

The Fellowship of the Ring Study Guide

The Fellowship of the Ring by J. R. R. Tolkien

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Plot Summary

J.R.R. Tolkien's novel *The Fellowship of the Ring* is the first book of his infamous three volume series collectively known as *The Lord of the Rings*. *The Hobbit* can be included in the series, but anyone may begin by reading *The Fellowship*. The prologue sets up an introduction into the fantastic world and acts as a fill-in guide for those who have chosen not to read *The Hobbit*. The novel is told from a third person point of view and can be quite anthropological at times, giving detailed histories and descriptions. The books highlight an epic adventure set in the fictional world of Middle-earth.

The backstory that sets up the plot of *The Lord of The Rings* begins in *The Hobbit*. Within the account, Bilbo Baggins, a Hobbit-- a race of creatures that stands two to four feet tall and are considered jolly and well-meaning-- finds a dangerous ring in the cave of Gollum, a decrepit creature who killed his brother to get it. He takes it back to the Shire, home of the Hobbits. Bilbo is blissfully unaware of the dangers of the Ring and knows only that it makes him invisible. *The Fellowship of the Ring* takes up the tale at Bilbo's 111th birthday. After throwing a large party in honor of his birthday, Bilbo disappears and makes arrangements to leave the Shire forever. He is supposed to leave the ring for his adopted nephew, Frodo, but is reluctant to part with it. When his friend Gandalf asks him to leave the ring as he promised, he grows angry and lashes out. After much debate, Gandalf convinces Bilbo to leave the ring behind.

Gandalf suspects that the ring is evil and leaves the Shire for many years in search of information. He finds that the ring belongs to Sauron, the Dark Lord who lost the one ring that contains almost all his power. He intended to use the Ring to enslave all the people of Middle-earth. After confirming his fears, Gandalf tells Frodo to take the ring away from the Shire due to Sauron's increasing power.

Frodo immediately takes to the road with his friends Sam, Merry, and Pippin. They are pursued by Black Riders, a disguise of the nine Ringwraiths who are servants of Sauron. They spend their first night in the company of Elves who promise to send word to help protect them on their perilous trek. Just a few miles into their journey, the hobbits get lost in the Old Forest. They encounter an evil willow tree which ensnares Merry and Pippin and swallows them up. Tom Bombadil, the oldest creature in Middle-earth, rescues them.

After this adventure, the hobbits travel to Bree where they meet Aragorn, widely known as Strider, heir of the kings of the ancient men of Westeros and friend to Gandalf. During their stay in Bree, Frodo falls during a song performance and accidentally slips the ring on his finger, vanishing and causing a scene. Aragorn warns the hobbits to keep away from the inn for the night and in doing so, he saves their lives. They then head to the Rivendell, Realm of Elves. During their journey they are confronted by the Black Riders. During the battle, Frodo is badly wounded by a magical weapon made by Sauron's servant. Aragorn becomes worried about the power that the wound holds over Frodo. As the company approaches Rivendell, they are met by Glorfindel, the lord of the Elves, who leads them forward. At the ford, they encounter the Black Riders and Frodo



is placed on a white horse that is able to outrun them. The Black Riders are swept away in the river by a flood created by Glorfindel.

Frodo wakes to find himself in Rivendell with Gandalf at his bedside. Elrond has healed him. He is also reunited with Bilbo, who is now staying in Rivendell. Elrond holds a council to discuss what should be done with the ring. Frodo volunteers to take the ring to be destroyed in Mordor, the place it was created. A fellowship is created to accompany him on the journey including Sam, Pippin, Merry, Gandalf, an Elf named Legolas, two men-- Aragorn and Boromir, and Gimli, a Dwarf. They all travel south, passing through great dangers on their way. They take the path of the Misty Mountains where they are almost defeated by the massive amounts of snowfall and an attack by a strange wolf-pack.

Gandalf suggests they change their course toward the mines of Moria-- an ancient underground world in which the Dwarves once dwelled. Upon arrival, they are met by Orcs, more servants of Sauron. They all fight valiantly, especially Gandalf who fights a terrible demon known as a Balrong. While escaping the mines, the Balrong ensnares Gandalf and the others are forced to leave him behind.

The rest of the fellowship continues to Lorien where they are met by Elves led by Lady Galadriel. When they arrive at the heart of her kingdom, she tests their hearts and lets them rest there until they are ready to travel again. Lady Galadriel allows Frodo and Sam to look into her magical mirror, which shows them events of the past, present, and future. Everyone who looks in sees something different. When Frodo glances inside, he sees a huge eye that is searching for him constantly. Frodo realizes that he is searching for the one ring. Lady Galadriel wears one of the three rings that Sauron gave to the Elves in the old days. Moved by her wisdom, Frodo offers her the ring so that her beloved country will not come to ruins. She bravely refuses, knowing that even if she hopes to do good, the ring will corrupt her and make her just as evil as Sauron. Lady Galadriel gives each member of the fellowship a parting gift.

When they leave the beautiful forest of Lorien, the fellowship travels down the Great River. They realize that Gollum-- the creature that once owned the ring-- is following them. He seems to be working for Sauron. After facing more Orcs as they travel down the river, the fellowship arrives at Rauros where they must decide what course to take-- east toward Minas Tirith or west toward unknown dangers to destroy the ring. Frodo decides to take a walk alone to clear his mind and comes to a conclusion about what path he wants to take. Boromir, drawn by the power the Ring holds, follows him. He wants the ring for himself and tries to take it from Frodo; but Frodo uses the ring to vanish and run away. When he does, he sees the Great Eye that is constantly searching for the ring. After some effort, he takes off the ring and decides that he must complete the journey alone. Sam realizes what Frodo is up to and joins him on the boat as they set out toward Mordor.



Book 1: Chapter 1: A Long Expected Party - Chapter 2: The Shadow of the Past

Summary

The novel begins with the announcement of Mr. Bilbo Baggins eleventy-first birthday. He is an extremely generous man who adopted Frodo Baggins, who happens to share the same birthday. Through various gossips, we learn that Bilbo is somewhat of a legend in the Shire and is also considered rather queer due to his associations with the Dwarves, Elves, and the Wizard Gandalf. Nevertheless, his party is considered the event of the century and the people of the town are filled with excitement for the special day. After dinner, Bilbo makes a curious speech and disappears in a flash of light. Bilbo uses a magic ring to make himself invisible, a ring he has kept secret from everyone but Gandalf. He walks to his room making arrangements to leave the Shire forever. Gandalf walks in and asks him if he is leaving the ring for Frodo as he intended to do. At first, Bilbo lashes out at Gandalf, but finally leaves the ring. The next day, Gandalf warns Frodo to never use the ring and to keep it a secret.

