

'Riddle in the dark—A Hobbit adventure!' By Sid River

Background This is a three part mini-play, one scene, quite a bit of dialogue and quite a challenge. There are however, some great lines, and the characters are well known. Probably best done as a radio style play with the scripts in front of the actors or as a stimulus for writing parodies in an English lesson. You could record it and add sound effects for real fun. I'd like to hear it if you do (might even feature it on the website!)

Parts	Description
Narrator	Not just a voice, but actually a character in this scene. A frustrated actor 'lummy' by the sound of it!
Bilbo Baggins	A Hobbit from the Shire. Short, hairy and a bit bad-tempered. Does his best to keep the drama rolling along and deal with all the short, hairy puns along the way. Best done with a mild West-country accent, as that is how I've always imagined Hobbits speaking.
Gollum	Great if you can do the voice, although an unexpected accent might add to the humour. He like to rant and rave along the way, as is usual for subterranean troglodytes who usually only have rocks and blind fish to talk to!

Notes

The characters occasionally switch between character voice and 'lummy actor' voices, BBC 1950's style of course! You could accompany this with spooky cave music, if there is such a thing.

Riddles in the dark—A Hobbit adventure by Sid River

- Narrator: We join our story as Bilbo Baggins, a formerly well-to-do little Hobbit from the Shire, finds himself lost in the underground labyrinths of the Misty Mountains, separated from his dwarfish companions, cold, wet and without a change of underwear for twelve days!
- Bilbo: (*talking to himself*) Oh dear, things aren't looking too good for you now Bilbo Baggins
- Narrator: They're not smelling too good either from where I'm standing short stuff!
- Bilbo: Drat and confound those dwarfish clots. They've gone and left me alone again to sort myself out; and I'm only a little fellow!
- Narrator: Yes, 3 foot 6 and the smallest adventurer ever to set his hairy foot outside the shire but with a heart the size of a storm giant! How on Middle Earth he got his waist coat on is a mystery!
- Bilbo: Can we stop there with the size references. Didn't you know that short is the new tall these days. I was a very fashionable Hobbit back in the shire, I'll have you know, a real trendsetter!
- Narrator: Well I hear that platform soles are coming back in, they could prove useful to a litt . . . err . . . someone as fashionable as you. Anyway, to continue with the story. As Bilbo's path took him deeper and deeper into the heart of the mountain, the tunnel walls became damp and the air more still. He was halted suddenly when he stepped into something wet and squelchy.
- Bilbo: Oh no, not...!
- Narrator: Yes, that's right, an underground lake!
- Bilbo: Phew, I thought it might be more troll droppings. Have you seen them, they're the size of footballs and have the consistency of a strawberry trifle!
- Narrator: Yes, thank you! Can we get on with the story now?
- Bilbo: Oh, yes. Sorry..... (*whispers*) But they are huge you know!! (*gestures with hands to audience*)
- Narrator: Utterly demoralised and realising that he could go no further, our vertically challenged hero drops to the floor against the cave wall, defeated and depressed. He cast his mind back to the cheery scene he had left behind in his comfy little Hobbit hole and despaired that he would never again see such contentment and happiness. His heart sank, and he could feel the very lifeblood of his soul beginning to seep away, replaced with only blackness and the terror of the bottomless pit of the cave!
- Bilbo: Does this have a happy ending or shall I just go home now?
- Narrator: As his limp arms fell to his side, Bilbo's fingers came to rest on a small, metal object lying in the mud. He lifted it up and held it before his eyes, squinting in the darkness.
- Bilbo: I say, what's this I've found? Why, it's a old tap washer!
- Narrator: No you pint-sized fool, it's a gold ring!
- Bilbo: Oh. (*pause*) But how would I know it's a gold ring if it's dark and I'm squinting?

Narrator: Well... Let's just say you had a hunch.

Bilbo: Oh great, now not only am I short with hairy feet but I've also got a hunch!

Narrator: A hunch, you idiot, not a hump. An idea! An inkling!

Bilbo: Oh I see!! Well, gold you say? (*cackles overly dramatically*) I'm rich! Rich I say! Rich beyond my wildest dreams. Is it a magic ring?

Narrator: Yes, but you don't find that out until the next chapter.

Bilbo: Can't we skip a few pages and get to the magiky bit. It's more exciting than sitting here in a damp cave! I could magic you up something nice for yourself. A personality perhaps? A new hairdo?

