The Lord of the Rings Study Guide

The Lord of the Rings by J. R. R. Tolkien

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BOOKRAGS

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Introduction

In 1997, *Lord of the Rings* was voted, to the chagrin of some critics, the greatest book of the twentieth century in a poll run by major British booksellers. Despite some negative criticism, *Lord of the Rings* has been a steady best-seller since the first volume was published in 1954, and a campus craze in the sixties and early seventies. The extensive fantasy sections in today's bookstores, from Terry Brooks to Terry Pratchett, are all its children, as are, if George Lucas is to be believed, the Star Wars films.

On the surface, a combination of popular acclaim and critical disquiet is a baffling response to the work of an Oxford professor saturated in the study of language development and early medieval literature. Still, it is perhaps this crossing of characters and situations common to epic and folktale with a judicious use of novelistic technique that accounts for both its popularity with the reading public and the hostility of some critics, whose literary culture is too centered in the avant-garde to be comfortable with a work that reaches so deeply into medieval literature and which rejects, however thoughtfully, moral relativism. Despite its roots in medieval literature, *Lord of the Rings* places its characters and its readers on a collision course with modern moral dilemmas of knowledge and power. Tolkien poses these modern problems with absolute ethical principles and a belief in both an overarching providence and the importance of human choice. These ethical absolutes are, however, at least partially expressed in terms of a new type of hero, one which does not supplant the old epic hero but which complements it. Although Tolkien always insisted that *Lord of the Rings* was not allegorical, it is apparent that the Ruling Ring and the destruction of the natural world that flows from the desire for its power are a reflection of Tolkien's concern for humanity's ability to destroy both itself and the earth. That Tolkien chooses a course of total rejection of such knowledge and power is perhaps one of the unconscious sources of some critics' reaction to the work. Such a rejection strikes at the heart of the concept of progress as it has developed in western civilization.

Overview

In The Lord of the Rings Tolkien has demonstrated the evolution of a literary world. In The Hobbit, often considered a prologue to the trilogy, he created a fascinating kind of being with no parallel in literature; in the trilogy he expands his single hobbit hero into four hobbit companions and an interesting assortment of helpers and enemies. Readers who were captivated by Bilbo in The Hobbit will encounter him again in The Fellowship of the Ring, the first volume of the trilogy. Bilbo's nephew Frodo is a more developed character than Bilbo and therefore even more absorbing to watch in action. The trilogy exemplifies Tolkien's power to sustain a central adventure through three volumes, each divided into two books. Each of the six books builds up to its own climactic ending, but an intricate system of interlacing allows the reader to move easily with the characters as the author fills in more details about the geography of Middle-earth, the history of its inhabitants, and the progress of the quest.

The expansive background against which the central action takes place conveys a sense of the universality of the conflict between good and evil. In this world everyone needs the support of others in overcoming obstacles and in doing good. Many of the background sections treat the nature of evil as a distortion of what could have been good.

Basic to the history of the One Ring is the thirst for power in its creator, Sauron. In the central volume of the trilogy, The Two Towers, the desire for the power inherent in the Ring has also corrupted the wizard Saruman.

Tolkien's analysis of the corrupting nature of power explains why three of his strongest forces for good—Gandalf, Galadriel, and Aragorn—refuse to take the Ring and why Bilbo is unable to resist its control. As the story develops, one major source of Frodo's internal conflict lies in the pull of the ring itself.

The success of Frodo's quest flows from mercy, friendship, endurance, and the courage to risk life and happiness for the good of others.

Author Biography

J. R. R. Tolkien was born January 3, 1892 in South Africa, where his father was a banker. His father died in 1896 while Tolkien, his mother, and younger brother were visiting family in England. To economize, his mother moved the family to a village near Birmingham where she began Tolkien's education in French, German, and Latin, as well as botany and drawing. Here Tolkien fell in love with the English countryside. Mother and sons were received into the Catholic church in 1900. Tolkien was deeply religious; beneath the surface of the *Lord of the Rings* is a deep sense of God's providence. His mother died when Tolkien was eleven. They had moved back and forth from country to city, but her death meant a final move into the industrial city of Birmingham. There, at sixteen, he met his future wife, Edith Bratt. His guardian, worried by an infatuation in a teenager studying for an Oxford scholarship, insisted that he break off contact until he was twenty-one. A similar period of working and waiting is a defining circumstance in Aragorn's life, who must not hope to marry Arwen, daughter of Elrond, until he has restored his ancestors' kingdom.

Tolkien, from his first lessons in Latin, had shown a facility for languages and a deep curiosity about their inner working. As well as learning Latin and Greek at school, he taught himself Old English and Gothic. Tolkien soon went from inventing Gothic words to filling out the surviving vocabulary, then to inventing a language. This love of languages, together with a love of the countryside, was to be the genesis of Middle Earth and its history.

At Oxford, Tolkien specialized in Philology, the study of the development of languages over time. As his studies were drawing to a close, World War I broke out. His experience of battle and the deaths of nearly all his closest friends stayed with him in his writing and his criticism of early texts. After the war, he worked on the Oxford English Dictionary, then taught at the University of Leeds. In 1925 he was back in Oxford where he taught until retirement. Alongside his academic work, he continued to write the 'history' of Middle Earth, the world of his invented languages, discussing it with friends like C. S. Lewis. In 1936 he published *The Hobbit*, a story written for his children. An incident in *The Hobbit*, the finding of the Ring, becomes the point of departure for *Lord of the Rings*.

Lord of the Rings was written during the Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War. Although he insisted the trilogy was not an allegory, he and it were not untouched by events of the time. The atomic bomb intensified his misgivings about modern technological progress and the corruption of power. His concept of the heroic, already affected by his experience in World War I, shifted further away from the traditional in the context of a world now capable of destroying itself. The publication *The Lord of the Rings* in 1954-55 was greeted with bitter criticism from some members of the literary establishment, but sales were steady into the mid-sixties when the trilogy became a cult best seller. Tolkien, meanwhile, worked to prepare *The Silmarillion*, the pre-history of Middle Earth. He died in England on September 2, 1973, and the work was published posthumously in 1977.

Of his critical writing, *Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics, On Fairy Stories*, and the short study *Ofermod*, printed with the short play *The Homecoming of Beortnoth Beorthelm's Son*, all reflect the interaction of his scholarship and his creativity, as well as his profound concern with ethics.

About the Author

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien was born January 3, 1892, in Bloemfontein, South Africa, where his father was a bank manager. After his father's death, four-year-old Ronald, his younger brother, and mother settled in Sarehole, a village in the West Midlands of England. Tolkien retained an idealized image of the Sarehole Mill, the old mill pool with its overhanging willow tree, a nearby tempting mushroom patch, and clusters of cottages—all of which later figured in his picture of Hobbiton. At this time young Ronald was already discovering two interests that were to shape his life: languages and stories about imaginative places. When his mother moved the family to Birmingham, the trains and factories created a much more forbidding atmosphere, one from which he later encouraged people to "escape" through imaginative literature.

During his years at King Edward's school in Birmingham and later at Oxford, Tolkien concentrated on philology, moving from more traditional languages such as Latin, Greek, German, and French, to Old and Middle English, Gothic, Old Norse, Welsh, and Finnish.

During his childhood Tolkien had started "making up" languages, and as an undergraduate at Oxford he continued this practice, evolving from Finnish and Welsh what eventually became the languages of his elves in Middleearth. His work with the signal corps of the British army from 1916 to 1918 stretched his linguistic talents in a different direction.

After the war Tolkien worked briefly with the staff of the Oxford English Dictionary, a pleasant occupation for one so interested in language, but he soon moved into the profession in which he was to spend the rest of his life: teaching. He was first invited to join the English department at Leeds University; five years later he became a professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford, a position he held for thirty-four years. At Oxford he did much to demonstrate the strong bonds between what had been two rival fields: language and literature. Among his scholarly productions medievalists have consistently praised his translations of the Middle English poetic romance Sir Gawain and the Green Knight and the posthumously published translations of Pearl and Sir Orfeo. It is significant that the most prominent of his many studies in Anglo-Saxon literature should be his published lecture on "Beowulf The Monsters and the Critics" (1936). As a child Tolkien had loved dragon stories, and the anonymous Anglo-Saxon Beowulf-poet created one of the greatest dragons of literature, a model for Tolkien's treasure-loving dragons in The Hobbit and Farmer Giles of Ham, as well as his masterpiece of malice and terror, Glaurung of The Silmarillion.

Throughout his life, Tolkien was drawn to the challenge of creating an imagined world and mythology. In the 1920s, while he was busy with his teaching career, he was also playfully creating "fairy-stories" to entertain his children. It was for them that The Hobbit evolved, episode by episode. When they outgrew listening to stories, Tolkien's motivation to create them stopped, and so did Bilbo's quest. Not until 1937 did Tolkien complete the novel. The overwhelming popularity of The Hobbit led his publisher to

request another book about hobbits. Tolkien began a sequel almost immediately, but The Fellowship of the Ring, the first part of The Lord of the Rings trilogy, did not see print until 1954, seventeen years after he had written the first chapter.

The world of Middle-earth came to full form in The Lord of the Rings trilogy, but its underlying mythology continued to grow throughout Tolkien's life. After his retirement from Oxford in 1959 he concentrated on preparing for publication manuscripts that went back as far as his schoolboy song about Earendil (1914).

Shortly before his death on September 2, 1973, he was still revising—and rerevising—the manuscripts which were finally edited and published by his son Christopher in The Silmarillion (1977).

Tolkien's own absorption in these myths is reflected by the inscriptions on his and his wife's gravestones: "Beren" and "Luthien," the names of the humanelven couple from whom the great lines of Middle-earth descend. The Tolkien cult of the 1950s and 1960s has never really died out, but the works of this modern myth-maker have themselves begun to find places not only among lists of "popular" novels, but also among the great classics of literature.

Plot Summary

Overview

In *Lord of the Rings*, the inhabitants of Middle Earth join to save themselves from enslavement by the malevolent Sauron. Centuries before, Sauron forged a Ring, putting much of his power into it, to control through a series of lesser rings, men, dwarves, and elves. Some men fell into his power, but an alliance of men and elves defeated him, and the Ring was cut from his hand. It should have been destroyed, but a human prince, Isildur, took it. Isildur was slain, and the Ring fell into a river. There, the hobbit-like Deagol eventually found it. His friend Sméagol killed Deagol for the Ring. From Sméagol it passed to Bilbo Baggins, who, innocent of its powers and dangers, takes it back to his home and eventually leaves it to his cousin and heir Frodo Baggins. Once it is understood what the Ring is, and that Sauron is trying to recover it, it becomes clear that it must be destroyed. It can, however, only be destroyed in the same fire in which it was forged, the volcano Orodruin deep in Sauron's realm. It appears a rash and hopeless mission, requiring that the last forces of Middle Earth fight and act as a decoy while sending Sauron's ultimate weapon back into the heart of his realm. The very unlikelihood of the mission confuses Sauron. The Ring is destroyed in an act of providential irony, but not without enormous loss and a fundamental change to Middle Earth.

The Hobbit

The *Lord of the Rings* is preceded by a prologue, *The Hobbit*, which introduces the Hobbits, Middle Earth, and Sauron's Ring. Bilbo Baggins, on a superficially unrelated adventure finds, steals, or wins□actually a little of all three□a magic ring. His first act while wearing the ring is to spare the life of its previous owner, Gollum, despite the creature's murderous intentions. Bilbo uses the ring throughout the rest of the book to help his companions, raising their estimation of him from something like an awkward piece of baggage to a statesman, if not quite a hero. Returning home, he finds that his reputation will never recover from his adventure and that he does not care.

The Fellowship of the Ring: Book 1

Gandalf the Wizard, an old family friend of Bilbo and his companion in *The Hobbit,* suspects Bilbo's ring is Sauron's lost Ring. Bilbo's advanced age and vigor are unusual even for a hobbit, and the Ring has begun to fill him with unease. Bilbo leaves the Shire, bequeathing the Ring, on Gandalf's advice, along with the rest of his estate to his cousin and heir Frodo. Eventually, Gandalf returns and makes a final test that convinces himself and Frodo that the Ring is Sauron's. Sauron has built up his power and is searching for his Ring. He sends his most terrible servants, the Ringwraiths, to find it. Frodo, his servant Sam, and cousins Merry and Pippin barely manage to elude them

with the help of Aragorn, the heir of the ancient kings who had fought Sauron in the past. Frodo nearly falls under Sauron's power when he puts on the Ring and is wounded by a Ringwraith.

The Fellowship of the Ring: Book 2

The hobbits and Aragorn reach Rivendell with the Ringwraiths closing in. There a council of men, elves, dwarves, and hobbits is held. They decide the Ring is too dangerous either to use or to hide. It must be destroyed. Frodo offers to take and destroy it in the fire where it was forged. With him go Gandalf, Aragorn, and Boromir, son of the Steward of Gondor, for mankind; Legolas, son of Mirkwood's Elf-king, for the elves; Gimli, son of Gloin of the Lonely Mountain for the dwarves; Sam, Merry, and Pippin for the hobbits. Gandalf leads them until, thwarted in their attempt to cross the mountains, he takes them underground through the mines of Moria. There he falls in battle to an evil creature from the earth's depths. Aragorn takes over leadership of the band, guiding them to the elven kingdom of Lórien where its queen Galadriel tests their resolve and gives each a gift, then sends them down the river Anduin to the Rauros falls. There they must decide whether to turn east towards Sauron's realm or go with Boromir to the aid of Minas Tirith, capital of Gondor. Already they realize Gollum is following them. When it becomes clear Frodo will continue the apparently hopeless quest to destroy the Ring, Boromir tries to take the Ring. Frodo, horrified at the Ring's effect, leaves the others. Sam insists on coming with him. Orcs from Mordor and from the renegade wizard Saruman attack while the rest search for Frodo and Sam. Boromir dies trying to protect Merry and Pippin from the Orcs who have been told to capture hobbits.

The Two Towers: Book 3

Gimli, Aragorn, and Legolas return at Boro-mir's horn call, but arrive only in time for Boromir to confess to trying to take the Ring and to beg Aragorn to save his people. Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli start in pursuit of the Orcs. The three are overtaken by a troop of horsemen, the Riders of Rohan, led by Eomer, nephew of their King. Eomer tells them that he and his men overtook a band of Orcs at the edge of the great forest of Fangorn and slaughtered them. He lends them horses to search for their friends on the condition that they come to his uncle's court afterwards to justify his help. The hobbits, however, have escaped and met Treebeard the Ent, the master of the forest. Hearing their story, Treebeard decides the time has come to move against Sauruman who has begun to imitate Sauron, destroying or enslaving everything within his reach. Aragorn, Gimli, and Legolas reach the forest where Gandalf, sent back from the dead to finish his work, meets them. He tells them that the hobbits are safe and have found allies: the Ents. They travel to the court of Theoden, king of Rohan. The wizard turns the king from the despair induced by the insinuations of Grima, the king's councilor, Saruman's agent. They and the Ents help Rohan fight off Saruman's invasion, and then go with Theoden to confront Saruman, now besieged by the Ents. There they are reunited with Merry and Pippin. Saruman refuses to give up his bid for power; Gandalf breaks his staff. Grima

throws a palantír, one of the last three seeing stones, brought from the lost land of Númenor at Gandalf. Pippin, overcome by curiosity, looks into the stone and is seen by Sauron, who thinks he is the Ringbearer. Gandalf gives Aragorn, heir of the kings of Númenor, the palantír and rides with Pippin to Minas Tirith in Gondor. Merry becomes King Theoden's squire.

The Two Towers: Book 4

Frodo and Sam are found by Gollum, whom Frodo befriends, almost winning him over from his malice. Gollum leads them through the desolation around Mordor, but they discover that they cannot enter its "Black Gate." Gollum offers to show them another, hidden way. As they journey there, a scouting party under command of Boromir's younger brother, Faramir, catches them. Faramir learns of the Ring and their plans, but resists any temptation to seize it. He gives them supplies and warns them that Gollum's secret way, the Spider's Pass, is more dangerous than Gollum has said. They follow Gollum, however, having no other choice. A monstrous spider, Shelob, bites Frodo. Sam thinks he is dead and takes the ring to complete Frodo's task. Just as he is about to cross into Mordor, Sam overhears Orcs bickering and realizes that Frodo is not dead. He attempts to follow the Orcs carrying off the unconscious Frodo, but collapses.

The Return of the King: Book 5

Pippin and Gandalf reach Gondor and meet Denethor, the ruling steward. Denethor questions Pippin closely about his dead son. He is not happy with what he hears. He resents Aragorn and believes the Ring should be used to defeat Sauron. Pippin, who admired Boromir, offers his sword to Denethor who accepts him as one of his guardsmen. Meanwhile Aragorn has been joined by a small band of his kinsmen. He takes leave of King Theoden and rides for the Paths of the Dead to demand the help of a ghostly army cursed to have no peace until they fight against Sauron. Gimli and Legolas go with him. Longing for glory and in love with Aragorn, Éowyn, niece of Theoden and regent in his absence, begs Aragorn to let her come with him. Aragorn is miserable. He knows she loves him, but he has spent his whole adult life trying to win Elrond's permission to marry his daughter Arwen. He also understands she is frustrated by woman's work. He refuses Éowyn's pleas and tries to convince her that her role as regency is vital. When Theoden sets out for Gondor, Éowyn, disguised, rides with the army. Merry, who had been ordered behind by the king, comes with her.

At Gondor, meanwhile, Denethor, aged prematurely by watching events distorted by Sauron in the palantír of Minas Tirith, falls further into despair. When Faramir, whom he berated for not seizing the Ring, is brought back wounded, he slips into madness. The Riders of Rohan arrive at Minas Tirith and attack the besieging army. In the battle, the Chief Ringwraith, mounted on a flying beast, attacks Theoden and kills his horse, which falls, killing the king. Éowyn, who has stayed close to him through the fighting, comes between the Ringwraith and her dying uncle and, with Merry's help, kills him. Eomer finds his uncle in time to be named king and receive Theoden's last message for

Éowyn. Finding Éowyn apparently dead, he goes into a rage and charges through the enemy, overstretching his lines, but bringing them within sight of Aragorn, who is arriving with the fleet he has liberated from Sauron. Denethor has seen the approach of the fleet in the palantír and, thinking it is Sauron's, decides to kill himself and Faramir. Pippin, looking for Gandalf, meets a guard, Beregond, whom he sends to try to delay Denethor. With the help of Pippin and Beregond, Gandalf rescues Faramir, but Denethor commits suicide. The battle won, Aragorn refuses to officially enter the city for fear of stirring up dissension, but comes secretly to nurse Faramir, Éowyn, and Merry. With Minas Tirith secured for the moment, the leaders decide to send a small force under Aragorn to Mordor to draw Sauron's attention away from the Ringbearer. When they reach the gates of Mordor, they are met by the "Mouth of Sauron" who shows them Sam's sword, an elven cloak, and Frodo's armor.

The Return of the King: Book 6

Sam rescues Frodo from the Orcs, helped by their in-fighting and the power of Galadriel's gift. He hands Frodo back the Ring, and they travel on, still shadowed by Gollum. They abandon their few possessions as they abandon their hope of doing anything more than destroying the Ring. The landscape grows increasingly bleak as they approach the volcano, Orodruin. Frodo grows weaker and Sam carries him when he can no longer walk. Gollum catches up with them and knocks both of them down. Frodo rises with sudden strength and orders Gollum out of his path: "Begone and trouble me no more! If you touch me ever again, you shall be cast yourself into the Fire of Doom," and walks up the path to the fire. Sam, left alone with Gollum, almost kills him, but, having known briefly the burden of the Ring, cannot out of pity. He follows Frodo and sees him, at the fire's edge, claim the Ring for himself. Gollum attacks Frodo, they struggle and Gollum bites off Frodo's ring finger and, dancing with glee, topples into the flames destroying the Ring.

At the gate of Mordor, the little army is at bay. Eagles arrive just as the armies of Mordor are thrown into panic with the destruction of the Ring. Gandalf sends the eagles to rescue the hobbits. Nearly two weeks later, Sam and Frodo wake in Aragorn's camp. They are reunited with the rest of the Fellowship and formally honored. The army returns to Minas Tirith, where Faramir and Éowyn have fallen in love during their convalescence. Aragorn is crowned. On Midsummer's Day, Aragorn and Arwen are married. They and the Fellowship escort the body of Theoden back to Rohan for his burial. Éowyn and Faramir are betrothed. Arriving at Orthanc, they discover Treebeard has allowed Saruman to leave. Accompanied by Gandalf, the hobbits travel on to Rivendell, meeting Saruman and Grim on the way. The hobbits visit with Bilbo and travel on to learn the Shire has not escaped unscathed. Gandalf leaves them telling them to hurry. Entering the Shire, they find that Lotho Sackville-Baggins and then Saruman under the name of "Sharkey" have turned the Shire into a police state and the beginnings of an ecological disaster. They rouse their fellow hobbits to see off the men who have terrorized them, but discover that Grim has murdered Lotho, and that Sharkey is Saruman. Frodo tries to keep them from bloodshed and will not allow the hobbits to harm Saruman. The miserable Grim, who is in turn killed, murders Saruman. Merry,

Pippin, and Sam re-enter the life of the Shire as acknowledged heroes. Sam marries Rose Cotton; the newlyweds live with Frodo in Bag End. Frodo, however, does not recover from his ordeal. Just three years after they had fled the Shire with the Ring, Sam accompanies Frodo to the Havens where together with Bilbo, Gandalf, Galadriel, and Elrond, he takes ship for the west. With Merry and Pippin, Sam watches as the ship sets sail and then returns home to his wife and baby daughter.

Book 1, Chapter 1

Book 1, Chapter 1 Summary

The story begins with Bilbo Baggins and his upcoming one hundred eleventh-birthday party. Although Bilbo is getting old, he has not changed at all in 61 years, and many people notice and wonder about this. However, Bilbo's cousin and heir, Frodo Baggins, whom he adopted twelve years before, do not think this is unusual. Instead, Bilbo and Frodo are excellent friends and even share the same birthday, meaning that Frodo is turning 33—and coming of age—the same day that Frodo is turning one hundred eleven years old.

As the party draws nearer, Gandalf the wizard arrives, much to the excitement of the hobbits in The Shire. This is because he is carrying a cartload of fireworks for the party, and his fireworks displays are legendary. Eventually, the day of the party arrives and, following a magnificent display of fireworks and a very hearty dinner, Bilbo makes a speech thanking everyone for coming, almost immediately followed by the announcement that he is leaving. Then, there is a sudden flash of light, and Bilbo disappears.

All of the hobbits are amazed and confused by Bilbo's vanishing act, because none of them knew how he did it. In fact, just as the flash of light flared up, Bilbo had secretly put on a ring that makes him invisible, then walked home to Bag End. However, nobody knew about the ring or its powers except Bilbo, Frodo and Gandalf.

After Bilbo's vanishing act, Gandalf meets Bilbo back at his home. Bilbo is preparing to leave and, as he does, Gandalf reminds him to leave the ring to Frodo as he intended. However, Bilbo feels a stubborn urge to keep it, and only a severe threat from Gandalf persuades him to leave the ring. However, once Gandalf is sure that Bilbo is leaving the ring behind, he allows Bilbo to leave in the company of three dwarves.

Frodo, who wanted to say goodbye to Bilbo, unfortunately arrives at Bilbo's house too late. However, Gandalf is still there and he tells Frodo that Bilbo left his ring for him, in addition to his house and all his belongings. Frodo is not the master of Bag End and everything in it.

The next day, the Bagginses from Sackville -- Bilbo's relations -- offer to buy the house from Frodo for a very low price, but Frodo refuses. Shortly after they leave, Frodo is anxious to avoid the Sackville-Bagginses, so he ignores the knocking on the door of his home. However, it is actually Gandalf arriving to tell him that he has to leave. Gandalf had intended to stay for several days, but Gandalf says that he has some business to attend to that will not wait.

Book 1, Chapter 1 Analysis

Hobbits are symbolic of rustic folk. They enjoy old stories and histories they already know and they are quite content living where they live. They are short, prefer to wear green and brown and are very similar in appearance to leprechauns. Because of this, it seems that Tolkien wanted the hobbits to be symbols of the Irish.

Tolkien plays around with words some in the first chapter. For instance, The Sackville-Bagginses are often called the S-B's: very similar to SOB's, which describes them well.

When Gandalf leaves, he warns Frodo not to use the ring because, "It may have other powers than just making you vanish when you wish to." (40) This foreshadows the importance of the ring.

Gandalf is a symbol of wisdom and experience. He does not know anything specifically, but he has inklings of what is happening and what they mean. He is thoughtful, reserved, and thinks deeply. Even when he claims he does not know anything, he still knows something. In future chapters, he is not always welcome because he, like wisdom, often gives bad news that nobody wants to hear. However, Gandalf knows that things are often different from what they seem. His color is Gray because he works in so-called gray areas where events, actions, and results and not always clear.

Book 1, Chapter 2

Book 1, Chapter 2 Summary

The story picks up seventeen years later. Gandalf has visited Frodo several times in those years, but he has not been to The Shire in nine years. However, in his previous visits, Gandalf was very interested to note that Frodo, like Bilbo, did not seem to age at all.

Frodo's two best friends are Peregrin "Pippin" Took and Meriadoc "Merry" Brandybuck. The three of them are frequent companions and walk all over The Shire together, though Frodo is anxious to travel farther. However, he cannot bring himself to leave The Shire quite yet.

As the days stretch on, rumors spread that elves are heading west, dwarves are about and huge tree-like beings are walking in the woods. In addition to these unremarkable stories, there are also rumors that include "whispers of the Enemy and of the Land of Mordor." (p. 42) Likewise, there are rumors that the orcs are multiplying, trolls are out and even deadlier, unnamed creatures are in the countryside. Though some of the hobbits are not concerned by these rumors, others notice the change and are very concerned.

In fact, Samwise Gamgee and Ted Sandyman have an argument about all these rumors of strange happenings around The Shire. Sam thinks that something important is happening and there are strange things occurring around them. However, Sandyman dismisses it all as a bunch of nonsense.

One day, Gandalf finally returns to visit Frodo. His immediate concern is about the ring and he is there to make sure that Frodo still has it safely and secretly stored. After being reassured on this point, Gandalf explains to Frodo that the ring is much more powerful than he had thought and he tells Frodo the story of the Rings of Power and explains how dangerous they are.

After explaining everything to Frodo, Gandalf throws Frodo's ring into the fire, much to Frodo's surprise. However, after the initial surprise wears off, Frodo pulls it out of the fire and looks closely at it. It is then that he sees strange, fiery letters on the ring and Gandalf explains that they are from an important poem:

Three Rings for the Elven-kings under the sky,

Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone,

Nine for Mortal Men doomed to die,

One for the Dark Lord on his dark throne

In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.

One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them,

One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them

In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie. (p. 49)

Frodo's ring is the One Ring that The Enemy, Sauron, lost long ago, robbing him of much of his power. Now, Sauron wants it back and will do anything to get it. Gandalf then explains how Frodo wound up with it:

The Ring was originally on Sauron's hand, but he was felled in a great battle with men, elves and dwarves. After Sauron fell, Isildur -- a man -- cut it off Sauron's hand but, unfortunately, Isildur did not destroy the Ring when he had the chance, but kept it instead. Then, as he returned from the battle, he was attacked on a bridge by orcs. Isildur tried to escape, but the orcs slew him and the Ring fell into the river.

Years later, two hobbit-like creatures found it while they were swimming and one of them, Sméagol, killed the other for it. This Sméagol was also known for a strange swallowing noise that he made all the time, which gave him his other name: Gollum.

As the years passed and Sméagol kept the Ring, it caused him to live on and on and hate the world increasingly. Eventually, he crept away and hid himself in a mountain cave to be alone with the Ring, which he called his "Precious." Then, while Bilbo was out on his adventure to slay the dragon Smaug, Bilbo found the Ring and took it.

Learning that the Ring made him invisible, Bilbo sneaked out of the cave and, as he left, he had an opportunity to kill Gollum. However, Bilbo did not take the opportunity when it presented itself, and he spared Gollum's life. Hearing this, Frodo says that it is a pity that Bilbo did not kill Gollum, but Gandalf responds that pity kept Bilbo from killing Gollum and that was a good thing to do.

Coming to the current state of the world, Gandalf tells Frodo that Sauron captured and tortured Gollum for information, meaning that Sauron has heard of The Shire and he knows the name of Baggins. Thus, Sauron is sending people out to find Baggins of The Shire and the Ring that he carries.

Finally knowing how dangerous the Ring really is Frodo offers the Ring to Gandalf for safekeeping. However, Gandalf recoils in horror, saying that the Ring would make him far too powerful. Instead, since Gandalf will not take the Ring, Frodo decides that he must take the ring out of the Shire, where it will be less of a danger.

Hearing Frodo's resolve, Gandalf stands up, slowly walks over to the window, reaches down and, with a quick snatch, pulls Sam Gamgee up by the ear, asking him what he has heard. Sam gives a few snippets of the story, so Gandalf makes him come into the house. Sam is, obviously, terrified of Gandalf the wizard and Gandalf decides to dole out punishment on Sam for eavesdropping; Sam will have to go with Frodo on his

journey out of The Shire. Hearing this, Sam is overjoyed; he has wanted to see elves for a long time and now he will have an opportunity to do that very thing.

Book 1, Chapter 2 Analysis

The tale of how Bilbo got the Ring from Gollum is told in *The Hobbit*.

The movements of the elves and dwarves indicate that something horrible is growing and people are attempting to run away from it.

The huge tree-like thing walking through the woods foreshadows the Ents.

The argument between Sam and Ted Sandyman foreshadows future problems with Ted Sandyman.

Sauron is a symbol of pure evil, not unlike the devil.

The One Ring is a symbol of power itself. Moreover, because it is a simple circular ring, unmarked and unable to be damaged or destroyed, it is a symbol of eternal, endless power. Just like power, the One Ring is very tempting, horrifying, very difficult to give up, and will eventually turn its use to evil. This is like the phrase "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

It is important to Gandalf that Bilbo gave Frodo the Ring as a gift. It means that power has been given up instead of being forced away. The gift symbolizes the way that a person who receives power freely will do better things with it than a person who takes power for himself. The way it is given is an important indicator of what the person who receives it will do with it.

Book 1, Chapter 3

Book 1, Chapter 3 Summary

As the days stretch on toward autumn, Gandalf tells Frodo that Frodo should leave soon. Anxious to go, but not anxious to leave The Shire, Frodo decides to leave on his and Bilbo's birthday and he will head to Rivendell, where Bilbo went. However, in order to keep the actual business of his journey secret, Frodo hides his intentions by selling his home to the Sackville-Bagginses and telling everyone except Sam that he will be moving closer to his old family.

