

‘In a few days I think we will reach the town. Maybe in four or five days’ said a voice behind him. Scared, Sméagol turned around very fast. Vardtir had to laugh. ‘There is nothing to laugh. You have scared me to death!’ shouted Sméagol. With lifted hands Vardtir said: ‘Sorry my friend, this was not my intention.’

‘Where have you been?’ asked Sméagol. ‘I got some fish. Let’s have breakfast.’ he replied smiling and showed two fish to Sméagol. ‘How did you catch them?’ Sméagol was wondering. ‘One time I’ll show you.’ answered Vardtir and gave one fish to Sméagol. Then he took his fish and bit into the raw fish. Sméagol was shocked. ‘Can we make some fire, so that I can roast my fish?’ he asked. ‘We have got no time for such useless matters.’ replied Vardtir chewing. You have to eat it raw. But you’ll like it.’ Sméagol stared at his fish and decided to try it later. ‘I’m not hungry right now.’ Not a minute later Vardtir had done his

breakfast. 'Let's go on!' he shouted, picked up his gear and set off. 'Crazy fellow,' thought Sméagol and followed him along the bank of the *Anduin*.

After a day's march they found a cave in a crevice. There was a big entrance, but they couldn't see anything inside. 'Let's have a look if we can stay inside this night,' said Vardtir, because it was almost dusk. Sméagol didn't want to show that he was afraid, so he took his torch, lit it and entered the cave slowly.

Vardtir was right behind him. After some paces, Sméagol heard unclearly a deep, brutal voice. It muttered something and was followed by laughing. He looked to Vardtir, who gave him a sign to be quiet by holding his forefinger in front of his mouth. Then Vardtir went to the front, and the two of them sneaked a bit closer to the voice. A few paces ahead of them was a turning, and there they could see some flicker of light. 'It must be a fireplace,' thought Sméagol, who was afraid to death. But he followed his new friend quietly. They sneaked to the turning and peeked carefully round the corner. Now Sméagol took the ring in his pocket, without thinking about it. Inside, two big grey trolls were sitting. Each troll was more than three times bigger than each of the hobbits. But it looked very smooth in their room. They were sitting next to a fire and were eating some roast meat. Suddenly it became silent, and there was sniffing of the troll who was sitting with the back to the hobbits to hear. Before the hobbits had the chance to react, the troll began to bellow in a horrible way and turned to the hobbits.

'Ruuuuuuun!' cried Vardtir. And immediately they started to run. But the troll also began to run and grabbed a big club. Sméagol was sure that this was the end, because the troll was two times faster than him. But the will to survive forced him to run faster than it was normally possible. Vardtir was right behind him. When Sméagol reached the entrance, he put on the ring. It was already dark outside. A second later the troll came out of the cave and stopped for a while. It looked around but couldn't see anything. Again it was sniffing. Then it noticed some leaves rustling on the ground, sprang forward and swung its club in that direction. There were two horrible sounds to hear but then there was just silence. The troll could neither smell nor see anything.

Sméagol woke up. He was lying between a big rock and a bush. Every single bone inside of him was hurting. Seized with panic he started to crawl. He didn't know where, but as far as possible away from the cave. After crawling some meters he lost his power. He put off the ring and put it in his pocket. Then he fell unconscious again.



When he woke up again he was lying very comfortably next to a fire.

‘Somebody must have found me,’ he thought. He looked around but couldn’t see anybody. His bag was lying next to him. On the fire something was boiling. There was just one other bag. ‘So the person must be alone,’ he thought. He couldn’t force himself to stand up, because everything was hurting. Especially his ribs on the right side and his left shoulder. The ribs had to be broken.

After some minutes there came an old man, clad in a wolf skin coat. He brought some fish with him. ‘If he didn’t do anything to me until now, he won’t do anything to me at all,’ thought Sméagol and decided to stay lying.

‘Oh you are awake,’ said the old man. ‘How are you feeling?’ he added smiling.

‘Miserable,’ answered Sméagol. ‘I found you near a path. What has happened to you?’ asked the old man. Sméagol didn’t want to explain how he could escape the troll, so he answered: ‘Some robbers picked me up on that path.’

‘So you had great luck,’ answered the old man. ‘Most people don’t survive such an attack.’ He took the boiling soup down from the fire, put some of it in a bowl and gave it to Sméagol. ‘Here, that will help you. I put some herbage inside. That will accelerate the healing process.’ Sméagol took the bowl, and started to slurp the liquid soup. ‘I wonder why they didn’t steal your bag’, remarked the old man, while he started to roast the fish.