Narrator: Well...(*thinks and strokes his hair*) it's tempting... dreadlocks perhaps? But no, the story's about to get much more exciting in the next few lines.

Bilbo: Well it's about time. At the moment it's about as exciting as a mint sauce flavoured milk-shake at the Sheep of the year Christmas party! Carry on then!

Narrator: Lurking somewhere in the dark of the cavern is the mysterious creature Gollum, balding, pale and withered, with only the blind fish of the mountain lake and his precious ring for company.

Gollum: Less of the balding precious, I'm only acting you know!

Narrator: Bilbo become rigid with fright as the twin points of light that were Gollum's bulging eyes, rowed slowly towards the shore of the lake, followed closely by the rest of Gollum himself.

Gollum: What is it preciouss. What is the nassty little thing that sits on the edge of our ponds dipping it's toeses in the water. Shall we eats it now or just poke it in it's eyeses till it squeals?

Bilbo: I say, how charming and we've only just met. (*shouts as though Gollum is deaf*) My name is Bilbo Bagginses. I'm a hobbitsy wobbitsy from The Shirey wirey! Can you show me the way outy wouty?

Gollum: Ere, he don't half talk funny precious for a nassty little sneaker. Is he a goblin or an Orc? Or is he just off his trolley

Bilbo: I'm neither. I told you, I'm a hobbit from The Shire, a halfling!

Narrator: (*sniggers*) More like a half pint actually!

Bilbo: Look your comments are really beginning to make me bitter!

Narrator: Ooh yes, you're a HALF PINT of BITTER all right. It's a shame you're not a little LAGER!! (*laughs*)

Bilbo: (*steps towards the narrator and speaks in a normal actors voice*) Look old chap, can we get back to the script, I'm appearing in a quiz show on Radio 4 a little later on!

Narrator: Oh . . .Yes. Terribly sorry old bean.

Bilbo: (*Assumes dramatic Hobbit voice again*) Stay back you foul denizen of the deep, or you'll taste the cold steel of my Elvish blade!

Gollum: (*In a mocking voice*) Oooh, isn't it bold! I t won't be so brave if we pushes off and leaves it in the dark, just him and his Elvis ballad for company for the next 200 years!

Bilbo: Elvis ballad?? I think you mean Elvish blade

Gollum: (*not listening*) Yes, blue suede shoes won't get him far in this environment, the nasty little sneaker. We thinks it needs us precious, to show it the way out, yes!!

Bilbo: Look, sorry. I didn't mean to be pushy. I tell you what, let's play a little game. I'm sure that you'd like that.

Gollum: Ooh yes, we likes games preciouss, yes!!

Bilbo: How about..... a challenge?... We'll call it .. Er ..who can find the way out the quick-est. I'll even let you go first. Off you pop.

Gollum: I t must thinks we've been living on our own in a dark cave for too long precious if it thinks we're going to fall for that one. No how about a game of riddles, ancient and noble ...I t must like that game precious?

Bilbo: Well.. you're right actually (*crosses legs and hops from foot to foot*) I could do with a riddle. Is there a dark corner somewhere.

Gollum: Take your pick, but watch out for the cockroaches precious, they can pole vault!

Narrator: Although Gollum was a thoroughly foul and miserable creature who would normally eat a hobbit for breakfast as quick as look at him, he did have a soft spot for party games. And the ancient game of riddles was his very favourite, apart from blind's man's buff that is, which, on the whole, was a little bit pointless in a pitch black cave!

Bilbo: Okey-dokey, riddles it is, I t sounds like fun. What are the rules? Best of three!

Gollum: The rules is simple precious, we asks it a riddle and if it answers, its gets a go. I f it can't answer, we eats it. How does that sound?

Bilbo: Err . . . A little one sided old chap. And what do I stand to win if you can't answer my riddle?

Gollum: How about an "I survived Smeagol's cave" T-shirt and a signed photo?

Bilbo: I rather fancy I'd prefer to be shown the way out, if it's all the same to you?

Gollum: Blast it precious, we just can't shift merchandise anymore! Okay the way out it is. Now us first ... let us see. (thinks)

Narrator: Golum was a good riddler, despite his lack of regular practice. His evil, twisted mind searched feverishly for the oldest, hardest, most ancient riddle that he could muster.

Gollum: AH HA! What is it that stands in a field and goes "ooooo" preccious?