As everyone prepares to leave, Gandalf suddenly has to respond to an urgent message and leaves in a rush. Gandalf promises to travel with Frodo but when Frodo's birthday finally arrives, Gandalf has not yet returned. Frodo is not sure if he should leave without Gandalf but, since the time has come, Frodo leaves anyway, setting out on his journey with Sam and Pippin. However, as the hobbits leave, Frodo overhears Ham Gamgee -- Sam's father -- telling someone that Frodo has already left.

As the three hobbits travel down the road, they hear a horse coming toward them. Unsure of what to do, the hobbits hide. Fortunately, they get under cover just in time to see a man dressed all in black and riding a black horse approaching them. Seeing the man and feeling a dread fear throughout his body, Frodo wants to put the Ring on in order to disappear as the black-cloaked man sniffs the air. After some time, he finally leaves them and the hobbits watch him ride down the road. However, as Frodo watches the Rider go down the road, he thinks he sees the Black Rider turn off into the woods.

Anxious to avoid the Black Rider, the hobbits walk alongside the road for a long way. However, another Black Rider approaches them and sends them hiding. This time the Rider is more insistent and actually enters the woods but, fortunately, a band of elves approaches, scaring off the Rider.

The hobbits meet the elves as the elves pass by and, of course, the elves wonder why the hobbits are hiding in the woods. The hobbits tell them about the Black Riders and, hearing this, the elves are clearly concerned. In order to keep the hobbits safe, the elves bring the hobbits to a sort of hall made out of trees.

Once they are there, Frodo and Gildor -- the chief elf -- talk long into the night about everything that is happening in the world. Gildor is particularly concerned when he hears that the normally reliable Gandalf is late for his promise to come to the Shire and travel with Frodo. However, Gildor will not say anything further, except to tell Frodo to travel carefully and to try to be brave.

Book 1, Chapter 3 Analysis

The conversation that Frodo overhears between Ham Gamgee and someone else foreshadows the Black Riders' attempts to find Frodo. The person at the Gamgees' door is a Black Rider.

As the hobbits set out, Frodo complains about the weight of his pack. Sam offers to carry more, even though his pack is already very heavy. This foreshadows Sam's constant attention to Frodo and his willingness to bear any burden for him.

The elves of *The Lord of the Rings* are not the sprightly fairy creatures of modern tales. They are the elves of older mythology: great heroic warriors. They are immortal in terms of aging (they do not grow old), but they can be killed in battle. They are somewhat magical; though they do not think what they do is magical in any way.

Book 1, Chapter 4

Book 1, Chapter 4 Summary

Frodo, Sam and Pippin wake up in the woods to find that the elves are gone, and that they have left no trace of their existence except for some food. Fortunately, the food makes for a very enjoyable breakfast and the hobbits set out again, this time on a shortcut through the woods. Though they nearly have a run-in with one of the Black Riders, their trip is uneventful.

After traveling through the woods all day, they finally come to Farmer Maggot's house. Though Frodo is terrified of Farmer Maggot and his dogs, Pippin knows him well and trusts him. Much to Frodo's alarm, they are given a scare by Maggot's dogs when they enter Farmer Maggot's land but, once the farmer realizes whom they are, he brings them inside for dinner.

As Mrs. Maggot cooks dinner for everyone, Maggot tells Frodo that a Black Rider had come to Maggot's door and offered gold in return for information about Baggins. When Maggot turned him down the Rider rode off quickly, though Maggot is still clearly concerned about him. That night, Farmer Maggot takes the hobbits to the ferry that crosses the Brandywine. They meet Merry near the ferry and Frodo, Sam, and Pippin bid their farewells to Maggot.

Book 1, Chapter 4 Analysis

The Black Riders are symbols of fear. They make people cringe, hide and want to do desperate things that may not be for their own good.

Book 1, Chapter 5

Book 1, Chapter 5 Summary

The hobbits cross the river on the ferry. When they arrive at the farther bank, they see a black-cloaked shape sniffing the ground on the other side. Without explaining things to Merry, the hobbits quickly depart. Soon enough, the hobbits arrive at the house that Frodo bought. Frodo, Pippin and Sam explain to Merry and Fredegar "Fatty" Bolger what happened with the Black Riders on the way. Instead of being horrified, however, Merry is disappointed that he missed an adventure.

Then, as the hobbits are sitting comfortably by the fire, Frodo decides that it is time to tell his friends that he and Sam will be leaving the Shire. However, once he tells of his intentions, Merry, Pippin and Fatty simply laugh and tell him that they already knew that he is leaving. In fact, Merry and Pippin have decided to join him and leave Fatty behind in Frodo's house to cover his tracks. Finally, Merry and Pippin also tell Frodo that they already knew about the Ring and the fact that it makes people invisible. Hearing all this, Frodo is angry that they have been spying on him, but he is very thankful for their friendship and help.

As they make their travel plans, the hobbits decide to travel through the Old Forest in order to travel unnoticed. Hearing this, Fatty is appalled and says that it is far too dangerous to travel in the Old Forest. However, Merry is not frightened because he has been in the Old Forest before and he says that they have nothing about which to worry.

Book 1, Chapter 5 Analysis

Fatty Bolger's fears of the Old Forest foreshadow the deadly perils Frodo, Sam, Merry and Pippin will face there.

Book 1, Chapter 6

Book 1, Chapter 6 Summary

Frodo, Sam, Merry and Pippin leave early in the morning and look for the gate in the hedge that protects Buckland from the Old Forest. Finally finding it, they lead their ponies through the gate and into the trees.

As they walk, Merry explains that the Forest is very alive and very aware of what people are doing in it: The trees will try to drop branches on people's heads and trip them with roots. In fact, the trees even move and change the paths that run through them. Merry also relates the story of how the Forest tried to climb over the hedge into Buckland, but the Bucklanders chopped down several of the trees and built a huge bonfire with the wood in order to ward off the Forest. Since then, as Merry says, the Forest has been angry.

After a long trek through the trees, the hobbits arrive on the top of an open hill where they can see the surrounding area, including large stretches of the Forest, the Barrow-downs –an area of frightful legend –and the Withywindle River. As they look down at the Withywindle, Merry explains that the valley of the river seems to be the source of all the oddities of the Forest.

Soon, the hobbits leave the hill and travel through the Forest some more, trying to avoid the Withywindle in the east. However, no matter how hard they try, they keep finding themselves pushed toward the river. Finally, they are forced onto the banks of the Withywindle and a path that runs along it. Even though the hobbits mistrust the path, they see no other way out and decide to follow it.

Eventually, Merry and Pippin are tired and fall asleep against a willow. Frodo tries to keep them moving, but he falls asleep too. Sam manages to fight off the urge to sleep, but he is very groggy. Instead, he walks around to clear his head and finds Frodo asleep on the ground with a tree root holding him down. Alarmed, Sam pulls him out from under the root, and Frodo wakes up almost immediately. Realizing their friends are in danger, they run to the willow to find that Pippin is almost entirely swallowed by the tree, and Merry is partially enclosed by it. The hobbits try to burn the tree, but the tree tells Merry that he will be cut in half if Sam and Frodo keep using fire.

Fortunately, Tom Bombadil comes walking up just then, singing a nonsense song. Frodo and Sam tell him what is happening and Tom tells the tree –Old Man Willow—to release the hobbits. Hearing Tom, Old Man Willow releases the hobbits and, once the appreciative hobbits are all safe, Tom invites them to his home.

Book 1, Chapter 6 Analysis

The anger of the Old Forest is symbolic of nature when it is threatened. It is vengeful and unforgiving to those who do not give it free reign. Despite the love of nature in this book, not all of nature is kind.

Book 1, Chapter 7

Book 1, Chapter 7 Summary

The hobbits arrive at Tom Bombadil's house, where Goldberry is waiting for them. She is a gracious host and offers them food and reassurance that they are safe in Tom's house. Unsure of what to make of their new friend, Frodo asks who Tom is. In response, Goldberry explains that "he is" (p.121) and that he is Master. Then she goes on to tell Frodo that Tom is fearless and has never been caught. However, he does not master the woods, waters and hills—they belong to themselves. Instead, he is his own master, subject to no one and nothing.

After a good meal and a good night's sleep, the hobbits wake up the next morning to find that rain is pouring down and Goldberry is out for her autumn washing. In fact, it is raining too hard for the hobbits to leave, so they sit down and listen to Tom tell stories. As the hobbits listen, Tom tells the hobbits of the thoughts of trees, the story of Old Man Willow and of the barrow-wights in the Great Barrows. Amazed at Tom's vast knowledge, Frodo asks Tom who he is. However, Tom merely says that he is Eldest, and he remembers "the first raindrop and the first acorn" (p. 129) and everything and everyone that came after. Frodo also learns that Tom already knows a great deal about the hobbits, so he tells Tom about their travels.

After Frodo finishes his tale, Tom asks to see the Ring. Frodo kindly gives it to him, and Tom puts it on his finger. Frodo is amazed to see that nothing happens when Tom puts the Ring on and then, when Tom takes off the Ring, he makes it vanish and reappear before giving it back to Frodo. Once he gets the Ring back, Frodo wants to make sure the ring is the One Ring, so he slips it on his finger and vanishes. However, Tom still sees him and tells him to take it off, which Frodo does. After the excitement with the Ring, Tom teaches the hobbits a song to sing if they run into trouble crossing the Barrow-downs. He makes sure that they all know it perfectly and word-for-word so that they will be able to summon him if they need him.

Book 1, Chapter 7 Analysis

Goldberry, dressed in green, is a symbolic Mother Nature character. Tom is symbolic of the Earth itself. He was around before anyone, events rarely escape his notice, he has nothing to fear, and cannot be captured. He is master of nothing, but he is Master. He is old, but still fresh and lively to everyone who meets him. In addition, nothing makes him happier than making Goldberry (Mother Nature) happy.

Tom Bombadil is the oldest being on earth. Age is synonymous with wisdom and experience, which this book values above almost all else. Old beings are both more powerful and more dangerous than the younger, as in the case of Sauron.

Though the Old Forest is a dangerous place, Goldberry and Tom are very happy there and they have a very comfortable home there. This is symbolic of the idea that there is still a great deal of warmth and friendliness in the harshest natural areas. Additionally, Tom's mention of the barrow-wights foreshadows the hobbits' encounter with them.

Book 1, Chapter 8

Book 1, Chapter 8 Summary

After the hobbits leave Tom's house, they happen across Goldberry as she stands on a hill. Meeting the four travelers, she tells them to travel quickly and safely through the Barrow-downs. The hobbits begin to cross the Barrow-downs quickly but, because they are making good time, they stop for lunch on top of a barrow. Unfortunately, they fall asleep and wake up to find that they are surrounded by dense fog. Realizing their plight, the hobbits quickly set out to travel through the fog, but they are separated.

Trying to find his companions, Frodo hears the other three hobbits calling for him and begging for help, but he cannot find them. In an attempt to find his friends, he calls for them, but instead of his friends, a ghostly figure approaches, and Frodo falls unconscious.

Frodo wakes up inside a barrow and sees Sam, Merry and Pippin asleep on a stone slab, clothed in white with a sword lying across their necks. To make matters worse, an arm is crawling along the ground toward the sword. Knowing there is nothing else he can do, Frodo sings the song Tom Bombadil taught him.

Almost immediately, Tom appears and opens the barrow. The arm scurries off, and Tom helps Frodo carry his friends out into the open air. Because the other three hobbits are still unconscious, Tom wakes them with a song and tells them to take off their strange garments and run through the grass naked.

After leaving the hobbits, Tom returns, leading the hobbits' ponies. Tom explains that the ponies' noses told them of danger, and they are much smarter than the hobbits for knowing that they should run from the danger. Then, in order to scatter the treasure of the barrow, Tom jumps inside and pulls out long knives for the hobbits to use as swords.

Eventually, Tom leads the hobbits back onto the road toward Bree, and then leaves them to return to Goldberry. With their friend gone, the hobbits continue their journey and, as they ride down the road, Frodo reminds everyone that he is travelling under the name of Underhill.

Book 1, Chapter 8 Analysis

The hobbits' naked run through the grass has certain homoerotic undertones. This is not the last time that there are hints of homosexuality in *The Lord of the Rings*. Sam, in particular, provides many of these moments. This is especially true in his silent expression of love for Frodo in a later chapter. However, the love between men also indicates a brotherly love between friends. Tolkien often uses the term love for the relationship between very strong friends.

Book 1, Chapter 9

Book 1, Chapter 9 Summary

The hobbits arrive at Bree, where both men (known to the hobbits as Big Folk) and hobbits live. After the hobbits convince the gatekeeper to let them in, they head toward the Prancing Pony for a room. However, soon after the hobbits enter Bree, a dark figure jumps over the gate, following them.

The hobbits arrive at the Prancing Pony—an inn run by Barliman Butterbur—and ask for a room. However, Barliman is rushing about in all directions and barely has time to sign them in. Then, when Frodo gives his assumed name, Barliman seems to think that the name Underhill is important, but he cannot remember why. Therefore, he just shrugs it off and shows the hobbits to their room, and he gives them their dinner in their parlor. Then, once the hobbits are feeling invigorated, everyone except Merry goes into the crowded common room.

As they enter the room, Strider—a Ranger—stares keenly at Frodo. Barliman does not trust Strider but Frodo talks with him when he calls Frodo over. Fortunately, while they are speaking to each other, Strider points out that Pippin is about to tell everyone around the table about Bilbo's disappearance at his birthday party and Strider urges Frodo to do something to stop him. With nothing else to do, Frodo stands up on a table and announces that he is happy that they have met everyone and that it is getting late, and they should be turning in.

However, as he is standing on the table, someone in the room asks for a song and Frodo, not sure how to get out of it, sings a song that the crowd loves. In fact, the song is such a success that they ask him to repeat the last few lines. Frodo, rather flattered, repeats the last few lines of the song and, as he does a little jump in the air, slips and falls down off the table. Unfortunately, his finger falls into the Ring and he vanishes. Seeing this, the crowd is stunned at his disappearance and a couple of locals hurry out of the room.

Frodo, unsure what to do, crawls over to a dark corner near Strider and takes off the Ring. Surprisingly, Strider is not very curious about Frodo's vanishing act. Instead, he says that Frodo has really messed things up, and he wants to speak with Frodo in his room later that evening.

Meanwhile, the crowd is still asking questions about Frodo's disappearance and, trying to cover his tracks, Frodo comes up with a convenient excuse. The crowd is unconvinced, but it is enough for Frodo to get himself, Pippin and Sam back to their room.

Book 1, Chapter 9 Analysis

Barliman Butterbur does not trust Strider. However, he is a forgetful, scatterbrained character. Through this, the reader is shown not to trust Barliman's assessment of Strider.

Frodo's song is a long variation on the old nursery rhyme that begins, "Hey diddle-diddle the cat and the fiddle…"

When Strider tells Frodo, "You put your foot in it! Or should I say your finger!" (p. 157), it shows that Strider clearly knows who Frodo is and that he is carrying the Ring. This point is emphasized when he calls Frodo "Mr. Baggins" (p. 157) when Frodo is travelling with the name Underhill. Strider has obviously been thoroughly informed about Frodo and his mission. This foreshadows Strider's importance.

Book 1, Chapter 10

Book 1, Chapter 10 Summary

Frodo, Sam and Pippin return to their room and stir the fire back to life before they notice that Strider is in the room with them. Since they have an agreement to meet, Frodo asks Strider about the information that may be important to them. However, Strider says that he will only give up information for a price: that he be allowed to act as guide on their journey. Still wary, Frodo does not agree to his price. This actually pleases Strider, because it shows him that Frodo is finally learning to be cautious.

Strider explains that he followed the hobbits after they got back on the road by the Barrow-downs and he sneaked over the gate after them. In addition, Strider tells them that Black Riders have passed through Bree and Bill Ferny may be in league with them. Then, once again, he offers his services as guide. However, the hobbits—Sam especially –still do not trust Strider.

Just then, Barliman arrives and Strider hides behind the door. Barliman explains that he suddenly remembered that Gandalf told him that a hobbit fitting Frodo's description would be traveling under the name of Underhill and he has a letter for Frodo that was supposed to have been sent to him months ago. In addition, Barliman says that Black Riders had been through Bree awhile back and Strider, whom he still mistrusts, was asking about Frodo earlier that night. Hearing his name, Strider appears from behind the door and chastises Barliman for his forgetfulness.

Just then, the hobbits realize that their friend Merry is missing but Barliman explains that he went out for some air. So, unconcerned by this news, Frodo opens the letter from Gandalf. The letter tells Frodo he should leave before the end of July (almost three months previous) and that Strider is a friend of Gandalf's. As well, the letter says that Strider's real name is Aragorn and he gives a poem that includes the lines:

All that is gold does not glitter,

Not all those who wander are lost; (p. 167)

After reading the letter, Frodo is almost convinced to take Aragorn along with him. However, Sam is still unsure, so Strider answers by saying that he is Aragorn, son of Arathorn and if he wanted the Ring, he could take it. To show his power, he stands up menacingly, but quickly retracts the implied threat.

Finally realizing he can trust Strider, Frodo decides to take him as their guide. Now that he is in charge of the hobbits, Strider explains that they will make for Weathertop, an old fort and lookout post. Then Frodo asks about Gandalf, but Strider has not seen him for months.

Just then, Merry bursts into the room. He saw Black Riders in Bree and followed one of them to see what he was doing. Seeing the Rider talking to someone, he turned to run but fell unconscious. It was only because of Nob that he was able to escape the Rider and, once he did, he ran back with the news. Unfortunately, Merry does not know what happened after he fell unconscious or what he said to the Black Rider.

Hearing this, Aragorn thinks that the Black Riders may attack the inn. He sends Nob to put pillows under the hobbits' beds so that it looks like they are asleep in their room. Meanwhile, they will actually sleep in the parlor under Aragorn's guard.

Book 1, Chapter 10 Analysis

The poem "All that is gold…" was written by Bilbo. During the conversation about the Black Riders, the characters refer to them as "black men" throughout. Some readers take this as Tolkien making comments about race. This description of black, evil beings continues later with the orcs and Uruk-hai. Whether or not this was, Tolkien's intention is still not entirely clear. Aragorn's implied, and then quickly retracted threat of taking the Ring from Frodo foreshadows others' attempts to take the Ring.

Book 1, Chapter 11

Book 1, Chapter 11 Summary

The story returns to the Shire, where Fatty Bolger is staying at the house Frodo purchased. Three Black Riders attack the house, but Fatty escapes from a back door and alerts everyone.

Back in Bree, Aragorn wakes the hobbits and shows them the slashed sheets and blankets in their room: The Black Riders had attacked in the night. Seeing this, Strider and the hobbits decide to leave at once.

Unfortunately, they cannot leave right away because their ponies were stolen and they have to walk. Now, instead of leaving early and unnoticed, they cannot leave until noon, towing an overpriced, underfed baggage-pony purchased from Bill Ferny.

The company leaves Bree and stays off the roads, trying to leave the Riders behind. After a few days of backtracks and winding ways, they see flashes of lightning in the distance that look as if they are rising from the ground up to the sky.

Eventually, they arrive at Weathertop. As they search the ground, the find a cryptic message Gandalf left for them on a rock. Seeing it, Aragorn interprets it to mean that Gandalf was at Weathertop three days before.

As they look out from the top of Weathertop, Frodo and Aragorn spot two Black Riders meeting three other Riders on the road. Seeing this, Aragorn realizes they will probably attack Weathertop in the night. In order to protect themselves, they build a fire and wait.

After Aragorn passes the time by telling the story of Beren and Tinúviel, Sam and Pippin think they see the Black Riders climbing up Weathertop. Soon, the Black Riders attack their camp and, in fear, Frodo puts on the Ring and sees the Riders as tall, ghostly, shimmering kings. With nothing else to do, Frodo tries to attack these ghostly apparitions, but one of the Black Riders stabs Frodo.

Book 1, Chapter 11 Analysis

A league is three miles. A furlong is one-eighth of a mile.

When the hobbits are leaving Bree with Strider, they see a very strange looking man peering at them from Bill Ferny's house. The appearance of this man foreshadows the half-orcs of the Uruk-hai. On Weathertop, Aragorn tells the hobbits the story of the love between Tinúviel, an elf and Beren, a man. This foreshadows Aragorn and Arwen's love for each other.

Book 1, Chapter 12

Book 1, Chapter 12 Summary

Frodo wakes up next to the fire. Sam, Pippin and Merry tell him that Aragorn chased off the Black Riders, but they do not know where he is. Soon, Aragorn returns, checks Frodo's wound and leaves to return with healing herbs known as *athelas*. Then, as Aragorn searches the ground around the camp, he finds a cursed knife on the ground. Part of the blade has been chipped off, meaning that it is in Frodo's wound and moving inward. Then, as Aragorn holds the knife, the blade dissolves in his hand.

The company quickly sets out for Rivendell. They continue travelling through the countryside and woods for several days, though Frodo's wound hurts increasingly every day. Eventually, they meet the elf Glorfindel on the road and he helps them on their journey to Rivendell.

After several days, they approach the Ford of Bruinen near Rivendell. It is then that Glorfindel suddenly tells Frodo to ride as quickly as possible on his horse to escape five of the Black Riders.

Riding Glorfindel's horse, Frodo speeds toward the Ford and, barely escaping the Black Riders, he crosses the Ford. However, he can go no further and the Black Riders taunt him as they begin to cross. Suddenly, the river rises and Frodo falls unconscious as the river sweeps away three of the riders in the Ford. Then his friends attack the other two riders with torches, spooking their horses and sending them leaping into the river too.

Book 1, Chapter 12 Analysis

The athelas that Aragorn uses to help Frodo on Weathertop shows up twice more: when Aragorn helps heal Sam and Frodo after their escape from Moria and in the Houses of Healing in Minas Tirith. In the woods, Aragorn and the hobbits come across trolls that have been turned to stone. This is an allusion to one of Bilbo's adventures in *The Hobbit*. The final scene where Frodo barely escapes the Black Riders is the climax and ending to Book One. This leaves a cliffhanger ending as Frodo falls unconscious.

Book 2, Chapter 1

Book 2, Chapter 1 Summary

After four nights and three days, Frodo wakes up in a bed in Rivendell to see Gandalf sitting by his bed. Gandalf explains that he was late because he was held captive, though he does not say anything further about his imprisonment.

Gandalf then explains to Frodo that the Black Riders are the nine Ringwraiths who are under the control of Sauron and that Strider and the rest of the Rangers are Men of the West or Númenoreans. Frodo asks if the Riders were killed in the Ford, but Gandalf tells him that only their horses were killed; the Wraiths cannot be killed that easily.

Continuing the tale of everything that Frodo missed, Gandalf tells Frodo that, while he was asleep, Elrond removed a shard of a Morgul-knife that would have turned Frodo into a Wraith if it had dug any deeper into his body. If it had, then Frodo would have been under the command of the other Ringwraiths, and he would have been forced to do their bidding.

Eventually, Frodo's strength returns enough to allow him to get out of bed. Just outside his door, he sees Sam and they go out and meet Merry and Pippin for a feast that is being held. At the feast, Frodo sees Elrond, Glorfindel, Gandalf and the beautiful Arwen. However, Aragorn is conspicuous in his absence.

After the feast, the company goes to the Hall of Fire, where Frodo meets Bilbo. Bilbo tells Frodo about his travels and asks to see the Ring. Frodo, not seeing any problem with it, Frodo shows it to him but, as he does, Bilbo seems to turn into a withered, greedy, groping old man. Appalled, Frodo draws back from him and Bilbo then realizes why he had to give up the Ring and asks Frodo to put it away.

Once everyone is gathered, the elves sing a song by Bilbo before Bilbo and Frodo leave to talk more. However, as Frodo exits, he sees Aragorn standing over Arwen as though they are in love.

Book 2, Chapter 1 Analysis

Gandalf says that it may have been better that he was delayed and held captive. Gandalf, the symbol of wisdom, is saying that things are rarely what they seem and often the worst things that happen can turn out to be good. When Gandalf seems to see a transparency around Frodo, especially on his left hand, it symbolizes the fact that the Ring is slowly gaining control of Frodo. When Frodo enters the hall for the feast, he sees Gandalf on the dais next to Elrond. This shows that Gandalf is held in much higher esteem than Frodo had expected.

Glóin was one of the dwarves Bilbo joined in *The Hobbit*. Frodo asks him about other dwarves from *The Hobbit*: Balin, Ori and Óin. Glóin does not know what became of them. This foreshadows the Fellowship finding Balin's grave in Moria. Bilbo's desires for the Ring and Frodo's unwillingness to hand it to him foreshadow future problems with the Ring between Frodo, Gollum and Sam.

Aragorn's insistence that Bilbo put a green stone in the song foreshadows Arwen's gift -- given through Galadriel -- to Aragorn of a green stone. Aragorn standing over Arwen at the end of Chapter 1 further foreshadows their marriage.

Book 2, Chapter 2

Book 2, Chapter 2 Summary

Council is joined the following day in order to determine what should be done with the Ring. The Council consists of Frodo, Bilbo, Gandalf, Aragorn, Elrond, Glorfindel, Glóin, Glóin's son Gimli, Legolas from the Mirkwood, Boromir from Gondor and a few other elves.

Opening the Council, Glóin speaks of Balin's trek to Moria (*Khazad-dûm* in dwarvish) and the fact that a messenger came to his king from Mordor, asking about the Ring. Glóin has come to Rivendell in order to learn what is so important about the Ring and why Sauron wants it so badly. In order to clear things up, Elrond tells everyone there the story of the Ring.

Then Boromir stands up and explains the plight of Gondor as it fights against Mordor. He says he came because he and his brother Faramir both had a dream telling them "Seek for the Sword that was broken… For Isildur's Bane shall waken, and the Halfling forth shall stand" (240). In response, Aragorn shows Boromir his broken sword as part of the answer to the dream. Then Gandalf asks Frodo to show everyone the Ring. Elrond tells everyone that the Ring is Isildur's Bane, answering the second part of Boromir's dream.

The Council asks Bilbo to relate the tale of how he found the Ring and took it from Gollum. Then Frodo tells everyone of what passed while he has had the Ring, completing the story of the Ring and its travels. Filling out the story, Gandalf tells the story of his hunt for Gollum, Aragorn's capture of Gollum and how he learned more about the Ring from him. Hearing of how dangerous Gollum is and how badly he wants the ring, Legolas reluctantly reports that Gollum escaped.

Moving on to other matters, Gandalf then tells the Council how Saruman lured him in the tower of Orthanc in Isengard and how Saruman wants the Ring for his own ends. Saruman tried to convince Gandalf to help him get it but Gandalf was not convinced. Therefore, Saruman imprisoned Gandalf on the top of Orthanc, from which Gwaihir, the Great Eagle, rescued him. From there, Gwaihir took Gandalf to Rohan and Gandalf took the great horse, Shadowfax. Riding on to Bree, he heard the hobbits had already been through the town and, in order to try to meet them, he rode to Weathertop. In fact, the lightning that Aragorn and the hobbits had seen earlier in their journey was Gandalf fighting off the Black Riders. Then, after the fight on Weathertop, Gandalf rode on to Rivendell.

After the full state of affairs has been made clear, the Council attempts to figure out what to do next. The Council considers sending the Ring to Tom Bombadil, but Gandalf tells them it is a bad idea. Having heard of the power of the Ring, Boromir wants to take it to Minas Tirith to use in the war against Mordor, but he is overruled because anyone

who uses the Ring to destroy Sauron would only take his place as the ultimate evil in Middle Earth. Instead, the Council decides that the Ring must go into the Cracks of Doom to be destroyed. However, they do not know who should take it. Bilbo offers to take it, but he is refused. Finally, Frodo says that he will take the Ring to be destroyed. Just then, Sam appears from hiding and says that he will join Frodo on the quest.

Book 2, Chapter 2 Analysis

Boromir is the symbolic man of action. Boromir likes to confront things directly and is not concerned with subtleties. He is always forthright and brave, but he does not understand his own inability to control his desires. He is highly respected and highly valued and knows how to get what he wants. However, he does not know how to control his desires with thought. He is the sort of man who gets things done, but does not do well when there is no one there to tell him what to do.

When Gandalf speaks the language of Mordor, everyone is appalled and the elves cover their ears. Tolkien was a linguist and put a great deal of stock into both the sounds of words and the power of those sounds. Gandalf says that Gollum "may play a part yet that neither he nor Sauron have foreseen." (249) This foreshadows the scene in which Gollum accidentally destroys the Ring.

Saruman is a symbol of the misguided intellectual and scientist. For instance, he speaks of dividing light into its component elements with a prism. He is able to think well, but once he gets a bad idea in his head, he rationalizes it until everything is built around that one idea. He uses reason to find the reasoning that will lead him to the conclusion he has already decided on. The wise Gandalf, however, rationally builds his conclusions upon good reasons and decides his course from there.

When the Council gives up the idea of throwing the Ring into the sea, they say it is a bad idea because of beasts in the deep and because the earth under the sea will eventually become dry land. This shows that the concerns of the council are not only measured in years but also thousands of years. They want a permanent solution that is beyond even the longest stretch of time that is so long that it seems to be permanent.

Book 2, Chapter 3

Book 2, Chapter 3 Summary

Elrond sends out scouts to find the Black Riders and make sure that they are nowhere near Rivendell. Meanwhile, everyone has to wait and see what to do next. Elrond decides that there will be nine people travelling with Frodo and tells Merry and Pippin that the Fellowship of the Ring consists of Gandalf, Aragorn, Boromir, Legolas, Gimli, Frodo and Sam so far. Elrond wants two more warriors to travel with Frodo, but Merry and Pippin promise that either they will go along or they will be sent home bound up in sacks. In the mean time, preparations for the quest move forward. Aragorn's sword is re-forged and renamed Andúril. As well, Bilbo gives Frodo a sword, Sting, which senses orcs, as well as an indestructible mail corselet (an armored shirt) made of mithril.

It is late December when the nine members of the Fellowship strike out with Bill, the pony they purchased in Bree and travel through the land of Hollin in order to find a safe place to cross the mountains. After about three weeks of traveling, the Fellowship attempts to cross the mountain Caradhras through the pass of the Redhorn Gate. However, the mountain seems to be alive, throwing rocks down at them as a blizzard howls around them. Then, finally, after a cold, miserable night on the path, they retreat.

