

Lord of the Rings is without a doubt my favourite story of all time. J.R.R Tolkien is a genius. I'm currently listening to the story, again, on audio book usually when I go on my long runs. One of the recurring themes within the story is the struggle of dealing with a heavy burden. A person, or hobbit in this case, having to deal with a task they need to complete despite it being something they never expected having to deal with. Frodo always knew that there was an easy escape to the quest he embarked on - to ditch the ring and to flee into hiding. There will always be an easier option in life in regards to everything. But is the easy option the right option in the long term? What would've happened if Frodo had thrown away the ring or abandoned his journey? What would've happened if he had let Boromir take the ring to Minas Tirith, given it to Denethor and let them 'use' it against Mordor. It's an interesting thing to speculate about. I love to create 'alternate' timelines in my head in which events end in different ways. In fact changing one of the events in LotR is the core to my first fan-fic story that I'm currently writing.

I bring up Lord of the Rings as it allows for amazing analysis. I love literary analysis - analyzing motifs, allegory, metaphors and anecdotes that at times shed different light on situations. Anyways, Here is an excerpt of a conversation between Frodo and Gandalf when they discuss the ring.

Frodo: I wish the ring had never come to me.

Frodo: I wish none of this had ever happened.

Gandalf: So do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide.

Gandalf: All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us.

Gandalf: There are other forces at work in this world, Frodo, besides the will of evil.

Gandalf: Bilbo was meant to find the ring, in which case you also were meant to have it.

Gandalf: And that is an encouraging thought.

Maybe you can see why I bring up these themes and this excerpt. The journey Frodo and Sam went on together with the ring is just like the distance you and I faced. The Shire – their home, represents safety. It's untouched by evil and worries. It's a comfortable life, to live in the Shire and both Sam and Frodo both mention, at times, how they wish they were back there. We embarked on a journey exiting our comfort zones and took upon a huge burden by doing long distance - something that seemed to be never ending at times. The journey brought on moments of sadness but also moments of joy and happiness. We climbed many hills and grew together. Think about the first time Sam saw Rivendell – a place he always dreamed about going to. He was in awe and it left him speechless. They also encountered struggle on their journey such as the deaths of Gandalf and Boromir. They had to climb literal mountains such as when they tried to cross over the Redhorn Pass (Caradhras) in the Misty Mountains and also figurative hills such as the time they finally arrived at Mordor, Faramir and his squadron of Gondor soldiers captured them and took them away from their end goal. Life will always bring you on unexpected paths and have multiple twists and turns before you reach your end goal.

When Frodo and Sam reach the gates of Minas Morgul and start climbing the mountain in order to get to Cirtih Ungol, the only 'safe' passage into Mordor, the two split. The burden of the ring, the influence of Gollum and the entire struggle became too much for Frodo and he banished Sam out of rage. Gollum influenced Frodo when he was at his weakest and managed to trick him. The pressure and stress from everything around him became too much and as a way to make things 'easier' he asked Sam to leave. And so Sam did. But Sam, after embarking on the journey back 'home', realized that he couldn't give up

on Frodo. He realized that Frodo, despite having done what he did, had too many exterior factors influencing him. That it was not Frodo saying those things but that it was the illusion brought upon him by the exterior influences. And thus he returned to him. He climbed the rocky hill alone, and saved Frodo. And after some struggle, everything eventually worked out.

When the journey finished for Frodo and Sam, they lie defeated yet successful on the cliffs of mount doom and were retrieved by Gandalf and the Eagles. They finally, after that, could live their lives in a normal fashion without worries and stress. Only memories of the past remained. The journey brought them together and created a bond and friendship not describable by words. I see you and I on the cliffside of Cirith Ungol. And because of this I have archived everything from our time. Nothing is thrown out or deleted. But to take the last step into Mordor and to finish the Journey I need your hand.

Instead of rejecting me or shutting me down completely like I told you to do if that's how it was, you don't say anything. I've been doing all this in blindness because I believe in you. I want to believe in you. I think that you have suppressed all the feelings deep down inside. I think the reason why you didn't want to stay with me initially was cause you were afraid and didn't have the energy of the hardships and challenges that were coming. That you had doubts, and of course given that I wasn't feeling the best, it was too much. External factors influenced you and your "Shire" was within such easy reach. You bottled everything and never confronted me about your thoughts and concerns.

I watched an interview with Hilary Clinton the other day and she mentioned an excerpt from her concession speech. She said *"Never ever doubt that fighting for what is right is worth it. Is it hard? Do you sometimes feel that nobody is listening? Are there setbacks? Yes that goes with the territory. But don't give up on your dreams. Don't only do everything you can to chase your dreams, but help others realize theirs as well."* Say what you want about her, but she has done a lot of good work when it comes to inspiring young women. But her words can be applied to anyone and any situation. They spoke well to me as it is how I too see things. I've always told you I want to help you achieve your dreams, while also achieving my dreams. To be the inspiration for everyone. I always wanted to make your Masters dreams come true. The FBI dreams come true. The having a life in which you will never worry about having 'money' to travel to see family or friends. It's what we, together, were working towards. Cirith Ungol was very close to the end of Sam and Frodos journey just as how we were close to the end of our 'journey' and mission. One day when I have kids I am gonna dress them up like this for Halloween: <https://goo.gl/AZiAf5> . And I know you want to do that too.

I am living the dreams you and I had made for us and I will continue to pursue them. You never properly communicated your concerns and thoughts and all of that. And the day you are ready I want to give the opportunity to do just that. To let go of that bottle of and to let everything out. To speak your mind for once, because you don't do that, and to build on those negative things and to make things better. Because that's how relationships work – you build, overcome and evolve, together as a team.

It's okay to be afraid. It's never too late to make a change. Bill Burr once said something quiet profound: *"Realize that sleeping on a futon at 30 is not the worst thing. You know what's worse? Sleeping in a king bed next to a wife you're not really in love with but for some reason you married, and you got a couple of kids, and you got a job you hate. You'll be lying there fantasizing about sleeping on a futon. There's no risk when you go after a dream. There's a tremendous amount of risk to playing it safe."* You and I went

after a dream when we were together and doing the long distance. We played it the least safe as we could. And it was going to succeed. <https://i.redd.it/hklrtx5z2wvz.jpg> This was the embodiment of us. Remove your fear. Pull out from deep within you the Melani that loves risks and wants to make a difference in the world. Because I truly don't think it is gone. I don't think the part that loves me is gone. And to a certain extent those two parts within you are the same thing. I think I may have been a bit too hard on myself after the breakup and that it was actually you who had lost a part of you. That part. Your biggest fear of becoming stuck in Hawaii won. You let it win. But you can always pull yourself out by being brave. Be brave, holistic and follow your craziest thoughts and dreams – just like we did when we were together. The day you're ready to pull **yourself** out I will be more than happy to help you.

I'm in the process of planning my Disney trip right now. The plan is to drive down the east coast – to only do fun and enjoyable things on the way and to end up in Florida. There is still room for you. You know how to contact me.