Narrator: Bilbo paused for a moment. He knew the answer to this, he was sure. He put one finger to his lips and thought hard. Then, his little face lit up!

Bilbo: (*hopping about excitedly*) I've got it! What stands in a fields and goes "oooo"? A cow with no lips of course!

Gollum: (angry) Drat and blast precious, the nasty Baggins knows his stuff.

Bilbo: Yes, and now it's my go! What do you call a man with a seagull on his head?

Narrator: Gollum smirked wickedly. He had once had a cousin who spent five years of his life with a seagull on his head. It had begun as a party trick but soon the two of them had become inseparable. People and birds had flocked from miles around to see the amazing partnership and they were quite the talk of the town. It all ended in tragedy one weekend when the seagull began to invite friends round to all night parties and Gollum's cousin was crushed under the weight of a ninety-two pound turkey doing the conga!

Gollum: (*dancing with excitement*) Cliff! Cliff! A man with a seagull on his head ... Cliff! My turn! My turn! Let us see, how can we out-smart the tricky little half-wit?

Bilbo: Half-LI NG!! Please!!

Gollum: Yes, whatever. Ah yes, we knows precious! What does it call a man with no armsies and no legsies in a pool of water. What eh precious, what? (*getting excited*) Come on, it must answer, the Baggins must answer!!

Bilbo: Ok! Ok! Calm down old chap and keep what's left of your hair on, you've got to give a hobbit a little time.

Gollum: Sorry! Sorry. It's just ... well it's our best one yet and we doesn't get to use it that often you see.

Bilbo: Let me see ... a man with no arms and legs...

Narrator: Bilbo smirked wickedly. He had once had a cousin with no arms and legs, and no body for that matter, who had held an important job in a school. He was the Head! The following year he had received a cowboy hat for Christmas and was then known as the Deputy Head. It had been several years since.....

Gollum: (*interrupting*) Sorry, sorry, We objects! We objects!

Narrator: Silence in court!

Gollum: No your Honour, I mean your narratorship. You can'ts use the "cousin" plot line again, no, We've already used that once and it would make the drama far too unrealistic. We has to keep things believable precious.

Narrator: Then how do you suggest he comes up with the answer. It can't just come out of mid air!

Gollum: Well..... perhaps he could find the answer written in ancient runes on the back of a stone, yess, it could! Or.. It could appear in magical fire-writing on the wall of the cave?

Narrator: (*Getting irritated*) Why don't we just give him a copy of the readers Digest book of riddle answers and be done with it. Or maybe Sir Walter Raleigh could appear and present him with the answer inside a magic potato if you want realism.

Gollum: Now you're just being silly, we were only trying to help. (*sulks*)

Bilbo: (*putting up his hand*) Err, excuse me. I actually do know the answer to this. A man with no arms and no legs in a pool of water? It's Bob . . .! I sn't it.

Gollum: (*exasperated*) We can'ts even remember the question now! Gollum! Gollum!

Bilbo: Well I'm right, and now it's my turn. What is red and white and goes round at 80 mph?

Gollum: What? Red and white... 80 mph! Not fair! Not fair precious!

Bilbo: Aha, you don't know the answer!

Gollum: We knows the answer precious ... A frog in a blender. Not fair!

Bilbo: Well if you know the answer, why isn't it fair?

Gollum: Some of our best friends are frogs! (*sobs*)

Bilbo: Oh, sorry. (*pause*) Didn't mean to offend. Tell you what, forget that, I'll ask another one. Right...erm!

Narrator: Bilbo began to feel worried. His mind was empty and he'd left his "My little Hobbit little book of riddles" on his bedside table back in Bag End. He began to seriously contemplate the possibility that Gollum would win the competition and would serve him up as a main course at the next deep cave dwellers dinner and dance. Anxiously his fingers slipped into his waist-coat pocket and on to the gold ring that he had secreted there.

Bilbo: Hrm. What have I got in my pocket?

Narrator: He had merely spoken aloud what he was thinking but Gollum had mistaken it for Bilbo's next riddle.

Gollum: What has it got in it's pocketeses. (*getting agitated*) What has it got in it's pocketeses!! Not fair! Not a proper riddle. The nassty little sneaker's cheating!

Bilbo: (*Shouting*) Look, I've had it up to here (*he holds hand up level with his forehead*) with your "not fairs"!