Book 2, Chapter 3 Analysis

Gandalf advises Elrond to send Merry and Pippin with the Fellowship because of their friendship with Frodo. This symbolizes the importance of friendship and the idea that it will often succeed where bravery will not. The Fellowship leaves Rivendell on December 25. This is symbolic of a Christian mission to destroy evil. Frodo overhears Gandalf and Aragorn discussing the way to cross the mountains. Gandalf hints at a way other than a mountain pass, but Aragorn does not want to think about that route. This foreshadows the Fellowship's trek through Moria.

Book 2, Chapter 4

Book 2, Chapter 4 Summary

The Fellowship decides to move forward through Moria. Everyone but Gimli the dwarf is frightened of the place, but no one sees another choice.

As they wait for morning, a pack of wolves attacks the Fellowship. The Company fights them off valiantly, and Gandalf shows his power by setting the woods on fire. However, in the morning, the bodies of the wolves are gone, showing that the wolves were not normal wolves. In fact, they were agents of Sauron. The Company travels to the gates of Moria as quickly as possible in order to escape the wolves and, as they near the entrance, they see a large pool standing in front of the entrance. Since a pony will not be able to travel through Moria, they send Bill off, much to Sam's regret.

That night, as the moon comes out, lines of light show the edges of the door, as well as the writing "speak, friend, and enter" (297). They realize it is a riddle, but they cannot figure it out. Boromir, frustrated, throws a rock into the pool. However, after all his deliberation, Gandalf finally realizes that he needs to say the elvish word for friend. Once he does, the doors open.

However, just as the doors open, tentacles strike out from the pool and attack the Company. The companions quickly run through the opening and, just as they are all in, the tentacles pull the doors shut. Then, while they are inside, there is a crashing noise outside, signifying that the doors are sealed with rubble from the outside. Looking back, Gandalf is concerned about the fact that the monster under the water attacked Frodo first, though he says nothing.

With only one way to go, Gandalf leads the Company through Moria by the light from his staff. However, after a while, they come to a choice between three doors and Gandalf is stumped. With nothing else to do, the rest of the Fellowship rests in a guardroom with a large well that intrigues Pippin. In fact, Pippin is curious to know how deep it is, so he drops a stone into the well and, after a long wait, it hits water. Then hammers are heard from the depths; they are not alone. However, the Fellowship continues an uneventful trek through Moria. It is only after days of travel in the mines that they come to a room with the tomb of Balin.

Book 2, Chapter 4 Analysis

The bickering between Legolas and Gimli shows that the elves and dwarves have deep-seated rivalries that often set them at odds, even when they are united against a common enemy. This foreshadows the problems and mistrust that Gimli faces when the Fellowship comes to Lórien. Frodo hears footsteps behind him in Moria. Gollum is following them. Gandalf explains that the dwarves' greed destroyed them when they

woke up evils in the deep. This symbolizes the way greed wakes up evils in people that should be left alone.

Book 2, Chapter 5

Book 2, Chapter 5 Summary

Gandalf finds a book that tells of Balin's return to Moria. The book is filled with accounts of their return to Moria and battles they fought against the orcs. Continuing on, he reads how the orcs pushed them back and trapped them in that very room. Then, on the final page, the book says there were "drums, drums in the deep," and then "they are coming" (314).

After reading through the contents of the book, Gandalf gives the book to Gimli for safekeeping. However, the Fellowship hears drums coming from the deep and they realize that they are trapped. Fortunately, there are two exits to the room and the orcs are only at one door, so they slam one door shut and wedge it closed. The orcs force the door open and the company fights them off brilliantly. In the fight, Frodo is struck by a spear but he is fine, much to everyone's surprise.

Everyone but Gandalf runs down the stairs of the unguarded door while Gandalf works to close the way behind them. Soon after, they hear a crash and Gandalf comes down, utterly exhausted from meeting something that almost destroyed him. However, the way behind them is secure. The Fellowship enters a huge room ands run toward a narrow bridge near the exit. Fortunately, their pursuers are cut off by a flaming fissure, though trolls are bridging the gap with stones. Then, as Legolas turns to shoot an arrow at their enemies, he sees a Balrog.

Everyone runs across the bridge while Gandalf stands at the far end and warns the Balrog not to approach. However, the Balrog attempts to cross and Gandalf smashes the bridge, sending the Balrog into the abyss. However, the Balrog's whip catches Gandalf's leg and pulls him down into the abyss too. After seeing their leader fall into the fissure, the company runs through the gates and into Dimrill Dale. Then, once they are safely in the open air and daylight, they can grieve for the loss of their friend Gandalf.

Book 2, Chapter 5 Analysis

The Fellowship's entrapment in Balin's tomb is a mirror image of the last stand of the dwarves. The battle in Moria is the first climax of Book Two.

Book 2, Chapter 6

Book 2, Chapter 6 Summary

With Gandalf gone, Aragorn takes over the leadership of the company. They leave the gates of Moria behind as quickly as possible because the orcs might come after them at night. However, as they enter the valley, Gimli takes Frodo to the Kheled-zâram, a large pool of water that mirrors the mountains and the stars, even when the sun is shining.

The Fellowship travels on, but Frodo and Sam fall behind. Remembering that they were injured in the fight, Aragorn makes everyone sit down and rest. However, as they recall the fight, everyone wonders how Frodo survived being hit squarely with a spear. Their questions are answered when, in order to check for wounds, Aragorn removes Frodo's shirt and sees the mithril corselet underneath. Stunned at the sight of the brilliant workmanship, Gimli says that it is worth more than all the land in The Shire.

After Aragorn eases Frodo's bruises and the cut on Sam's head with *athelas*, the Fellowship travels quickly and arrives at the woods of Lothlórien. Realizing where they are, Boromir is frightened of the place and the tales he has heard, though Aragorn tells him that there is nothing to fear. Instead, they enter the woods and decide to climb up into the trees to sleep. However, a party of elves is in the trees. Since Legolas is an elf, he speaks with them and convinces them to allow the Fellowship to sleep on their tree platforms, though they do not trust Gimli. However, they allow him to climb up into the tree in order to help keep a band of orcs from Moria from finding everyone.

Up on the platform, Frodo wakes in the middle of the night. Thinking he hears something, he looks down from the platform and sees Gollum trying to climb the tree. However, before Gollum can climb up, the elves scare him off. The next morning, the company is to be brought to Lórien. Because of the laws of the land, the elves demand to blindfold Gimli, but Gimli refuses. Therefore, in order to soothe ill feelings, Aragorn tells the elves to blindfold everyone, including himself and Legolas.

When the Fellowship arrives in Cerin Amroth, everyone is allowed to walk freely, including Gimli. Haldir, one of the elves who were on the platform, shows Frodo the view from the top of the hill, where they meet Aragorn. Sadly, it is the last time Aragorn ever visits Cerin Amroth.

Book 2, Chapter 6 Analysis

Aragorn frequently says that there is no evil in Lothlórien other than what people bring with them. In the ideal natural world of Lothlórien, evil is nowhere to be found unless it is brought in. When evil comes in, it is destroyed like the orc band that came from Moria.

When Haldir takes Frodo to the top of the hill of Cerin Amroth, he also points out the dangerous Southern Mirkwood and Dol Guldur. This shows that Frodo's mission and the

coming battles in Rohan and Gondor are only parts of a much larger war that is being fought all over Middle Earth.

Book 2, Chapter 7

Book 2, Chapter 7 Summary

The elf Haldir guides the Company to Caras Galadhon, where Lord Celeborn and Lady Galadriel live. Once they enter the city, they climb up to the hall of Celeborn and Galadriel, where each member of the Fellowship is welcomed warmly. However, seeing their numbers, the two elves mention that they thought there were nine members of the Fellowship. Reluctantly, they report Gandalf's death in Moria and all the elves there are saddened by the news. However, Celeborn is so angered by the news that he speaks harshly about the dwarves and the fact that they dug so deep into the mountain. However, Galadriel gently rebukes her husband for his words, and then speaks to Gimli about Moria in the dwarvish tongue. Hearing her speak beautifully in his own language, Gimli is suddenly very happy in her company.

Galadriel then searches the eyes of each member of the Fellowship and only Legolas and Aragorn are able to keep from turning their eyes away. It is only after Galadriel searches their eyes that everyone discusses the experience; everyone says that it was as though they were being offered something pleasurable instead of the their quest and she would not tell anyone else which option they would choose.

After a while in Lórien, Galadriel comes to Frodo and Sam and asks them to look into her mirror for a glimpse of what it would show them. Sam looks into it to see Frodo lying asleep before he sees himself climbing a long and winding stair looking for something. Then he sees Ted Sandyman cutting down trees in the Shire and the Shire transformed into a hideous industrial area. Shocked at what he has seen, Sam cries that he needs to go back. However, Galadriel will not allow him to do it because many things it shows have not yet happened and some things may never be.

Once Sam finishes, Frodo looks in the mirror. There he sees a man who looks like Gandalf, but he is dressed in white. Then the image shifts and Frodo sees Bilbo in his study. After that, the mirror shows him images of a great history that includes the sea, tall ships, a white city with seven towers, the smoke of battle, a ship with black sails and a banner with a white tree. Once he has seen all this, Frodo thinks it is over and begins to draw away. However, the mirror changes and shows him an eye rimmed with fire that stares out, looking at him. Suddenly, the Ring weighs heavy on his neck and almost drags him into the water of the mirror. Only Galadriel saves him when she tells Frodo that the eye is looking for him as well as her. As she makes a motion that seems to shove off the influence of Sauron, Frodo sees the ring on her finger and realizes that it is one of the Three Rings given to the elves.

Fearful of his task and filled with admiration for Galadriel, Frodo offers her the Ring. With this temptation in front of her, Galadriel imagines what would happen if she were to take it. As her words go through the possibilities, she speaks of becoming a hideous Queen of terrible beauty and, as she does so, she changes into that very thing before

Frodo's eyes. Then, as the moment passes, she returns to normal and refuses to take the Ring. Lacking the understanding of what just happened, Sam says that she should take the Ring anyway to make folk pay for their dirty work. However, Galadriel tells him that that is how it would begin but, unfortunately, it would not stop there.

Book 2, Chapter 7 Analysis

Galadriel is able to calm Gimli and turn him into an adoring admirer. This is symbolic of the ability of kindness to turn even angry rivals into the most loyal friends. In fact, after this, Gimli and Legolas is an inseparable pair.

Sam's visions in the mirror foreshadow the deforesting of the Shire, the attack of Shelob on Frodo and his search for Frodo after he was brought to Minas Morgul. Frodo's visions foreshadow the return of Gandalf, the War of the Ring, and the Eye of Sauron searching for him.

Galadriel wears the Ring of Adamant, an indestructible metal. Therefore, Galadriel is a symbol of the beautiful as an indestructible force against evil. Beauty is indestructible, unless a powerful evil comes to take it away. However, Power is terrible to behold when it allies with Beauty, for it is both frightening and irresistible. Thus, Galadriel refuses the One Ring of Power.

Book 2, Chapter 8

Book 2, Chapter 8 Summary

The party is set to move on from Lothlórien. Celeborn offers the opportunity for any of them to stay there rather than go on but everyone wants to continue with the quest. However, they must choose which side of the River Anduin to travel on. The west side of the river will take them to Minas Tirith and the east side will take them to Mordor. Since Aragorn has not decided which side of the river to take, Celeborn offers them boats for the journey. Then they sit down and try to figure out which way to go but during their conference, Boromir eyes Frodo in a way that makes Frodo very uneasy.

On the day they are to leave, the elves give them *lembas* -- or, waybread -- to strengthen them on their journey. As well, the elves give them clothes, including cloaks that blend into the background, like a chameleon's skin. Finally, the elves give Sam some rope.

Gimli and Legolas are in the same boat because they seem to have struck an unlikely friendship and, as the Fellowship heads out, they are met by Celeborn and Galadriel. They have a meal on the riverbank, and after their meal, Galadriel offers gifts to each of the members of the Fellowship. Galadriel gives Aragorn a brooch with a green stone and a sheath that ensures his sword will not be stained or broken, even in defeat. For Boromir, she offers a belt of gold, Pippin and Merry receive silver belts, Legolas receives a bow and a quiver of arrows and Sam receives a box of earth from Galadriel's garden. Coming to Gimli, Galadriel asks him what he would like and he responds that he would like a strand of Galadriel's hair. Hearing this, Galadriel gladly gives him three strands. Finally, Frodo is given a phial of light. With their parting over, the Company sets out into the river. Gimli is actually driven to tears by his wish that he could stay with Galadriel. However, the Fellowship travels on down the river and away from Lothlórien.

Book 2, Chapter 8 Analysis

Galadriel tells the members of the Fellowship "Maybe the paths that you each shall tread are already laid before your feet, though you do not see them." (359) These words seem to indicate that there is an element of fate in their journey. In fact, the Mirror of Galadriel seems to show that fate is definitely at work. In fact, Galadriel says to Sam in the previous chapter that the events in her Mirror sometimes happen only because people try to prevent them. Thus, *The Lord of the Rings* is posing the question of whether there is such a thing as free will. However, it never actually tries to answer it.

When Frodo hears the song of the elves, he remembers all the words well enough to write them down and translate them later. This clearly foreshadows the fact that Frodo will survive the adventure and will live to tell the tale in a world where he has time to write. In other words, there will be a "happy ending" to the story.

The way that Boromir eyes Frodo foreshadows his attempt to take the Ring from him. The box of earth Sam receives will revive the Shire once he returns. The phial of light Frodo receives will help him through Shelob's lair and help Sam rescue him. In fact, the phial contains the captured light from a Silmaril, a stone that figures into one of the myths that Tolkien created in the larger mythology in the universe of *The Lord of the Rings*.

Book 2, Chapter 9

Book 2, Chapter 9 Summary

The Company continues along the River. Pippin and Merry ride in the boat with Boromir, Frodo and Sam ride with Aragorn, and Legolas and Gimli share the third boat. Finally, the Company leaves the woods and enters a wide wasteland that makes them feel naked and exposed on the river.

Sam is too frightened of boats to paddle, so he keeps watch on the bow. However, one night, he wakes up from sleep and sees a log that seems to have eyes. Frightened, he tells Frodo about it, and Frodo tells him it is Gollum. Realizing that this is a dangerous state of affairs, Frodo tells Aragorn about it, but Aragorn was already well aware of him.

As the Fellowship continues down the river, they come near the rapids of Sarn Gebir and orcs attack them from a riverbank. However, the Company escapes unscathed and lands on the opposite side of the river. As they land, one of the Nazgûl arrives on a huge flying beast, but Legolas kills the beast with an arrow.

After the short battle, the Company works their boats back upstream. With no way to navigate the rapids, they walk their boats around the rapids of Sarn Gebir and get back onto the river. Then they pass through the Pillars of the Kings and finally arrive at Amon Lhaw and Amon Hen (the Hills of Hearing and Sight) near the waterfall of Rauros. With the time for decision at hand, they make camp to decide where to go next.

Book 2, Chapter 10 Analysis

The eagle that Legolas sees above them is Gwaihir. He is also the eagle that they see as they are chasing the orcs across the fields of Rohan. The Company spent an entire month in Lothlórien, though it only seemed to be a few days. This is symbolic of the way that time flies by quickly when people are happy.

Book 2, Chapter 10

Book 2, Chapter 10 Summary

The next day, they ask Frodo what he wants to do. However, Frodo cannot decide, so he walks off into the woods to think about it. However, as Frodo is out walking, Boromir finds him and tries to convince Frodo to either come to Minas Tirith or give him the Ring.

Boromir speaks about everything he could do with the Ring, which frightens Frodo. The desire for the Ring is corrupting Boromir and Frodo refuses to go with him or give him the Ring. In fact, Boromir is enraged with desire for the Ring and he tries to take it from Frodo by force. However, Frodo escapes by putting on the Ring and running away. Frodo runs up to Amon Hen, the Hill of Sight. There, he looks out and sees the world stretching out around him until, finally, he feels the Eye of Sauron searching for him. As its gaze approaches, Frodo takes off the Ring and escapes the Eye.

Realizing the danger that the Ring poses to his friends, Frodo decides that he must go on by himself. Therefore, he puts on the Ring and goes back toward the boats. Meanwhile, the other members of the Company are discussing what to do and they all decide that if Frodo wants to go to Mount Doom, they would all follow him. However, as they are discussing this, they see that Boromir has disappeared and, when Boromir returns, he tells a little of what happened with Frodo while leaving out his attempt to take the Ring.

Immediately, the hobbits go running after Frodo and, in order to keep them from getting into too much trouble, Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas chase after them. Aragorn catches Sam and tells him to follow him but, having no way of keeping up with Aragorn, Sam stops to think what he should do.

Putting his mind to the problem, Sam correctly figures that Frodo would return to the boats and Sam runs in that direction as quickly as possible. Sam arrives at the shore and jumps in the water just as an invisible Frodo is shoving off. However, Sam cannot swim, so Frodo has to save him. Then, when Sam is safe, he tells Frodo that he promised that he will stay with him and that he will not leave him. Sam and Frodo return to shore, pick up Sam's gear and head out.

Book 2, Chapter 10 Analysis

Though this chapter is not as thrilling as some others are, it is the second climax of Book Two. The Fellowship of the Ring is broken and from here on to almost the end of the story, the tale is divided into the different adventures of different bands of characters. Though Sam was afraid in the boats and most hobbits are terrified of water, he willingly jumps into the water to catch Frodo. This shows that, to Sam, friendship is more important than life.

Book 3, Chapter 1

Book 3, Chapter 1 Summary

Aragorn runs up to the seat of Amon Lhaw in order to find Frodo. He sees that Frodo has gone up to the seat and gone back, but he does not know much else. He looks out from the seat but sees nothing except an eagle flying high above the hills.

However, as he is sitting there, Aragorn hears Boromir's horn and rushes to his aid. Unfortunately, Aragorn is too late and only finds Boromir dying, pierced with several orc arrows. With his last breath, Boromir tells him he tried to take the Ring from Frodo and that the orcs have taken the hobbits. Aragorn asks Boromir if Frodo was with them, but Boromir dies before he can answer. With this new disaster, Aragorn feels like he has failed.

As Aragorn is standing over Boromir's body, Legolas and Gimli arrive, having killed several orcs. Then they see the body of Boromir and wish they had been by his side instead. In order to honor their fallen friend, Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli put Boromir in a boat with trophies from the orcs he killed. As they are picking up the weapons, they find the knives that Merry and Pippin took from the barrow. Furthermore, as they examine the bodies of the orcs, they see that many of them are not from Mordor. In fact, some of the orcs have a white hand and an S-rune on the brows of their helmets. Seeing this, the three warriors quickly figure that these orcs have been sent by Saruman.

The three of them take Boromir's body back to the boats and notice that one of the boats is missing. However, they are too busy to worry about it further. Instead, they put Boromir's body into one of the remaining boats and row him out into the river. As he goes over the falls, they sing a song of mourning for him. The three companions return to the landing and Aragorn sees that no orcs have come there. After some thought, he decides that Frodo and Sam must have gone off on their own and the three remaining members of the Fellowship should not follow them. Instead, he decides that he, Gimli and Legolas will chase down the orcs who took Pippin and Merry.

Book 3, Chapter 1 Analysis

The orcs destroy everything they come across as they travel. This is symbolic of the destruction that evil brings to everything it encounters, especially nature.

Book 3, Chapter 2

Book 3, Chapter 2 Summary

Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli set out to follow the orcs. Unfortunately, their chase is futile and they get no closer to the orcs that took Pippin and Merry. With all this bad news piling up, Aragorn is having a crisis of doubt in himself, but continues to follow the trail anyway. Fortunately, Aragorn finds a brooch that was dropped on the ground as a signal and he realizes that Pippin and Merry must still be alive.

The three cross into Rohan on the trail of the orcs and, as they do, they spy a troop of men on horseback approaching. They hail the riders as they are about to pass and the riders quickly wheel around to surround the three with spears at the ready. In the circle, each side threatens the other, but Aragorn calms everyone down and speaks with Éomer, their captain.

In the course of their conversation, Aragorn mentions that they have come from Lórien. Hearing this, the Riders are appalled, as they have heard strange tales of both the place and Galadriel. However, Gimli stands up for Galadriel and promises to teach Éomer a lesson about Galadriel with his axe. Then, in order to relieve the tension and state his own authority, Aragorn announces himself as the rightful King of Gondor.

With this strange news reported to Éomer, Aragorn asks him about the orcs. Éomer reports that the men of Rohan chased the orcs, surrounded them, killed them all and burned their bodies. However, they did not see any hobbits in the group, or anything that looked like a hobbit.

Then, in order to relieve the tension and question Aragorn more thoroughly, Éomer sends his troops away. With more privacy, Aragorn tells him that they came from Imladris, led by Gandalf, but Gandalf died in the mines of Moria. Éomer is very sad to hear this, but he also reports that Gandalf was no longer welcome in King Théoden's hall because he brought nothing but bad news. As well, Gandalf stole Shadowfax, the king's favorite horse. In the final stroke of bad news, Aragorn tells Éomer that Boromir was killed by the orcs that the men of Rohan killed. Éomer is alarmed to hear this, as Boromir was a great warrior.

Eventually, Éomer asks the three companions to come with them back to Edoras. However, Aragorn tells him that he will join them when he can; he still needs to find Pippin and Merry. Agreeing to this, Éomer lends them two horses from their fallen comrades so that they can search for the hobbits, then come to King Théoden's hall. Finally, the Rohirrim ride off and Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas ride to the battle site to examine it. However, their examinations turn up nothing useful.

With night falling, the three of them camp by Fangorn forest and, in the night, they see a cloaked old man they think is Saruman. However, when they call to him, he disappears into the night. Once this excitement has passed, they realize their horses have run off.

Book 3, Chapter 2 Analysis

The tireless pursuit of Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas is symbolic of the tirelessness of goodness when it is in pursuit of a noble goal. However, they cannot keep up with the orcs. This is symbolic of the way that sometimes even the best intentions fall down in the face of reality. Éomer says that Théoden is receiving bad advice. This foreshadows them finding Wormtongue as the counselor to Théoden.

Legolas asks Aragorn what he has heard about Fangorn Forest. Legolas, an elf, is among the oldest beings on earth. For him to ask Aragorn about the Forest shows just how widely Aragorn has traveled and how respected he is among the elves.

Book 3, Chapter 3

Book 3, Chapter 3 Summary

The story moves back to Pippin and Merry as they are being taken away by the orcs. Pippin remembers the fight where Boromir was killed and how the hobbits had fallen into the arms of the orcs. Surprisingly, the orcs did not hurt them, even when Merry had cut off several of their hands and arms; it seems that they were not to hurt the hobbits under any circumstance. However, the orcs shot arrows at Boromir until he fell.

As the hobbits are carried along by the orc troop, the orcs of Mordor argue with the Uruk-hai of Saruman and they come to blows. However, the orcs of Mordor come out the worse for it against the Uruk-hai. Fortunately, one of the orcs falls near Pippin and Pippin uses the knife in the orc's dead hand to cut through the ropes around his wrists.

Traveling further, the troop reaches a steep incline. There, the orcs cut the thongs around the hobbits' legs to allow them to walk on their own. Then they all run across Rohan. As they are running, Pippin breaks away from the orcs and uses his free hands to drop his elven brooch on the ground as a signal. However, he is quickly recaptured and brought back into the midst of the orcs.

The orc-troop continues running toward Fangorn Forest, but the Riders of Rohan surround them before they can reach the trees. Then night falls and the Rohirrim make camp around the band, keeping them surrounded. In order to keep the hobbits from escaping, the orcs tie up their legs again and dump them on the ground next to each other.

Some men of Rohan attack the band secretly in the night and, as the Uruk-hai go see what happened, an orc named Grishnákh starts pawing the hobbits. Thinking quickly, the hobbits give hints about the Ring in order to tempt him and, falling for the bait, Grishnákh tries to escape with the hobbits. However, a horseman spots him and kills him.

The battle starts and the men of Rohan pass over the hobbits on their way to kill off all of the orcs. As the slaughter goes on, Merry and Pippin escape from their bindings and head into Fangorn Forest.

Book 3, Chapter 3 Analysis

Chapter 2 covers the same period as Chapter 3. The orcs and Uruk-hai have been sent to find the hobbits and bring the Ring to Saruman. However, the greed of the orcs is their undoing. Evil hating itself and fighting itself is a consistent theme in *The Lord of the Rings*.

Book 3, Chapter 4

Book 3, Chapter 4 Summary

Merry and Pippin walk through Fangorn Forest, not sure what to do or where to go next. Therefore, they climb up onto a hill to see around them. Under the open sky, the sun is shining and Merry says that he almost liked the place.

Suddenly, a voice bellows out at them saying that that is almost a compliment. The voice belongs to Treebeard, a large tree-like being called an Ent -- a tree-herd -- and tells them, "Do not be hasty, that is my motto," (452). Examining the hobbits, Treebeard tries to place them in his list of lore but cannot, so Merry and Pippin explain to Treebeard what hobbits are. Then, in order to receive more news, Treebeard asks them about Gandalf, but Pippin tells him that Gandalf is dead. Hearing this, Treebeard is very disappointed.

Interested by the hobbits, Treebeard quickly carries them to his Ent-house. Once they are there, Treebeard gives them a drink and asks them to tell the story of how they came there. After explaining whom they are, where they came from and how they ended up in Fangorn Forest, the hobbits ask Treebeard whose side he is on in the war. However, Treebeard tells them that he is not on any side in the war because nobody is really on his side. However, he does admit that he dislikes the orcs because of their habit of cutting down trees and he continues to say that Saruman has a mind of "metal and wheels" (462) instead of growing things. Treebeard grows angry with Saruman and the orcs, and then cools off quickly. He decides to call an Entmoot -- a meeting of the Ents -- in order to put them into action against Saruman and the orcs.

The next day, Treebeard takes the hobbits to the Entmoot where the Ents stand in a circle, swaying and making strange sounds all at the same time. After a long period, Treebeard realizes the hobbits are bored and sends them to walk about by themselves. Then, after more time passes, Treebeard brings Quickbeam, a relatively hasty Ent, to keep them occupied while the Entmoot continues.

After three days, the Entmoot ends and there is a surge of energy in the forest. The sound of singing rings around the hills as the Ents march to war against Isengard. As he rides on Treebeard's shoulders, Pippin looks back into the open spaces between the forest and Isengard, but the open spaces are gone, as though the trees have followed the Ents.

Book 3, Chapter 4 Analysis

Ents are the oldest beings on earth -- older than the elves. They are symbols of the life of the forest. They are slow to act, but they are wise and powerful in their patience. The fact that hobbits do not show up on the Ents' list of the beings of earth shows that they are probably the least known creatures on earth.

The Ents' love and longing for the Entwives is symbolic of a problem with nature. There is nature in the fields just as there is nature in the forests. Moreover, where there are fields, there is not forest, and vice versa. Nature cannot seem to commune with itself. Treebeard says that Saruman has a mind of "metal and wheels" (462). This is symbolic of the way that Saruman is concerned with the unnatural world of machines instead of the natural world of trees and forests that Treebeard values.

Book 3, Chapter 5

Book 3, Chapter 5 Summary

The story returns to Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas. Aragorn is a master of tracking, but even he cannot find a sign or a track of the old man they saw the night before. Thus, it seems that they saw a phantom of Saruman instead of Saruman himself.

They track the hobbits to the edge of Fangorn Forest and walk into it, despite the warnings they received from Celeborn. Then, as they travel through Fangorn, they spy a gray-robed figure that they think it is Saruman. The three companions are about to attack him, but he uses magic to make them to drop their weapons. Then, as he talks to them, they see that is actually wearing white -- the color of Saruman. Once again, the three try to attack him, but he makes them drop their weapons again. Then he shows himself: It is Gandalf. However, he has replaced Saruman and become Gandalf the White.

Gandalf explains that Gwaihir told him that Frodo has gone alone toward Mordor in order to take the Ring to Mount Doom. Aragorn responds by telling him that Sam went with Frodo, which pleases Gandalf greatly. Then, as they sit in the Forest, the three companions fill Gandalf in on everything else that happened to them since he left them.

After hearing their tale, Gandalf tells them what else is going on around them. Gandalf thinks that Sauron will expect the Ring to go to Minas Tirith and that someone will come from there, trying to replace him. However, Sauron's wisdom does not expect that they would want to topple him and set up no replacement. Thus, Sauron is ready to empty Mordor to attack Minas Tirith instead of protect his own land from the Ring-bearer. This, as Gandalf explains, is their greatest hope.

Gandalf goes on to tell them that Saruman is a double-traitor: He is a traitor by allying himself with Sauron, but he is also a traitor to Sauron. Instead of looking to take the Ring to Sauron, he wants the Ring for himself and this means that he is hindering Sauron's search for it. Finally, to round out the story, Gandalf explains who Treebeard is, what the Ents are and how Saruman did not take them into his plans.

With Gandalf's explanation of the affairs of the world finished, Gimli asks Gandalf what happened with the Balrog. Gandalf tells them the tale: He fell with the Balrog into deep tunnels beyond the knowledge of the dwarves who created Moria. Then he fought with the Balrog for a long time until they came to the top of the mountain. Finally, Gandalf cast the Balrog down, destroying him. It was then that Gandalf died, only to awake again. Then Gwaihir found him on the mountaintop and carried him to Lothlórien, where he was healed.

Having come from Lothlórien, Gandalf gives each of them a message from Galadriel. For Aragorn, Galadriel says that the "Dead watch the road that leads to the seas." (491).

She warns Legolas to avoid even seagulls, or he will want to travel on the sea. She also warns Gimli to be careful whom he attacks with his axe.

With their meeting done, they leave Fangorn Forest. Once they are in the open, Gandalf calls for Shadowfax, who arrives leading the horses that Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli lost the night before. Then they mount and ride to Edoras in order to see King Théoden of Rohan.

Book 3, Chapter 5 Analysis

Here Gandalf is the symbol of wisdom taking the place of intellectualism. Where the intellectual was once White and good, the intellectual has left the path of wisdom. Therefore, wisdom must take its place and do what intellectual thought could not do. However, he becomes the ideal intellectual by using wisdom to find his intellect.

Gandalf says that old men often mutter to themselves because, when they need advice, they talk to the wisest person they can find, and the wisest person an old man can find nearby is himself. With Gandalf's death and return to life, he has become a symbolic Jesus figure who vied with evil and conquered it. Similar to the women traveling to Jesus' tomb on Easter Sunday, the three companions did not recognize Gandalf at first.

Gandalf's words from Galadriel to Aragorn and Legolas contradict each other. He tells Aragorn to travel to the sea, but he tells Legolas to avoid the sea. Thus, the advice shows that a choice must be made by both. When Legolas looks toward Isengard, he sees smoke rising. This foreshadows the tale of the Ents' attack on Isengard.