After a nine year absence, Gandalf visits Frodo once again, telling him the ring left by Bilbo is extremely powerful and belongs to the Dark Lord, Sauron. It is the one ring that contains almost all of Sauron's powers and was intended to enslave all of Middle-earth. Gandalf tells the tale of the ring being taken from Sauron by Isildur the warrior who cut his hand during wartime. The ring is lost soon after. It is found by Deagon, a creature belonging to a race akin to the Hobbits., Deagol, does not have it for long before his brother, Smeagol, kills him and takes the Ring. After many years of evil-doing, Smeagol takes to the mountains and becomes known as Gollum. These are the mountains in which Bilbo finds the ring and brings it back to the Shire. Gandalf warns Frodo that Sauron is looking for the ring and states that Frodo must leave the Shire to go destroy it.

Analysis

The prologue sets the stage to the remarkable amount of detail that is created throughout the work. It reads like a history, giving credibility to the fantasy and making it seem more like a history than a fictional novel. The Shire is a perfect place for Tolkien to begin, giving a level of comfort to readers and slowly drawing them in rather than beginning at a scene of action that would easily lose appeal. Even in the familiarity of the Shire, there is an edge of something stifling, which Bilbo and Frodo both detect. They are eager to journey beyond and find something more than the gossips of the town folk. Bilbo's character in particular is unusual from the beginning. He is regarded with both awe and dismissal, and grows foreboding when asked to leave the ring. It is



the audiences' first insight into the powers of the ring, foreshadowing its effects in the following chapters and the hold it will have on Frodo Baggins.

The second chapter is full of exhaustive detail about from the origin of the ring and its effects, many of which are foreshadowed by Bilbo's inability to give up the ring and his lack of aging. It gives a detailed history and sets up the story as an ancient legend of myth. Throughout this chapter, there is an apparent connection set up between the events of the past and their affects in the future. Gandalf brings the connection to light when he states that Bilbo does not kill Gollum when he has the chance, giving rise to Frodo's quest to set out and destroy the Ring.

Vocabulary

perpetual, inexhaustible, genealogical, lore, wield, perils, profound, dithering, draught, vulgar, subsided, vigorous, perished, solemnly, badgering



Book 1: Chapter 3: Three Is Company - Chapter 4: A Short Cut to Mushrooms

Summary

Following the footsteps of Bilbo, Frodo makes arrangements to leave the Shire on his fiftieth birthday. With the pretense of settling at Buckland in a house in the eastern borders of the Shire, Frodo sets out with Pippin and Sam. They encounter a rider dressed in black who seems to be searching for something. Frodo has an urge to put on his ring and disappear but just as he starts to, the man rides off. As they travel on, they are forced to hide once again from a Black Rider, but are saved by the voices of Elves. The Elves know Bilbo and offer the trio lodging and food for the night. Gildor, the leader of the company of Elves, tells Frodo that the Black Riders are servants of the Enemy and promises to send word for their protection.

The next morning, Frodo considers leaving Pippin and Sam at Buckland when they arrive so that they will be safe from the dangerous adventure he must face. Sam states that he wants to travel with him, wherever the journey may lead them. The trio sets out to Buckland, cutting a path through the rough countryside. After many miles, they arrive at the end of the wood and are immediately met by Farmer Maggot's dogs. Since he is a friend of Pippin, they are invited into his home where he informs them that a Black Rider had been by looking for Frodo. After supper, he offers to take them to the ferry where they are surprised by Mr. Merry.

Analysis

As the Hobbits leave the comfortable Shire, there is an immediate contrast set up between life on the road and life at the Shire. The journey is exhausting even in these beginning chapters, and extremely unpredictable and perilous, giving rise to various personality traits and vulnerabilities of the characters. At the Shire, the Hobbits lead a life not filled with many surprises, therefore we only got a few glimpses into each of the characters.

By taking the Hobbits to the road, Tolkien is able to show us more of their thoughts, desires, and fears. When Frodo considers traveling alone on the journey beyond Bucklebury, the audience can gather that Frodo is a caring person and does not like to put others in danger even if his own safety is compromised. Sam, on the other hand, is daring and honorable. He is curious about the world beyond Hobbiton and though he may never come back, he is willing to risk his life to journey along with Frodo. Through Sam, we see that the road also means excitement and wonder. When the Hobbits run into the Elves, they are taken aback by the magnificence they find in their kingdom, something they would have never experienced by staying in the Shire.



Tolkien makes the good and the evil easily distinguishable in these early chapters. The Black Riders are almost immediately considered evil due to their black cloaks, the fear they invoke, and their hissing noises. On the other hand, the Elves are easily distinguishable as good due to their beautiful features and giving personalities. The only factor that seems to blur the line between good and evil is the ring, which is already beginning to have a hold over Frodo.

Vocabulary

fragrant, surpassing, whiter, inquisitive, imitations, plunging, elusive, hearth, snuffling, groping, kindred, tarrying, ominous, assail, compensated



Book 1: Chapter 5: A Conspiracy Unmasked - Chapter 6: The Old Forest

Summary

Merry leads the trio to a boat, they sail across to Buckland, and ride the rest of the way to the house. After a bath and another supper of mushrooms, Frodo begins to inform Merry and Pippin of his plans to journey beyond Buckland. They tell him they have already guessed his plot. They inform Frodo that they will accompany him on his voyage. They also tell him that they have knowledge of the ring and know that it belongs to the Enemy. Merry found out about it when he saw Bilbo use it to become invisible. Frodo learns that Merry assigned Sam to be chief investigator regarding the ring. Frodo is surprised, but excited that his friends will be with him. They decide to leave in the morning by taking a path through the Old Forest. Fatty Bolger, who also lives in the house, stays behind to watch for the Black Riders.

As they begin trekking through the Old Forest, the Hobbits discover it is nearly impossible to find a path. Just when they are beginning to lose hope, the trees shift and reveal a path, but it is not as safe as they imagine. In the afternoon, they reach Withywindle, the strangest part of the wood and grow sleepy beneath a willow tree. Sam resists the urge to rest and is able to save Frodo from a root that has pushed him into the river. Merry and Pippin are swallowed by the willow. Frodo begins to panic and cries out for help. A man singing a song, Tom Bombadil, appears and saves Merry and Pippin. They follow him to his home.

Analysis

The audience learns that the Hobbits Frodo has befriended are not as ordinary as they seem. Merry is very clever and has organized to accompany Frodo, depicting his loyalty and his adventurous spirit. Though the schemes of Pippin, Merry, and Sam can be considered a little underhanded, they are admirable nonetheless and foreshadow their relationship to Frodo as the journey continues.

“The road” as a recurring motif continues. There never seems to be any respite on the road, but a feeling of danger and fear of the unknown is constant. Buckland itself is a reminder of the dangers that are present in the world around them, noted by the hedge that surrounds the house and the need to keep the doors locked after dark. This is a contrast to the open, free environment of the Shire. Even the natural world grows more sinister as they travel farther. The Old Forest is not a gentle, quiet wood such as the ones in the Shire, but very much alive and dangerous.

