

The Lord of the Rings - The Fellowship of the Rings

Gandalf held it up. It looked to be made of pure and solid gold. ‘Can you see any markings on it?’ he asked.

‘No,’ said Frodo. ‘There are none. It is quite plain, and it never shows a scratch or sign of wear.’

‘Well then, look!’ To Frodo’s astonishment and distress the wizard threw it suddenly into the middle of a glowing corner of the fire. Frodo gave a cry and groped for the tongs; but Gandalf held him back.

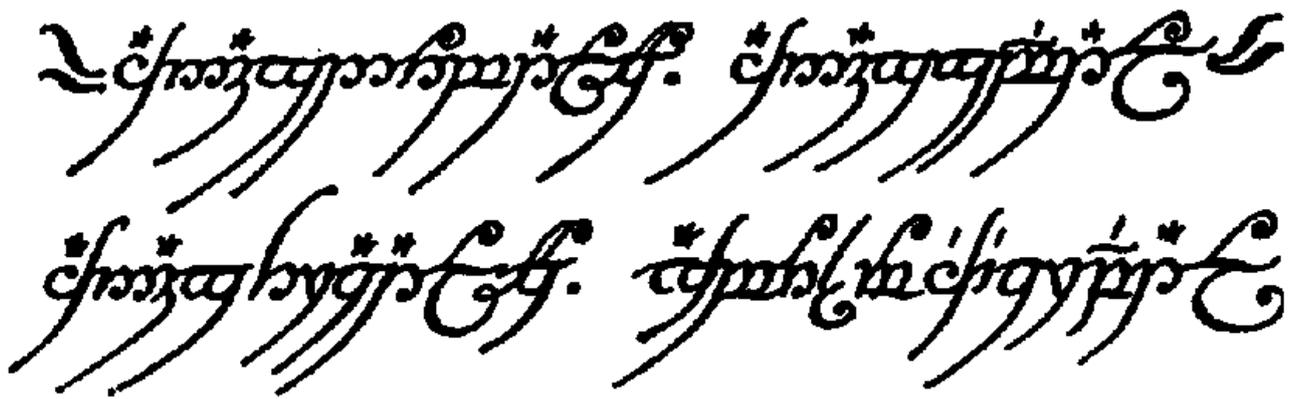
‘Wait!’ he said in a commanding voice, giving Frodo a quick look from under his bristling brows.

No apparent change came over the ring. After a while Gandalf got up, closed the shutters outside the window, and drew the curtains. The room became dark and silent, though the clack of Sam’s shears, now nearer to the windows, could still be heard faintly from the garden. For a moment the wizard stood looking at the fire; then he stooped and removed the ring to the hearth with the tongs, and at once picked it up. Frodo gasped.

‘It is quite cool,’ said Gandalf. ‘Take it!’ Frodo received it on his shrinking palm: it seemed to have become thicker and heavier than ever.

‘Hold it up!’ said Gandalf. ‘And look closely!’

As Frodo did so, he now saw fine lines, finer than the finest pen-strokes, running along the ring, outside and inside: lines of fire that seemed to form the letters of a flowing script. They shone piercingly bright, and yet remote, as if out of a great depth.



I cannot read the fiery letters,' said Frodo in a quavering voice.

'No,' said Gandalf, 'but I can. The letters are Elvish, of an ancient mode, but the language is that of Mordor, which I will not utter here. But this in the Common Tongue is what is said, close enough:

*One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them,
One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them.
It is only two lines of a verse long known in Elven-lore:
Three Rings for the Elven-kings under the sky,
Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone,
Nine for Mortal Men doomed to die,
One for the Dark Lord on his dark throne
In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.
One Ring to rule them all. One Ring to find them,
One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them
In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.*

He paused, and then said slowly in a deep voice: 'This is the Master-ring, the One Ring to rule them all. This is the One Ring that he lost many ages ago, to the great weakening of his power. He greatly desires it - but he must not get it.'