Book 3, Chapter 6

Book 3, Chapter 6 Summary

Gandalf, Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli ride to Edoras but at the gates, they learn that Wormtongue told the guards not to let anyone in. However, they convince the guards to permit them entrance and they travel through the city until they come to the door of Théoden's hall. There, Háma -- the doorwarden -- demands that they all leave their weapons behind, including Gandalf's staff. However, Gandalf tricks him into allowing him to keep his staff.

The four companions enter the hall to find that King Théoden is weak and ill under the counsel of Wormtongue. In fact, Théoden is so defeated that he has imprisoned his own nephew, Éomer. Of course, Théoden does not want to see Gandalf because he always brings bad news, but Gandalf heals him and brings him outside into the air where he once again feels strong. Feeling alive again, Théoden sends Háma to fetch Éomer.

Gandalf tells Théoden everything that is happening, including how Saruman has become a traitor. Then Gandalf advises him to send his women, children and old men to safety and send his men to war. Instead, Théoden decides that he, himself, will lead his men to battle. Finally, in thanks for giving him his life back, Théoden tells him that he should have a gift and Gandalf decides to take Shadowfax as his gift.

As the men prepare to ride to war, Théoden asks Wormtongue to join him. However, instead of joining them, Wormtongue runs away. Then, in order to set everything in order, Théoden names his nephew Éomer as his heir and puts his niece Éowyn in charge of the household while Théoden rides to war.

Book 3, Chapter 6 Analysis

The weakness of Théoden was brought about by Wormtongue. Théoden's body was ruined as a symbol of the way that bad thoughts and bad counsel ruined his mind. Gandalf tricks the doorwarden of Théoden to allow him to keep his staff with him. It seems that Gandalf needs his staff to work the magic of healing on Théoden. This also explains why Gandalf breaks Saruman's staff later: by breaking his staff, Gandalf takes away his ability to perform magic.

Gandalf tells Théoden that he might feel better if he grasped a sword. This is a symbol of a king once again taking his rightful place as a leader in battle and the way that a king can help himself by remembering one of his most important tasks. When Aragorn takes the cup from Éowyn, he feels her hand tremble. This foreshadows the revelation of the love she bears for Aragorn.

Book 3, Chapter 7

Book 3, Chapter 7 Summary

King Théoden leads his men toward the fords of the Isen in order to help Erkenbrand fight the forces of Isengard. However, they meet a man on horseback along the way who tells them that the fords have been lost and the army has been scattered.

Suddenly, Gandalf tells Théoden to ride to Helm's Deep with all possible speed. Then he rides off on an urgent, unspecified errand. Théoden leads his men toward the fort, including Éomer, Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli. However, Saruman's army follows close behind. Once they are in Helm's Deep (or the Hornburg), the men wonder about Erkenbrand, one of their marshals. However, no word has been heard of him, even though he leads the best men of Rohan.

As night falls, the orcs of Saruman attack Helm's Deep ruthlessly and fight their way through Helm's Dike and the first wall. Having taken the outer defenses, they attack the Deeping Wall relentlessly. Even though they are continually pushed back by stones and arrows, they attack again and rise closer to the wall. Eventually, they are close enough to bring a battering ram against the gate.

In order to save the gate, Aragorn and Éomer exit from a secret door and fight them off with swords. However, they cannot hold and they are forced back by the sheer number of orcs. In fact, Éomer is almost killed by an orc pretending to be dead, but Gimli -- who no one noticed coming out of the secret door -- kills the orc easily. Once they are inside again, the men pile rubble against the inside of the gate in order to bolster it.

After the assault on the gate, the attackers come at the wall with ropes and ladders while the battering ram attacks the gate again. Once again, the defenders fight them off, but grow weary fending off the constant assaults. However, there is a surprise for the defenders when the orcs blast a hole in the wall with explosives. The breach is serious, but the men fight the invaders back again. Finally, there is a lull, but it is interrupted when another hole is blasted in the wall.

Battling the new threat, Aragorn fights the orcs off as best he can, but he is forced back to the citadel and the last defense. Unfortunately, Éomer and Gimli are separated from Aragorn and Legolas. It is then, when all hope is lost, Théoden decides that it is time to make one last ride into the enemy.

With this final decision made, Aragorn stands on the top of the battlements to look out at the dawn. Once he is there, he warns his enemies to depart or die but they are not convinced. Almost immediately, the orcs blast the gate open. However, just when the battle seems lost, a rumor comes from the rear of the attackers and they are suddenly dismayed by something they have seen or heard.

At this critical moment, Théoden and Aragorn ride out of the ruined gate, killing all the orcs in their way. Enemies flee before them until Théoden and Aragorn reach the first wall. Once they reach the first wall, they stop and look out to see that a forest has grown across the land overnight and, in a final stroke of good fortune, they see Gandalf leading Erkenbrand and his men to battle. This new force sweeps the battlefield of foes and sends the orcs into a forest from which they never leave.

Book 3, Chapter 7 Analysis

The battle of Helm's Deep is the major climax of Book Three. The storm in the sky is a symbol of the battle on the ground. Aragorn's expectation of dawn is symbolic of the phrase "It is always darkest before the dawn." He knows that things can look very different when people can see them clearly. The blasting fire (similar to gunpowder) the orcs use is symbolic of the evils of technology.

Book 3, Chapter 8

Book 3, Chapter 8 Summary

Gimli and Éomer exit the caves safely, much to everyone's relief. To add to the good news for Gimli, he has won his orc-killing game with Legolas 42 to 41. Out on the fields in from the Helm's Deep, Théoden, Éomer, Legolas, Gimli and Aragorn meet Gandalf. They ask him how the woods have grown there overnight but Gandalf tells them that they must ride to Isengard to find out. In fact, he himself will be riding there to speak with Saruman.

As the mopping up continues, the men of Dunland who joined in the assault on Helm's Deep are spared, but the orcs are all killed. However, as punishment for taking up arms against Rohan, the Dunlendings are enlisted to build mounds for the dead and stack the bodies of the orcs.

The next day, Gandalf, Théoden, Aragorn, Éomer, Gimli, Legolas and a handful of warriors ride toward Isengard through the woods that have appeared overnight. Gimli is afraid of the trees, but Legolas is fascinated by them and wants to walk through them. Gimli, however, speaks longingly of the Glittering Caves in Helm's Deep and, when Legolas hears Gimli talk about them, they agree that Legolas will take Gimli through Fangorn Forest and Gimli will take Legolas through the caves of Helm's Deep.

Finally, they come to the end of the Forest and, as they leave the forest, Legolas sees an Ent for the first time in his life. He immediately wants to turn back, but Gandalf prevents him. Instead, they all ride on toward Isengard. As they camp for the night, they see steam rising from Isengard, which confuses them. They had seen smoke before, but not steam, and everyone except Gandalf wonders what it means.

The company arrives at Isengard to find it flooded and, when they approach the gate, they are greeted by Pippin and Merry, who are sitting on the ground smoking pipes. Gandalf takes Théoden to speak with Treebeard while Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas are utterly amazed and happy to see their friends.

Book 3, Chapter 8 Analysis

The steam rising from Isengard foreshadows the explanation of how the Ents dammed the river and used it to flood Isengard, putting out all the fires below the ground.

Book 3, Chapter 9

Book 3, Chapter 9 Summary

Théoden follows Gandalf to meet Treebeard, taking his men with him, while Merry and Pippin set out a meal for Gimli, Aragorn and Legolas. As they sit and eat, the hobbits tell their friends how they were captured, how they escaped, and of their time with the Ents.

Eventually, Merry and Pippin describe the Ents' assault on Isengard. As they approached Isengard, they watched the army leave that was being sent to Helm's Deep. However, the Huorns seemed to follow the army while the Ents waited outside Isengard. Then, when Saruman's army was gone, the Ents attacked Isengard, smashed through the surrounding wall and ran toward the tower. In fact, the attack was so successful, Pippin wonders if Saruman's might was overestimated. However, Aragorn says that Saruman was great once and still has the power to command and convince the wise.

Returning to the story of the battle, Saruman barely escaped from Quickbeam, who chased him into the tower of Orthanc. However, as the Ents entered the ring of Isengard, they were attacked with fire from below the earth. Many were burned as they attacked the tower of Orthanc itself, but even they could not damage it.

Realizing that they could not topple the tower, the Ents retreated and dammed the Isen River. In fact, it was while they were performing that work that Gandalf arrived and spoke with Treebeard in order to get help with Saruman's army at Helm's Deep. Then, on the same night as the attack on Helm's Deep, Treebeard released the river, sending water into the holes and caves beneath the ground and putting out the fires underneath Isengard.

In the final action in Isengard, Wormtongue, arriving that morning, was sent into Orthanc. Treebeard, in fact, chased him through the water and up toward the door of Isengard.

Book 3, Chapter 9 Analysis

Huorns are Ents that have become like trees. However, they can still move when they want to move. The pipe-weed that Merry and Pippin find foreshadows the trouble they will find when they return to the Shire. When Aragorn mentions that Saruman can still convince the wise, it foreshadows the struggle with Saruman's voice in the next chapter. The Ents ability to break down walls is symbolic of the way that roots of trees can pierce through even the toughest rock and tear down even the mightiest of walls.

Book 3, Chapter 10

Book 3, Chapter 10 Summary

Gandalf leads everyone to the foot of Orthanc to parley with Saruman. However, before they begin their parley, Gandalf warns them to beware of his voice, which can convince men to do Saruman's will.

Once they are on the steps of Orthanc, Saruman tries to convince Théoden to stop the war between Isengard and Rohan and join his side. Théoden's men are convinced by Saruman's voice, but Théoden is not and he rejects Saruman. Then, when that tactic fails, Saruman tries to convince Gandalf to join him. However, Gandalf is also not convinced. Instead, Gandalf offers Saruman freedom if he will leave his staff and the keys to Orthanc with Gandalf. However, Saruman refuses the offer, so Gandalf breaks Saruman's staff with a word.

Their parley over, the company leaves the steps. However, just as they are leaving, Wormtongue throws a round stone down at them, but misses. Seeing it, Pippin picks it up, but Gandalf quickly takes it away from him.

Book 3, Chapter 10 Analysis

Chapter 10 is the secondary climax to Book Three. It is the moment Isengard and Saruman are unable to be a threat. Saruman, the symbol of intellectualism, can convince men to do what he desires. This is symbolic of the way that men of intellect and science can construct complex arguments that are not really as good as they seem.

When Saruman turns to leave, but Gandalf orders him to return, it shows that Gandalf has become much more powerful than Saruman and able to command him. When Wormtongue throws the stone down from the tower, it is not clear if he was aiming for the people on the steps, or Saruman. However, since it hit the railing where Saruman was standing, it seems that he was aiming for Saruman. This foreshadows Wormtongue killing Saruman. Gandalf says that Saruman would have few treasures more important than the one that Wormtongue threw down. This foreshadows the importance of the stone.

Book 3, Chapter 11

Book 3, Chapter 11 Summary

Those who rode to Isengard ride toward Dunharrow, taking Pippin and Merry along with them. After a long day's journey, they make camp for the evening. Ever the curious one, Pippin is anxious to look into the stone from Orthanc. Therefore, while Gandalf sleeps, Pippin takes the stone from under Gandalf's arm and replaces it with another stone. Then, once he has the stone to himself, Pippin looks into it and yells in pain.

Hearing the cry, Gandalf wakes and asks Pippin what happened. Pippin responds that he saw Sauron and it was horrible for him. However, realizing that they may still be safe, Gandalf says that Sauron probably thought that Saruman forced Pippin to look into the stone as a form of torture.

However, Gandalf is happy to learn that the stone is a *palantír* -- a magical stone that allows people to communicate over long distances. Now he knows how Saruman and Sauron talked to each other, solving one mystery. Immediately, Gandalf gives the stone to Aragorn and reassures Pippin that his foolishness may have actually been a good thing in the end.

Suddenly, a Nazgûl flies overhead and, realizing that there are Riders abroad, Gandalf calls for everyone to mount and ride off with all possible speed. Gandalf picks up Pippin and takes him Minas Tirith while the rest ride back to Helm's Deep.

Book 4, Chapter 1

Book 4, Chapter 1 Summary

Sam and Frodo travel along a ledge, trying to find their way down onto the plains below. Eventually, they find a way and, after a difficult climb down, they work their way across the rocky land below. Adding to their troubles, they know that Gollum is following them, but they are hoping he will lose the trail.

Exhausted from their climb, they try sleep in a cave but, as they crawl into their refuge, they see Gollum climb down the cliff face. Knowing that they have to do something about their unwelcome follower, Sam jumps him but Gollum is too strong and pins Sam on the ground. However, Frodo holds Sting to Gollum's throat, forcing him to release Sam.

The hobbits have captured Gollum, but now they have to decide what to do about him. Frodo feels sympathy for Gollum and his blind, uncontrollable desire for the Ring, but Sam is unsympathetic. However, it is Frodo's decision to make and he decides to let Gollum be their guide to Mordor.

However, the hobbits are smart enough to know that Gollum is untrustworthy, so they bait Gollum into thinking they are asleep. Gollum, of course, tries to run off, but they catch him quickly and put Sam's elf-rope on his leg. However, the elf-rope burns him, even with a loose knot, and Gollum screams in pain, forcing the hobbits to remove the rope.

Frodo wants to keep Gollum close and he knows that they could use his help making their way into Mordor. Therefore, in order to keep Gollum under control, Frodo asks him if he will swear to guide them to Mordor safely. Gollum, realizing he has no other choice, swears by the Ring that he will do what Frodo tells him to do. Hearing this, Frodo warns Gollum not to swear on the Ring because it will twist his words. However, Gollum insists and, after swearing his oath, Gollum becomes very friendly and obedient.

Book 4, Chapter 1 Analysis

Frodo and Sam climb down the cliff on the same night Merry and Pippin escape into Fangorn. An ell is a unit of measurement of about 45 inches. A fathom is a unit of depth equal to six feet. Sméagol, in his blind desire for the Ring, has become an animal. He had endless power and now he wants it again. Now he is just a crawling thing that will do anything just to regain what he lost.

Frodo asks Gollum whether he will actually swear by the Ring, his "Precious." As Frodo says, it will turn everything to evil and will make him keep his promises. This foreshadows Gollum's demise in the Cracks of Doom.

Book 4, Chapter 2

Book 4, Chapter 2 Summary

The hobbits follow Gollum toward Mordor and they pass through the Dead Marshes in order to avoid the eyes that are on the road. However, the Dead Marshes pose other problems, such as the damp, cold water and the ghosts of men who died in a great battle long before. In fact, as Frodo looks in the pools, he sees images of dead elves, men and orcs in the water. Seeing Frodo's difficulty, Gollum warns them not to look into the water or follow the lights that appear in the air.

Gollum continues to be a very useful guide for a little while. However, when a Nazgûl flies overhead, Gollum seems to change and become slier and, as they continue to pass through the swamp, they rest and Sam hears Gollum arguing with himself. Overhearing Gollum's split personality battling with itself, one part of him wants to keep the promise to Frodo and another part of him wants to get the Ring back. However, one side says that if "She" (619) takes care of the hobbits, Gollum will still keep his promise to the letter, if not the spirit.

Book 4, Chapter 2 Analysis

The events of this chapter occur at around the same time as the Entmoot, the three travelers meeting Gandalf in Fangorn Forest, and the healing of Théoden. The split personality of Gollum is the outward symbol of Gollum's internal conflict. The part of his personality that has not been taken over by the Ring is still there, but it is conflicted by his intense desire for the Ring. The "She" (619) that Gollum talks about foreshadows the Shelob's attack in Cirith Ungol.

Book 4, Chapter 3

Book 4, Chapter 3 Summary

Gollum leads the hobbits to the Black Gate -- the main entrance to Mordor. It is an enormous, very well defended iron gate and, as they lie hiding in the hills near the Gate, Gollum says they can go no further without being captured, which would only give the Ring back to Sauron.

When the hobbits realize that the Black Gate is almost impossible to pass through undetected, Gollum tries to convince the hobbits to try another way that he knows. Sam does not like it, but Frodo asks Gollum about the other way.

Gollum goes on and explains that he found a back way over the mountains that nobody knows about. Furthermore, he adds that the route may not be protected as well as the Black Gate and, what's more, Sauron cannot look in all directions at once and he will probably not be looking that way. Wary of Gollum, Frodo asks if it is guarded, but Gollum does not answer directly. However, Frodo realizes that it is a better option than the Black Gate and Frodo decides that they will follow him.

Book 4, Chapter 3 Analysis

Frodo and Sam are outside the Black Gate on the same day that Gandalf speaks with Saruman at Isengard. The other way that Gollum recommends foreshadows their trek through Cirith Ungol. When Frodo says that Gollum is falling into trouble by asking to Frodo for the Ring, it not only foreshadows Gollum's attempt to take the Ring at Orodruin, but Frodo's inability to resist the power of the Ring. Frodo tells Gollum that he swore an oath on the Ring and the Ring will hold him to that. If Frodo had put the Ring on and had told Gollum to jump off a cliff, Gollum would be forced to do it. This shows that Frodo is beginning to feel the power of the Ring and that he is already thinking about the power that it gives to the person who wears it.

Book 4, Chapter 4

Book 4, Chapter 4 Summary

Gollum leads the hobbits through Ithilien, a land that is ruled by Sauron. However, it is still green and lively and, thanks to the trees that line the road, the travelers are able to rest comfortably off to the side of the road.

Gollum slinks off and returns with a pair of rabbits and Sam, eager for a meal of something other than *lembas*, Sam cooks both of them into stew, though Gollum cannot stand cooked meat. Eager for some extra flavor, Sam asks him to bring some herbs, but Gollum refuses and slinks off to find his own food. With Gollum gone, the hobbits finish their meal and Sam leaves to rinse out his pans. However, as looks back at their campsite, he sees that his fire is giving off smoke and, as he rushes back and puts his fire out, he hears something that sounds like imitated birdcalls.

The hobbits hide as men arrive at their fire. The men clearly know that there is someone about and they should go out and look for them. Hearing this, the hobbits know that there is no way out, so they draw their swords to fight them off. However, the men do not attack their small adversaries. Instead, they look at these strange little men and wonder who and what they are.

In a surprising coincidence, the captain of the company is Faramir, Boromir's brother. He is there to fight enemies that are traveling through Ithilien and he leaves the hobbits under guard so that he can attack a troop of men from Harad that are coming up the road.

As the Haradrim march toward Mordor, Faramir's men attack. The attack is successful and the men of Gondor scatter and kill their enemies quickly. In the confusion of the fight, an oliphaunt from Harad is frightened and comes crashing through the woods, satisfying Sam's curiosity about the beasts.

Book 4, Chapter 4 Analysis

The events of this chapter occur on the same day Aragorn arrives at Dunharrow. Gollum does not want cooked food. Instead, he wants his raw food now and not later. He has become an animal who does not know how to control his desires.

Book 4, Chapter 5

Book 4, Chapter 5 Summary

The battle is over and Faramir interrogates Frodo about Isildur's Bane in front of his troops. However, Frodo will not say anything about it or about his mission through Ithilien. However, during the interrogation, Frodo learns that Boromir is dead; Faramir learns that Gandalf has died, and neither side is happy to hear the news that the other brings.

Deciding to keep the hobbits close, the men lead them toward their hiding place. Along the way, Faramir continues to ask about Isildur's Bane, but claims that he "would not take this thing, if it lay by the highway." (656) In fact, Faramir says that Frodo did well to not say anything in front of the entire troop of men as it might have led to too much information going out to too many people.

Finally, the company nears its hiding place and, in order to keep the hobbits from finding out where they are going, the men blindfold Sam and Frodo. Then they lead them around some rocks, over a set of stairs and behind a waterfall.

Once they are in the cave behind the waterfall, the hobbits finally begin to enjoy Faramir's companionship. However, after a good meal and some wine, Sam lets it slip that Boromir was after Frodo's Ring. Hearing that, Faramir now knows what Isildur's Bane is and he is tempted to take it from Frodo by force. However, he already said that he would not take it and he will not be turned into a liar.

Book 4, Chapter 5 Analysis

Faramir has the same prophetic dream as his brother Boromir and wants to know more about Isildur's Bane and the halfling mentioned in the dream. Faramir is the symbol of the man who is capable of both action and thought. He is not thought to be as brave as Boromir, but only because he considers the next move instead of just performing the next move. The way in which he thinks about his next move makes him seem indecisive to some. However, he can control his desires because he can control his mind. He is capable of being left on his own. As well, he uses strategy instead of brute force in combat, unlike Boromir.

Book 4, Chapter 6

Book 4, Chapter 6 Summary

In the cave, Faramir wakes Frodo to tell him that Gollum is catching fish in the pool near the waterfall. Technically speaking, Faramir is required, by law, to kill Gollum as a trespasser. However, Frodo begs Faramir to spare Gollum for reasons of which Frodo is not even sure.

Instead, Frodo lures Gollum toward the waterfall. There, men jump out of hiding, capture him, bind him, blindfold him and take him behind the waterfall. Once they bring Gollum in, Faramir interrogates him and tells him that he must never tell anyone of the location of their hiding place. With the choice between death and keeping a secret, Gollum swears by the Ring never to speak a word of their hideout. Hearing this, Faramir gives Gollum into the care of Frodo.

Faramir asks Frodo and Gollum where they will go in order to enter Mordor. Hearing Gollum's plan, he is shocked. In fact, he knows the name of the pass they are to try -- Cirith Ungol. Though he does not know what exactly is there, he recommends that they do not go that way, especially because Faramir does not trust Gollum. However, Frodo still trusts Gollum and his oath upon the Ring. As well, he knows that Gollum is their best chance to get into Mordor.

Book 4, Chapter 6 Analysis

Faramir's warning that evil is growing inside Gollum foreshadows Gollum's treachery.

Book 4, Chapter 7

Book 4, Chapter 7 Summary

The men lead Frodo, Sam and Gollum out of the falls. Faramir requires that Gollum be blindfolded but, rather singling out Gollum, Frodo asks that they all be blindfolded when they leave. Then the hobbits continue to follow Gollum toward Mordor and, as they do, a black cloud covers the entire sky, making the day seem like night.

Eventually, they come to a crossroads where there is a beheaded statue of an ancient king. As the day slowly closes, a ray of light from the sun falls on the king's head as it lies on the ground, crowned with flowers.

Book 4, Chapter 7 Analysis

The events of this chapter begin on the same day that Aragorn enters the Paths of the Dead and Gandalf reaches Minas Tirith. Frodo's decision to have everyone blindfolded so that Gollum will rest easier shows that he has learned from the example of Aragorn in Lothlórien. The cloud growing in the sky shows that the power of Mordor is stretching out. However, the last ray of light from the sunset shows that is cannot conquer everything. The king's head crowned with flowers foreshadows the return of the king to Gondor.

Book 4, Chapter 8

Book 4, Chapter 8 Summary

Frodo and Sam continue to follow Gollum toward Cirith Ungol. When they reach the bridge to Minas Morgul, Frodo is tempted to walk across, but Sam stops him just in time. In fact, Sam pulls him down into a hiding spot by the road just as the Lord of the Nine Riders leads a great army of orcs from Mordor.

As the King of the Nazgûl passes by, the Ring grows heavier on Frodo's neck and Frodo is forced to fight off the temptation to put on the Ring. The King of the Nazgûl, who seems to sense Frodo, stops the army. Seeing this, Frodo despairs that all is lost but, finally, the Nazgûl Lord starts the march again and Frodo is saved.

After a long time, the army finishes marching by. Once the way is clear, Gollum leads them up two sets of longs stairs toward Cirith Ungol. After a long climb, Sam and Frodo stop to sleep before they enter the tunnel at the top. Gollum disappears for a while, making Sam curious about what he is up to. However, exhaustion finally overtakes both of them and they both fall asleep.

When Gollum returns, he sees the genuine tenderness between Sam and Frodo and he nearly repents for all that he has tried to do to them. However, when Sam wakes up, his harsh words anger Gollum and he leads the hobbits on toward the tunnel.

Book 4, Chapter 8 Analysis

Gollum nearly changes his mind on the same day Denethor sends Faramir to Osgiliath. On the stairs up to Cirith Ungol, the hobbits discuss their place in the great tale in which they find themselves. This does some interesting things in the story. First, it shows that Frodo and Sam understand that they are in one of the great tales of all time and they are playing a key part in it. However, it also asks the reader to step into their places for a moment. They are not great warriors, nor are they legendary heroes. They are simply common folk who ended up in a tale instead of finding one. Through this, Tolkien is asking us to read not only *The Lord of the Rings*, but also all great epics as tales of people who were merely doing the best that they could, despite the fact they did not know how things would end.

When Sam wakes up, he has Frodo's head in his lap. He sees Gollum as he is reaching out tenderly to Frodo. However, Sam calls him a sneak and a villain. Gollum is very hurt by Sam's accusation. When Gollum saw the two of them sleeping peacefully, a remnant of tender feeling woke up in him. However, when Sam woke to insult him, Gollum became bitter. Sam, in his cruelty to Gollum, removed the last vestige of real tenderness in Gollum, ensuring that Gollum would never again do anything honest.

Book 4, Chapter 9

Book 4, Chapter 9 Summary

The cloud from Mordor still covers the sky as the hobbits move forward. They climb the last upward stretch and enter Shelob's Lair. The smell is overpowering, but the hobbits go on. Soon, Gollum disappears into the gloom.

Unable to see enough to move forward, Frodo uses the phial of light from Galadriel to see through the darkness and, as they try to peer through the inky blackness, Shelob, a huge spider, comes out to attack them. However, the phial of light and the power of Galadriel are enough to scare her away.

Passing farther through the Lair, the hobbits reach an exit only to find that Shelob has spun a web across it and only Frodo's elven blade can cut the strands. In order to free his hands, Frodo gives Sam the phial and he slashes through the web.

After the way is cleared, the hobbits run toward the cleft of Cirith Ungol. However, Shelob knows another exit near the pass and, as Frodo runs forward, Shelob appears and attacks him. Meanwhile, Gollum attacks Sam from behind but Sam, using his wits, manages to fight him off. Gollum scurries off and Sam furiously chases Gollum back toward Shelob's Lair but, as he runs, Sam remembers Frodo, turns around, and runs back to help him.

Book 4, Chapter 9 Analysis

The hobbits notice the smell of Shelob's Lair, but enter anyway. This parallels Tom Bombadil's earlier warning that ponies could smell danger and run away, but the hobbits would walk right into it. Sauron allows Shelob to eat his orcs because he has plenty of them, and Shelob is an excellent guardian of Cirith Ungol. This symbolizes that evil does not even care for the evil that it spawns. It only cares about itself. This symbolism is furthered by the fact that Shelob ate her own young.

Book 4, Chapter 10

Book 4, Chapter 10 Summary

Sam returns to find Frodo in a cocoon of webbing with Shelob standing over him. Not knowing what else to do, Sam attacks Shelob and gives her a severe, but not mortal wound. However, it is enough to scare her off, and when Shelob retreats to her lair, Sam attempts to help Frodo.

Seeing Frodo's cold form lying on the ground, Sam thinks that Frodo is dead. With no clear direction and plagued with indecision whether to guard Frodo's body or press on, Sam decides to take the Ring, the sword Sting, and Galadriel's phial of light from Frodo's body. Then, hopeless, friendless and lonely, he walks toward Cirith Ungol.

As Sam approaches the pass, he hears orcs coming and puts on the Ring to hide from them. He expects them to attack, but instead he watches the orcs march past and take Frodo. Then, realizing he has done nothing to help his master, Sam chases after the orcs in order to protect Frodo's body. However, he cannot move as fast as the orcs and they disappear into a tunnel.

As Sam frantically chases after the orcs and Frodo, he hears two orcs talking. From them, he learns that Frodo is not dead, only paralyzed and unconscious from Shelob's poison. Eventually, they reach the end of the road and the orcs enter a gate. However, Sam arrives at the gate just after the doors have been closed and, having lost his master to the foul orcs, Sam feels like he has utterly failed.

Book 4, Chapter 10 Analysis

The climax of Book 4 is in the end of Chapter 9 and the beginning of Chapter 10. The events of this chapter occur on the same day Faramir is wounded, the Pelennor is overrun, and Aragorn captures the fleet at Pelargir. Once again, evil symbolically does not even care for itself. Here, the orcs do not even care for each other. They will gladly leave others to die at Shelob's hand for fun.

Book 5, Chapter 1

Book 5, Chapter 1 Summary

Pippin and Gandalf ride to Minas Tirith and, as they do, they pass by warriors of Gondor repairing the wall of Pelennor. Seeing them approach, the men are worried because Gandalf, the bearer of bad news, has arrived. However, he presses on toward Minas Tirith.

They enter the gate to the city and ride through the seven tiers up to the hall of Denethor, the Steward of Gondor. Finally coming to the doors to Denethor's hall, Gandalf warns Pippin to be careful what he says. In response to Denethor's questions about Boromir, Pippin tells Denethor how Boromir died in the fight against the orcs. Because of his debt to Boromir, Pippin offers his services to Denethor as a knight of Gondor. Hearing this, Denethor accepts his service as a knight of Gondor and assigns him to the Tower Guard.

After asking Pippin more about Boromir, he sends Pippin off to his quarters. As Pippin leaves, Gandalf tells him that he did well, though Denethor was able to determine some things from Pippin's story, such as the existence of a man who ranked higher than Boromir. Then Gandalf sends Pippin off in order to confer with Denethor alone.

As Pippin waits for further instructions from Denethor, Beregond -- a Guard of the Tower of Gondor -- meets Pippin in order to instruct him in his duties and tell him the passwords. They quickly scare up some food and eat looking out over the fields toward Mordor. Knowing how things stand, Beregond is worried about how things will fare in the war.

Eventually, Beregond goes off to duty and Pippin goes to meet Beregond's son Bergil. They strike up a fast friendship, go down to the Gate and see the men that the allies of Gondor have sent to help in its defense. As the troops march through, the people of Minas Tirith are happy for the help, but there are far fewer warriors than the people had hoped. That night, Pippin returns to the room he shares with Gandalf. He wakes from to slumber to see Gandalf pacing the floor and wondering aloud when Faramir will arrive.

Book 5, Chapter 1 Analysis

The seven tiers of the all-white city of Minas Tirith are a symbolic link to the seven heavens of Dante's Paradise. The dead tree in Minas Tirith is a symbol of the end of the line of kings. Though Aragorn is heir to the throne of Gondor, the line of Kings has been broken and the Stewards rule Gondor. However, the memory of the Kings is still present, much like the tree is still present in Minas Tirith. Denethor and Gandalf are both wise, but they test their wills against each other. Denethor is a symbol of wisdom that has gone awry because it keeps itself secret.