Within the work, nature itself seems to have a personality. The woods of the Shire are domesticated and calm while the trees of the Old Forest have malice and seem to have



a will of their own. By making the woods alive, Tolkien depicts that nature is not a simple force that can be dealt with easily. It is an active force that seems to have a mind of its own.

Vocabulary

comical, conspirators, hinder, inquisitiveness, intriguing, scrupulous, parole, heath, laden, sluggard, enmity, innumerable, abominable, deceitful, intriguing, bewildered



Book 1: Chapter 7: In the House of Tom Bombadil - Chapter 8: Fog on the Barrow-Downs

Summary

Tom Bombadil welcomes the group into his home where they meet a stunning woman named Goldberry who claims she is the daughter of the river. Frodo asks her who Tom really is and she replies that he is “Master of wood, water, and hill.” That night, after a hearty dinner, Frodo, Pippin, and Merry are all plagued with bad dreams. They spend the next day by the fireside talking to Tom. He tells them he is older than anything in Middle-earth. He knows about the ring and asks to see it. Much to the surprise of everyone, he does not disappear when he puts it on. To make sure the ring is genuine, Frodo puts it on and disappears for the first time. Tom sees him and tells him to stop his tricks. At the end of the night, Tom teaches them a song that will call him whenever they find themselves in danger.

After saying their goodbyes, the Hobbits continue their trek. At noon, they approach a flat hilltop. Growing comfortable with food, the Hobbits fall asleep and wake to find themselves surrounded by a deep fog. As they head toward what they believe to be the north, Frodo is knocked unconscious and captured by a Barrow-wight. When he awakens, he notices that Pippin, Merry and Sam have been caught as well. A cold voice enters their chamber and Frodo notices an arm coming through a passage. He toys with the idea of using his ring to disappear in order to save himself. At the last moment, however, he cuts off the arm and calls to Tom. They take the Hobbits out of the barrow and they slowly recover from the Barrow-wight's spell. Tom hands each of the group a dagger from the Barrow-wight's treasure and directs them to the town of Bree. Frodo cautions his friends to call him Mr. Underhill in public.

Analysis

Tom is one of the most mysterious figures introduced so far. Even after spending a full chapter with him, the audience does not know much about his character except that he is jolly and likes to sing songs. His immunity to the ring is not explained, but it can be inferred that this is probably the case because he was around before Sauron. Tom seems to control nature and tame it. The wild forest is dangerous to the hobbits until it is handled by someone. This gives us an insight into Tolkien's perception of nature. Nature, after the controlling hand of a man, becomes timid and safe, but when left alone, it is wild and dangerous.

The Barrow-wight does not seem to have any sort of personality in the work except that he is simply full of evil. It does not seem that the Barrow-wight is any agent of Sauron,



but there are aspects that remind the reader of him. In lack of personality, they are already alike. They are pure wickedness, with no sort of humanity in them. There is a further reminder of the Dark Lord with the image of the independent arm moving down the tunnel, much like Sauron's hand that the warrior Isildur severed in order to get the ring.

The power of the ring continues to get stronger, a fact that is clearly noticed when Frodo considers leaving his friends by disappearing. Evil within the work is not only external to the characters, but an internal struggle as well. Frodo's mind has been affected by the powers of the ring, and he considers an extremely selfish action through its influence. He struggles between two aspects of his own mind -- one of survival and the other of saving those he loves. When Frodo resists the urge to run, his strong nature is depicted.

Vocabulary

pinnacle, yammered, turf, plumes, dominion, brambles, biers, capering, harken, clime



Book 1: Chapter 9: At the Sign of the Prancing Pony - Chapter 10: Strider

Summary

Bree is an unusual place in Middle-earth for it is home to both Hobbits and Big People (humans). Frodo and his companions arrive in Bree at nightfall. After a bit of questioning by the gate-keeper, they are allowed into the city and go directly to an inn called The Prancing Pony owned by Barliman Butterbur. The inn is alive with guests from all over and Frodo, Pippin, and Sam decide to join the gathering in the drinking hall. While there, Frodo notices a man watching him from the shadows. Butterbur explains that he is a Ranger, a wanderer named Strider. Having noticed Frodo's questioning, Strider calls him over to talk. Meanwhile, Frodo notices that Pippin is about to give away the name Baggins and begins to sing a song to distract the audience. In the middle of a verse, he slips and falls, slipping the ring on accidentally. The audience is shocked and suspicious. Strider addresses Frodo as Baggins, implying that he knows about the ring, and asks to see him later.

When the Hobbits go back to their room, they notice Strider is already there. He tells the company that the Black Riders have been in Bree looking for Frodo and they are not safe for long. Butterbur knocks and enters, stating that he knows Frodo Baggins is going by the name of Underhill. He is a friend of Gandalf and produces a letter he was to mail to Frodo three months earlier. The letter warns Frodo to never use the ring and states that Strider, whose real name is Aragorn, is a friend of his who is there to help the hobbits. Gandalf also warns them to make for Rivendell as quickly as possible. Merry runs in suddenly claiming he has seen the Black Riders. The Strider warns them to not sleep in the room and they head to the parlor to take rest.

Analysis

Strider is of great significance in these two chapters and though his first appearance lends to create suspicion, the reader quickly learns that he has knowledge of Frodo's business and does not seem to hold a dark menace. He looks like a vagabond, but when the reader learns he is a friend of Gandalf's, it is obvious that he holds much more importance than is previously implied. His second name, mentioned by Gandalf in his letter, also shows that Strider may have more to him still. His mysterious character rouses the interest of the audience and depicts the sort of hero that Tolkien is fond of. All of his heroes have a modest appearance, but have great beauty and strength internally.

It is a comfort to learn that the Hobbits are not alone in their journey and have protection from many places. Thus far, all the dangers the Hobbits encounter are eased in some way by forces outside their control. In the previous chapter, Tom acts as their protector



and it seems that the Strider will hold a similar, but much greater position. Tolkien constantly reminds us that there are always forces greater than our own.

Vocabulary

babel, dispel, botanical, capered, swarthy, uncanny, penetrated



Book 1: Chapter 11: A Knife In the Dark - Chapter 12: Flight To the Ford

Summary

Back at Frodo's house in Buckland, Fatty Bolger feels a fear in the night and sees the gate opened by an invisible hand. Knowing it is the Black Riders, he flees to the home of the Brandybucks who ring the town bell and make the Black Riders flee. At the inn, the Hobbits wake to find their horses gone. They leave Bree on foot but manage to buy a half-starved horse. Strider knows all the paths well and leads the group to Weathertop, a halfway point to Rivendell. When they arrive, they see the Black Riders close by and take shelter in a dell. That night, the Black Riders attack. Afraid, Frodo puts on the ring and is able to see the Riders' features clearly — they have deadly white faces and no mercy in their eyes. He screams out the name of the Elves Elbereth and Gilthoniel and stabs the foot of one of the Black Riders. Suddenly, Frodo feels an icy pain in his shoulder and blacks out.