‘May I eat the fish raw?’ asked Sméagol without considering what the old man said. ‘Raw?’ asked the old man disgustedly. In that moment Sméagol thought about Vardtir. ‘Did you see another hobbit where I was lying?’

‘No you were the only one. Why are you asking?’ Sméagol was thinking for a while and answered then: ‘I had a friend. He was my companion.’

‘Damn, do you think they kidnapped him?’ asked the old man. ‘What?’

‘The robbers, do you think they took your friend with them?’

‘Oh, – ah – yes, I think so,’ answered Sméagol and put his hands on his face, while he imagined what the trolls did to his friend. ‘I’m so sorry,’ said the old man. ‘It’s okay, all I need is –. My friend showed me that one can eat a fish raw. It’s no problem. It’s also tasty and it saves a lot of time. To be honest, I even like the taste of a raw fish better.’ The old man laughed and said: ‘I nearly forgot your strange wish. But feel free.’ He handed one fish to Sméagol, who was painfully reminded that he could not use his left arm. ‘If you don’t mind, I would like to roast my fish.’ added the old Man. After eating, they talked familiarly until the night. Then the weary Sméagol fell into a deep sleep.

‘I can’t describe how beautiful you are.’ Sméagol woke up and heard such strange words. It was dark, and he couldn’t see at first who the words were spoken by. But then he saw in a little distance the old man, huddled, perching with his back to Sméagol. ‘You are so – precious.’ he heard the old man hissing. In that moment he felt for the ring and realized anxiously that it was not in his pocket. A wild rage came over him, but he had to control himself, because he didn’t want to frighten the old man. In the worst case, he could put on the ring. So Sméagol quietly opened his bag at his side and took out his hammer. Then he stood up and sneaked into the direction of the old man. ‘Why didn’t you come much earlier to me?’ he heard the old man whispering. Then the old man noticed a cracking behind him and turned to Sméagol. He saw the hammer and asked him frightenedly: ‘What are you doing Sméagol?’ Sméagol kept staying at the same place where he was been seen. ‘Who did you talk to, old man?’ ‘Sméagol, I just – I – ‘ he muttered. ‘Do you know what you have stolen from me, you damn fool!?’ shouted Sméagol suddenly. Then he ran the few remained paces to the old man and clashed his hammer on the head of the old man. There was a dull sound and blood splashed on Sméagol. The old man was immediately dead and fell to the ground but Sméagol couldn’t stop beating the head of the old man with his hammer. Then he threw his hammer aside and grabbed the ring, flustering. He hissed just two words: ‘My precious.’

He left the fireplace like it was. He just took his things with him and also the three remaining fish. Nobody would find out that he had killed the old man. How could they? In the condition that Sméagol left the old man, also a wild animal could have attacked him.

‘Don’t worry, nobody will learn it.’ he heard suddenly from the right. There he saw Vardtir to his astonishment. Vardtir was hurt the same way like Sméagol. ‘Vardtir, where have you been and how did you escape the trolls?’ asked Sméagol. Vardtir just smiled and answered: ‘It doesn’t matter. I’m glad we are together again. Let’s go to *Ashokanao* finally.’

IV: The beginning of a new life

‘What a beautiful place.’ he said to himself and his new friend.

He knew this place only from stories. When he was still a child, his father told him a lot about their area, the various inhabitants and natural lore. In these stories his father always talked about this town, he described it as beautiful, but only a few hobbits took the very long way to settle there, most of them stayed in their village because they were just too lazy. This was the reason why Sméagol chose this city as his destination. He hoped that no one could recognize him here and he would be able to start a new life. His father definitely had told nothing wrong. The streets were paved throughout, the lights worked properly, the curbs were clean, and the people seemed friendly. The only thing that troubled him were the clearly visible wounds that both had suffered on the way to *Ashokanao*.

However, Sméagol had already thought of a good excuse. When climbing in the Misty Mountains, there had been a rock slide, which both could barely escape and thereby were injured.

‘So I had not imagined it in my wildest dreams. Here I want to start a new life and leave all the rest behind me.’ he said.

‘We should first get a room, then we can discuss everything further.’