Book 5, Chapter 2

Book 5, Chapter 2 Summary

Aragorn, Merry, Legolas and Gimli ride with Théoden toward Helm's Deep. However, Merry feels more like baggage than like a companion. Along the way, they meet thirty Rangers and two of Elrond's sons. The Rangers were looking for Aragorn, though Aragorn did not send for them. Once they are together, one of Elrond's sons tells Aragorn, "If thou art in haste, remember the Paths of the Dead." (758) However, Aragorn replies that he would have great need of haste to travel there. Finally, Aragorn learns that one Ranger, Halbarad, carries a rolled-up banner.

The company rides to the Hornburg in order to rest before they continue their journey. As the company dines, Merry offers his services to Théoden, who accepts him as an esquire. The men sit in conference in order to consider what to do next. Aragorn decides to take the Rangers to Dunharrow quickly and travel the Paths of the Dead. Hearing this, Théoden is frightened for him, but accepts his decision.

That night, Aragorn secretly looks into the *palantír*, letting Sauron know that the rightful king of Gondor is returning. Then Aragorn leaves with the Rangers, Elrond's sons, Legolas and Gimli, leaving Merry with Théoden. The company rides to Dunharrow where Éowyn is there to greet them. Seeing the kingly Aragorn, she gazes longingly at him. However, Aragorn merely tells her of his intention to travel the Paths of the Dead and she, likewise, is appalled at his decision. However, she does not stop them and they ride through a door into the Paths of the Dead. None of the people who join Aragorn on this mission is afraid except Gimli, who is ashamed of his fear. Finally, they cross out the other side of the Paths and ride out to the Stone of Erech. However, they are not alone as they ride; the Dead follow them so that they can fulfill their obligation to fight Sauron. Then, At the Stone of Erech, Aragorn's banner is unfurled.

Book 5, Chapter 2 Analysis

Éowyn is the only woman in *The Lord of the Rings* who wishes to fight in battle. She is the symbol of those women who are not content with a life of staying at home. When Éowyn says goodbye to Aragorn, she is wearing armor and carrying a sword. This foreshadows her ride into battle. Here, the Oath-Breakers are the symbols of broken promises. People are haunted by broken promises, much as those who broke their oath haunt the mountains.

Book 5, Chapter 3

Book 5, Chapter 3 Summary

Merry rides with Théoden to Dunharrow, where the men of Rohan are mustering. With all his former companions gone, he feels like he has been left behind by everyone. Once they reach Dunharrow, Théoden, Merry, and Éowyn sit down to eat and confer on their next move. However, they are interrupted when an errand-rider from Gondor arrives, bringing Théoden the Red Arrow -- a signal that Gondor is in dire need of Rohan's help. Seeing this, Théoden's decision is made: he will lead all of his available men to Minas Tirith.

The next morning, Merry wakes to see that the sun is covered by a dark cloud coming out of Mordor. Merry quickly runs to Théoden's side, where Merry is told that he that he will ride with them to Edoras, but no further. However, Éowyn gives him the battle armor that Aragorn requested for him. The assembled men all ride to Edoras and Théoden rides off to battle, leaving Merry behind to stay with Éowyn. However, Merry wants to join the Rohirrim going to battle. Thus, when a smaller warrior, Dernhelm, offers Merry the chance to join him on his horse, he is happy for the opportunity.

Book 5, Chapter 3 Analysis

Dernhelm is actually Éowyn. She rides out seeking death because death is better than a life of duty for her.

Book 5, Chapter 4

Book 5, Chapter 4 Summary

Gandalf wakes Pippin and sends him to Denethor. Denethor has commissioned armor for Pippin and he wants his new soldier to be properly outfitted. The cloud from Mordor covers the sun and a properly outfitted Pippin looks out over the battlements with Beregond. Then, as they look out into the distance, they see Nazgûl chasing Faramir across the Pelennor. However, just as the Nazgûl seem ready to overtake and kill Faramir, Gandalf rides out and uses magic to scare them off.

Faramir and a few of his men reach the Gate and ride up to meet with Denethor. As they pass through the streets, Faramir is surprised to see a hobbit, Pippin, in the armor of Gondor. Faramir goes to his father's side and reports the events in Ithilien, including Frodo and Sam's intention to travel through Cirith Ungol. When Gandalf hears that they were going to travel through that pass, he is instantly worried. In fact, Gandalf expects that this is some sort of plot by Gollum, but he thinks that they may have a chance.

However, when Denethor hears about the Ring, he is angry that Faramir did not bring the Ring to him. In fact, Denethor is so angry with his son that he wishes aloud that Faramir had died instead of Boromir. Therefore, the next day, Denethor sends Faramir to Osgiliath in order to strengthen the defenses on the River: a suicidal mission. However, as Faramir is about to leave, Gandalf warns him not to throw his life away rashly.

The next day, the army of Mordor storms through Osgiliath. Overwhelmed, Faramir and his men retreat to the Causeway Forts. One day after the storming Osgiliath, the army of Mordor breaks the wall around the Pelennor and chases the men of Gondor into Minas Tirith. Faramir fights to protect the retreating army, but he is wounded badly. Only the work of Prince Imrahil of Dol Amroth saves him and he carries Faramir's motionless body back into the city. However, the fields around Minas Tirith are lost and Gondor's enemies surround Minas Tirith. The city is besieged and Rohan has not come with the aid that everyone had hoped for.

The siege begins as the orcs and their allies throw exploding shells into Minas Tirith. Then, soon after, the orcs throw the heads of Gondor's warriors into the city as the Nazgûl fly over the city on their strange beasts. The defenders lose all hope for survival and they either stand motionless on the walls or collapse in fear. In order to shore up the defenses, Gandalf and Imrahil walk along the walls restoring morale but the effect of their words is only temporary and the men are soon cowering again.

Meanwhile, Faramir's body is brought up to Denethor and, as he sees the wounded body of Faramir, he finally realizes that he loves his son. However, Denethor quickly falls into despair, as Faramir seems to be on the edge of death. With all his hope gone, Denethor orders his Tower Guard to build a funeral pyre for himself and Faramir so that

he can burn himself alive with his son's body. Though men still come in to ask for orders, Denethor refuses to give any. Instead, he gives up the command of the city's defenses to Gandalf. However, seeing what Denethor is about to do, Pippin leaves his post to get Gandalf's help.

As Pippin runs down to the battle, the army of Mordor rolls out a giant battering ram named Grond. It batters the gate of Minas Tirith three times, breaking it on the final stroke. With a flash of lightning, the entrance to the city is breached. Arriving at the Gate, Pippin sees Gandalf as he holds the broken gate against the Lord of the Nazgûl. However, Gandalf does not move. Instead, he tells the Nazgûl King that he will not take the city. Then, as a cock crows for the dawn, the sound of horns tells the people of the city that Rohan has arrived.

Book 5, Chapter 4 Analysis

Chapter 4 is the climax of Book Five. The King of the Nazgûl is a symbol of despair: the inability or unwillingness to act even when the need arises. Thus, wherever he goes, men fall and weep or drop their swords and stand motionless. Gandalf says that there is a prophecy that no man would kill the King of the Nazgûl. This foreshadows Éowyn killing him. Pippin sees a strange light coming from Denethor's window. This foreshadows the revelation that Denethor has a hidden *palantír*. When Denethor speaks of "heathen kings," (807) he is showing that he has given up all of his noble nature and fallen to the level of an uncivilized ruler.

When Pippin leaves his post and tells Beregond what is happening, he sets up the problem of which is more important: duty or morality. The answer here, of course, is that it is more important to be moral than to dutifully follow immoral orders. In this chapter, paralleling the battle of Helm's Deep, the dawn brings news of rescue from a hopeless situation, again symbolizing "It is always darkest before the dawn."

Book 5, Chapter 5

Book 5, Chapter 5 Summary

The story returns to the day before the armies of Mordor attack Minas Tirith. Merry continues to ride with the Rohirrim though the leader of Dernhelm's *éored*, Elfhelm, pretends not to notice him.

While the men of Rohan are travelling through the Woods approaching the Pelennor, Théoden meets with Ghân-buri-Ghân, the Chief of the Wild Men of the Wood. The Chief tells Théoden that the Wild Men -- or Woses -- hate orcs too, and they will be happy to guide the Rohirrim along an unguarded, secret road to Minas Tirith. The Rohirrim accept the offer and, in exchange, Théoden promises him that the men of Rohan and Gondor will leave the woods to the Wild Men.

The Rohirrim travel through the Forest led by the Chief of the Woses. Then, as they near the end of the forest, Ghân-buri-Ghân says that the wind is changing and quickly runs off. Then, in order to be ready for the coming battle, the Rohirrim rest in the Woods. After the men of Rohan rise and begin the ride off to Minas Tirith, Dernhelm rides closer and closer to Théoden, almost joining him at his side. Finally, the Rohirrim leave the Forest and enter the fields around Minas Tirith without anybody noticing they have arrived. As they look at the city, they see the fires all around and a flash of what seems to be lightning coming from the city.

Théoden, at first, seems to buckle under the strain of being too late. Then, with a grim resolve, he gathers his strength, rises in the saddle and urges his men to death and glory. He blows his horn and leads his men against the forces surrounding city.

Book 5, Chapter 5 Analysis

The Woses are symbolic of all indigenous people. They only want to be left alone to their own lives and not hunted by other men. They hate evil as much as other people and their knowledge can teach us vital things we would not know otherwise. The changing wind is symbolic of the change in the battle as Rohan arrives. The dark cloud that covers everything is pushed back by the changing wind just as the arrival of the Rohirrim will change the course of the battle. The lightning that comes from the city is the battering ram Grond breaking through the Gate of Minas Tirith.

Book 5, Chapter 6

Book 5, Chapter 6 Summary

Hearing the call that Rohan has arrived, the King of the Ringwraiths leaves the gate in order to lead the orcs against them. Thus, the city is saved. Meanwhile, Théoden leads the Rohirrim through the army of Mordor and, on the field, Théoden finds the forces of the Harad. The sides ride their horses against each other and Théoden kills the king of Harad. However, after killing the king of the Harad, the Nazgûl king arrives. Théoden's horse is frightened by the King of Despair and, as the horse rears, it is hit by a dart and falls on top of the king. Seeing Théoden on the ground, the Nazgûl King looms over him.

However, Éowyn, carrying Merry, rides to Théoden's rescue. She tells the Nazgûl King to leave, but he laughs and reminds her that no man can slay him. In response, she drops her helm, showing him that she is actually a woman.

The Nazgûl's flying beast attacks her, but she kills it easily. Then the Nazgûl King knocks her down, breaking her arm with one blow. It seems that he is about to slay Éowyn until Merry, who was cowering in fear of the King, rises up and stabs him in the knee. As the Nazgûl King howls in pain, Éowyn rises and, with her one good arm, slays him with her sword.

Meanwhile, Éomer leads his men through the army of Mordor and Prince Imrahil leads horsemen from the ruined Gate of Gondor. Crossing the battlefield, Éomer happens across Théoden and Éowyn on the battlefield and, seeing both of them lying motionless, he thinks that both are dead. Enraged, he rides back out into battle thinking only of killing his enemies while nothing of his own safety. Meanwhile, other men of Rohan take Théoden and Éowyn toward the city with Merry following weakly behind them.

After cutting a swath of death through his enemies, Éomer stops his killing spree only when he sees enemy ships arriving. However, the ships are actually sailed by Aragorn and his company, including Legolas, Gimli. Then they, along with the Rangers and sons of Elrond, sweep across the battlefield killing everyone and everything in their path until, at the end of the day, no enemies are left alive on the Pelennor.

Book 5, Chapter 6 Analysis

Éowyn's killing of the Nazgûl King is both an ironic fulfillment of the prophecy that no man would kill him and a symbol of women's ability to eliminate despair by both showing men how they are supposed to act, and giving men a reason to act bravely. Merry does not move to protect Théoden, but seeing a woman against the Nazgûl King rouses him to action. This happens because Éowyn is brave enough to be threatened. Merry's desire to protect a woman is brought on by a woman who is brave enough to face death. Thus, she is taking on the bravery that men are supposed to possess.

After Éowyn's stand against the Nazgûl, Éomer rides into battle with the same spirit of fearlessness and determination as his sister. This is symbolic of the fact that despair is gone and men are once again acting, as they should.

Book 5, Chapter 7

Book 5, Chapter 7 Summary

Returning to where Chapter 5 left off, the King of the Nazgûl rides off to fight the Rohirrim as Pippin runs up to Gandalf and tells him that Denethor is about to kill himself and Faramir on a funeral pyre. Hearing this, Gandalf takes Pippin onto Shadowfax and they ride up to Rath Dínen. As they ride up, they meet Imrahil on the way and Gandalf gives him command of the defenses of the city.

They quickly reach Silent Street and find Beregond fighting off servants that are attempting to bring Denethor the torches he needs to light the pyre for himself and Faramir. Gandalf enters the fray and chastises Denethor for trying to kill himself like some heathen king instead of fighting his enemies. Then Gandalf picks up Faramir to take him to the Houses of Healing.

Denethor wants to stay with his son, but Gandalf will not allow it. However, Denethor says that there is no hope for anyone anyway and shows Gandalf the *palantír* that he had kept hidden, telling Gandalf that he knows that Gandalf is trying to set himself up as the real power in the world. Finally, Denethor grabs a torch from one of his servants and burns himself alive on the pyre.

Gandalf leaves the scene and goes to the Houses of Healing with Faramir. Arriving safely, he looks out from the battlements just in time to hear the dying shriek of the Nazgûl King.

Book 5, Chapter 7 Analysis

Denethor accuses Gandalf of setting himself up to run Gondor. However, this is immediately shown to be false when Gandalf has a chance to take the key to the Steward's Door and instead says that Beregond should keep the key until Imrahil returns. If Gandalf had planned to take the kingship of Gondor, he would take the keys himself. The fall of the dome of Rath Dínen is symbolic of the fall of Denethor.

Book 5, Chapter 8

Book 5, Chapter 8 Summary

Merry walks up through Minas Tirith, following the men bearing Théoden and Éowyn and, as he does, Pippin meets him. Worried at the state of his friend, Pippin helps Merry walk toward the Houses of Healing. Though Merry thinks he is dying, Pippin helps him go on until he sees Bergil and tells him to send Gandalf. As Merry and Pippin rest on the side of the road, Gandalf finds them and helps Merry walk the rest of the way.

In the Houses of Healing, Merry, Éowyn and Faramir are all doing badly. However, a woman named Ioreth happens to mention the saying, "The hands of the king are the hands of a healer." (842) When Gandalf hears this, he rushes out to find Aragorn.

Aragorn is actually down in the fields in front of Minas Tirith. The news of the King's arrival has spread, but Aragorn tells Imrahil that it is not yet time for him to claim his kingship and thus he will not enter the city.

Instead, Éomer and Imrahil go to the House of the Stewards and look for Denethor. However, they meet Gandalf there and he tells them Denethor is dead, but Éowyn is still alive. Then they see Aragorn, whom Gandalf found and brought into the city. However, Aragorn still does not want to take his place as king yet, so he gives the rule of the city to Imrahil.

Aragorn, Gandalf, Éomer and Imrahil go to the Houses of Healing, and Aragorn examines Merry, Éowyn and Faramir. Realizing their bad state, he asks for *athelas* but the Houses of Healing have none. No one there thinks that *athelas* has any value, so Aragorn demands that someone find some. Finally, Bergil arrives with a few leaves, allowing Aragorn to heal the three heroes.

When Merry awakes, he is almost instantly happy. He asks for a meal and a pipe, but soon rethinks the pipe, remembering his promise to smoke with Théoden and tell him about The Shire. However, Aragorn tells him to smoke his pipe and happily remember Théoden instead. Then, with his work in the Houses of Healing done, Aragorn leaves the city.

Book 5, Chapter 8 Analysis

The saying, "The hands of the king are the hands of a healer," (842) is symbolic of the fact that a king should be able to heal conflict between enemies. Aragorn does not claim his kingship immediately because he does not want a lot of bickering about his claim. First, he needs to receive the kingship from the Steward of Gondor in order to ensure a clean succession. Second, any questions that may arise associated with his claim on the kingship will only cause bickering among allies instead of the unification that he

needs in the war on Mordor. Instead, Imrahil -- the Prince of Dol Amroth -- takes command of the city.

Book 5, Chapter 9

Book 5, Chapter 9 Summary

Gimli and Legolas walk up the roads of Minas Tirith, critiquing the quality of the city and its construction. Realizing how much better the dwarves and elves could make the city, they resolve to bring them there to make the necessary improvements in its stonework and gardens. Then, as they climb up to the Houses of Healing, they meet Imrahil and tell him that there is a meeting of the Captains outside the city. Imrahil goes down immediately.

Meanwhile, Legolas and Gimli reach the Houses and Healing and speak with Merry and Pippin. Then, as they sit talking, Legolas sees seagulls flying along the river and he talks about how he wishes to go out on the sea. However, Gimli, Merry and Pippin all beg him to stay in Middle Earth.

In order to hear more about their adventures, Pippin asks Legolas and Gimli about the Paths of the Dead. Gimli does not want to talk about it, but Legolas explains how everyone followed Aragorn into the Paths because of the love they have for him. In fact, even Éowyn, the shield-maiden, loves Aragorn, though her love is a romantic love.

Continuing the story, Legolas explains how the Dead followed Aragorn for four days and nights on their trek to Pelargir. They sometimes tried to pass Aragorn but, since he was able to command even the dead, he ordered them to stay behind him.

They rode on to a ford and the Dead frightened Aragorn's enemies so much that they fled from the battle. Then, continuing their journey, Aragorn brought them to Pelargir. There, the army of the Dead put such fear into Mordor's allies that they jumped into the river to drown rather than hold their ground. Once their enemies were gone, the slaves that manned the boats of Umbar were set free and the men from the region joined Aragorn. Then, finally, Aragorn told the King of the Dead that their oath was fulfilled and they could rest. Finally, Aragorn led the captured ships from Pelargir up the Anduin River toward Minas Tirith and into battle.

Meanwhile, as the friends are talking in Minas Tirith, the Captains are in counsel. They know that they are weak from the fighting, but they figure that they can keep Sauron's Eye away from Frodo and Sam and their mission to destroy the Ring. Therefore, they decide to make an assault on the Black Gate in order to distract Sauron and keep his Eye on them and, possibly, give the Ringbearer time to complete his task.

Book 5, Chapter 9 Analysis

Gimli says of men's works, "It is ever so with the things that Men begin: there is a frost in spring, or a blight in summer, and they fail of their promise." (855) This is a critique of

the way that people do not follow through on good intentions when it suddenly becomes hard to follow them.

Here, Aragorn's army of the Dead is a symbol of fear. Instead of the fear that the Black Riders cause -- where men stand still and do nothing -- the Dead bring the fear of righteous might. Evil would rather destroy itself than face righteous might.

In their decision to assault the Black Gate, the Captains and Gandalf are knowingly making an impossible attack that is doomed to fail. However, they are expecting Sauron to think that Aragorn has the Ring because, if Sauron were in Aragorn's place, he would take the Ring and use it against his enemy.

Book 5, Chapter 10

Book 5, Chapter 10 Summary

The army from Gondor sets out from Minas Tirith to make their hopeless assault on the Black Gate and Gandalf, Pippin, Gimli, and Legolas join them. They reach the crossroads with the headless king and restore his head, including the crown of flowers.

After seven days of marching, the small army reaches the Black Gate. There, the Mouth of Sauron comes out to parley with Aragorn and Gandalf and, as proof that the hobbit has failed, he shows them Frodo's mail shirt, Sam's sword, and an elven cloak. Then the messenger gives them their terms of surrender. However, Gandalf, as spokesman, refuses them.

As the Mouth of Sauron rushes back, the Black Gate opens and orcs pour out of Mordor as men and orcs run down from the mountains on either side of the army. The small army is quickly surrounded and the eight remaining Nazgûl fly overhead, spreading fear.

In the midst of all this, Pippin stands next to Beregond as the battle begins. With hope gone, Pippin stabs a troll in the ankle and falls under him. Then, as he blacks out, he hears someone yell that the Eagles are coming.

Book 5, Chapter 10 Analysis

Restoring the head on the statue of the king at the crossroads is symbolic of the return of the king to Gondor. As men begin to be afraid on the road to Mordor, Aragorn tells them to move out to take Cair Andros. Through this, Aragorn is shown to be a wise and forgiving king.

Because The Mouth of Sauron shows Gandalf a mixed batch of goods and only said there was one spy, Gandalf knows that only one hobbit was caught and there is still hope. Though Pippin does not believe there is any hope, and does not believe the Eagles are coming, it foreshadows that there is plenty of hope and the Eagles really are coming. However, it allows Book Five to end on a cliffhanger. When the Nazgûl spread fear, the men are afraid and hopeless. However, because the King of Despair was killed in Chapter 6, everyone stands firm to fight instead of doing nothing.

Book 6, Chapter 1

Book 6, Chapter 1 Summary

The story returns to the end of Book Four. Sam walks goes through the pass to the Tower of Cirith Ungol and hears a battle in the tower, making his hopes rise. However, as he tries to enter the castle, he is stopped by the Silent Watchers. However, Sam manages to pass them by holding up Galadriel's phial of light.

Sam enters the Tower and finds that it is filled with dead orcs. However, one living orc comes down the stairs and, seeing the cloaked and armed Sam coming at him, he quickly turns tail and runs away from Sam. Heartened by this, Sam continues up the stairs and hears two orcs arguing. One orc, Shagrat, tries to kill the orc who ran away from Sam. However, as Shagrat chases the other orc, he is distracted by an attack from Gorbag, who was pretending to be dead. Shagrat quickly kills Gorbag, grabs a bundle he was carrying, and runs down the stairs, dodging Sam's attack on the way.

Leaving Shagrat to run away, Sam climbs up the tower but cannot find Frodo. With no idea of what to do, Sam starts singing. Then, someone responds. However, the last orc -- whom Shagrat tried to kill earlier -- puts a ladder up to a trapdoor and climbs up to threaten Frodo. Now knowing where Frodo is, Sam climbs up, attacks the orc and, though the orc easily dodges Sam's attack, the orc falls through the trapdoor and breaks his neck on the floor below.

Sam runs up to Frodo in order to help him. Meeting Sam, Frodo despairs because he thinks that the orcs took the Ring along with everything else. However, Sam shows Frodo that he actually has the Ring. When Frodo sees the Ring, he almost attacks Sam to get it back. Then, when Frodo has the Ring back, he returns to normal and apologizes, realizing what the Ring is doing to him. However, Sam asks if he can carry it for him sometimes, but Frodo says that it would be better if he does not.

The hobbits still need a way to travel through Mordor undetected, so Sam finds some orc armor for them to wear, making them less conspicuous. Then, once they are dressed, armored and ready, they leave the castle as quickly as they can. As they run away from the castle, a Nazgûl flies down to the Tower.

Book 6, Chapter 1 Analysis

The events of this chapter happen on the same day that Minas Tirith is besieged and the Rohirrim are guided through the forest by the Wild Men of the Woods. The package Shagrat carries has the mithril coat, Sam's sword and an elven cloak that The Mouth of Sauron shows to the company at the Black Gate. When Sam and Frodo leave, they break the power of the Silent Watchers by holding the light of Galadriel and shouting in the elvish language. The natural power of words is used for good here: destroying an evil force.

Book 6, Chapter 2

Book 6, Chapter 2 Summary

Frodo and Sam jump into a ravine and land in a thicket of thorns in order to avoid the Nazgûl. Then, once they think it is safe, they climb through the ravine toward their goal. As they rest, they see the dark clouds being driven back and hear the dismay for the death of the Nazgûl King. Frodo and Sam work their way farther along the ravine until they come to a cleft that will allow them to look out on Mordor. After seeing how far they have to go, they climb down and work their way farther across the ravine.

As they travel, two orcs pass them by. Sam and Frodo hide quickly, though they can overhear the orcs' conversation. As it turns out, the orcs are talking about Gollum and how he got away from them. However, he is somewhere in Mordor and he is following Sam and Frodo. As the orcs continue to talk, their conversation turns into an argument, the argument turns into a fight and one orc kills the other then runs away, allowing Sam and Frodo to keep moving.

The hobbits continue along the ravine, resting when they can, but they are eventually forced to take the road. Unfortunately, as they walk along the road they are overtaken by a band of orcs. However, the orc-driver thinks that they are just small orcs, and he whips them into the band, pushing them along the road on the run.

Eventually, the orcs come to a crossroads where another orc band runs into their group. Once again, confusion turns to arguments and arguments turn into fights, giving Frodo and Sam the chance slip away and hide.

Book 6, Chapter 2 Analysis

The events of this chapter happen from the day that the Nazgûl King is killed to the day that Aragorn leads the army out of Minas Tirith. The thicket of thorns is symbolic of nature hanging on even in the most desolate of lands and the way that nature is perverted when it is not allowed to grow normally. Because of the way that evil hates itself, as symbolized by the constant fighting between orcs, it works to destroy itself. Here, it allows Sam and Frodo to continue their mission.

Book 6, Chapter 3

Book 6, Chapter 3 Summary

Days pass as Sam and Frodo work their way across Mordor toward Mount Doom. Finally, they come to a point where they can go straight toward the mountain, allowing them to throw away their orc-armor. After tossing the extra weight away, they travel toward Orodruin carrying only their gray cloaks, the Ring, the sword Sting, the phial of light, and the box of Galadriel's earth.

They rest when they can, move forward when they are able, and finally come to the mountain. However, Frodo is spent, forcing Sam to carry him up the mountain. But, as Sam carries Frodo upwards, he sees a path running up its side, leading to their goal.

They climb up the mountain toward the path and, finally reaching it, they have an easy way up. However, as they climb, Gollum attacks Frodo, trying to get the Ring back. Frodo is able to throw Gollum off and, enraged, tells Gollum that, if he attacks again, he will be thrown into the Cracks of Doom.

With new strength, Frodo runs off toward the opening into the mountain, leaving Sam alone with Gollum. Sam finally has an opportunity to kill his hated foe, but as Gollum begs to be spared, Sam has pity on him. In fact, he leaves him behind in order to let him run away and live for a little bit longer, but Gollum does not run away. In fact, he pretends to run off, and then turns around to follow Frodo again.

Sam runs up to the Cracks of Doom but, as he spies Frodo, Frodo does not throw the Ring in. Instead, he claims it for his own, puts it on his finger and disappears. However, just then, Gollum knocks Sam over to attack Frodo and take the Ring back.

Meanwhile, Sauron suddenly realizes where the Ring is and what is happening to it. His Nazgûl fly toward Orodruin as fast as possible in order to retrieve it. At the Cracks of Doom, Gollum fights with the invisible Frodo and bites off the finger that wears the Ring. Triumphant, Gollum holds Frodo's finger aloft and rejoices that he finally has his Precious again. Then, as he dances by the edge of the Cracks of Doom, Gollum slips and falls in, destroying both himself and the Ring.

After the Ring is destroyed, the Mountain starts rumbling and spewing lava as the Tower of Barad-dûr falls. Meanwhile, Sam and Frodo climb out onto a rocky outcropping on the side of the mountain and wait to die.

Book 6, Chapter 3 Analysis

This chapter is the climax of the entire novel of *The Lord of the Rings*. The events of this chapter occur from the day that Aragorn leads the army from Minas Tirith to the day the army is attacked after arriving at the Black Gate. Frodo's warning to Gollum that he

should not attack him foreshadows Gollum's fall into the Fire. The Ring held Gollum to his promise to do what Frodo told him to do and, by doing so, the Ring was destroyed. This is a symbol of the way that evil hates itself and destroys itself by its own actions.

Book 6, Chapter 4

Book 6, Chapter 4 Summary

Returning to the battle outside the Black Gate, the Eagles -- led by Gwaihir the Windlord -- attack the Nazgûl until, suddenly, the Nazgûl turn and fly toward Mount Doom. As Sauron's power leaves the orcs, the orcs are instantly confused and afraid and the Captains of the West see this and attack. Fortunately, Gandalf stops them and, as the men watch, the Black Gate and the towers flanking it fall, showing that Sauron has passed. With their master gone, the orcs and trolls run away, but many of the men who had joined Mordor stand to fight. However, most either run away or surrender.

Gandalf calls for Gwaihir and the Eagle carries Gandalf toward Mount Doom -- with two of his Eagle brothers following. There, Gwaihir spots Frodo and Sam as they sit on a rocky outcropping with lava flowing by them. Knowing what they need to do, Gwaihir's brothers pick up Sam and Frodo and carry them off to safety. Sam, exhausted, malnourished and emotionally spent, blacks out.

It is fourteen days before Sam finally wakes on a soft bed with Frodo next to him. Confused and unsure whether everything he remembers actually happened, he realizes that it was not a dream when he looks at Frodo's hand and sees that one of the fingers is missing. Then, as Sam looks around confused, Gandalf, who Sam thought was dead, appears behind him and tells him that he is in Ithilien and that the Shadow has left Middle Earth.

Then, as Frodo wakes, Gandalf -- who is happier than Sam has ever seen him -- lets him know that the King of Gondor has returned to rule the Western Lands. Then, in a final bit of good news, he gives Frodo and Sam the phial of light and the box of earth that they received from Galadriel.

The men and elves that are assembled there treat Frodo and Sam with great honors, as though they were kings in their own right. Finally, Sam learns to his surprise that Aragorn is actually the King of Men, not the type that Sam took him for in Bree. Finally, after a minstrel sings of Frodo and Sam's accomplishments, they go to a pavilion and see Merry and Pippin -- who seem to be taller than Sam remembers -- in the armor of Rohan and Gondor. Unsure what to make of all this, Sam sits down with Pippin and Merry after the feast in order to share tales.

Book 6, Chapter 4 Analysis

This chapter symbolizes the reunification of the Fellowship. As the separate strands of the story are unified into one chapter, so are the major characters. Frodo does not want to carry a sword. This shows the fact that he does not want anything to do with wars or conflict any longer.

Book 6, Chapter 5

Book 6, Chapter 5 Summary

Returning to the time when Aragorn sets out with his army toward the Black Gate, Faramir and Éowyn are in the Houses of Healing in Minas Tirith, waiting for news of Aragorn's attack. However, they hear nothing and are frustrated by the fact that they are stuck in Minas Tirith instead of fighting with Aragorn. In fact, they are almost imprisoned in the Houses of Healing by order of Gandalf and Aragorn.

As the days pass idly, they spend time together and fall in love. Then, one day, they looking out toward Mordor and their hands clasp. Just then, they see the Shadow pass from Mordor. Weeks pass and people return to Minas Tirith, including Aragorn. With his Kingship clear, Faramir gives him the keys to the City and welcomes him as the King who has returned. Then, after his coronation, he finally enters the city as the ruler of Gondor.