Strider is worried that the wound will gain control over Frodo and finds a plant to subdue the effects. With danger so close, the company must leave at once for Rivendell. Frodo is very weak and travels on the horse as his friends walk beside. They pass through a path that Bilbo, Gandalf and others had taken many times and discover the three trolls that had once been turned to stone by Gandalf. With lighter hearts, they continue on. Glorfindel, an Elf-lord of Rivendell, finds them and leads them on to the ford of the Bruinen River, beyond which is the Elf city. Glorfindel puts Frodo on his horse that will save him if the Black Riders attack. Frodo refuses to leave his friends, but Glorfindel reminds him that the Black Riders are after him alone. As they approach the ford, the Black Riders attack and Glorfindel's horse carries Frodo away, across the river, to the ford. As the horses of the Black Riders try to cross, they are swept away by the current and Frodo falls into unconsciousness.

Analysis

Not available

Vocabulary

quagmires, midge, tussocks, wraith, undulating, dell, cairn, frugal, maimed, encumbered, glade, quailed, cleave



Book 2: Chapter 1: Many Meetings - Chapter 2: The Council of Elrond

Summary

Frodo awakens in Elrond's home in Rivendell. Gandalf is sitting beside him. Gandalf reveals that he was held captive for a time and War is coming to the land. When asked about Strider, Gandalf states that he is one of the ancient Men of the West. With some more rest, Frodo wakes to find he is hungry and joins his friends and Elron's other guests at the table for a feast. After dinner, Frodo and the others are led into a hall where Bilbo is sitting. Frodo is thrilled to see his beloved Bilbo, who doesn't seem to have changed at all; but as soon as Bilbo asks to see the ring, a change comes over Frodo and he feels the need to strike him. The moment soon passes and there is more merriment as Aragorn walks in. Bilbo sings a song then takes Frodo away from the hall so they can catch up.

The next morning a council is called where many messengers from all over the land are gathered to ask for Elrond's advice. Glóin, who has come in behalf of the Dwarves, states that the Dark Lord sent them a message offering new rings of power in exchange for news of Hobbits, especially Bilbo. Elrond tells the assembly about the history of the rings and their great importance to their history as well as to the present occurrences and how they relate to Sauron. Boromir, a warrior from the great city of Gondor, states that the power of Mordor is rising. He also relays a dream he had about a broken sword called Isildur's Bane. Aragorn stands and reveals that he is a descendent of Isildur and keeper of the broken sword. Frodo reveals the ring and tells of his perilous journey to Rivendell. Many histories are also told, including how Bilbo came across the ring. Much to everyone's surprise, an elf named Legolas, announces that Gollum has escaped. There is much debate about what should be done with the ring. After much contention, Frodo finally speaks up to say that he will take the ring himself.

Analysis

The ring is taking much control over Frodo; even his most beloved relationship with Bilbo is affected. During dinner at Rivendell, Frodo remarks that he would rather see Bilbo than "all the towers and palaces in the world;" yet when he sees his beloved uncle, Frodo is easily angered by the mere thought of letting him touch the ring. The relationship between Frodo and Bilbo is a familiar family bond. Bilbo, despite leaving the ring to Frodo, is still unwilling to part completely with it. Even after Bilbo apologizes, the suspicion of the audience does not completely fade. In these chapters, evil seems to react much more strongly when faced with the happiest and most familiar moments and people than in dark, ominous times.



During the council, Gandalf and Elrond insist that the ring cannot just be given off for someone else to deal with. They seem to think that it has come to Frodo for a reason and that he must journey with it. Even though Frodo is not the strongest or bravest among them, he is willing to carry the ring to be destroyed. This depicts his selflessness, a characteristic of a true hero. In contrast, Sauron is extremely selfish and will find any means to destroy the world of others. Likewise, the ring as a representation of Sauron's power cares only about itself and getting back to its master, regardless of the consequences to others. Through the Ring the reader is able to gather a bit of Sauron's thoughts and ideals. This contrast works well to reveal the inner and outer strength that is needed to be a true hero in The Lord of the Rings.

Vocabulary

Hale, dais, venerable, multitudinous, panoply, habergeon, chalcedony, unheralded, foundered, clad, stalwart, trove



Book 2: Chapter 3: The Ring Goes South - Chapter 4: A Journey In the Dark

Summary

Frodo will leave Rivendell when the scouts find where the Black Riders have gone. After two months of waiting, they decide Frodo will be accompanied by eight others including a member from each group living in Middle-earth. There is the Dwarf Gimli, Elf Legolas, Gandalf, two Men - Strider and Boromir, and the four Hobbits. The company begins their treacherous journey to Mordor, traveling many miles away from Rivendell in the bleak, unchanging landscape. A fortnight later, they arrive at the country of Hillon where Elves once dwelled. The group is content to rest for the night, but Strider is suspicious of the deep silence. Strider warns that Hillon may be spied upon and the company is off again the next evening. They travel through a perilous mountain that covers them with a constant downpour of snow; and the men are forced to burrow a path out. They claim that the mountain holds evil, and the snow does not cease until they retreat.

The company is forced to decide on a new path and Gandalf suggests journeying through the mines of Moria, a place widely reputed to be evil. Many are against the idea and Aragorn hints that it is most dangerous for Gandalf. When they hear the howling of wolves, they quickly change their minds. In the night, the wolves surround them. Legolas kills one with his arrows while the rest pretend to flee. In the dead of the night, they come back and attack the company. The wolves are defeated when Legolas kills the wolf chieftain. When they arrive at Moria, they realize they must let the pony go, much to the dismay of Sam. Gandalf figures out the riddle on the ancient doors to open them. As they begin to pass through, they are attacked by a tentacle creature that tries to drag Frodo into the lake. The group rushes through the doors which are shut behind them by the creature. Gandalf, feeling shifty, takes a smoke before they start to walk through the mines. They pass through beautiful underground halls. In the night, Frodo thinks he sees two luminous eyes shining through the darkness, but his fears are never confirmed. As they continue on, they reach the tombstone of Balin, the Dwarf-king. Gimli covers his head with his hood in mourning.

Analysis

The nine member of the fellowship are an extremely important aspect of the novel. They are made up of all the people of Middle-earth: Hobbits, Elves, Dwarves, and Men. This grouping makes the narrative come alive in many ways. Throughout the history of Middle-earth, all four groups have had their conflicts which also show up during the journey. Legolas and Gimli are at odds since the beginning, a reaction of the past animosity between Dwarves and Elves. In a small way, they help Tolkien further narrate the history of Middle-earth. The reader is also able to see various characteristics of each group. The men seem to exceed in strength, which is demonstrated several times



by both Boromir and Aragorn. Legolas shows the light-footedness specific to Elves and Gimli depicts a strong resolve.