Said and done. Sméagol and Vardtir strolled along the sidewalk, visited a few shops and then went to the nearest inn. Although the inn looked a bit older, its location and the amount of current visitors were decisive, so the two of them opted for this inn. By the way, they liked the name of the inn very much – ‘*The Drunken Hobbit*.’ When they opened the door to the inn, there was an excellent atmosphere. Throughout the inn echoed this well-known hobbit song, which was being sung almost everywhere and was among the favourite songs of Sméagol.

What will we do with a drunken hobbit?

What will we do with a drunken hobbit?

What will we do with a drunken hobbit?

Early in the morning.

*Way hay and up he rises,
way hay and up he rises,
way hay and up he rises,
early in the morning.*

The two felt directly related to the other visitors and joined them singing. It did not take long before the two were part of the whole. They spent a wonderful evening with the residents of the town and were quickly accepted by them.

‘Now, where did you come from?’ asked one of the residents.

For such a case, Sméagol had already merged a suitable answer.

‘Well, we’re from *Woodland*, as we call it. It’s way down in the south, nothing special. Just a community of some carpenters.’ answered Sméagol.

‘Oh yes, I know this place,’ said the hobbit Udigur.

‘Oh really? Are you kidding me?’ replied Sméagol.

‘My cousin Fraudo lives there. Do you know him?’ He is a little weakling who has mainly fear, something like the village idiot.’

Sméagol swallowed. He looked at the enquirer friendly and said:

‘I unfortunately do not know him. In our village you don’t know everybody, this is also a reason why I moved away. I felt strange there and wanted to live in a different environment.’

‘What a pity,’ said Udigur. ‘I haven’t seen him for years. Well, no matter.’

Sméagol was satisfied, he believed him the story.

‘So, what are your plans here?’ the resident asked again.

‘Good question. In my old village, I was a carpenter. I hoped to continue working here in this profession. I’m damn good at what I’m doing!’ said Sméagol self-confidently.

Everyone started to laugh out loud, but when they realized, that Sméagol was serious, one of them said: ‘I run a carpentry and it’s damn hard to find good staff. If you’re really as good as you tell us, come tomorrow after sunrise to my carpentry. It’s located two blocks north from here.’

There was silence. No one said anything, everybody stared at Sméagol.

‘All right, it would be an honour for me.’

They both shook their hands. ‘By the way, my name is Paramir.’ said the hobbit.

'I like you hobbits. The next round is on me.' screamed Sméagol through the inn.

The crowd began to cheer and Sméagol felt good. He was accepted and he couldn't imagine a better start in his new hometown. After that, it was still a long night.

They were able to spend the night at the inn, Sméagol was up the next morning very early and went his way to the carpentry. He was very optimistic and looked forward to his first day. When he appeared in the carpentry, Paramir was already working on something. He saw Sméagol and brightened visibly.

'Who can drink that much, can also work as hard.' were his first words.

'I'm very happy that you're here. Just today I have a great job, and I can use your help very well.'

'No problem,' said Sméagol. 'What are you working on?'

'This will be a cabinet for our mayor. A very important job. If everything runs smoothly, I'll get more orders from him,' said Paramir.

'Sounds nice. On similar orders I have also worked in my old home,' said Sméagol.

'All right, let's do it!'

Sméagol was completely in his element. His first working day was a great success. Paramir was impressed by him and offered him, immediately after the completion of the cabinet, a permanent position, which was accepted by Sméagol immediately. Paramir was thrilled.

'So that's settled then. I could also offer you a temporary free place to sleep. I have several free rooms here where you could live easily.'

'That would be great. Would it be possible to stay there with my friend?' said Sméagol.

'Of course. Who is this friend?' asked Paramir friendly.

'You've met him yesterday evening, don't you know anymore?' answered Sméagol and laughed.

'Really? I can't remember him. But I think that's because of the beer. Doesn't matter, he can move in with you, no problem.' Paramir replied.

Sméagol was satisfied. He had achieved so much on the first day.

Accommodation, a new job, new friends, it was perfect for him. It was as if the world belonged to him. Both of them indulged in a few beers and talked about Eru Iluvatar and about Middle Earth. After their long conversation, Paramir showed Sméagol his new room and told him a lot of information about the

town and its inhabitants. Then both finished their conversation and Paramir made his way home, he lived only three minutes away from his workshop. The rooms were great, there was plenty of room for Sméagol and he felt at home immediately. As Sméagol was about to go to sleep, he noticed Vardtir. He was sitting comfortably on a chair and looked very satisfied.