Aragorn's reign begins and he releases all his prisoners, frees the slaves of Mordor and makes peace with the Easterlings and the men of Harad. He also pardons Beregond for his treason and sends him to serve Faramir -- who has been named Prince of Ithilien -- at Emyn Arnen. Finally, Éomer returns to Rohan as elves and dwarves come to Minas Tirith and bring the city into a splendor that it had never before enjoyed.

Meanwhile, Aragorn is anxious to marry Arwen, but he waits for a sign to tell him that it is time. Finally, one day, Gandalf takes him out and shows him a sapling from the line of Nimloth growing in a pile of barren rocks. Elated, Aragorn know that the sign has come. He carefully takes the sapling to the courtyard above and replaces the dead tree that stands atop Minas Tirith. Eventually, the happy day arrives when Arwen arrives with Elrond. Elrond gives Aragorn the scepter of Gondor and Arwen and Aragorn are finally married.

Book 6, Chapter 5 Analysis

When Faramir and Éowyn clasp hands, Sauron dies. Here, Tolkien is giving love the symbolic last word on the death of evil. Evil has died with the death of Sauron. Love is taking the place of evil.

Book 6, Chapter 6

Book 6, Chapter 6 Summary

Éomer returns to Minas Tirith in order to carry the body of Théoden back to Rohan. In order to show proper honor to Théoden, Aragorn, all four hobbits, Gandalf, Legolas and Gimli join them for the funeral procession. As well, Arwen, Celeborn, Galadriel, Elrond and his sons, Imrahil, Faramir and many others also join.

Along the way to Rohan, they pass the woods where the Wild Men live and the party hears drums beating in the woods. Aragorn announces that he gives the woods to the Woses and the drums stop. Eventually, the procession arrives in Rohan with Théoden's body. The Rohirrim erect a great burial mound for him and give him a funeral, including a magnificent feast where Éomer gives Éowyn to Faramir so that they might be married.

After much feasting, it is time for the hobbits to leave. Éowyn gives Merry a horn as a gift, though Merry refused to take any gifts other than his arms and armor. Then Aragorn, the four hobbits, Gandalf, Legolas, Gimli and all the elves except Arwen ride on to Helm's Deep. At Helm's Deep, Gimli fulfills his part of the bargain with Legolas when he shows him the Glittering Caves. After leaving Helm's Deep, the company travels to Fangorn and meets Treebeard at Isengard. There, Treebeard tells Gandalf that he has let Saruman leave Orthanc, along with Wormtongue.

As the company gets ready to leave Isildur, it is time for more partings. It is Legolas's turn to show Gimli Fangorn Forest and Aragorn must return to Minas Tirith. Meanwhile, the rest of the company travels toward Rivendell. Along the road, the company meets Saruman and Wormtongue. They offer Saruman an opportunity for forgiveness and comfort, but Saruman is bitter and refuses their attempts. However, Pippin gives him some pipeweed and Saruman returns the favor by stealing Pippin's pipeweed pouch.

Eventually, Galadriel and Celeborn leave the company to return to Lothlórien while the rest travel to Rivendell to see Bilbo again. However, when the hobbits arrive, they see that Bilbo has aged greatly since the Ring has been destroyed. Unfortunately, he cannot even stay awake long enough to hear the other hobbits' tales in order to write them down. Instead, Bilbo gives his book to Frodo so that he can finish it. After fourteen days in Rivendell, the four hobbits and Gandalf leave for the Shire. Before they leave, Elrond tells Frodo to look for Bilbo in the Shire in the early autumn.

Book 6, Chapter 6 Analysis

Saruman says that things are less than good in Southfarthing, foreshadowing the miserable plight of the Shire when the four hobbits return to it. When Frodo says that they have seen everything "Except the Sea" (964), it foreshadows his decision to go to the Grey Havens and travel across the Sea with the elves. This foreshadowing is

furthered when Elrond tells Frodo to look for Bilbo in the woods of the Shire and that he, Elrond, will be with him.

Book 6, Chapter 7

Book 6, Chapter 7 Summary

The hobbits and Gandalf travel peacefully toward The Shire but on the anniversary of the attack on Weathertop, Frodo's wound from the Morgul knife hurts him terribly. However, he is fine the next day. They arrive in Bree to see that it is a very changed place. The town is very wary and worried and the men all seem to carry clubs. As well, the Prancing Pony is almost empty and there is no pipeweed.

The companions sit down with Butterbur to find out what is going on and he tells them that things have been bad in Bree. Many rough folks have passed through and there were even people killed in Bree, of all places. However, when Gandalf reports that the King has returned, Butterbur is elated. However, he is very surprised to hear that Strider of all people is the King in Gondor. Finally, Butterbur completes the happy reunions when he gives Bill the pony to Sam. Then, the hobbits and Gandalf ride toward The Shire. However, as they approach The Shire, Gandalf leaves them in order to spend time with Tom Bombadil.

Book 6, Chapter 7 Analysis

Butterbur's problems and hints foreshadow the troubles the hobbits will find in the Shire.

Book 6, Chapter 8

Book 6, Chapter 8 Summary

Frodo, Sam, Merry and Pippin arrive at the bridge over the Brandywine to find that there is a gate there. As well, the houses have changed, being built above the ground with square windows instead of the underground dwellings with round windows that hobbits prefer. To add to the oddity, the hobbits at the gate are afraid to let them in because "the Chief" (975), Lotho Baggins, has made rules against it. Merry, Pippin, Frodo and Sam, of course, do not want to hear of it and, instead, tell them to open the gate.

The noise of the hobbits arguing wakes up the "Big Man" (976) -- who turns out to be Bill Ferny -- and he threatens to break their necks. However, when he sees four heavily armed, angry hobbits facing him, he runs off never to be seen again. With the Big Man out of the way, the four companions are admitted through the gate and, once they are inside, the four travelers talk with the hobbits working the gate. There they learn that there is not enough food and there is not any beer or pipeweed. However, there are many rules.

The next morning, Shirriffs come to arrest Frodo, Sam, Merry and Pippin. The four hobbits on ponies play along but, since they are riding ponies, they are able to push the Shirriffs faster than they can run and soon leave the Shirriffs behind. The four travelers reach Bywater, and they are immediately threatened by half-orcs carrying clubs. However, the four hobbits quickly draw their swords and scare them off. Following their minor victory, they rouse the hobbits of the Shire and quickly convince them to join them in getting rid of the men who are oppressing the populace. However, realizing they need more help, Pippin runs off to fetch more hobbits while Merry, Sam and Frodo put together a plan.

Eventually, twenty half-orcs come to Bywater in order to regain control of the town. However, the hobbits there trap them and, in the ensuing fight, one half-orc is killed. Seeing that the case is hopeless, the other half-orcs surrender and are quickly tied up.

Sam runs off to find his father and bring him to Bywater while Frodo and Merry learn everything that has happened to they Shire while they were gone. As the other hobbits explain it, it all started when Lotho Baggins took over Bag End and started buying everything he could, including houses, inns, taverns, mills and land. Then, making things worse, he brought in the men and the half-orcs to keep order and seize all the beer and pipeweed. However, the half-orcs eventually took over for themselves, imprisoned Lotho in Bag End and a person named Sharkey took over The Shire. Then, hobbits were thrown into prison constantly, and everybody lived in fear until Merry, Pippin, Frodo and Sam showed up to rouse the hobbits.

After being caught up to date, the hobbits rest and, the next morning, the Tooks that Pippin sent for arrive. Just in time, as it turns out, because about a hundred men and

half-orcs come to retake the town. However, in the battle that follows, the hobbits set another trap and all of the Big People are killed, scattered or captured. Unfortunately, several hobbits are also killed or wounded in the battle. However, in order to prevent reprisals on the captives, Frodo prevents the hobbits from killing the men who surrendered.

With their last victory, the army of hobbits sets out for Bag End and, as they crest the hill, they see that the woods have been cut down, a quarry has replaced Bagshot Row and Ted Sandyman's mill was replaced with an even larger one. In fact, Ted Sandyman sees them and taunts them, but he quickly learns that the ruffians have been defeated and they are no longer a threat. Then, to call the hobbits out and announce their victory, Pippin blows the horn of Rohan.

Riding down the road toward Frodo's old home, Frodo, Sam, Merry and Pippin enter an empty Bag End, but cannot find Lotho. Instead, they find Saruman -- alias Sharkey -- who tells them that Lotho Baggins is dead. However, Frodo is not willing to take revenge on Saruman and Wormtongue, who still follows his former master slavishly, and instead he offers them both a place to live. However, Saruman refuses for both of them and tells Wormtongue that they are leaving again.

However, in one final attempt to take out his vengeance on Frodo, Saruman attempts to kill him with a dagger, but Frodo's mithril armor deflects the knife. However, instead of letting the other hobbits attack Saruman, Frodo forgives him and offers Wormtongue a chance to leave Saruman. Then Saruman tells Frodo that Wormtongue killed Lotho. Shocked that Saruman told Frodo that he killed Lotho; Wormtongue kills Saruman. Then, as he tries to run away, hobbit archers kill Wormtongue.

Book 6, Chapter 8 Analysis

The overthrow of the ruffians is symbolic of the way that common people can throw off oppressors when they band together and choose to make a difference. The destruction of the Shire's forests and the huge mill are symbolic of the evils of destroying nature for the sake of industry.

Book 6, Chapter 9

Book 6, Chapter 9 Summary

The hobbits of the Shire release all the hobbits imprisoned by Lotho and Saruman, tear down the huge mill built for Ted Sandyman, and restore Bagshot Row to its former state. As well, Sam plants a mallorn tree to replace the party tree that was chopped down, and plants other trees throughout the Shire, putting a grain of Galadriel's earth on every tree in the hopes that it will help them grow. Then, with a little of Galadriel's earth left in the box, he throws it into the wind. However, it is not until spring that Sam learns that the trees are all fully-grown, the pipeweed and beer are excellent and almost all the children born that year have blonde hair. Eventually, Sam marries Rosie Cotton and they move into Bag End with Frodo. However, despite Sam's dedicated care, Frodo is ill on the anniversaries of the attack on Weathertop and the days he spent in Mordor.

One day in the early fall, Frodo asks Sam to join him on a fourteen-day journey. Sam thinks that Frodo is travelling to Rivendell in order to be with Bilbo, so he is not surprised when Frodo hands over the keys to Bag End, as well as the book he had been working on for Bilbo.

Finally, the day comes for their trip, and Sam and Frodo travel out of the Shire, where they meet Elrond, Gildor, Galadriel and Bilbo. Then they travel to the Grey Havens and see Gandalf there, openly wearing the Ring of Fire. It is then that Sam understands that the elves, Gandalf, Bilbo and Frodo are going to leave Middle Earth forever. Then, with their parting imminent, Pippin and Merry arrive just in time to say goodbye to Bilbo and Frodo. Eventually, the ship leaves and the three hobbits return to the Shire. Sam returns home to Rosie and she sets their daughter on his lap. Sitting comfortably in his home, Sam says to Rosie, "Well, I'm back" (1008).

Book 6, Chapter 9 Analysis

Sam's restoration of the Shire is symbolic of the fact that nature can always be brought back. It also symbolizes that things can become even more beautiful after difficult times. The final line of *The Lord of the Rings* is somewhat sad. It is almost as though Sam is woefully resigned to a life at home. However, Tolkien is merely pointing out that Sam is returning to a very comfortable life that is not nearly as exciting as the tales that he lived through. However, earlier in the book, Tolkien showed Sam and Frodo discussing how tough the life of adventurers is and that it is not really to be envied.

Characters

Aragorn

The last descendant of the kings of the west, Aragorn, named Estel (Hope) by his mother, was born in the northwest of Middle Earth. (Aragorn is variously known as Strider, Thorongil, Estel and Elessar.) There his kinsmen and people had dwindled to a small clan of hardy, relatively long-lived men and women. His father was killed soon after his birth; Aragorn was raised in Rivendell, the last secret hope of his people. He has spent his adult life, like the other men of his people, as a Ranger, protecting the northwest lands of Middle Earth (particularly the Shire, since the finding of the Ring) from the threat of Sauron. He has ridden under an assumed name with the riders of Rohan and fought under an assumed name□Thorongil□in Gondor.

Aragorn is not a fairy-tale hero. His hard, hunted life has made him grim and, at times, a little tart. His ability and experience have not left him without self-doubt. His personal life, particularly his love for Arwen, has been mothballed for decades. He hardly refers to that love, and only retrospectively do some of his actions, for example, singing the Lay of Beren and Luthien, reveal its true, almost painful intensity. Despite this, his capacity for true friendship defines him as much as his actions. He is capable of great tenderness and understanding, born of intuition honed by experience. Gandalf relies on him. Bilbo treats him with the avuncular fondness with which he treats his own young cousins. Eomer of Rohan trusts him very nearly on sight, something Aragorn has not often experienced. Aragorn responds to this with a brother's love for Eomer and his sister Éowyn. Éowyn falls briefly in love with him. His struggle to put their relationship on a footing which will neither deny respect for her ability nor compassion for her situation, but which will not mislead her as to his true feelings, is an often overlooked indicator of Aragorn's personality. When she finds her real love in Faramir, there is a palpable release of tension between Aragorn and Éowyn. Aragorn, the only child, has found in Eomer and Éowyn something like a family. Finally united to Arwen, there is a certain unbuttoned happiness about him that he will carry to his death.

Arwen

A half-elf and Elrond's daughter, like all elves, she is for all practical purposes immortal. Arwen (also known as Undomel 'Evenstar') is called 'Evenstar' because of her resemblance to her great-grandmother, Luthien 'Morningstar,' who also renounced immortality for the love of a mortal man. She has waited for Aragorn through all his labors and marries him shortly after the end of the War of the Ring, assigning her right to pass over the sea to the uttermost west to Frodo should he wish. After Aragorn's death, she goes back to her mother's home of Lórien and, the elves all departed, dies alone.

Arwen's character and meaning are elusive, but in the end, hidden away in the Appendices, supremely tragic. The true female counterpart of Frodo, she is wounded by the necessary choice between father and lover, immortality and mortality, just as Frodo is by the experience of the Ring. Although she assumes mortality, she dies utterly elven in her attitude.

Bilbo Baggins

A Hobbit who accompanies a group of dwarves on an attempt to kill a dragon and reclaim their home and treasure. All this happens, although not quite the way they expected, and largely through Bilbo's growing self assurance and the help of a ring Bilbo finds, steals, or wins□actually a little of all three□that renders its wearer invisible. Bilbo brings the ring back with him and occasionally uses it, largely to avoid meeting his more obnoxious relatives. It has, however, other effects. He enjoys extended life and vigor, but also begins to feel it "growing on his mind." The ring is the Ring, the great ruling Ring of Sauron, holding a power that devours and corrupts sooner or later all that carry it. He relinquishes it to Frodo, his heir, and goes off to Rivendell. He eventually passes over the sea into the west with Frodo, Elrond, Gandalf and Galadriel. Bilbo is the first author and compiler of the Red Book of Westmarch, "source" of Tolkien's history of Middle Earth.

Frodo Baggins

Cousin and adopted heir of Bilbo, he is left a clearly magic ring along with the rest of Bilbo's property and warned not to use it. After a number of years, Gandalf comes to perform a final test that identifies the ring as the One Ring of Sauron, whose power and influence is so great and so corrupting that it cannot be safely used. Attempting to protect the Shire and his people, Frodo and three companions, Sam, Merry, and Pippin flee with it while being pursued by the Sauron's servants the Ringwraiths. At the Council of Elrond, he offers to take it to Mount Doom and destroy it. He struggles to perform the task, slowly being devoured by the power of the Ring until, at the edge of the volcano's crater, he chooses to claim the Ring for himself. At that moment, Sauron is aware of him and is distracted from the little army lead by Aragorn. Before he or Frodo can act, Gollum bites off Frodo's finger to steal back the ring and, dancing with glee, falls backwards into the fire, destroying the Ring. Frodo is doubly maimed by his sufferings while carrying the Ring and by his final failure to resist and destroy it. He can find no peace in his return home and takes up Arwen's offer to pass over the sea into the west in her place.

Balin

One of Bilbo's dwarf companions, Balin goes to restore the ancient Dwarf kingdom of Moria where he is killed by Orcs.

Beregond

A man of the Guards of the Citadel, he and Pippin save Faramir from death at the hands of Faramir's father, Denethor. To do this, Beregond leaves his post and kills three of his comrades, who attempt to stop him, following orders from Denethor. Beregond's dilemma is an exemplum of divided loyalties and competing moral imperatives among which each person must choose and act. His trial is one of Aragorn's first acts as the newly crowned king of Gondor, shifting from warleader to judge.

Bergil

The son of Beregond who guides Pippin about Minas Tirith and fetches the herb Athelas, which Aragorn uses to save Merry, Éowyn, and Faramir.

Black Captain

See Witch King of Angmar

Black Riders

See Ringwraiths

Fredegar Bolger

Fredegar, also known as Fatty, is another of Frodo and Bilbo's cousins. He tries to keep up the pretense that Frodo is still in Buckland for as long as possible. He raises Buckland against the Ringwraiths and later leads guerilla warfare against Sharkey's rule, emerging from the Lockholes in Michel Delving a much thinner Hobbit.

Tom Bombadil

A character something like Kipling's Puck of Pook's Hill, he has a power that can be asserted over nature, but it is not certain that he has any role in guarding or tending it as the Ents have. The Ring has no power over him. At times, he seems like a vision of what man would have been if Adam had not fallen in Eden.

Boromir

Boromir is the eldest son of Denethor and the last ruling steward of Gondor. He is a masterful man, who loves the glory of battle, and, like his father, thinks only in terms of preserving the status quo in Gondor. He insists on traveling to Rivendell to find out the meaning of his brother's dream. He becomes one of the Fellowship of the Ring, but is

clearly uncomfortable with the decision to unmake the Ring and with the pretensions of Aragorn. He attempts at the Rauros Falls to take the Ring from Frodo. When Frodo flees, Boromir is stricken immediately with remorse for his action. A company of Orcs attacks the band, dispersed by Frodo's flight. Boromir is mortally wounded defending Merry and Pippin from the Orcs. He confesses to Aragorn that he attempted to take the Ring and begs him to go to Gondor to save his people.

Meriadoc Brandybuck

See Merry

Bregalad

Bregalad (also known as Quickbeam) is one of the youngest of the Ents or shepherds of the trees. He makes up his mind with most un-Entish speed and, having made up his mind that Saruman must be stopped, is excused from the Entmoot or parliament to play host to Merry and Pippin.

Barliman Butterbur

Owner of the Prancing Pony Inn in Bree, often patronized by Gandalf. He forgets to send on Gandalf's letter to Frodo warning him to leave the Shire. He thinks Aragorn is at best a dubious character.

Celeborn

The husband of Galadriel, Celeborn is the ruler, with his wife, of the elves of Lórien. He is a somewhat shadowy figure compared to his wife. His reactions to men and events seem less shrewd than hers.

Círdan

Círdan is the elf lord who originally wore one of the three rings of the elves, and who rules the Grey Havens from which the elves depart to the lands of the Valar in the west. Círdan provides the ships that make the voyages. He departs with the other leaders of the elves and the Ringbearers Frodo and Bilbo.

Farmer Cotton

A farmer from near Bywater, and a local leader, he and his sons rally to five hobbits returned from the War of the Rings and help them clear the Shire of the interloping men

under the leadership of Saruman, now called Sharkey. His daughter Rose marries Sam Gamgee.

Rose Cotton

Daughter of Farmer Cotton, she marries Sam Gamgee the year after he returns from the quest to destroy the Ring.

Dain

Dain (also known as Ironfoot), the Dwarf king of the Lonely Mountain, dies fighting beside King Brand of Dale against the forces of Sauron in the Ring War.

Denethor

The last ruling steward of Gondor. He is very much in the mold of the ancient men of the west. His resemblance to Aragorn is mentioned at more than one point. Nevertheless, he pays only lip service to the essential nature of the stewardship. It is clear he would not relinquish, with any good grace, his rule to the true king should he return. He is contemptuous when speaking of Aragorn. In the Appendices in the last volume of *Lord of the Rings*, there are suggestions that Denethor's attitude may have been affected by an earlier meeting of the two men. Aragorn, under the name of Thorongil, fought as a captain in the wars of Gondor under Denethor's father, Ecthelion II. Denethor resented Thorongil's ability, success, and his father's regard for the stranger from the north. Since Denethor is a "farsee-ing" man, the reader is left to ponder whether Denethor realized from the beginning who Thorongil was. Denethor's relationship with Gandalf is equally poisoned. He resents his patronage of Aragorn and his influence over his own younger son, Faramir. When Denethor realizes that his younger son Faramir has allowed Frodo to continue on his attempt to destroy the Ring instead of bringing it to him, he flies into a cold rage. Denethor bitterly drives him back into battle. There, Faramir, fighting desperately to cover a retreat, is wounded and falls under the influence of the poisonous Black Breath. Mad with despair for Gondor and grief for his dying son, Denethor commits suicide, attempting to kill his son with him. Faramir is saved by the desperate action of Beregond and Merry, but all attempts to save Denethor fail.

Dernhelm

See Éowyn

Dunhere

Dunhere is the Lord of Harrowdale and one of the lords of Rohan at the muster.

Eomer Eadig

See Eomer

Elanor

Sam Gamgee's oldest daughter, named for a flower of Lórien. According to the Appendices, she marries Fastred Fairbairn. It is in their family that the Redbook of Westmarch, represented as Tolkien's source, was handed down.

Elessar

See Aragorn

Elladan and Elrohir

The sons of Elrond who have long fought alongside the Rangers and come with them to meet Aragorn in Rohan and fight under his banner.

Elrond

The son of Eärendel the Mariner, son of Idril Celebridal and Tuor, and Elwing, daughter of Luthien Tintúviel and Beren. He was a master of ancient learning, a careful councilor, and his house in Rivendell in the northwest of Middle Earth was a citadel against the rising power of Sauron. At the end of the first Age, the Valar, the spirits who rule earth under the one divinity Iluvater, gave Elrond and Elros, his brother, the choice of belonging to the people of their female grandparents, the immortal elves, or of joining the mortal humans of their male grandparents. Elrond chose to be an elf and like the elves he had the right to pass into the deathless lands of the west. His children also were allowed the choice of mortality in Middle Earth or passing into the uttermost west. Elros chose mankind and remained with the people of his grandfathers', the Edain. He was granted a life span longer than most humans, and this longer life span was inherited, although diminished, by his descendants of whom Aragorn was one. Aragorn and Arwen, Elrond's daughter, were deeply in love. Elrond, although he sheltered and encouraged Aragorn, opposed the match because he knew it would mean the loss of his daughter to mortality.

Ents

Ents are great tree-like beings, among the oldest senescent beings on Middle Earth. Slow and careful of speech and judgement, when aroused they are capable of enormous destruction. They care for all trees, and it is in defense of their trees that they

attack Saruman at his fortress Isengard. They and the Huorns turn the tide of the battle at Helm's Deep.

Entwives

Female Ents, they were more interested in fruit trees than in forest trees and were famous for their gardens. They seem to have been instrumental in teaching mankind agriculture. They chose to live in cultivated lands rather than with the male Ents who preferred the wild woods. Eventually the Entwives were lost to the Ents. The Ents searched for them, but found only their broken gardens.

Eomer

Eomer (also known as Eomer Eadig) is Third Marshal of Rohan and the son of King Theoden's beloved younger sister, Theodwyn. Orphaned as a young boy, his uncle takes him and his sister Éowyn into his home and raises them as his own. Eomer and his sister have had to endure seeing the king made old and feeble before his time by the evil counsel of Grima Wormtongue. Since his only son Theodred had died in fighting against Saruman's army, Theoden, dying on the battlefield before Minas Tirith, named Eomer his heir. Confronted with Aragorn on his hunt for Merry and Pippin, he immediately recognizes Aragorn's qualities and worth and takes the great risk of his uncle's anger to lend him and his companions, Legolas and Gimli, horses. This is the beginning of a deep friendship between the two. Finding his sister, as he thinks, dead beside their uncle, he leads a reckless charge that cuts across the Pellenor Fields within sight of Aragorn's ships coming to the aid of the city.

Estel

See Aragorn

Éowyn

Sister of Eomer, Éowyn (also known as Dernhelm) has been like a favorite daughter to her uncle. She stood by him while Grima made an old man of him and has had to resist Grima's advances. The best description of her is Háma's, "She is fearless and high hearted. All love her." She falls in love with Aragorn at first sight, recognizing in him all the qualities of a leader. Her uncle makes her regent of the Mark in his absence at the suggestion of Háma. When she realizes Aragorn cannot love her as she wishes, she disguises herself as a young warrior and, with Merry as her companion, rides off to war with her uncle. When the Chief of the Ringwraiths confronts her uncle on the battlefield, killing his horse, she comes between them and with the help of Merry kills the Wraith, who it was foretold would never die by a man's hand. Éowyn and Merry are overcome by the Black Breath, only to be saved along with Faramir by Aragorn's nursing and herb lore. Recovering together while the armies move towards Mordor, Faramir comes to

love her deeply. She accepts him and the task of rebuilding the ravaged province of Ithlien. They are formally betrothed after her uncle's funeral. She never mentions her own great deed, but almost her first words to her brother after coming out of her coma are, "You shall make him [Merry] a knight of the Riddermark for he is valiant."

Undomel 'Evenstar'

See Arwen

Fangorn

See Treebeard

Faramir

The younger son of Denethor, Faramir is a scholarly man, but, nonetheless, a formidable warrior. Although his father has always and obviously preferred his older brother, he and Boromir were always close. Faramir admires Gandalf and attempts to learn as much as he can from him. Unlike his brother and father, he is not tempted by the Ring and makes good his boast that he would not stoop to pick it up if he found it on the road when he finds Frodo and the Ring in his power. Instead, he gives what help he can to Frodo's quest. Broken-hearted by his father's anger against him and worn out by incessant fighting, he is seriously wounded and infected with the Black Breath while trying to cover his men's retreat to Minas Tirith. His father, mad with despair, attempts to kill him, but Merry, Beregond, and Gandalf save him. Aragorn is able to cure him by force of will and herb lore. While recuperating, he falls in love with Éowyn whom he marries. Aragorn gives him Ithilien to restore.

Fatty

See Fredegar Bolger

Bill Ferny

A Breelander man in league with the Ring-wraiths. He is in the Shire when the companions return.

Galadriel

A powerful elf woman who, with her husband Celeborn, rules Lórien, a land where the ravages of time, or the effects of the waves of evil that have swept over Middle Earth, are held at bay by the power of her Ring. Galadriel is a political being, despite her

sylvan trappings. She first summoned the White council, and she attempted to have Gandalf made its head. She has long desired the Ring, but when offered it by Frodo, draws back from her desire having carefully considered what the ends of her actions would be. Her keen understanding of individuals is not practiced coldly. Her quick and penetrating understanding and sympathy for Gimli and his world-view and sorrows win her a deep and enduring love. It in turn enlarges Gimli's sympathy and understanding in all his dealings. She is Arwen's grandmother and clearly favors the match with Aragorn.

Gaffer Gamgee

Gaffer is Sam's father, the gardener at Bag End.

Sam Gamgee

The youngest son of Bilbo and Frodo's gardener, Gaffer Gamgee. He is acting gardener of Bag End when he is caught eavesdropping on Frodo and Gandalf. A practical, long suffering soul, there is a streak of the sublime in him, longing to come in contact with the higher sensibilities of the Elves, meeting obstacles with unconscious heroism. He emerges as a hero on the level of Aragorn, specifi-cally mirroring many of the qualities of Faramir.

Gamling the Old

Gamling the Old is the Commander of the men of Rohan holding Helm's Deep.

Gandalf the Grey

Gandalf the Grey, also known as Mithrandir, Grey Pilgrim, Gandalf Greyhame and Gandalf Stormcrow, is a wizard, one of five sent from the west to Middle Earth to help in the fight against Sauron. The wizards were not to dominate, but to encourage and aid in the fight against Sauron. Although Saruman was head of the White council and the chief of the order of wizards, Círdan gave Gandalf his own Ring when he arrived from out of the west. He traveled incessantly, trying to keep some sort of watch and alliance against Sauron. He is sensitive to the movement of providence, even if he does not know what the pattern of providence is. He dies fighting a Balrog in Moria and returns to Middle Earth only briefly to see the struggles against Sauron to their conclusion and leaves within two years for the west.

Mithrandir Gandalf

See Gandalf

Ghân-buri-Ghân

Leader of the 'Wild Men,' an indigenous primitive people, in the forest of Drúadan. He leads the riders of Rohan through secret paths and brings them news of the Siege of Gondor. Aragorn con-firms their possession of the forest and bans others from entering it without their permission.

Gimli

Son of Bilbo's companion, Gloin, Gimli represents the Dwarves among the Fellowship of the Ring. His friendship with Legolas and love for Galadriel brings a new rapprochement between the long estranged peoples.

Glorfindel

Glorfindel is the Elf prince who rides out from Rivendell to find and help Frodo and his companions. His horse carries Frodo and the Ring to safety.

Goldberry

Goldberry is the wife of Tom Bombadil.

Gollum

Gollum, also known as Sméagol, is a Hobbit-like creature who came into possession of the Ring by murdering his friend Deagol who had found it. He sneaks away into the mountains where, after centuries, he loses the Ring to Bilbo. He is still drawn to the Ring, desiring it and hating it. He helps Frodo and Sam half out of a pathetic desire for friendship, half out of addiction to the Ring. At the edge of the crater of Mount Doom, he bites off Frodo's finger to steal back the Ring. Dancing with glee, he falls backwards into the fire, destroying himself and the Ring, fulfilling Gandalf's belief that his fate is bound up with that of the Ring and that mercy to him would be repaid.

Sméagol Gollum

See Gollum

Gorbag

Gorbag is a commander of a body of Orcs who capture Frodo.

Great Captain

See Witch King of Angmar

Grey Pilgrim

See Gandalf the Grey

Gandalf Greyhame

See Gandalf the Grey

Grima

Grima, also known as Wormtongue, is Coun-sellor of Theoden in the pay of Saruman. It is he who throws the Palantir of Orthanc. He finally murders Saruman.

Grishnakh

An Orc of Mordor who attempts to spirit Merry and Pippin away before the final battle with the Riders of Rohan.

Háma

The warrior who keeps the door to Meduseld, the house of King Theoden. He allows Gandalf to take his staff into the hall, which is instrumental in the fall of Grima, a spy of Saruman. It is Háma who tells Theoden that Éowyn is the person that the people will want as their regent. Háma is killed by the Orcs at the battle at Helms Deep. Theoden refers to the mutilation of his body by Saruman's men when he refuses to be swayed by Saruman's offers of help and power.