Gandalf is also a major aspect of the journey, depicting a supernatural yet altogether human quality. He is able to solve the riddle of the door which shows his cleverness; but the reader realizes when he stops to take a smoke that he is still flesh and blood with simple desires that keep him going. His character may be the most complex seen thus far, and there are many mysteries that seem to surround him.

Nature once again plays a harsh role in their journey. The snow in the mountain is malevolent and seems to have a will of its own. The mountain seems to want to deter their journey and is thus characterized as evil. Once again, Tolkien brings light to the fact that untamed nature is extremely unpredictable and in that sense, dangerous.

Vocabulary

contrive, avail, lore, gossamer, girt, cloven, contrivance, besieged, knoll, doggedly, chasms, cavernous



Book 2: Chapter 5: The Bridge of Khazad-dum - Chapter 6: Lothlorien

Summary

The company examines the room in which they find the tomb to find what may have happened to the Dwarf king. Gandalf finds a book which seems to be a record of the Balin's troop who had come to take back Moria from enemy hands. The work is filled with sorrow and ends on a dire note stating that they could not get out. Just as Gandalf orders the company to get back out in the hall, a large boom is heard and a sound like the beating of drums shakes the walls. They realize that there are Orcs, servants of Sauron, coming down the hall straight toward them. They shut the door and fight bravely for their defense. When Gandalf sees a chance to escape, he urges the others to go forward while he casts a spell that stops the sound of the Orcs and collapses the door and room. He quickly runs back to the group, nearly spent, stating there was something else there that even scared the Orcs. The company reaches the lower halls and runs across a slender bridge over a bottomless pit. As they turn to look back they see a Balin, a shadowy form that is covered with fire, but surrounded by darkness. Gandalf tries to fight back, but the Balin manages to pull him back into the mines. The others stumble forward and collapse in grief.

With Gandalf lost in the caverns, Aragorn takes command. He leads them away from the Misty Mountains to the forest of Lothlorien (Lorien). When they arrive, Boromir becomes wary due to strange rumors he's heard. Legolas tells the others of the history of Lothlorien. As night approaches, the company decides to climb the trees for refuge and finds Elves there. They have heard Legolas' song and know of Frodo's journey so the Elves allow them up to the trees. In the night, the Orcs pass under the trees and Frodo sees a curious creature climbing up a tree. As morning dawns, the company walks further into Lorien. Gimli is told he must walk through blindfolded. He grows angry and almost begins to fight when Aragorn says they will all be blindfolded. The next morning, Haldir, head of the Elves of the trees, receives a message that Lady Galadriel, queen of the forest, knows the company and their blindfolds can be removed. They open their eyes to see a beautiful, unstained landscape.

Analysis

Chapter 5 brings the most action seen thus far in the novel. The drums create a realistic sense of imagery which creates tension. The tension builds slowly, with various sounds and warnings that run from the previous chapter into this one, foreshadowing potential danger. When the Orcs actually do arrive, the reader is taken by surprise at their vast number and massive size. The scene is even more menacing because the Balin, another enemy, has not yet appeared.



Gandalf's disappearance into the chasm is also quite harrowing. It is the first example of a weakness for Gandalf. Aragorn's prophecy from the chapters before, when he warns that the mines are most dangerous for Gandalf, comes true. This gives the reader another view of Aragorn as well. He seems to have a strong intuition. With this prophecy as well as the history behind the forest, Lorien adds to the strong mythological aspect of the book that Tolkien has already set up with his various characters and the way in which he relays the story.

Lorien is described as incredibly beautiful and Aragorn states that it is the "heart of Elvendom on earth." It has a sense of perfection, but also has a bit of left-over animosity toward Dwarves. The juxtapositions between Dwarves and Elves that have already been touched on a bit throughout are seen here once more. They are opposites in many ways. Dwarves tend to work below ground in mines, while Elves have an art above ground such as the one the reader sees in Lorien. Yet, these opposing factors can still work together when a bit of trust is put forward.

Vocabulary

scimitars, helm, hewed, swart, skewered, chasm, smote, truncheon, gird, glen, sword, girth, bole, sundered, flet, gaffer, eddying, obstinate, sentinels, mallron, marauding, waylaid



Book 2: Chapter 7: The Mirror of Galadriel - Chapter 8: Farewell to Lorien

Summary

As night falls, the company arrives in the City of the Trees where they meet Lady Galadriel and Lord Celeborn. They ask of Gandalf and are deeply grieved when they hear of his entrapment within Moria. The Lady then looks deep into the eyes of each one of the members of the fellowship, asking each what he would do if given a chance to get what he desires most or travel on this path of shadows to destroy the ring. All are invited to take refuge in the city until they feel well and refreshed once again. On one of these days, Lady Galadriel calls to Frodo and Sam, taking them to the Mirror of Galadriel which shows things of the past, present, and future. Sam looks in and sees the Shire in danger. He is deeply saddened. Frodo sees a vision of a wizard, and is unsure whether it is Gandalf of Saruman, then of Bilbo and the sea among other things. The most striking and fearsome is an eye that seems to be searching for him as his ring grows heavy. Finally, Galadriel reveals that she has one of the three rings made for the Elves. She states that if Frodo fails, their land will be bare to the enemy and if he succeeds, their power and city will be lost. Frodo offers her the ring and though she has long desired it, she refuses.

When it is time to leave, Aragon does not yet know which course to take. Lord Celeborn offers the company boats which eases their minds, especially Aragon's since it will give him time to decide what path to take. The group holds a council of their own; and Boromir states he will go to Minas Tirith as he had decided in the beginning and suggests it is folly to destroy the ring. After being given food and beautiful chameleon-like cloaks, the group sets out once again. When they set off on the river, they see Lady Galadriel and Celeborn once again, who invite them for a feast on the banks. Galadriel gives each member of the fellowship a gift before they depart once more.

Analysis

Through the episode with the mirror, that the reader notes that magic has the ability to cause great despair as it does to Sam and Frodo. In the end, it gives them knowledge, but it is one that drives out hope. With this scene, Tolkien may be trying to tell the reader that sometimes it is better not to know certain ends. Even if they are inevitable, seeing the events in the mirror does not help Frodo or Sam to stop them. It is their active courage that leads them through rather than a reliance on magic.

