



For the record, the new film marks an end to “swoopy”. You know, the camera plunging from the peak of Orthanc or mimicking the trajectory of trebuchet-flung masonry. Jackson shrugs, “After we did swoopy, I was seeing swoopy in Harry Potter, I was seeing swoopy in Troy. Swoopy has become a bit old-fashioned.”

His actors may have long departed, but the director is still giving himself options. He will keep watching and cutting his film, determined to get it down to a “lean machine” of two-twenty (“but don’t hold me to that!”), while simultaneously elaborating on sequences as he does. Only James Cameron can boast a comparable technical freedom. Jackson can literally fix things in post.

What this system is not designed to do is speed things up. If he has more breathing space, he’s going to use it to try more things. No matter how much time you’ve got, you’re always going to use it all up. “It can always be improved,” says Jabez Olssen, Jackson’s evenly spoken editor on all three Hobbit films, later. “Peter is the ultimate believer in that. There’s always more that you can do.”

• **Top:** The gang’s all here: the reunited dwarves barricade themselves within the Lonely Mountain  
**Above:** Spoiler alert? Could this be Jackson directing Hugo Weaving’s Elrond at Dol Guldur? Do we sense a rescue is underway?

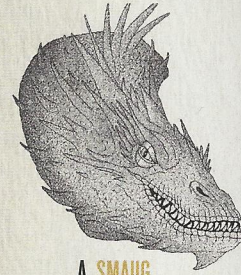
**THROUGH A DOOR** next to Dr. No, or possibly Octopussy, lies Peter’s Edit Suite, flagship of a fleet of bustling Avid bays. Thunderball, Jason And The Argonauts and The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms decorate three of the walls; the fourth is largely occupied by a 104-inch screen. Three sofas, vast enough to provide respite for Jason and his entire crew, are aligned to face the screen. Olssen sits in the corner, hands poised over his Avid like Sulu on the bridge of the Enterprise. Jackson takes up position on the central sofa, cup of tea in hand, feet on the table. **Empire** occupies the galleon to the left, marvelling that with all the Herculean effort, the sheer numbers involved in a Jackson production, it all comes down to this quiet room.

On the screen, the dwarves huddle beneath the recently reinforced battlements of Erebor, and (in the reverse) Thranduil

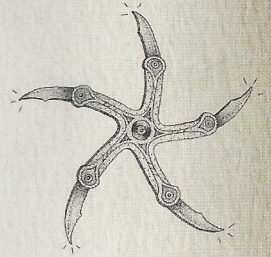
# WEAPONS OF CHOICE

SOMETIMES YOU JUST NEED THE RIGHT TOOLS WHEN IT COMES TO ‘INVINCIBLE’ MONSTER-SLAYING. CAN YOU MATCH THESE FOES WITH THE ONLY THINGS THAT’LL KILL THEM?

ILLUSTRATIONS BRADLEY JAY



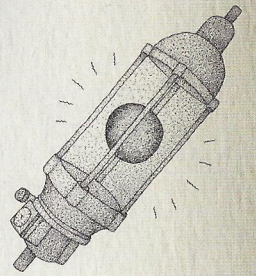
A. SMAUG  
(THE HOBBIT: THE BATTLE OF THE FIVE ARMIES, 2014)



1. THE GLAIVE



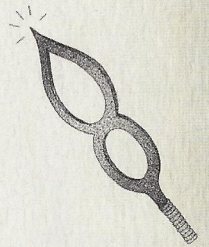
B. THE BEAST  
(KRULL, 1983)



2. THE OXYGEN DESTROYER



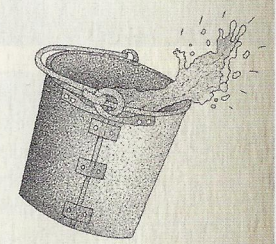
C. THE WICKED WITCH OF THE WEST  
(THE WIZARD OF OZ, 1939)



3. A BLACK ARROW



D. THE KRAKEN  
(CLASH OF THE TITANS, 1981)



4. A BUCKET OF WATER



E. GODZILLA  
(GODZILLA, 1954)



5. MEDUSA'S HEAD