‘Oh hey Vardtir! Where have you been the whole day? I did not see you this morning.’ Asked Sméagol.

‘I was always close to you. You’ve used this day very well, here we are safe. I am very proud of you.’

‘Thank you, you’re right. Today was a good day. But right now, I just want to sleep. Good night my friend.’ answered Sméagol.

‘Okay, that’s a good idea, a little sleep will be good for us. Good night.’ replied Vardtir.

The next morning, Sméagol was back in the workshop and worked with Paramir on a new job. The two complemented each other well and actually were a very good duo. Suddenly, someone knocked at the door. *Boom, boom, boom.*

Paramir opened the door and outside stood the mayor of the town. He was perhaps four feet tall, had a large waist belt and very bright hair. His name was Kokagon. He was accepted in the whole town because of his lovely nature, and he was a very wise man.

‘Hello Kokagon. How are you?’ said Paramir.

‘Hello Paramir, I’m fine. Oh, do you have a new employee?’

‘Yes, he is a gift. We met yesterday at the inn and got along well. He’s new in our town and was looking for work, so I offered him this job. He really does a great job.’ answered Paramir.

Kokagon looked friendly at Sméagol and offered him his hand.

‘Welcome to our town Sméagol.’ he said.

Sméagol shook his hand and thanked him for this nice welcome.

‘It’s nice to see new faces who participate directly in our communal life,’ said Kokagon.

‘But now let’s get down to business. How far are you with my closet, Paramir?’

‘Oh, I have a surprise for you. We finished it yesterday,’ said Paramir.

‘Are you kidding me? I’ll first believe it when I see it.’ answered Kokagon.

‘Then come with me. Without Sméagol I couldn’t have done it,’ said Paramir proud.

They all went together into the next room and there it stood. Kokagon was overwhelmed, he could not believe that they finished the closet already. He thanked the two several times and promised that in the afternoon he would send over a few hobbits who would pick up the closet. He also rewarded them royally, and then he left the workshop. In addition Kokagon promised both to be recommended. Paramir and Sméagol could hardly believe their luck.

In the following weeks and months, both got a lot of orders. They even had to hire additional workers to meet the demand, because the reputation of the two also spread to other villages.

In the following years, business was still excellent and Sméagol integrated fully into the town community. The desire of Sméagol for the ring grew over the years, but he was able to hide it from the other citizens. Everything seemed to be going perfectly, until the fateful day when everything changed for Sméagol. It was a day like any other. Sméagol went to work in the morning, as he did every day. After a brief welcome Sméagol noticed that something was wrong. Normally he and Paramir talked about Eru Iluvatar and about Middle Earth, but that day hardly a word came out of his mouth. Paramir told Sméagol of new projects, his family and his pets. But not today. It was as if someone had forbidden him to speak. Sméagol was surprised.

‘What’s wrong with you, Paramir?’ asked Sméagol.

‘Oh nothing, just the weather.’ answered Paramir.

Sméagol noticed that something was wrong, but he could not imagine what had happened. He thought about what had happened the last few days and if there was maybe a reason, why Paramir’s behaviour was so strange.

‘Puuh, the Sacklins got a new child. No, that’s not the reason. Udigur came back from his long journey. Puh, what should have happened to him? No, it is not that. Perhaps a customer is dissatisfied with our work. That must be it, the Arbutis are dissatisfied with all that we do. Damn Arbutis, I hate that bloody family.’

Suddenly another thought rushed through the head of Sméagol. As he stood there paralysed now, the hammer in his right hand fell to the ground. He remembered his first day as Udigur told him something about relatives in his former village. Udigur had gone for already three years, he will certainly have visited his relatives. He will certainly have asked for me, because it’s very rare that a Hobbit moved from one village to another.

'Oh no, they told Udigur everything about me.' thought Sméagol.

'What should I do now?' was the first thing that rushed through his mind.

'Relax, behave in a normal way. First of all, I'm taking the rest of the day off.'

When Sméagol asked Paramir for a holiday, he just nodded silently and turned away from him. Sméagol was inwardly very upset, he did not know exactly what to do. He walked back home very quickly, but he noticed the suspicious looks on him. His home was five minutes away from the workshop. Due to the success with Paramir, Sméagol was able to build a new house. It was a beautiful house. Sméagol and Paramir had put a lot of work in it, the garden stretched far over his property, and there was even a pond. Then he went to his house, took the ring from its hiding place and sat down at a table.