It is surprising that Frodo offers to give the ring to Lady Galadriel when he is so wary to let others hold it even for a little while. Yet, it depicts the great bond of trust that he feels with her and the power she holds. Her beloved country will be extinguished, a fate she could prevent by taking control of the ring; but she knows that it is an evil power and



therefore chooses not to accept it. She chooses good even though choosing evil will save her and her people. The fact that she refuses what she desires most for the good of Middle-earth as a whole depicts her as an ultimate hero.

Vocabulary

fosse, talan, tapering, fen, lamentation, gaffer, assuaged, phial, hythe



Book 2: Chapter 9: The Great River - Chapter 10: The Breaking of the Fellowship

Summary

The company rides down the Great River passing brown, treeless lands. While sitting lost in thought, Sam sees Boromir staring at Frodo with a strange expression. He also what he thinks is a log with eyes. He later tells Frodo about the log and learns that he also saw it. They believe it to be Gollum. Aragorn notes that this is so and he has been following them for days. They travel at a swifter pace, but see dark shapes on their way. They paddle away from the east bank where Orcs have begun to shoot arrows at them and somehow make it safely to the west bank. As soon as they arrive, a dark shape with wings comes down toward them. All of a sudden, the bow given by Galadriel sings, making the dark shape swerve until it disappears on the eastern shore. Looking up at the moon, Sam realizes they spent a month in Lorien. They travel to Aragorn's land where he has not been in many years. They must now decide whether to head east toward danger or west towards Minas Tirith.

Frodo walks alone for some time, considering which path to choose. While sitting, he feels something behind him and turns to see Boromir who asks to give his counsel. Boromir asks to see the ring, but Frodo sees a strange gleam in his eyes and refuses. Boromir shrugs it off and asks Frodo to think not only of the evil the ring can do, but of the good. He says that it should be used, not destroyed. He then attacks Frodo intent on getting the ring. To escape, Frodo puts on the ring and runs, glancing about at his landscape from a high cliff and seeing signs of war everywhere. He sees the beautiful Minas Tirith, but as he turns he gazes upon Barad-dur, the fortress of Sauron. As he does, he feels the eye searching for him closing in on where he stands. A voice inside his head shouts for him to take off the ring and he finally does. He has decided that the ring must be destroyed and in order to do so, he must go alone. When the rest of the fellowship realizes he is gone, they search desperately for him. Sam thinks of the boats and sees one starting off on its own. He falls into the river, but Frodo saves him. They travel to the Land of Shadow alone to complete the quest.

Analysis

Gollum's constant stalking of the company gives the reader a sense of dread as nothing else has. He represents an unseen, hidden danger that is everywhere and therefore much harder to destroy. It is this constant fear that makes the characters weary and suspicious of the world around them. Sauron's servants seem to be fond of moving in this unseen way. The Ringwraiths did the same, the sound of hooves appearing when



least expected. In the same way, the eye is constantly watching Frodo and searching for him. This constant paranoia makes the company very weary of the journey.

Through the perils of the path, Frodo is growing. He is drawn to the power of the ring many times, but stands strong against it. As the eye searches for him, the good inside of him warns to take it off.. When he overcomes the ring in this way, he realizes the best path will be to continue alone. This way his friends will be free from harm. His fear had blinded him for too long and the more he feared, the more he fell under the influence of the Ring. When he takes a stand against it, he finds a clear direction that allows him to be completely selfless. It is this selflessness that the reader sees the idea of a true hero represented several times throughout the novel.

Vocabulary

pestilence, eyot, gunwale, descride, furlong, thrawn



Characters

Frodo Baggins

Frodo Baggins is the ring bearer and primary protagonist in The Lord of the Rings trilogy. His parents die when he is young. He is adopted by Bilbo Baggins and brought to the Shire. He is good-natured and has a strong will. He is also curious about the world around him. He is full of good, but he also has doubt and is not immune to the evil influences of the ring. Initially, he is weak and terribly afraid of any danger; but as the novel progresses, he gains more inner strength until he is able to face his biggest fear of traveling to Mordor alone. He always has a sense of sadness surrounding him and does not see anything great about his quest. He is following his path to destroy the ring solely because he was chosen and does not look for glory.

Bilbo Baggins

Bilbo Baggins is the Hobbit who found the ring. He adopts Frodo Baggins, and they live together for many years in Bag End located in the Shire. He befriends many Elves, Dwarves and other beings of which many other Hobbits disapprove. His love for travel and adventure take him to many places throughout Middle-earth. He keeps the ring for many years and when the reader meets him, he seems to be very attached to it.

Sam Gamgee

Sam Gamgee is a gardener and friend to Frodo Baggins. One night, Gandalf finds him listening under a window and the reader begins to learn more about him. He cares greatly about the Shire and loves many things of the Earth. A true friend to Frodo, he follows him everywhere even if it means placing himself in grave danger. Of all the characters in the book, Sam seems to have the purest heart. He seeks no reward from the journey except to see the Elves. He, too, is a curious Hobbit and proves to be much more clever than we are first inclined to believe.

Gandalf the Grey

Gandalf the Grey is the wizard who has a special interest in Hobbits. He is kind and wise, bestowing his wisdom to both Bilbo and Frodo. He always carries a white staff which helps him cast his magical spells. He becomes the leader of the fellowship and leads the company through with steadfast bravery. Throughout The Fellowship of the Ring, his character is still not well known, but that does not stop him from being one of the most beloved and enduring characters of the work.



Aragorn/Strider

Aragorn is the ranger of the north who is initially introduced as Strider. He comes from the line of men and is a direct descendent of Isildur, who first cut the ring from Sauron's finger many years ago. Aragorn is friend to Gandalf. He travels to many parts of Middle-earth and becomes a guide for the Hobbits and the fellowship. His character is extremely steadfast and he knows how to take control of any situation.

Sauron

Sauron is the ominous Dark Lord that has taken over Mordor and is building his army to destroy all the free people of Middle-earth. He creates the nine rings to give to the men, three to give to the elves, and seven to the dwarves. These rings held power to control their race of people, but they did not know that Sauron created yet another ring -- one that could control all others. The aim of Frodo's journey is to destroy this one ring while Sauron is desperately searching for it. Sauron is the epitome of evil. He does not care about anyone but himself and will do anything to gain control.

Merry

Merry is a Hobbit who is friend to Frodo. He is much cleverer than initially introduced. In his younger years, he sees Bilbo use the ring to disappear. Ever since, he has been investigating the ring and stalking Bilbo to find out the true nature of it. Merry knows the secrets of the ring long before anyone else. He is loyal to Bilbo throughout the fellowship.

Pippin Took

Also called Peregrin Took, Pippin is also a companion of Frodo Baggins and plays a role in the fellowship's quest to destroy the ring. He is the youngest of the company, still in his "tweens." He is very loyal to Frodo and refuses to be left behind, but also shows his youth. He is the first to miss the comforts of the Shire and remark on the troubles of the journey. Overall, he is as cheerful as he can be on a perilous journey and adds humor to the work.

