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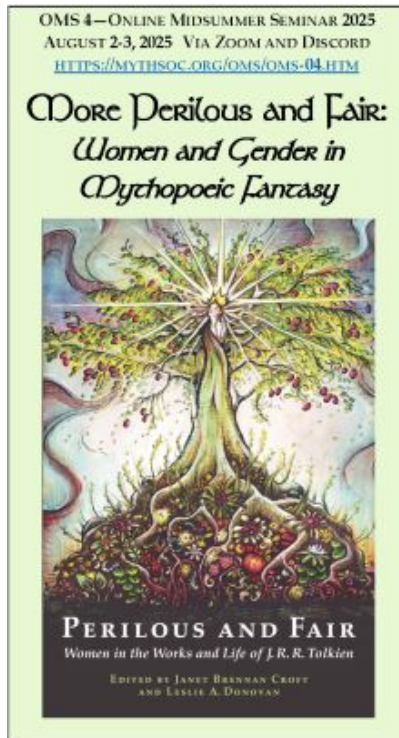
## Online MidSummer Seminar 2025

### More Perilous and Fair: Women and Gender in Mythopoeic Fantasy

August 2-5, 2024

Via Zoom and Discord

<https://www.mythsoc.org/oms/oms-04.htm>



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### Additional Keywords

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# I Have Guests

by Russ Bickerstaff

I can't imagine what they would want from me. I don't actually have anything. I'm just here in this room. I'm just here in this box. And they've come to ask me for something. So I'm going to have to welcome them. Because even if I don't have what they want, it's nice to know that they think that I *do* have something that they might want. It makes me feel like I'm actually in a position to give them something. Even though I don't have anything. I don't have anything that they could possibly want. Because I don't have anything at all.

It's just me in here. Just me in this room. Just me in this tomb. There's nothing else here. I am alone. And I want to tell them all of this. (I do. I really do. I really want to tell them all of this.) But I just...I can't bring myself to tell them any of it because I'm not exactly in a position to be able to do so just yet. And I'm not certain why, so I'm not going to say why yet, but I'm definitely going to have to be honest with them when I have the chance to do so.

I feel the need to apologize for not being able to be a good host. It's just...I have nothing to offer them and I wasn't expecting any guests. They try to let me know that they completely understand. (At least that's what they say. They say that they understand. I don't think that they do because they ARE still here and they ARE still telling me that they need something from me.) I want to tell them that I can't offer them anything because I don't have anything. At all. But I don't know that I can quite bring myself to tell them as much. Not yet.

They tell me that they have come a long way and sought out me in particular. I guess this is important to them because...if they're going to ask me for something they're going to want to make me feel good about giving it to them. And though this probably feels a little...I don't know...sneaky and duplicitous to me, I mean...it's not like I'm really one to cast judgment on them because it's not like I'm being completely honest to them. Not yet.

I tell them that it's very flattering for them to come as far as they have to specifically see me, but I can scarcely say that I understand. I'm not really anyone all that important and I feel as though they may have had some sort of a basic and fundamental misunderstanding about the whole situation. And that feels suitably honest...even if I'm not actually telling them everything. I mean...I feel as though that's really a big issue under the circumstances, but I really don't know. I just hope that they understand once I completely open up to them.

They seem to be getting around to actually asking me whatever it is that they're going to ask me for, but I really can't seem to imagine what it might be. And so I feel like I'm probably going to have to come right out and...but I don't want to disappoint them and I don't want them to feel awkward about the situation, so I guess I feel the need to distract the situation with talk of the weather and politics and such. Naturally I don't know a whole lot about the weather outside of this room and I haven't really had much of an opportunity to learn much about current politics, so there really isn't much that I'm able to talk about with any kind of an educated conversation.

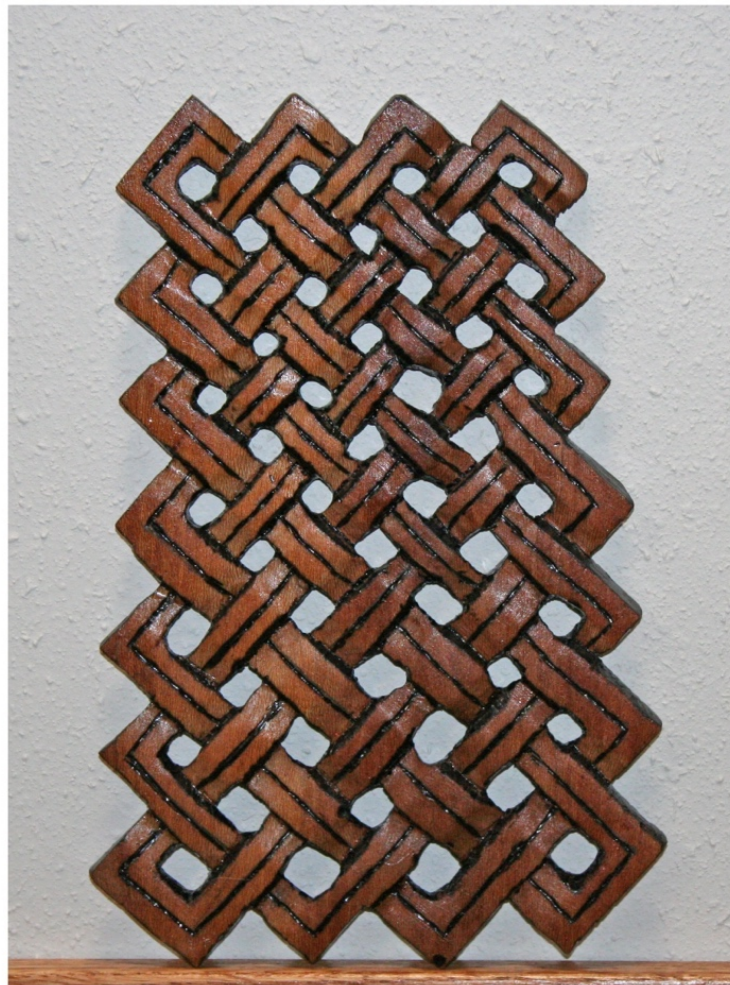
They tell me that politics..."in a manner of speaking"...are really what they want to talk to me about. Okay..so I'm listening. And I guess that they want something from me that has something to do with politics. And it DOES occur to me that they are going to laugh when they find out how little I actually have to do with current politics...I mean...I don't even know anything about them, so what could I give them?

And I'm just about to tell them all this when they start getting around to asking me what they're going to ask me. And I guess...I mean...they're telling me that it's not what I have that I can

give them but what I can do that can help them. And now it starts to sound a little bit more certain, but what could I possibly do for them? I've been here and I've been in here for ages. And I've never gotten out or anything like that. And I haven't really had much of a chance to think about much of anything outside this room in what must be years. What could I possibly offer them?

And that's when they tell me that the world is dying. And it's dying because I'm still around. And I guess...I mean...being a god or whatever...I mean...all I would have to do to save the world is cease to be. I mean...I guess that makes about as much sense as anything. I can't be around anymore, or the world will cease to be because it's all moved on or some such. I guess...I mean if THAT'S all it is...why not?

I feel so very, very embarrassed that I was thinking...I mean...haven't had worshippers in years or anything like that. Wouldn't have anything to give them. Of course, I can give them my life. I mean...that's a given. That's understandable. I can do that. Don't I feel foolish that I thought they WANTED something from me. Cease to exist? I can do THAT. I mean...I haven't really been doing very much over the course of the past few hundred years anyway. Rather foolish to keep lingering on as I have.



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