'What should I do?' raced through Sméagol's head.

'I think that the news have spread quickly. My excellent reputation is gone.'

Suddenly Vardtir, his best friend and room-mate, stood behind him. This surprised Sméagol because Vardtir had gone on tour a couple of months ago and had not reported since he was gone.

'Vardtir! What are you doing here?' said Sméagol.

'Do not ask too much. If you have any problems, I'm always close to you,' said Vardtir.

'I can't believe that. You have been gone for so long and suddenly you're just here again as if nothing had happened.' responded Sméagol.

'Like I said, Sméagol, don't ask too much, I always tell the truth, even when I lie. And now you have to listen to me carefully. The town has learned about your past, now all the people are just shocked and do not know what to do. It may, however, change quickly. We have to consider the next steps very carefully. This place is not safe for us anymore.'

'How do you know this?' asked Sméagol.

'What is wrong with you? There are three ways to do things, the right way, the wrong way and the way I do it. If you want to get out of town safely, you have to trust me. You've been safe here for a long time, but this is now over. The news will spread quickly, we must flee.'

'But why are you running away with me? You cannot be blamed by them,' said Sméagol.

'This is my decision. We belong together, but we have to go. We are who we choose to be, and I've made my decision,' said Vardtir.

'All right Vardtir' said Sméagol, 'if there is nothing left for me, I'll follow you.'

'You have to put the ring on and we can escape through your garden into the forest. Do not worry about me, I'll come after you!'

'Okay. But how will you escape without being seen?' asked Sméagol.

'You know, the greatest trick the Devil ever pulled was convincing the world that he didn't exist.'

'How do you mean that?' asked Sméagol confused.

Vardtir began to laugh and his voice changed. 'How do you think it was possible to find you all the time? Every time, when you needed some help, I was there. In the forest, when you couldn't make a fire, when you went on to this city, even when you killed Déagol.'

'Vardtir, what are you talking about?'

'You are so naive! How could I escape the trolls? Why do you think I had the same wounds like you? Why did I appear right after you killed the old man? Why do you think Paramir didn't remember me?' asked Vardtir in a creepy voice. Then he began to laugh full-throated. 'Sméagol, I am you!' he said and watched Sméagol with the most evil look that he ever did.

'No, that can't be true!' whispered Sméagol. 'Yes it is, but I'm the only one you have! We'll stick together. Everybody wants to hurt you, save me and the Ring! But don't worry, I'll take care of you like I always did! Let's go into the wild, where nobody can find us, and nobody will get our – precious! And before I forget - please, don't call me Vardtir. I am Gollum!'



Movie quotes

"Close your eyes and pretend it's all a bad dream. That's how I get by."
Jack Sparrow in Pirates of the Caribbean: To World's End

"I'm the one who knocks!"
Walter White in Breaking Bad

"Go ahead, make my day."
Harry Callahan in Dirty Harry: Sudden Impact

"I want to put a smile on your face."
The Joker in The Dark Knight

"I'm going to make you an offer you can't refuse."
Vito Corleone in The Godfather

"Their families been here long, long time."
Errol Childress in True Detective

"May the Force be with you."
Han Solo in Star Wars

"Now, if you'll excuse me, I'm going to go home and have a heart attack."
Vincent Vega in Pulp Fiction

"Why so serious, Sméagol?"
Joker in The Dark Knight

"Were you talkin' to me? "
Travis Bickle in Taxi Driver

"The stuff that dreams are made of."
Sam Spade in The Maltese Falcon

"It is not yours, save by unhappy chance. It could have been mine! It should be mine! Give it to me!"

Boromir in The Lord of the Rings

"You either die a hero or you live long enough to see yourself become the villain."

Harvey Dent in The Dark Knight

"Tread lightly, (Sméagol)."

Walter White in Breaking Bad

"I'll be back."

Terminator T-800 Model 101 in The Terminator

"Yeeeah, look what I have created! I have made fire! I have made fire!"

Chuck Noland in Cast Away

"I always tell the truth, even when I lie"

Tony Montana in Scarface

"There are three ways to do things, the right way, the wrong way and the way I do it."

Sam "Ace" Rothstein in Casino

"We are who we choose to be"

Green Goblin in Spiderman

"The greatest trick the Devil ever pulled was convincing the world that he didn't exist."

Verbal Kint in The Usual Suspects

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