Elrond

Elrond is the Lord of Rivendell who houses Frodo and the Hobbits after their long journey. He holds a council that decides the ultimate fate of the ring and later creates the fellowship.



Gimli

Gimli is a well-respected Dwarf of Middle-earth who is son to Gloin. While at the court of Elrond, Gimli volunteers to be a part of the fellowship. He is known for his bravery. He is easily angered by the Elves, especially Legolas, in the beginning of the journey, but they soon grow to be good friends. When Gandalf proposes to go to the mines of Moria, he is one of the only members to agree at once even though he knows that what he may encounter there may be devastating.

Boromir

A valiant warrior of the race of man, Boromir is chosen to accompany the fellowship until Minas Tirith. During the council of Elrond, Boromir suggests that the ring should not be destroyed, but used against the enemy. This is our first glimpse into his nature, a trend that continues until the end of the novel when he tries to take the ring from Frodo to gain power himself. Throughout the journey, his strength comes to great use, but eventually he breaks the fellowship.

Legolas

Legolas is an elf of the Woodland Realm who becomes a part of the fellowship. He has sensitive hearing, keen eyesight and is an excellent Bowman who saves the fellowship from the attack of the wolves. He is also very stealthy, able to move without sound through any landscape. He comes to the council of Elrond to report that Gollum has escaped. During the first part of the journey, he clashes with the Dwarf Gimli. They later become good friends.

Lady Galadriel

Lady Galadriel is the ruler of Lothlorien alongside Lord Celeborn. She has great beauty, much like her land. She is also very powerful and holds great knowledge. She is able to look at each one of the members of the fellowship and know what he desires most. The city of Lothlorien has been built up through the power of one of the rings initially given to the Elves by Sauron, one of which Lady Galadriel wears. She proves to be one of the most selfless creatures in the novel through her refusal to take the one ring offered by Frodo. Her character is remembered by all of the fellowship for being kind, gentle, and giving.

Tom Bombadil

Tom Bombadil is a jovial creature who is surrounded by mystery. He is said to be the master of the earth and wood. He lives in the Old Forest with Goldberry and is not concerned with matters that occur outside of his realm. He was alive before Middle-



earth was created and saw the first rise and fall of Sauron. He is immune to the power of the Ring.

Goldberry

Goldberry is the wife of Tom Bombadil and daughter of the river. She is beautiful and moves the Hobbits in a way that only the Elves can do.

Barliman Butterbur

Barliman Butterbur is the owner of the Prancing Pony, an inn located in Bree. He is friend to Gandalf and although he is quite forgetful, he helps bring a message to Frodo from Gandalf. He is willing to help Frodo in any way he can.

Gollum

Originally known as Smeagol, Gollum is a Hobbit-like creature. He is brother to Daegol, who initially found the ring after Isildur dropped it into the river. Smeagol wants the ring for himself and kills his brother to get it. He travels back to his home where he begins to do evil deeds. He is finally shunned and called Gollum. Taking to the dark mountains because he couldn't stand the sight of sunlight anymore, Gollum becomes a decrepit creature who only cares about the ring. He holds on to the ring until Bilbo comes into the mountains and finds it. Ever since, Gollum has been after the Ring. He follows the fellowship and is thought to be a servant of Sauron.

Daegol

Daegol is a Hobbit-like creature who is brother to Smeagol (Gollum). He is the first to find the ring, but is killed by his brother shortly after.

Isildur

Isildur is the son of the High King of Gondor who defeated Sauron during the War of the Last Alliance by cutting the Ring from the hand of Sauron. He does not destroy the ring and is killed by Orcs on his journey back home, leaving the ring at the bottom of the river for Daegol to find many years later.

The Balrong

The Balrong is a mysterious, terrifying demon in the mines of Moria. He is covered in fire, but surrounded by shadow and darkness. He brings fear to all creatures, including the Orcs of Sauron. The Balrong emerges from the depths of the mines and begins a

battle that Gandalf fights valiantly. Gandalf is captured by The Balrong before he can leave Moria with the rest of the fellowship.



Objects/Places

One Ring

The one ring is created by Sauron to control all others and therefore control all of Middle-earth. This is the ring that Bilbo Baggins finds in the cave of Gollum and brings back to the Shire, passing it on to Frodo Baggins who is given the task of destroying it. The ring has great power, but is completely evil. It seems to have a mind of its own and will put the lives of its bearers in danger in order to get back to its true master, Sauron. The Ring makes the wearer invisible and in that state, prone to the Great Eye that is constantly searching for it.

The Shire

Home to all the Hobbits, The Shire is a peaceful, gentle place filled with comfort. The people of the Shire are fond of gossip and do not wish to venture outside their quiet realm. There are, of course, exceptions to this. The Shire is where Bilbo Baggins grows up and later brings Frodo Baggins to live.

The Old Forest

The Old Forest is an ominous forest where the trees are alive and filled with malicious intent. Frodo and his Hobbit friends decide to cut across through the Old Forest to avoid the Black Riders. Merry and Pippin are swallowed by an old willow tree in this realm until Tom Bombadil saves them. The Old Forest is where Tom Bombadil resides.

The Prancing Pony

The Prancing Pony is the inn located in the village of Bree and operated by Barliman Butterbur. This is where Frodo first meets Strider (Aragorn). The inn is unique in that it has rooms for both men and Hobbits.

Rivendell

Rivendell is the Elven outpost in Middle-earth where Elrond resides. It is considered one of the safest places to be. Frodo describes it to be the perfect house full of singing and storytelling. Gandalf initially tells Frodo to travel to Rivendell.



Moria

Also known as Khazad-dûm, Halls of Durin, and Mines of Moria, Moria is the most ancient of all Dwarf kingdoms that was taken over by the Orcs of Sauron. Balin, king of the Dwarves, goes there to gain back his land, but is defeated and killed by the Orcs. When we hear mention of it, Moria is considered to be an evil place. Gandalf suggests the fellowship travel through Moria because all other roads will be longer and harder to travel down. When the fellowship arrives, they are met by the Orcs who try to kill them all. Through great bravery and strong defense, they make it through except for Gandalf who is captured by the Balrong.

Lothlorien

Lothlorien is a majestic forest ruled by Lord Celeborn and Lady Galadriel. It is noted as the most beautiful place that the members of the fellowship encounter. Time seems to pass extremely slowly in this realm. It is later revealed that Galadriel's ring of power, given by Sauron, makes the land so enchanting. The magical forest will no longer exist if the one ring is destroyed.

Mordor

Mordor is the dark realm in which Sauron dwells, where he is building his army to gain control of Middle-earth. It is surrounded by three mountain ranges and therefore makes a great fort against any enemies. The land is made up of volcanic ash. It is a place that is feared by all the free people of Middle-earth and is only spoken of for brief periods.