Her Ladyship

See Shelob

Hirgon

Hirgon is the messenger who brings the red arrow of summons from Gondor to Theoden. He is killed by Orcs on his return journey.

Holdwine of the Mark

See Merry

Huorns

A large group of Ents who have grown wild and treeish. They are extremely dangerous to meet unaccompanied by an Ent. They annihilate the army of Saruman at Helm's Deep.

Gildor Inglorion

The elf whose people meet Frodo, Sam, and Pepin on their flight from the Shire. He invites them to stay the night with them, which briefly frustrates the Ringwraiths. He sends word through other elf bands which eventually reaches Elrond and Rivendell.

Ioreth

A talkative nurse in the House of Healers in Minas Tirith. She reminds Gandalf that 'The hands of the king are the hands of a healer.' This message brings Aragorn to the beds of Eowyn, Faramir, and Merry.

Ironfoot

See Dain

Legolas

The son of the King of the Mirkwood elves, he represents the elves among the Fellowship. He and Gimli become inseparable friends.

Lieutenant of the Tower

The Lieutenant of the Tower, also known as The Mouth of Sauron, is not a Ringwraith, but a living man, a sorcerer of the same people as the men of the West, but of those who worshipped Sauron for the sake of his wicked knowledge. He confronts Aragorn, Gandalf, and the combined armies of Gondor and Rohan at the gates of Mordor with Sam's sword and Frodo's mail.

Farmer Maggot

A substantial hobbit in the Marish, a district of the Shire. He once set his dogs on Frodo for trespassing on his land after mushrooms, but welcomes him and his companions to his home and helps them to the crossing of the Brandywine River, despite being approached by one of the Ringwraiths.

Merry

Merry, also known as Meriadoc Brandybuck and Holdwine of the Mark, is Frodo's younger cousin. Later the Master of Buckland, he is slightly older and more serious than his cousin Pippin. He and Pippin were almost not allowed to join the fellowship, but their presence, on Gandalf's advice, turns the tide of events on at least three occasions. Meriadoc offers his services to Theoden, and trying to stay near the king in battle, takes the help of a young warrior who turns out to be Éowyn. Together they kill the Nazgûl. With Pippin, he spearheads the scouring of the Shire.

The Mouth of Sauron

See Lieutenant of the Tower

Nazgúl

See Ringwraiths

The Necromancer

See Sauron

The Nine

See Ringwraiths

Old Man Willow

A malevolent tree who infects the whole of the old forest east of the Shire. He attempts to kill the hobbits.

Pimple

See Lotho

Pippin

Pippin, also known as Peregrine and later, the Thain of the Shire, is the youngest and most thoughtless of Frodo's companions. He makes the same impression on events as his cousin Merry, saving the life of Faramir.

Quickbeam

See Bregalad

Rangers

The Rangers are the remnants of the men from Númenorean kingdom of Arnor in the northwest of Middle Earth. They have kept watch over the Shire as well as the rest of the lands north and west of Gondor since the fall of the northern Kingdom over a thousand years before the action of the *Lord of the Rings*.

Rhadagst the Brown

A wizard, particularly interested in bird-lore. He is innocently used by Saruman to capture Gandalf.

Ringwraiths

Ringwraiths, also known as Black Riders, The Nine, and Nazgul, are the nine human kings enslaved by the nine rings forged by Sauron 'for mortal men doomed to die.' They are lead by the witch king of Angmar.

Lobelia Sackville-Baggins

Bilbo and Frodo's cousin by marriage, her husband Otho was Bilbo's heir until he adopted Frodo. Lobelia had never forgiven Bilbo for coming back from his adventure just as she was about to move into his eminently desirable Hobbit hole, Bag End.

Lotho Sackville-Baggins

Otho and Lobelia's son, Lotho (also known as Pimple), was used to gain a foothold in the Shire. He is murdered (and possibly eaten) by Grima.

Saruman the White

Saruman the White, also known as Sharkey, is one of the wizards sent from over the sea, and the one master of 'realpolitik' in the narrative. He has become obsessed with creating a power base from which he might rule Middle Earth. He has become enslaved to Sauron, although he hardly seems to realize it. Escaping from the wreck of his ambition in Orthanc, he makes his way to the Shire, taking over Lotho Sackville-Baggins's regime and intensifying it.

Sauron

Sauron, also known as The Necromancer, is a being of incredible power, he has tricked elves, men, and dwarves to their destruction even when he has not actually enslaved them. His malevolence and hunger for power is insatiable. To this end, he forged the great Ring to control a series of others that he distributed among men and dwarves. Into this ring, he put a greater part of his own power. Lost to him, it diminishes him. Destroyed, it will make him impotent.

Shagrat

Shagrat is an Orc officer who captures Frodo.

Sharkey

See Saruman the White

Shelob

Shelob, also known as Her Ladyship, is the great, all-devouring, primeval spider who guards the secret entrance to Mordor. She wounds Frodo, but is wounded in turn by Sam with his knife made by the men of the west for the battles against the Witch King of Angmar.

Snaga

Snaga is an Orc of Shagrat's command.

Gandalf Stormcrow

See Gandalf the Grey

Strider

See Aragorn

Theoden

Theoden is King of Rohan. He is an exceptionally gentle and loving man in spite of being the warrior king of a warrior people. His relationship with Merry, more father than lord, is a thumbnail sketch of what his relationship with his people must have been. He falls into a despair brought on by Grima's poisonous take on events and people, but his cure is quick and complete.

Thorongil

See Aragorn

Peregrine Took

See Pippin

Treebeard

The oldest of the Ents or shepherds of the Trees, Treebeard (also known as Fangorn) can remember the first age. He sees the world largely in terms of his trees, but realizes the interconnectedness of the trees' welfare with that of all those who desire to follow the good in Middle Earth. His meeting with Merry and Pippin is the catalyst for his decision to call out the Ents in defense of their trees and take Saruman in hand.

Uglúk

A Captain of the Isengard Orcs, Uglúk's men capture Merry and Pippin. He is brought to bay at Fangorn and is killed in single combat with Eomer.

Witch King of Angmar

The Witch King of Angmar, also known as the Black Captain or the Great Captain, is leader of the Nazgúl, a renegade Númenórean who finally broke the power of the northern kingdom of Arnor and forced Aragorn's people into the role of Rangers.

Wormtongue

See Grima

Setting

Physically Middle-earth resembles modern Earth. It is the inhabitants that add the touch of unreality that a reader expects in what Tolkien calls a "secondary" world. In making a world for his hobbits, elves, wizards, dwarves, ents, orcs, ringwraiths, and other unusual beings, Tolkien assumes the creative rights which he says in his essay "On Fairy-stories" belong to the storymaker: the right to be free with nature; to use the world as a basis to make something new, while giving this new world its principles of inner consistency. Much of this mythology and history of Middleearth comes through songs that pervade the narrative, but a more organized "history," complete with dates for the four ages of Middle-earth and genealogies of major families of elves, dwarves, hobbits, and human beings, is included as an appendix to the third volume.

Social Sensitivity

In his preface to the trilogy, Tolkien distinguishes between allegory and applicability in literature. While he disclaims having imposed any allegorical significance on his story, he asserts the right of readers to apply the story as they see fit. In light of this disclaimer, it seems contrary to his intention to interpret The Lord of the Rings as political or social allegory, as some critics have done. On the other hand, readers in all generations can apply to their own age some of the overall principles embodied in the trilogy. The fact, for example, that elves, dwarves, hobbits, and human beings can set aside "racial" differences to work together for the welfare of Middle-earth can be extended to a hope that modern human races can set aside their differences, no more deeply embedded than the distrust between dwarves and elves.

Many battles take place in Middleearth—often violent and bloody ones.

The heroes fight bravely, sometimes against terrible odds, but nowhere do the "good" characters rejoice in fighting, except perhaps when Fangorn and the ents delight in overthrowing the treedestroyers, Saruman and his orcs, or when Legolas and Gimli compete in the number of orcs slain. Before the Battle of Bywater, after the return to the Shire, Frodo directs his companions to avoid killing their enemies if possible. Even Saruman would have been spared if his own cruelty had not provoked the enslaved Grima to turn against him.

Evil is readily recognizable by its ugliness and by its fruits. Goodness is equally recognizable, and its fruits are more lasting. The author does not preach, but his good characters exemplify in action the virtues of mercy, perseverance, generosity, and friendship. Sauron, Saruman, and the Ringwraiths all embody the vices of hatred, greed, and the thirst for power. The influence of Sauron on those who once were normal men demonstrates the pervasiveness of evil, as does the ugliness of Sauron's land, Mordor. While the destruction of Sauron and the Ringwraiths suggests that evil can be overcome, it does not imply that the destruction of a major source of evil eliminates all evil. The Southrons continue to fight after Sauron's power collapses, Saruman's petty destroyers of good continue their work in the Shire, and Aragorn finds it necessary to establish guardians for his borders. Middleearth after Sauron is no Utopia, but it is a world very much like ours, one worth cultivating to bring forth beauty and goodness. In Gondor and in the Shire hope lives on.

Literary Qualities

At the beginning of The Fellowship of the Ring, Tolkien deliberately links the trilogy to its predecessor, The Hobbit. He describes the return of Bilbo, Gandalf, and the Ring and, in the prologue, he expands the nature of hobbits and summarizes the story of Bilbo and Gollum.

The narrative at first continues the light spoken tone of the earlier novel, but as it develops, this tone recedes, only occasionally bursting forth in the words and actions of the irrepressible hobbits.

The author creates two major challenges for himself in structuring the three volumes: deepening the story's historical dimensions and uniting the many narrative strands. To make Frodo's quest part of a more cosmic struggle, Tolkien continues evolving the history of Middle-earth, using Gandalf and Elrond to relate the ancient history of Sauron, the Lord of the Rings, and supplying many glimpses of the mythological and legendary past through songs, allusions, and tales told by elves, dwarves, ents, and mortals. Tolkien allows information to seep through gradually. The Black Riders, for example, appear several times, each time causing deeper dread in the hobbits, before they are identified as the Ringwraiths. Aragorn's nobility also impresses itself on the reader in stages, not only through his historical deeds but also through revelations about his descent from legendary heroes. The destruction of the Ring and the crowning of Aragorn complete a chain of events stretching back from the end of the third age to the creation of elves and men in the first age. The compact history of Middle-earth in the appendix provides a broader explanation for many of the allusions within the trilogy itself; several sections of the appendix also extend into the future.

While Tolkien is deepening the overall dimensions of the War of the Ring, he also interlaces separate narrative threads to tell of the great deeds of the Fellowship. In the first volume the action moves forward smoothly and quickly, adventures following one another chronologically, and flashbacks deepening his story without blurring the time sequence. After the breakup of the fellowship, however, Tolkien links the activities of the separated fellows by a more intricate system of flashbacks, foreshadowings, retellings, and allusions to what is happening simultaneously at other places.

After the death of Boromir Tolkien traces two groups of six fellows; later (in book five) the narrative becomes even more complex because the fellows have re-formed into three groups. Isengard and Minas Tirith provide not only meeting places where the six fellows can explain recent events to one another (and to the reader), but also dramatic events to which the story of Frodo and Sam can be linked.

At the end of the final volume, The Return of the King, Tolkien completes the cycle with the hobbits' return to the Shire after Aragorn's coronation and wedding. In the account of the journey home, the reader learns what has happened to several characters from the earlier stages of the quest. Tolkien leaves no loose ends in his narrative. Saruman, for example, is removed from Middleearth; Sam's friend Bill, the pony, reappears to bring

revenge on his old master and joy to Sam; Lobelia Sackville-Baggins proves that goodness can assume many guises. When the narrator finally reveals who has the Ring of Fire, the source of Gandalf s pervasive fire-creating power becomes clear.

Throughout the trilogy Tolkien exemplifies his views of true fantasy. He produces an inner consistency within the secondary world so that what happens there follows consistent principles.

Although some of the inhabitants of Middle-earth remain foreign to the "real" world, they fit convincingly within the Tolkien cosmos. Those who appear repeatedly act according to their natures each time. Orcs, for example, are cruel, crude, ugly, arid quarrelsome; they love darkness and hate sunlight. When the orcs do not shrink from the sun, Aragorn sees their actions as a sign of Saruman's greater control over them. Ents are consistent in their hatred of orcs and in their longing to see the lost entwives again. Their legends, their treelike distinctions in personality, and the fitting traits of their leader Fangom add a touch of humor and a sense of the role of nature in the history of the world. The strangeness of talking trees is explained by their relationship with elves, who befriended ents in the past and taught them to speak. Whenever elves appear, they are beautiful and good; they love starlight and water and trees. The mythic significance of their "Star Queen," Elbereth, permeates the trilogy, as does the concept of the movement of the elves over the sea to the west. The final sailing of the elves with Gandalf and the two ring-bearers provides an ending in accord with elven traditions and with the cyclic narrative.

Themes

The Ring: Absolute Power Corrupts Absolutely

Lord Acton in the 1880s wrote, "Power Corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely." When Sam urges Galadriel, "I think my master was right. I wish you'd take his ring. You'd put things to rights. You'd make some folk pay for their dirty work," Galadriel answers, "I would□That is how it would begin, but it would not stop at that, alas!" While many earlier philosophers and writers would have agreed, such a clear and unequivocal vision of the intrinsic dangers of power could only come with the sharply increasing ability of humans to control and destroy not only themselves, but the earth itself. The Ring is the embodiment of the will to power. It exists only to dominate. It corrupts, driving a wedge between the wearer and his own nature, let alone every other being, no matter how dear. Tolkien expresses this corruption in the language of addiction where everything is sacrificed to the insatiable desire for the Ring/Power.

Providence

Near the beginning of *Lord of the Rings* when Gandalf tries to explain the Ring to Frodo he says: "It was the strangest event in the whole history of the Ring so far: Bilbo's arrival, just at that time, and putting his hand on it, blindly, in the dark...There was more than one power at work...The Ring was trying to get back to its master. When its master was awake once more and sending out his dark thought ... Behind that there was something else at work, beyond any design of the Ring-maker. I can put it no plainer than by saying that Bilbo was *meant* to find the Ring and not its maker." Critics have often remarked that there is nothing which amounts to religion in *Lord of the Rings* and no mention of God. A providence, however, hovers over the narrative, a beneficent power working through events and through individual willed actions, good and (ironically) bad, to bring about the destruction of the Ring and the end of Sauron. This providence does not give happily ever after, as it relies on the speaking people, it leaves them with the cumulative results of their choices, but it does not leave them alone. Elves, men, dwarves, Ents and Hobbits must act, but providence ensures that their actions are not without results. The victory of the good cannot restore what was lost nor even preserve all that was saved. Nevertheless, the far greater, unthinkable evil is averted.

Mercy and Pity

Pity in the *Lord of the Rings* presupposes understanding, sympathy, and a recognition of a moral imperative to alleviate rather than cause pain. In action, it seems to be closer to empathy than to the common modern use of the word pity, which in common usage, has now overtones of contempt. Acts of mercy born of sympathetic pity are clearly subsumed into the providential purpose. Gollum is spared again and again by the pity of

others, notably Bilbo, Frodo, and Sam. In the end, this mercy saves not Gollum, who cannot reject the addiction of evil, but those who have been merciful.

Death and Deathlessness

While most readers and critics concentrate on the absolute corruption of power, Tolkien wrote that *Lord of the Rings* was about death and deathlessness. The importance of the theme often comes as a surprise to even the most assiduous readers of the trilogy, although in the context of the larger history of Middle Earth, it emerges with greater clarity. Nevertheless, the juxtaposition of the effectively immortal elves with mortal men, (not to mention dwarves and hobbits) confront the reader at every turn. Sauron's initial temptation to men was based on the fear of the unknown and an unspoken jealousy of the elves. It is the attempt to seize immortality that destroys the island kingdom in the western sea Númenor, the preoccupation with death and ancestors that leaves Minas Tirith under-populated. Tolkien has the inhabitants of Middle Earth call death a "gift" and insinuates death is a welcome natural movement from earth to the presence of earth's creator. It is probably only in the context of the larger body of Tolkien's writings□notably the *Silmarrillion* and *The Book of Lost Tales*□that its ubiquity and centrality becomes apparent. Even more than men, the landscape of Middle Earth itself is again and again described in terms of loss, change, and decay. The juxtaposition of the immortal and changeless elves with a flawed and transitory environment indicates the elves are in an uncertain and ambiguous position. Perhaps the false mutable world is more surely the "long defeat" of which Galadriel speaks.

Moral Absolutes

Tolkien has been accused of seeing events in black and white, but throughout the trilogy, it is clear that while moral absolutes are the touchstone of actions, they do not prescribe specific and unvarying action. They are the weights against which the characters must balance competing 'right actions.' Merry and Pippin both swear oaths of allegiance. Both of them consciously break those oaths in pursuit of a higher good, "but," as Rosebury wrote, "it is precisely these kinds of departure from a facile and predictable structuring of ethical action which exemplify the work's moral subtlety and openness to contingency." Tolkien drew his characters in terms of moral and imperfection and intellectual limitation. Even Gandalf's character reflects a strong sense of the imperfections of humanity. Tolkien's wisest characters in the stories maintain this wisdom with a balance of restricted knowledge. Frodo demonstrates this when he quotes the proverb, "Go not to the elves for counsel, for they will say both no and yes." The elf Gildor replies, "Elves seldom give unguarded advice for advice is a dangerous gift, even from the wise to the wise, and all courses may run ill."

Style

Point of View

Tolkien in the Prologue to *Lord of the Rings* adopts a common literary convention: he has 'translated' it from Bilbo and Frodo's own Red Book of Westmarch. For long stretches of *Lord of the Rings* the point of view is third person, but there are important flashes of omniscience. These flashes derive from a complex set of circumstances rooted in the convention of translation from an autobiographical account, not a wavering of approach. What a character is thinking is usually revealed by means of words or actions. Where omniscience occurs, the mind involved is usually Frodo's. In the narrative of the debate before the company leaves Lórien, Boromir's thought is revealed by his words and actions, while the reader is taken into Frodo's mind. A more complex example occurs when Frodo's struggle with the eye of Sauron is reported. When Frodo puts on the Ring, the narrator becomes fully omniscient, but the ground has been carefully prepared for this effect of the Ring. If readers will accept that the 'real' authors are part of the action and one of those authors has the heightened awareness born of the Ring, it will not be strange to find that at times that we know the mind of Frodo, Sam or even, at the end, the reaction of Sauron himself.

Setting

Tolkien wrote of Middle Earth in the Prologue to *Lord of the Rings*: "Those days, the Third Age of Middle Earth are now long past, and the shape of all lands have been changed; but the regions in which the Hobbits lived are doubtless the same as those in which they still linger: the North-West of the Old World, east of the Sea." The landscapes Tolkien brings his characters through and describes in such loving detail are clearly European, suggesting landscapes from the arctic Norway to the shores of the Mediterranean. It is a sparsely inhabited, pre-industrial world, with scattered self-sufficient communities. Along with his care in describing the landscape and mapping the larger topography of Middle Earth, is the careful chronology and the accurate astronomical data that suggests he set his narrative in a time which was not long ago in astronomical terms. Despite this, the landscape of Middle Earth recapitulates epic landscapes back to Homer. The movement of battle across the Pelennor Fields can be compared to the *Iliad*. Lórien draws on both the island of Circe and the land of the Phoenicians. Medusel is modeled on Heorot from *Beowulf*.

Allusions

Tolkien's allusions are self-contained. They are drawn exclusively from within the history he created for Middle Earth. Possibly because the *Silmarillion* was not published and seemed unlikely to be published at the time he was writing the *Lord of the Rings*, even these allusions are kept to a minimum.

Imagery

Tolkien's imagery is rooted in the traditional. There has been some critical disquiet at his use of black and white, but careful reading demonstrates that it is complex and heavily nuanced. The corrupt wizard Saruman's color is white, Aragorn's banner is white on a black field and he wears black armor. Grey is a privileged color, elven cloaks are grey, Gandalf's color is grey. Similarly some critics have equated Tolkien's use of the 'industrial' landscape with class hatred or dislike for the urban industrial proletariat, an idea which is as far from his opinions as it was from Blake's when he wrote of 'dark satanic mills.' Two images are worth particular attention. One is of a great wave rearing up over fields, houses and trees, drowning the land of Númenor, the reflex of a dream Tolkien had from childhood. The second is Tolkien's complicated use of trees and forests running the full gamut of positive and negative meaning, from the trees of the Valar to Old Man Willow.

Quest or Anti-Quest

The *Lord of the Rings* has been discussed as a quest at least since Auden. Gandalf himself announced, "The realm of Sauron is ended. The Ring-bearer has fulfilled his quest," as Mordor and its armies collapse. A quest, however, presupposes something or someone that is sought. Circumstances and enemies will have to be overcome, but even if this involves the destruction of evil beings or places, the destruction is not the quest, only the means by which the quest is achieved. In *Lord of the Rings* only Sauron and his forces and Gollum are strictly on a quest, seeking the Ring. Frodo and his companions have the Ring. Their journey has only one purpose, to destroy it, ending Sauron's threat. Even Aragorn, who apparently turns to save Gondor and take up his responsibilities, offers himself to his followers as bait to distract Sauron away from the Ringbearer. In this, *Lord of the Rings* is closely related to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, in which Victor Frankenstein struggles to destroy his creation that has proved to be deeply flawed and uncontrollable.

Fantasy

Although all fiction writers, "make things up," fantasy involves this act of 'subcreation'□creating a world or vision of the world that has an inner consistency and honesty□to a much greater extent. Fantasy worlds are drawn with sharper outlines and clearer colors. At its best, fantasy draws the audience to fresh awareness of reality. The reader believes not because the genre requires suspension of disbelief, but because the consistency and coherence of the imaginary world compels belief. The *Lord of the Rings*' success is based in equal measure on delineation of a physical world and thoroughness in creating Middle Earth's historical cause and effect. Fantasy requires enormous discipline on the part of the writer or it will slide into sentimental wish fulfillment. A writer of fantasy can allow their characters almost unlimited range of experience, but must be rigorously selective in the character's reaction to them. It is a characteristic of the most successful type of modern fantasy that it extends the range of

reaction by skewing the expected characters. In this, Tolkien took a lead, introducing an almost Dickensian invention.

Historical Context

Introduction

Tolkien is often approached with the expectation that he was a typical child of late Victorian and Edwardian England, and deeply embedded in the British intellectual establishment. He was in some ways, however, atypical. His Catholicism, passion for Philology, profound love and respect for the earth, and distrust of the benefits of technology, particularly that of the internal combustion engine, made him a potentially uneasy member of his society. Even as the atomic bomb was being developed, the Ring was emerging in his narrative as the technology that cannot be harnessed, but must be destroyed, the source of unlimited power that corrupts and destroys even the best and highest. His picture of the Shire, which works as a society because justice and law are internalized rather than imposed, while admittedly ideal, is an ideal that has more in common with the Jeffersonian ideal of democracy than Imperial or Post-Imperial Britain. Far from being an imperialist, Tolkien was the champion of the local, wherever it was, as is clear from Aragorn's treatment of Rohan, the Woses and the Shire. He identified deeply with the West Midlands of England and spent much of his scholarly life working on its medieval texts, which he felt preserved a literary language and a sense of worth and identity through the dark days of Norman French domination.

Philology

Tolkien's passion for language emerged in his earliest Latin lessons with his mother. Philology as it developed in the early nineteenth century, after the discovery of Sanskrit and its great grammarians by western scholars, was one of the intellectual success stories of the first half of the century. The discovery of a family of languages stretching from Ireland to India and the pattern of their development, the history fossilized in words and their changes of pronunciation and meaning can be compared to the great developments in cosmology in the twentieth century. Indeed Philology could be described as the particle physics of literature. Philology allowed scholars to comprehend patterns of thought deep in the past. At its best, Philology sensitizes the reader to nuances and subtle shifts of word meaning, which are the manifestations of conceptual development. At its worst, it can strike those outside the area as an arid and endlessly refining word game. Philology, properly done, is hard work and requires a facility for languages and a willingness to expend infinite care upon a text. Even at Oxford in Tolkien's time, Philology was under attack by members of the faculty who thought literature and their students should not be bogged down in what they perceived as minutia.

The Destruction of the Countryside and the Fallibility of Progress

In the "Scouring of the Shire" chapter of *The Return of the King*, Frodo, Sam, Merry, and Pippin return to find Sharkey (Saruman) and his men have been busy destroying the Shire, building ugly buildings, cutting down trees, and fouling the water and air. This is only the beginning on a smaller scale of a process the reader has already seen on an almost unimaginable scale in Mordor and in mimicry of Mordor at Isengard. Tolkien was deeply distrustful of the ideas of progress, which seemed to be driving his world. Unlike most of his colleagues, he had experienced the real face of industrialization. He had lived in some of the worst parts of industrial Birmingham. He wrote in incomprehension of colleagues, who described the enormous car factories growing up around Oxford as the real world, as if there was something essentially unreal about fields and trees. He mourned for a large tree that had been cut down by a neighbor apparently simply for having the temerity to be alive and big. He was also acutely aware of the uses made of technology and the impulse that often drove its development. In *The Hobbit*, he wrote, "It is not unlikely that they (Orcs) invented some of the machines that have since troubled the world, especially the ingenious devices for killing large numbers of people at once, for wheels and engines and explosions always delighted them, and also not working with their own hands more than they could help; but in those days and those wild places they had not advanced (as it is called) so far." He wrote of the prisoners and slaves that they made to work "until they die for want of light and air." Nevertheless, the Ring transcends a mere symbol for the atom bomb and Sauron has no true historical counterpart. They are embodiments of the idea of evil in which historical evils only participate, symbols of a situation in which men and women in the mid-twentieth century, like Frodo, found themselves with the possession of a power over nature. This possession is a threat over humanity so immense that even the contemplation and desire of its use corrupts. It is not enough that it be kept out of the hands of the evil, because it will betray the good into evil.

The Lord of the Rings and Catholicism

Tolkien's Catholicism was deeply felt. His devotion to Christ present in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was both traditional and fervent. He was by no means, however, the typical conservative Catholic, and his Catholicism did not put him in an intellectual straight jacket. Even if we did not know that he was a supporter of the Ecumenical movement and faulted the Church for its paternalistic attitude, the very ability to create a narrative and world that does without traditional biblical narrative would suggest it.

The Experience of the Twentieth Century, Old English Literature, and Heroism

Tolkien did not reject the idea of the heroic, but redefined it over a number of years. His understanding and treatment of the heroic was born out of an interaction between two

Old English texts and the realities of the twentieth century. Looking at the Old English epic *Beowulf* in the context of the 1930s, he concentrated on the existence of radical evil and the necessity of opposing that evil even if in the face of inevitable defeat. By the 1950s, the effects of the almost inevitable pride of the traditional hero had come to loom large in Tolkien's thought and writing on the Old English poem The Battle of Maldon, in which the narrator suggests that Earl Beortnoth gives the Vikings an advantage out of pride, and therefore, throws his men's lives away in subordinating good sense to a notion of 'good form.' It is the heroism of obedience and love, of service, which has become the truly heroic in his mind.

Such a view of heroism is not new. It was traditionally the mode of representing the sacrifice of Christ and underlay the idea of king as shepherd of his people. It was a heroism that Tolkien had witnessed and taken to his heart in the horrors of his service in World War I. The renunciation of power is essential to Tolkien's view of heroism and to his perception of the changes brought about by mankind's ability to destroy itself and all earthly creation. The truly heroic required restraint, selfless-ness, and concern for the good of all. It required even the renunciation of glory. It is important that Aragorn insists that attention should be directed away from him to the Ringbearers and to Gandalf and it is important that Frodo seems almost relieved that he is not honored in the shire, and Sam hardly realizes his fame.

Critical Overview

In 1997, the *Lord of the Rings* was voted the greatest book of the twentieth century in a poll run by a major British bookstore chain. The results were greeted with chagrin by some critics and writers who felt this vote slighted serious literature. Their reaction was a reprise of many of the initial reviews. Tolkien criticism has been deeply divided in the nearly half century since the Wilson and Auden reviews at the time of its publication. Their reviews, it seems, set the agenda for Tolkien criticism. Writer after writer has chased sources, refuted the accusation of ethical flatness, lack of character development, and escapism. Writer after writer has struggled with their revulsion of a work that has a cult following, which belongs supposedly to a minor and marginal genre (fantasy), that superficially at least seems entirely outside the mainstream of twentieth-century literature.

Wilson, in his famous (or infamous) 1956 review "Oo, Those Awful Orcs," would not give serious consideration to a work that was both generically and stylistically mixed. He rejected the sense of relativism and irony, which for many contemporary critics was the only possible stance for a serious writer and an intelligent audience, and would only be rejected out of escapism. Faced with a major literary figure, Auden (a former student of Tolkien's), who not only took the work seriously, but praised it, Wilson felt it necessary to politely excuse the poet's taste. To be fair, it cannot be denied that escapism is part of the lure of *Lord of the Rings* when one looks at the thousands of fantasy novels its success has spawned in the last thirty years. It is equally fair to say that the critics that have found Tolkien's normative ethics congenial, particularly those approaching him as a Catholic author, have seldom produced anything much above the trite. A full study of late nineteenth-century and twentieth-century Catholic theology and Tolkien's understanding and reaction to it has yet to be written.

It has been suggested this lack of critical sympathy is the result of a lack of sympathy with or knowledge of the early medieval literature behind Tolkien's work. But most readers of *Lord of the Rings* are not specialists in early medieval literature, although many present day members of departments of Old and Middle English literature came to the subject from *Lord of the Rings*. Despite Isaacs' request for analytical and formalist approaches in 1968, the reader will still find, as Rosebury did, too much substitution of classification for analysis. Rosebury unerringly put his finger on perhaps the central problem of Tolkien criticism: "The truth is that it is difficult to write well about Tolkien because of the distinctive nature of his merits ... yet if he is to be praised effectively, the praise must be justified in terms of which bear an intelligible relation to other writers. ... Analysis and evaluation are always comparative." Tolkien criticism still seems to be too much in the hands of, as Carpenter says, the "deplorable cultus" of which Tolkien himself complained. Numerous books and articles appear to be written by authors who have not really digested their research, who do not seem to realize that the one thing a Tolkien critic does not need to do is to retell the story for the reader. Too many books and articles have been written by critics who feel it their duty to insist *Lord of the Rings* is not literature, and if it is, it certainly is not good literature, often making sweeping

pronouncements on style or characterization, which cannot be defended in the light of close reading.

