

There and Back Again:

A Tolkein-Inspired Wedding Ceremony

Opening Remarks

Officiant: Dear Friends and Family, welcome to Velma and Shaggy's wedding! Thank you for the journeys you have undertaken to be with them today, and an extra thanks to everyone who helped make this possible. We are gathered to celebrate with them as they embark on the adventure of marriage.

In planning their wedding, Velma and Shaggy were inspired by the works of J.R.R. Tolkein, for which they share a mutual love. Tolkein's themes of friendship and good cheer have followed them on their journey, but the way hasn't always been smooth.

As Bilbo told Frodo before embarking on his quest to destroy the One Ring, "It's a dangerous business, going out your door. You step onto the road, and if you don't keep your feet, there's no knowing where you might be swept off to." Love is much the same. It's dangerous to fall; you never know where it may take you. For Velma and Shaggy, love has been a long but rewarding quest. They stand before you now, at the beginning of a new chapter. To truly go there and back again, Velma and Shaggy are looking back on the prologue to their adventure.

The Journey's Beginning

In love, we take on many roles. Partner, helper, confidante. Brewer of tea and scooper of kitty litter. For the bride and groom, these roles are best encompassed by three of Tolkein's character archetypes.

Like hobbits, they have built their love around food and fellowship. They began their journey with a small connection: their shared love of tea. So they started with afternoon tea. From the first taste of earl gray and finger sandwiches, their relationship has been steeped in mutual respect and sweetened with love. Of course, there have been hills and valleys. They don't always speak the same language—Velma is better at writing than speaking, and Shaggy can be overly practical and too fond of puns—but they have grown together, learning to communicate, to encourage each other, and to love each other. They've found the simple happiness in game nights, potlucks, and shared gardens with friends, learning together that food and cheer are worth more than hoarded gold.

Like elves, they have turned their attentions to noble pursuits, devoting their time to causes they hold dear. While Velma spent long nights counseling women through her work with Day League, Shaggy mentored dozens of new programmers, including Velma herself. They've both taught themselves new skills, Velma studying hundreds of hours of coding and Shaggy leveling up his leadership and crafting skills. By supporting each other on the journey so far, they have reached new heights as individuals and as a couple.

Like dwarves, they have built each other up, supporting each other through a big move into their first house, their very own Erebor under a not so lonely mountain. They have filled their home with their passions: games, art, and two adorable pets: Hermes the dog and Diana the cat. (Hermes is here today as the handsome ring-bearer; follow him on Instagram at [#hermestheblur](#).) Through long nights of working and studying, career changes, and even midnight sewing and crafting marathons, they have stuck together. As they've learned to craft foam armor and weapons, they've also studied how to build each other up. And they have put both into practice in perfecting their Dragoncon costumes, their home, and their lives together.

The Fellowship

But as Tolkein taught us in his stories, dwarves, elves, and hobbits on their own are not enough. The power of fellowship brings Tolkein's heroes together to accomplish great things, and the same is true for the bride and groom. Like Legolas and Gimli, they've challenged each other to do better and reach higher than before. Like Arwen and Aragorn, their time together is sweetened not by its length but by the depth of their love for each other. And like Sam and Frodo, they wouldn't have gotten very far on their own. Their fellowship has brought them here.

Take a moment, Velma and Shaggy, to turn and look at all the people who have joined you here today.

You, gathered here, are also part of their fellowship. As Velma and Shaggy commit their lives to one another, they invite you to journey with them. If you support them in their journey, please raise your hand and say, "We are with you."

All together: We are with you.

Officiant: In your relationship, I challenge each of you to love and serve the other as Sam loves and serves Frodo. Though he is but a humble gardener, Sam follows Frodo on a grand and dangerous quest. Neither of them can anticipate where their path leads, but they go together. Like Sam and Frodo, I hope that wherever you go, you go together. As you embark on your journey, go in humility. Love thrives in humble soil. Seek ways to serve one another and consider your partner's needs before your own. Go forth as friends and helpers, and you will be #blessed.

Personal Vows

And now, Velma and Shaggy have prepared their own vows. Shaggy, will you begin by reciting your vows to Velma?

Shaggy recites their vows.

Officiant: And Velma, will you recite your vows to Shaggy?

Velma recites their vows.

Exchanging Rings

Officiant: As evidence of their commitment to one another, Velma and Shaggy have decided to exchange rings. Wedding rings are symbols of the journey taken together: the conclusion of one story and the beginning of another. They are forged by the fires of compassion, compromise, and love, not to be easily destroyed.

To alter from Tolkien: Two rings to wed them both, and in this marriage, bind them. The rings, please.

Shaggy places the ring on Velma's finger.

Officiant: Shaggy, repeat after me. With this ring, I take you as my companion in love and life.

Shaggy: With this ring, I take you as my companion in love and life.

Velma places the ring on Shaggy's finger.

Officiant: Velma, repeat after me. With this ring, I take you as my companion in love and life.

Velma: With this ring, I take you as my companion in love and life.

Closing Remarks

Officiant: They're married, y'all!

Velma and Shaggy kiss.

Officiant: Please join me in congratulating Velma and Shaggy. May their love be the road that goes ever on and on.