Mirror of Galadriel

The magic mirror of Galadriel is able to show anyone who looks in the fate of the past, present and future. Sam sees the destruction of the Shire. Frodo sees the Great Eye that never sleeps. Though the mirror gives the gift of knowledge, it does not ultimately help anyone change their fate.



Themes

The Nature of Evil

Tolkien makes the face of evil apparent throughout *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Symbols follow the common stereotypes associated with evil: covered in black/darkness, dangerous, ugly and malicious. The Black Riders are the first introduction into the face of evil and they follow these trends so that there is no doubt of their true nature. The one ring symbolizes the most powerful evil prescience within the novel. Sauron has encompassed almost all of his own power within the ring; and it is therefore one of the most destructive things in the book. The reader notices that it creates evil inside the mind of its wearer and all those who come too close to it. Frodo almost leaves his friends through the influence of the ring, something he would never have considered otherwise. Bilbo Baggins is so overcome by the power that he grows malicious toward Frodo, the one person he loves most. All these instances show the corrupting power of the ring, and therefore the corrupting power of evil itself. It is one of the most difficult influences to resist and those who do are completely selfless characters, setting up the stage of true heroism.

Whether or not the wearer has good intentions, the ring will turn them to evil because that is all it knows. It gives the wearer all the qualities associated with evil including selfishness. It makes Smeagol kill his own brother and turns Boromir from a valiant warrior to one who desires immense personal power. Even Gandalf does not think he can handle the corrupting nature of the ring.

The Inevitability of Decline

All things in Middle-earth, just as all things in life, will wear away and eventually come to an end. Tolkien touches on this theme many times throughout his work, especially in relation to the Elves. The Elves have created a beautiful kingdom, one that does not seem touchable by any force of evil. Yet, Tolkien mentions it will eventually come to great destruction and the era of the Elves will end.

This theme is brought fully to light in Lothlorien when Lady Galadriel speaks of the destruction of her land. Whether the ring is destroyed or not, Lothlorien will eventually come to pass and its beauty will fade into myth. It is important to remember nothing lasts forever, whether it is good or evil. This brings readers a little bit of encouragement during the times of evil within the novel, but also brings sadness with the revelation that the good things will eventually be destroyed as well.

Songs and Story-telling

The Fellowship of the Ring is filled with songs and various stories that are told throughout the journey. It is through these songs and stories that the reader learns



much about the history of Middle-earth and the way of life for many of the characters. The songs act as a vessel for the past, a time when many things were passed down through singing rather than actual prose. This sets up the mythological feel of the story that Tolkien worked so hard to achieve.

The songs are linguistically beautiful as well and create a parallel universe to the one that the characters are in. All the creatures of Middle-earth are fond of singing and storytelling. It helps them to celebrate and escape the perils that they often find themselves in, if only for a little while.



Style

Point of View

The Fellowship of The Ring is told from a third person omniscient point of view. In this way, the audience is able to get a full picture of what is going on. The prologue acts as a history, setting up the mythological journey that the readers will travel in the reading. Though the narrator follows Frodo for almost all of the novel, the reader does get an insight into Bilbo in the beginning and the fellowship when Frodo decides to leave to destroy the ring himself.

This point of view is not all inclusive as the audience is not able to see what is happening with the evil characters of the novel, such as with Gollum or Sauron. This works to create mystery and keep readers turning the pages for more.

Setting

The Fellowship of the Ring is set in a fictional realm called Middle-earth. This country has its own unique history. Tolkien does a good job in making the world believable. With a clear-cut history, even the magical elements of the work become more realistic. He begins with the Hobbits, a history that is told in *The Hobbit*, and later created an entire universe of various creatures. Even though there are many types of creatures in *The Fellowship*, they are made relatable by their human characteristics and personality traits.

Language and Meaning

Tolkien writes in simple prose that flows smoothly and can be easily understood. His use of language makes the immense detail and history easier to read and fully comprehend. His use of names of various people and places can create confusion, and the reader has to pay careful attention during these instances. The songs also make the work flow at a better pace and make the history of Middle-earth less muddled.

Structure

The Lord of the Rings is divided into three books: *The Fellowship of the Ring*, *The Two Towers*, and *The Return of the King*. The entire work follows the quest of Frodo to destroy the one ring in Mordor. *The Hobbit* can be included in the series, but does not have to be. It tells the history of the Hobbits and how Bilbo Baggins comes to have the ring, but these events are also explained within *The Fellowship*.

The Fellowship of the Ring is further divided into two books. The first book deals with Frodo's journey to Rivendell. In the second book, the fellowship is established and the perilous journey to destroy the one ring begins.



Quotes

He found himself wondering at times, especially in the Autumn, about the wild lands, and strange visions of mountains that he had never seen came into his dreams. He began to say to himself 'Perhaps I shall cross the river myself one day.' To which the other half of his mind always replied 'Not yet. (2, Book 1)

Pity? It was pity that stayed his hand. Pity and Mercy: not to strike without need. (2, Book 1)

Sing Hey! For the bath at the close of day that washes the weary mud away! A loon is he that will not sing: O! Water Hot is a noble thing! (5, Book 1)

All that is gold does not glitter; not all those who wander are lost; (10, Book 1)

It is no small thing to have come so far, and through such dangers, still bearing the ring. (1, Book 2)

Faithless is he that says farewell when the road darkens. (3, Book 2)

I have it, of course! Of course! Absurdly simple, like most riddles, when you see the answer. (4, Book 2)

I don't miss Gandalf's fireworks, but his bushy eyebrows, and his quick temper, and his voice. (7, Book 2)

Already she seemed to him, as by men of later days Elves still at times are seen: present and yet remote, a living vision of that which has already been left far behind by the flowing streams of Time. (8, Book 2)

For so it seemed to them: Lorien was slipping backwards, like a bright ship mastered with enchanted trees, sailing on to forgotten shores, while they sat helpless upon the margin of the grey and leafless world. (8, Book 2)



Topics for Discussion

Topic 1

What characteristics make Frodo the best candidate to carry the ring to Mordor?

Topic 2

What is the significance of the natural world in The Fellowship of the Rings? Does nature look/feel different in various parts of Middle-earth? If so, how?

Topic 3

What does the one ring signify?

Topic 4

Why does Tolkien choose to make his hero a Hobbit rather than a more powerful creature of Middle-earth such as the race of men, Elves, or Dwarves?

Topic 5

How does Tolkien define good and evil?

Topic 6

Tolkien did not consider The Lord of the Rings to be a fantasy novel, but rather, a myth. What are three mythical elements he uses to achieve his goal?

Topic 7

There are many instances of great beauty throughout the novel, especially in the realms of the Elves. What does the beauty signify?

Topic 8

Knowledge and wisdom are treated as two distinct things in The Fellowship of the Ring. What is the distinction?