Narrator: (*Mockingly*) Yes, and if he was any taller he'd be really angry!

Bilbo: (*actually really angry*) Look shut up you or I'll report you to the Middle Earth actors Union and campaign to have you banned!

Will you have me put on the **short** list! (*he doubles up laughing*)

Oh be quiet! Now Gollum! Answer the question!! I'll give you three guesses.

Gollum: (*sobs*) Not fair on old Smeagol!

Bilbo: Come on! Three guesses!

Gollum: Okay Okay, Keep your hair on! Let me see.... We knows, Handses! Handses in it's pocketsets!

Bilbo: Nooo, too obvious fish-features! One down, (*sounding like a darts commentator*) Twoooooo to go!

Gollum: What can it be! Gollum! Gollum! . . . I know holes! Holes to get it's handses in!

Bilbo: Nope! **One** more chance!

Gollum: (*Flying into a hysterical panic*) A fishcake! Strawberry jam! A set of encyclopaedias! A clown riding a unicycle! Seventeen green.....

Bilbo: No! NO! And thrice NO!

Gollum: A roast turkey! (*getting even more desperate*) An Antelope!!

Bilbo: Stop! This is getting out of hand! You are the weakest link!. I win and you must show me the way out.

Gollum: (*sobbing*) S'not fair! Poor old Smeagol!

Bilbo: Look, I'll take this to the Middle Earth Court of halfling rights if you don't keep your promise.

Gollum: Yes. Yes. We mustn't cheat. We must show the Baggins the way out. (*Gollum turns his back on Bilbo and whispers to himself and aside to the audience*) But first we could slip on our special **birthday present** and sneak up on the little twerp!

Narrator: Are you talking about that oversized beige jumper that your grandmother knitted you. If you sneak up on him in that he'll certainly die.....of embarrassment!

Gollum: No, not the jumper dipstick (although it is rather fetching don't you think) We is talking about our preciouss magic golden ring.

Narrator: Oh, you mean the one that you dropped last Tuesday when you were playing cave ping-pong with that dead toad.

Gollum: Yes, he wasn't much of an opponent. . . WHAT? Dropped it!!

Narrator: You mean the same magic ring that was accidentally found by a certain vertically challenged personage with hairy plates of meat.

Gollum: You mean . . . !

Narrator: Oh yes, our teeny friend is the man with the magic now , 'A' number 1, The hobbit with the mostest!

Gollum: But that means. . . !!

Narrator: Yes! It means that you're going to have to go to Argos and try and buy a replacement!

Gollum: No, anything but Argos! I couldn't stand the wait!

Bilbo: Excuse me for interrupting, but haven't you forgotten. You need to show me the way.

Gollum: What? . . . The way to Argos?

Bilbo: No you twit of a troglodyte! Out of this miserable place. Don't you remember!

Gollum: (*Speaking with mock sickness*) I t's all a bit hazy actually. Look I'm feeling a bit low right now. If I show you the way out would you mind if I tagged along. Then I could show you the in's and out's of that magic ring of mine . . . Er..yours!

Bilbo: (*Looks thoughtful*) You mean a partnership? Well . . . I t's worth thinking about. Perhaps we could ask Mr Nerdy over there (*points at narrator*) if he'd like to come.

Narrator: Ooh yes, please, yes !! . (*getting excited*) I t's so soul destroying being just a voice on the side of a stage.

Bilbo: Okay then. Let's shake on it. (*narrator enters and shakes hands*) Our new three way partnership. The good, the bad and the ugly!

Gollum: (*Clapping excitedly and leaping from foot to foot*) Ooh yes, yes!. Which one shall I be preciouss?

Bilbo: Er. . . Well . . . Try not to think about that now Quazimodo.

Gollum: Okey-dokey. Right. Follow me. The exits are over here, here and here.
All three begin to walk off stage.

Bilbo: And you promise you won't try any funny stuff?

Gollum: You mean like painting my face orange and throwing a few custard pies?

Bilbo: Doh! I give up! (*leave stage*)

Narrator: And do you know what folks, he did give up. Bilbo and his pals cut short their adventure and went back to the shire to set up a small business selling insurance to wizards of a pensionable age. The ring was shut away and never spoken off again. That is, until some old university professor wrote a book about it that sold quite a few copies and was made into a jolly little film! Yes, Snow White and the seven dwarves!

The end