EXTRACTS FROM THE LORD OF THE RINGS TRILOGY BY J. R. R. TOLKIEN

National Literacy Trust
Changing life stories

THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

1. From The Return of the King Book V Chapter 11, The Battle of Pelennor Fields and Chapter 4, The Siege of Gondor

Descriptions of the Nazgûl which have been compared to artillery shells

Upon it sat a shape, black-mantled, huge and threatening. A crown of steel he bore, but between rim and robe naught was there to see, save only a deadly gleam of eyes: the Lord of the Nazgûl. To the air he had returned, summoning his steed ere the darkness failed, and now he was come again, bringing ruin, turning hope to despair, and victory to death. A great black mace he wielded.

…

The Nazgûl came again … like vultures that expect their fill of doomed men's flesh. Out of sight and shot they flew, and yet were ever present, and their deadly voices rent the air. More unbearable they became, not less, at each new cry. At length even the stout-hearted would fling themselves to the ground as the hidden menace passed over them, or they would stand, letting their weapons fall from nerveless hands while into their minds a blackness came, and they thought no more of war, but only of hiding and of crawling, and of death.

2. From The Two Towers Book IV Chapter 2, The passage of the Marshes

This whole passage owes its 'inspiration' from the Somme, also a marshy river area.

They walked slowly, stooping, keeping close in line, following attentively every move that Gollum made. The fens grew more wet, opening into wide stagnant meres, among which it grew more and more difficult to find where feet could tread without sinking into gurgling mud. The travellers were light, or maybe none of them would ever have found a way through.

Presently it grew altogether dark: the air itself seemed black and heavy to breathe. When lights appeared, Sam rubbed his eyes: he thought his head was going queer. He first saw one with the corner of his left eye, a wisp of pale sheen that faded away; but others appeared soon after: some like dimly shining smoke, some like misty flames flickering slowly above unseen candles; here and there they twisted like ghostly sheets unfurled by hidden hands. But neither of his companions spoke a word.

At last Sam could bear it no longer. 'What is all this Gollum?' he said in a whisper. 'These lights? They're all around us now. Are we trapped. Who are they?' …

…

EXTRACTS FROM THE LORD OF THE RINGS TRILOGY BY J. R. R. TOLKIEN

National Literacy Trust
Changing life stories

THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

Hurrying forward again, Sam tripped, catching his foot in some old root or tussock. He fell and came heavily on his hands which sank deep into sticky ooze, so that his face was brought close to the surface of the dark mere. There was a faint hiss, a noisome smell went up. the lights flickered and danced and swirled. For a moment the water below him looked like some window, glazed with grimy glass, through which he was peering. Wrenching his hands out of the bog, he sprang back with a cry. 'There are dead things, dead faces in the water,' he said with horror. 'Dead faces!'

Gollum laughed. 'The Dead Marshes, yes, yes: that is their name, 'he cackled. 'You should not look when the candles are lit.'

'Who are they? What are they?' asked Sam, shuddering, turning to Frodo who was now behind him.

'I don't know' said Frodo in dreamlike voice. 'but I have seen them too. In the pools when the candles were lit. They lie is all the pools, pale faces, deep, deep under the dark water. I saw them; grim faces and evil, and noble faces and sad. Many faces proud and fair and weeds in their sliver hair. But all foul, all rotting, all dead. A fell light is in them.' Frodo hid his head in his hands.

3. From The Two Towers Book IV Chapter 1, The Taming of Smeagol

Frodo appears to be suffering from 'shell shock' as he nears Mordor. This passage also illustrates the relationship between 'solider' and 'bat man' in that Sam Gamgee is calling Frodo ' Master '

The hurrying darkness, now gathering great speed, rushed up from the East and swallowed the sky. There was a dry splitting crack of thunder right overhead. Searing lightening smote down into the hills. Then came a blast of savage wind, and mingling with its roar, there came a high, shrill shriek. The hobbits had heard just such a cry far away in the Marish as they fled from Hobbiton, and even there in the woods of the Shire it had frozen their blood. Out here in the waste its terror was far greater: it pierced them with cold blades of horror and despair, stopping heart and breath. Sam fell flat on his face. Involuntarily Frodo loosed his hold and put his hands over his head and ears. He swayed, slipped and slithered downwards with a wailing cry.
Sam heard him and crawled with an effort to the edge. 'Master, master!' he called, 'Master!'
He heard no answer. He found he was shaking all over, but he gathered his breath and once again shouted, 'Master!'
...
'All right, all right! I'm here. But I can't see.'
Frodo was calling with a weak voice. He was not actually very far away. He had slid and not fallen ...
He steadied himself a little, laying his face against the cold stone, feeling his heart pounding. But either the darkness had grown complete, or else his eyes had lost their sight. All was black around him. He wondered if he had been struck blind. He took a deep breath.
'Come back, come back!' he heard Sam's voice out of the blackness above.
'I can't,' he said. 'I can't see. I can't find any hold. I can't move yet.'

ALL WHO SERVED, SACRIFICED, AND CHANGED OUR WORLD
Thank you
1918 - 2018

rbl.org.uk/thankyou