There has been good Tolkien criticism. Purtill handles myth, morality, and religion in *Lord of the Rings*. He makes a beginning on the question of the essential nature of modern fantasy, linking it appropriately with science fiction. He is one of the very few critics to even advert to the often overlooked theme of immortality in *Lord of the Rings*. Nevertheless, he is capable of simple mistakes of facts and leaves the reader with the feeling they have experienced a good beginning, but that there is much more to be done.

Rosebury and Shippey, however, have easily produced the two best critical studies of *Lord of the Rings*, both appropriately published in the centenary year of the author's birth. Shippey's work will probably be the standard work on the northern European sources of Tolkien, as well on the particularly unfortunate animus that existed and so often continues to exist between the critics and scholars working on either side of the great watershed of the Renaissance. Rosebury's study, besides its technical excellence, commends itself in that it is perhaps the first written by a critic who, while clearly appreciating Tolkien both on an emotional and aesthetic level, makes no grandiose claims for high position in English literature. Even for a reader who would rank Tolkien a good deal higher than Poe, Rosebury's choice of comparison, such relative balance is reassuring. Rosebury, unlike so many enthusiastic admirers of Tolkien, takes the trouble to apply the sort of close reading Tolkien the scholar applied to texts. He gives a detailed and satisfying account of the methods Tolkien used in creating the fullness of his world in words. He moves then from method to the aesthetic as well as philosophical meaning of this fullness of breadth and detail. Continuing his pattern of close reading, he discusses the prose style and the infinite pains in word choice and sentence structure in *Lord of the Rings*. No author who can command the interests of two such critics can possibly be dismissed as minor.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3
- Critical Essay #4

Critical Essay #1

In the following essay, Conrad-O'Briain suggests that Tolkien's treatment of women is far more sensitive than critics have generally allowed.

Tolkien has been accused of being perfunctory in his treatment of his female characters and excused as being merely a man of his times. Looking closely at the characters in *Lord of the Rings*, however, it could be argued that Tolkien returned to possibilities for female participation which the epic traditionally afforded, but which were long overlooked in criticism. Tolkien's own relationships with women were obviously largely a product of his time. The early death of his mother, his marriage to a woman who was uncomfortable in Oxford intellectual circles, and the attitude of C. S. Lewis, whose misogyny was only overcome by a late marriage, all affected Tolkien. It is wrong, however, that it always affected him for the worse. Tolkien had been a student of Joseph Wright, the philologist who had married a former student. She not only worked alongside her husband, but made Tolkien and many other students comfortably at home. His final scholarly collaborator was a woman, Simone d'Ardenne, a former student who became a professor at Liege. This promising collaboration, thwarted in part by the World War II, only ended because of his increasing involvement with his fiction.

"My friend ... you had horses, and deeds of arms, and the free fields; but she, born in the body of a maid, had a spirit and courage at least the match of yours. Yet she was doomed to wait upon an old man, whom she loved as a father, and watch him falling into a mean dishonoured dotage; and her part seemed to her more ignoble than that of the staff he leaned on." These lines from *The Return of the King* are a recognition of spirit that has nothing to do with gender, and the effects of a gender-based division of opportunities on ability. From a man born in the reign of Victoria, who spent most of his life in the men's club atmosphere of the Oxford colleges, it suggests an unexpected, but genuine, sensitivity.

The women in *Lord of the Rings* reflect the broad generic background that Tolkien co-opted into his novel. They range from the comic Lobelia Sackville-Baggins who could, except for her furry feet, wander through the door at Blandings without more than a passing groan from Lord Emsworth, to Galadriel, who one suspects has more than a little in common with the hero, Athena. Between them are Mrs. Maggot and Rose Cotton, who could be out of the kinder moments of Hardy, and Goldberry, who like her husband seems to represent the earth as it might have been. There is Arwen, elusive, and in the end, hidden away in the Appendices, supremely tragic. The true female counterpart of Frodo, she is wounded by the choice between father and lover, immortality and mortality, just as Frodo is by the experience of the Ring. Although she assumes mortality, she dies utterly elven in her attitude. The individual reader is almost forced to react to it on a purely subjective level.

Three women, however, are pivotal in *Lord of the Rings*: Ioreth, Eowyn and Galadriel. Each of them is not only important to cause and effect in the narrative, but each gathers up important thematic threads.

Ioreth is the lineal descendant of Juliet's nurse, if less earthy, certainly, and, if she could be stopped for the question, unlikely to suggest deception and bigamy as the answer to any problem. But for all the comedy of her character, Ioreth performs and embodies a vitally important cluster of functions. She might be called the tenth muse, the muse not of a particular genre, but of those all-important literary functions: preservation and transmission. She is muse as philologist. It is she who remembers that "the hands of the king are the hands of the healer." She and her kind remember the old rhymes and words and ponder them, "'kingsfoil' ... 'tis a strange name, and I wonder why 'tis called so; for if I were a king I would have plants more bright in my garden." Her garrulousness is comic, but it is more than comic; it is deeply characteristic. She must repeat what she remembers, what she has heard, what she has experienced. She is a repository, transmitter commentator. On Aragorn's triumphal re-entry into Gondor, she begins the transmutation/ transposition of event into literature "Would you believe..." Old wives tales, or the material of epic? But as Charles M. Schulz famously had Linus van Pelt remark "some of those old wives were pretty smart." There may be a formal minstrel's "Nine fingered Frodo and the Ring of Doom," but anyone who has read Tolkien's "On Fairy Stories" will know perfectly well the version Tolkien would expect to sink deep into the hearts and minds of the west like a grain of sand in an oyster. However comic Ioreth is, she is not mere comic relief, to a philologist, she is the *beau ideal* of the Brothers Grimm. Ioreth is a moral reality check. She wrenches the narrative away from the dash and superficial glories of battle, the grandeur that never bears close scrutiny, to the real purpose of the fight outside the walls. As she says, "All I hope is that those murdering devils do not come to this House and trouble the sick." Battles are a means to an end and nothing more. It is characteristic of Tolkien to place so much weight on a minor character, albeit in highly spe-cific areas.

Eowyn the Lady of the Golden House and Galadriel the Lady of the Golden Wood, while superficially unlike, are, in fact, intensely alike. Their differences are of degree not kind. To see Eowyn, one intuits in the *Lord of the Rings*, is to see Galadriel in her youth. This suspicion is confirmed in the *Silmarrillion* and the *Unfinished Tales*. Tolkien wrote that Galadriel was "tall and valiant among the contending princes ... she yearned to see the wide unguarded lands and to rule there a realm at her own will." In *Unfinished Tales*, "she was strong of body, mind, and will, a match both the loremasters and athletes of the Eldar ... she had a marvellous gift of insight into the minds of others."

Eowyn is her mortal equivalent, a Galadriel for the fourth age. At her first meeting she looks at Aragorn and "she was suddenly aware of him: tall heir of kings, wise with many winters, greycloaked hiding a power that yet she felt." If Theoden is slow to recognize her as the equal of any man of his house, other men are not. When Theoden asks who he shall leave in charge of the Mark and protests that his nephew who cannot be spared from the host is the last of his house, the warrior Hama replies, "I said not Eomer ... And he is not the last. There is Eowyn, daughter of Eomund, his sister. She is fearless and high-hearted. All love her. Let her be as Lord to the Eorlingas, while we are gone." Eowyn and Galadriel, both in their own way, have fought the long defeat: Eowyn, the premature dotage of her uncle; Galdriel, the flawed and mutable nature of Middle Earth. Both were looking for a stage for their talents, Galadriel in Middle Earth, Eowyn on the battlefield. Both of them in defying an injunction bring themselves into danger, but

nevertheless, fight the good fight. Both Galadriel and Eowyn end up rejecting their original desires. Galadriel, offered the Ring and all the power she has ever desired, rejects it and accepts that she will depart and go into the west. Eowyn gives up the glory of battle for another life, but not quite the life that she has flown. Feminist readers may complain of Eowyn's change of heart, but to describe this as merely a move from the "masculine" (and, therefore, high status) arena of warfare to the "female" (and, therefore, low status) forum of marriage and the restoration of Ithilien, is to willfully misread the episode and the characters involved.

Eowyn is not a minor character. She does not represent the young woman who learns her place or even moves from infatuation with death and glory to life's quieter victories. She carries first the burden of representing the woman who can move across the stereotypical roles of male and female□she does this even before she disguises herself□and her ability to cross these boundaries is acknowledged by the institutions of her society. In this, she replaces Galadriel in the second half of *Lord of the Rings* as the woman who crosses the traditional boundaries by virtue of her character, a character and ability that cannot be denied. But Eowyn draws more meaning to her character.

Eowyn points two ways in her speech to Aragorn. She bluntly sweeps aside all the rhetoric of the glory of war and idealized, romantic womanhood: "All your words are but to say you are a woman, your part is in the house. But when the men have died in battle and honour, you have leave to be burned in the house, for the men will need it no more." The lines pivot on "honour"; there is no glorious immortality of fame for the non-combatants. Aragorn may plead with her to recognize her duty and valor all the greater, for being uncelebrated, but Eowyn now equates the war with her one chance of being with Aragorn. Although her infatuation with him is only a symptom of her desire to excel in a way her society has traditionally recognized. It is in this context that the stage is set to place Eowyn with Merry and Beregond. Eowyn makes a conscious decision to disobey orders, to leave her post. Her dereliction of duty is perhaps the most reprehensible, since a people depend upon her. Tolkien's treatment of this is sympathetic, partially because it fits into his scheme of providence: she and Merry kill the chief Ringwraith, partially because he is essentially sympathetic to her frustration. Her dereliction of duty is never alluded to by any of the characters or by the narrator. Even more important is what lies behind Merry's belief that "There seemed to be some sort of understanding between Dernhelm and Elfhelm, the Marshall who commanded the *éored* in which they were riding." Is Elfhelm acquiescing merely in Merry's presence or does he know and sympathize with her more?

Eowyn is not thinking of glory, however, when she stands between her dying uncle and the Witchking. She is acting out of pure love to protect the man who has raised her as if she were his own child. Her change of heart, however, does not begin then. It begins when there is an alternative offered that is worthy of her. She does not marry Faramir because she cannot have Aragorn, neither does she betray her abilities. The opposite is true. Faramir has been carefully developed to offer an alternative measure of courage and honor, heroism focused on more than warfare, to include creating and conserving. Faramir's own nature and his talents have been consistently placed in opposition to mere military prowess. Tolkien does not create a female character who must learn to

accept a female role. Rather, he creates a female character who comes to love a man who like her can cross the traditional boundaries of gender roles. And when she finds him, they will banter like Benedict and Beatrice, on the walls of Minas Tirith.

Source: Helen Conrad-O'Briain, for *Epics for Students*, Gale, 2001.

Critical Essay #2

In J. R. R. Tolkien's The Fellowship of the Ring, *Obertino examines Gandalf's sacrifice and its relation to the bible.*

The death of Gandalf is a moment of transcendent heroism in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, yet Celeborn, reflecting on it later, remarks, "And if it were possible, one would say that at last Gandalf fell from wisdom into folly, going needlessly into the net of Moria". An understanding of the strongly overdetermined etymology of Moria helps to clarify the significance of Gandalf's death and the question of his fate and folly. Moria's roots would have to include *mors* (Latin for death), as well as *Moira* (Greek for fate) and *moria* (Greek for madness, late Latin for folly). Celeborn's remark unwittingly stresses the thematic linkage of fate (*Moira*) or "net" (a frequent image for fate) and folly (*moria*). The drumbeats that sound within the earth before and after Gandalf's death seem to stress fate: "doom, doom". It is, however, also possible to see, as Celeborn does, Gandalf's death as perhaps foolish or unnecessary, as his fall at the Bridge of Khazad-dum (emphasis supplied) may imply. But is Gandalf's leading the company into Moria, where he dies, as foolish as Celeborn implies?

In fact, far from "going needlessly" into Moria, Gandalf first considers other tactical options and even tries one-the ascent of Caradhras-as an alternative to the underworld journey. To go around the mountains would endanger the quest by prolonging it and open the company to further observation from the air and interference by the enemy. The company attempts to climb over the mountains but is rebuffed by Caradhras itself. By the time Gandalf recommends the descent, Moria is the only reasonable option available. Later in Lothlorien, Galadriel sees this more clearly than her husband Celeborn: "Needless were none of the deeds of Gandalf in life". Nevertheless, even Frodo, who was present during the deliberations that took the company into the earth, seems to have doubts about whether Gandalf's death was wise: "In Khazad-dum, his wisdom died". Frodo's lament suggests that he may see his friend's death, a result of the descent into Moria, as foolish.

A way to reconcile Gandalf's fate (in the sense of unavoidable death) with a wisdom that also addresses the issue of folly is found in the New Testament, and especially Corinthians. The Christian precept "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13) pairs love with the willing self-sacrifice of death, and the god-hero of Christendom would for Tolkien be the principal exemplar of self-sacrifice for love. The path of martydom or "the wisdom of the Cross" is foolishness to the non-Christian (I Cor 1.18), who prefers the "fleshly wisdom" (2 Cor 1.12) that serves oneself and not others. Following the slain hero and often expecting themselves to be slain, the early Christians turned upside down the conventional wisdom that seeks self-preservation above all else. Thus St. Paul notes, "God" has "made foolish the wisdom of this world" through the folly of freely chosen self-sacrifice (I Cor 1.20-23). To refuse to give one's life and instead to follow the way of the world by pursuing a longer life and more pleasure for the flesh was, in the view of the marginalized early Christians, a colossal error: "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (1 Cor 3.19). To see

Gandalf's sacrificial death as perhaps foolish is a temporary lapse of judgment on Celeborn's and Frodo's part, perhaps useful to remind the reader that the flesh and its wisdom make their strong demands despite what real wisdom compels one to do. But Gandalf must not be measured by the wisdom of the world, as his rebirth makes clear. Gandalf fits the Pauline model, for his death to save others and preserve Frodo's quest shows a foolishness that is "wiser than men" (1 Cor 1.25).

The place of Gandalf's death□Moria□in addition to having the associations noted earlier also echoes Moriah in Genesis 22.2, the land where Jahweh commands Abraham to take Isaac to sacri-fice him "as a burnt offering on one of the mountains." Gandalf is pulled by the burning Balrog into the depths of a mountain. While Jahweh relents in the matter of the sacrifice of Isaac, God the Father in the New Testament does not in demanding the sacrifice of his only begotten Son. Another dissimilarity between the Genesis Moriah and the trek into Moria is that circumstances, rather than the voice of God, dictate the journey in Tolkien and the stand at the bridge. But Gandalf's self-sacrificial death is in accord with the precept of obedience to the higher good that the Genesis story endorses. His death also reveals the same strategy of renunciation Gandalf recommends Frodo take in bearing the Ring into the center of darkness that is Sauron's home and there throwing it into the cracks of Doom, because Sauron will not expect the Ring-bearer to willingly give it up and throw it away. About this strategy Gandalf remarks, "It is wisdom to recognize necessity, when all other courses have been weighed, though as folly it may appear to those who cling to false hope". The paradox that wisdom may be found by going before one's time into the earth and that only a crazy person would go there to find it is also seen in *The Aeneid*, where the Sibyl calls Aeneas's quest into Hades a fantastic project, or "insanus labor". But Tolkien goes beyond the Roman model of catabasis because Gandalf, unlike Aeneas, actually dies in the underworld. Gandalf's apparently foolish, yet ultimately wise, death through sacrifice, for both his friends and the good of all Middle Earth, is folly to those who refuse to see the goodness of the gesture, but through redemptive self-surrender "God has made foolish the wisdom of this world" (1 Cor 1.20). That this sacrifice occurs in Moria (Moriah) is especially appropriate.

Source: James Obertino, "Tolkien's *The Fellowship of the Ring*," in *The Explicator*, Vol. 54, No. 4, Summer, 1996.

Critical Essay #3

J. R. R. Tolkien's Lord of the Rings *recounts a pre-biblical period of history from a point of view that is distinctly Christian. In this article, Wood discusses Christian aspects in this epic.*

J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* is a massive epic fantasy of more than a half-million words. It is also a hugely complex work, with its own complicated chronology, cosmogony, geography, nomenclature and multiple languages, including two forms of elvish. The plot is so grand, moreover, that it casts backward to the formation of first things while glancing forward to the end of time. How did this huge and learned work□written by an obscure Oxford philologist□become a classic?

The answer has to do with Tolkien's central characters. They are humanoid creatures called hobbits, and their unlikely hero has the unheroic name of Frodo. During the 1960s, so many American youths were drawn to these diminutive creatures that Tolkien became something of a cult figure. "Frodo Lives" was a popular graffito of the time. T-shirts declared that "Tolkien is Hobbit-Forming." No doubt there was something escapist about this hobbit-habit. Perplexed by our nation's carnage in Vietnam and by the ultimate threat of a nuclear inferno, a whole generation of young Americans could lose themselves and their troubles in the intricacies of this triple-decker epic. Indeed, the rumor got about□a wish seeking its fulfillment, no doubt□that Tolkien had composed *The Lord of the Rings* under the influence of drugs.

Yet *The Lord of the Rings* has outlasted its cult status. Repeated readings do not exhaust its potential to deepen and define our moral and spiritual lives. Young and old alike keep returning to it for both wisdom and delight. True fantasy, Tolkien declared in his 1939 essay "On Fairy-Stories," is escapist in the good sense: it enables us to flee into reality. The strange world of hobbits and elves and ents frees us from bondage to the pseudo-reality that most of us inhabit: a world deadened by bleary familiarity. Fantasy, Tolkien observed, helps us recover a sense of wonder about ordinary things: "stone, and wood, and iron; tree and grass; house and fire; bread and wine."

Despite the eucharistic hint, Tolkien's work is not self-evidently Christian. As C. S. Lewis observed when it was first published, the Ring epic is imbued with "a profound melancholy." The ending is tearfully sad. Frodo is exhausted by his long quest to destroy the Ring of coercive power that had been fashioned by the monster Sauron. Though the victory has been won, Frodo cannot enjoy its fruits. And so he sails away to the elven realm, leaving his companions behind. Sauron and his minions of evil may have been defeated, but the triumph is only temporary. Evil will reconstitute itself in some alarming new form, and the free creatures of Middle Earth will have to fight it yet again.

The word "doom"□in its Anglo-Saxon meaning of damning judgment as well as final fate in ruin and death□pulses like a funereal drumbeat throughout the entire work. Toward the end of volume I, the elf Legolas offers a doom-centered vision of the world. It

sounds very much like an elvish and Heraclitean version of entropy. "To find and lose," says Legolas, is the destiny "of those whose boat is on the running stream.□ The passing seasons are but ripples in the long long stream. Yet beneath the Sun all things must wear to an end at last." Though elves are so long-lived that they seem immortal to humans and hobbits, the tides of time will sweep even them away. A deeply pagan pessimism pervades all three of the Ring books.

Yet it is a mistake to read Tolkien's work as sub-Christian. Tolkien, the finest *Beowulf* scholar of his day, had a thesis about the Anglo-Saxon epic that may be applied to his own fiction. *Beowulf* is a pagan work, Tolkien argued, exalting the ancient Scandinavian and heathen virtue of an unyielding, indomitable will in the face of sure and hopeless defeat. Yet it was probably written by a Christian, Tolkien contended, who infused it with Christian concerns: "The author of *Beowulf* showed forth the permanent value of that pietas which treasures the memory of man's struggles in the dark past, man fallen and not yet saved, disgraced but not dethroned." In a similar way, *The Lord of the Rings* recounts a prebiblical period of history□a time when there were no Chosen People, no incarnation, no religion at all□from a point of view that is distinctly Christian.

This judgment may seem strange because there is little that is Christian about *The Hobbit*, Tolkien's first fantasy work, published in 1937. It is a standard quest-story about the seeking and the finding of a tremendous treasure, a delightful "there and back again" tale concerning the adventures of Bilbo Baggins. But by the time he published *The Lord of the Rings* in 1954 and 1955, Tolkien had deepened and widened his vision, especially concerning the nature of heroism. The hobbits prove to be perennially attractive characters because they are very unconventional heroes. They are not tragic and death-defying warriors like Ajax or Achilles or Beowulf; they are frail and comic foot soldiers like us. The Nine Walkers□four hobbits, two men, an elf, a dwarf and a wizard□constitute a company not of the noble but of the ordinary.

They all learn, in a proleptically Christian way, what every mortal must confront: that we no sooner find our lives than we have to give them up. Unlike Bilbo, Frodo his nephew is called not to find but to lose, indeed to destroy, his great gem: the Ring of Total Control. It is a task that he does not seek but reluctantly accepts. Yet Frodo proves to be a fit bearer of the Ring. Not only does he possess native powers of courage and resistance; he is also summoned by a mysterious providential grace. The destruction of the Ring is nothing less than Frodo's vocation. And the epic's compelling interest lies in our discovery of how, just barely, Frodo remains faithful to his calling. In so doing he does far more than save his beloved Shire from ruin. Frodo learns□and thus teaches□what for Tolkien is the deepest of all Christian truths: how to surrender one's life, how to lose one's treasure, how to die, and thus how truly to live.

Early in the narrative, Frodo recalls that his Uncle Bilbo, especially during his latter years, was fond of declaring that

□ there was only one Road; that it was like a great river: its springs were at every doorstep, and every path was its tributary. "It's a dangerous business,

Frodo, going out your door," he used to say. "You step into the Road, and if you don't keep your feet, there is no knowing where you might be swept off to."

Tolkien's work is imbued with a mystical sense of life as a journey that carries one, willy-nilly, beyond the walls of the world. To get out of bed, to answer the phone, to open the door, to fetch the mail—such everyday deeds are freighted with eternal consequence. They immerse us in the river of time: the "ever-rolling stream" which, in Isaac Watts's splendid rendering of the 90th Psalm, "bears all its sons away." Whether engaged in great or small acts of courage or cowardice, we are traveling on the path toward ultimate joy or final ruin.

For Tolkien the Christian, the chief question—and thus the real quest—is how we are to travel along this Road. The great temptation is to take short-cuts, to follow the easy way, to arrive quickly. In the antique world of Middle Earth, magic offers the surest escape from slowness and suffering. It is the equivalent of our machines. They both provide what Tolkien in a letter called immediacy: "speed, reduction of labor, and reduction also to a minimum (or vanishing point) of the gap between the idea or desire and the result or effect." The magic of machination is meant for those who lack patience, who cannot wait. Sauron wins converts because he provides his followers the necromancy to coerce the wills of others, the strength to accomplish grand ends by instant means.

The noble prove to be most nobly tempted. Gandalf, the Christlike wizard who lays down his life for his friends, knows that he is an unworthy bearer of the Ring—not because he has evil designs that he wants secretly to accomplish, but rather because his desire to do good is so great. Lady Galadriel, the elven queen, also refuses the Ring of Force. It would make her enormous beauty mesmerizing. Those who had freely admired her loveliness would have no choice but to worship her. Perhaps alone among modern writers, Tolkien understood that evil's subtlest semblance is not with the ugly but with the gorgeous. "I shall not be dark," Galadriel warns, "but beautiful and terrible as the Morning and the Night! Fair as the Sea and the Sun and the Snow upon the Mountain! Dreadful as the Storm and the Lightning! Stronger than the foundations of the earth. All shall love me and despair!"

The one free creature utterly undone by the lure of total power is Saruman the wizard. Like Judas, he is impatient with the slow way that goodness works. He cannot abide the torturous path up Mount Doom; he wants rapid results. Since the all-commanding Sauron is sure to win, Saruman urges Gandalf and his friends to join forces with the Dark Lord. Those who face defeat can survive only by siding with the victor, using his coercive power to achieve their own noble aims: "We can bide our time, we can keep our thoughts in our hearts, deploring maybe evils done by the way, but approving the high and ultimate purpose: Knowledge, Rule, Order; all the things we have so far striven in vain to accomplish, hindered rather than helped by our weak or idle friends."

Saruman is doubly blind. He fails to see that laudable designs, when achieved by compulsive force, become demonic. Neither does he perceive the hidden strength of the hobbits. The chief irony of the entire epic is that hobbitic weakness is the solution to the

problem of Absolute Might. The hobbits are worthy opponents of Sauron because their life-aims are so modest. Wanting nothing more than to preserve the freedom of their peaceable Shire, they have no grandiose uses for the Ring. Their meekness uniquely qualifies them to destroy the Ring in the Cracks of Doom. This is a quest that can be accomplished by the small even better than the great. In fact, the figure who gradually emerges as the rightful successor to Frodo is the least likely hobbit of them all, the comically inept and ungainly Samwise Gamgee.

In the unlikely heroism of the small and the weak, Tolkien's pre-Christian world becomes most Christian. Their greatness is not self-made. As a fledgling community of faith, the Nine Walkers experience a far-off foretaste of the fellowship that Christians call the church universal. Their company remarkably transcends both racial and ethnic boundaries. Though it contains representatives from all of the Free Peoples, some of them have been historic enemies—especially the dwarves and the elves. No shallow commitment to diversity binds them together. They are united by their hatred of evil, and even more by their ever-increasing, self-surrendering regard for one another. Through their long communal struggle, they learn that there is a power greater than mere might. It springs not from the force of will but from a grace-filled fellowship of kindred minds and souls.

Perhaps we can now understand what Tolkien meant when he called *The Lord of the Rings* "a fundamentally religious and Catholic work." Its essential conflict, he insisted, concerns God's "sole right to divine honor." Like Milton's Satan, Sauron will not serve such a deity. He is intent upon his own supremacy, and he reads all others by his own light. He believes that anyone, having once possessed the power afforded by the Ring, will be determined to use it—especially the magical power to make its wearer invisible. He assumes that Frodo and his friends will seek to overthrow him and to establish their own sovereignty. Sauron's calculus of self-interest blinds him to the Company's strategy. Under Gandalf's leadership, they decide not to hide or use the Ring, but to take it straight back into the Land of Mordor—Sauron's lair—to incinerate it.

Not for want of mental power is Sauron deceived. He is a creature whose craft and power are very great, as his fashioning of the Ring proves. Sauron also embodies himself as a terrible all-seeing Eye. He can thus discern the outward operation of things, but he cannot discern the inward workings of the heart. Sauron's fatal lack is not intelligence, therefore, but sympathy. He cannot "feel with," and so he is incapable of community. The ores, the evil creatures whom Sauron has bred to do his will, constantly betray each other and feud among themselves. Tolkien thus holds out the considerable hope that evil cannot form a fellowship: there is no true Compact of the Wicked, but there is a real Company of the Good.

The animating power of this Company is the much-maligned virtue called pity. Frodo had learned the meaning of pity from his Uncle Bilbo. When he first obtained the Ring from the vile creature called Gollum, Bilbo had the chance to kill him but did not. Frodo is perplexed by this refusal. 'Tis a pity, he maintains, that Bilbo did not slay such an evil one. This phrase angers Gandalf, and prompts him to make the most important declaration in the entire epic:

"Pity? It was pity that stayed his hand. Pity, and Mercy; not to strike without need. And he has been well rewarded, Frodo. Be sure that [Bilbo] took so little hurt from the evil, and escaped in the end, because he began his ownership of the Ring so. With Pity."

"I am sorry," said Frodo. "But □ I do not feel any pity for Gollum □ He deserves death."

"Deserves it! I daresay he does," [replies Gandalf]. "Many that live deserve death. And some that die deserve life. Can you give it to them? Then do not be too eager to deal out death in judgement □ The pity of Bilbo will rule the fate of many□yours not least.

"The pity of Bilbo will rule the fate of many" becomes the motto of Tolkien's epic. It is true in the literal sense, because the Gollum whom Bilbo had spared so long ago is the one who finally destroys the Ring. The saying is also true in a spiritual sense. Gandalf the pagan wizard describes the nature of Christian mercy. As a creature far more sinning than sinned against, Gollum deserves his misery. He has committed Cain's crime of fratricide in acquiring the Ring. Still, Gandalf insists on pity, despite Frodo's protest that Gollum should be given justice. If all died who deserve punishment, none would live. Many perish who have earned life, and yet who can restore them? Neither hobbits nor humans can live by the bread of merit alone.

The unstrained quality of mercy makes *The Lord of the Rings* an enduring Christian classic despite its pagan setting. As a pre-Christian work, it is appropriately characterized by a melancholy sense of ineluctable doom and defeat: the night that comes shall cover everything. Such profound pessimism must not be disregarded. It has its biblical equivalent, after all, in the dark omen of death found in Ecclesiastes 12:5: "man goeth to his long home."

Yet this gloomy saying is not the ultimate word. Near the end of their wearying quest, Frodo and Sam are alone on the slopes of Mount Doom. All their efforts seem to have failed. Even if somehow they succeed in destroying the Ring, there is no likelihood that they will themselves survive, or that anyone will ever hear of their valiant deed. Amid such hopelessness, Sam□the bumbling and unre-flective hobbit who has gradually emerged as a figure of great moral and spiritual depth□beholds a single star shimmering above the dark clouds of Mordor:

The beauty of it smote his heart, as he looked up out of that forsaken land, and hope returned to him. For like a shaft, clear and cold, the thought pierced him that in the end the Shadow was only a small and passing thing: there was light and high beauty for ever beyond

its reach.□ Now, for a moment, his own fate, and even his master's ceased to trouble him. He crawled back into the brambles and laid himself by Frodo's side, and putting away all fear he cast himself into a deep and untroubled sleep.

Sam discerns that light and shadow are not warring in uncertain battle. It is the gleaming star that defines the darkness. These hobbits cannot name their source, but they know that Goodness and Truth and Beauty are the first and the last and the only permanent things.

Source: Ralph C. Wood, "'Traveling the one road': *The Lord of the Rings* as a □," in *The Christian Century,* Vol. 110, No. 6, Feb. 24, 1993, pp. 208-11.

Critical Essay #4

T. A. Shippey talks about the symbolism of J. R. R. Tolkien's characters from The Lord of the Rings *through* The Council of Elrond*.*

The gist of what has been said in this chapter is that *The Lord of the Rings* possesses unusual cultural depth. 'Culture' is not a word Tolkien used much; it changed meaning sharply during his lifetime, and not in a direction he approved. Still, one can see a deep understanding of its modern meaning of 'the whole complex of learned behaviour the material possessions, the language and other symbolism, of some body of people' in chapter 2 of Book II of *The Fellowship of the Ring*. This marks a jump-off point for the characters, whose objective is disclosed within it. It was also I suspect a jump-off point for Tolkien, since after that he was no longer writing his way through landscapes he had travelled before. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that as with the house of Beorn in *The Hobbit* 'The Council of Elrond' should provide a sudden introduction to archaic and heroic worlds confronting and overwhelming modern, practical ones. The later work is, however, many degrees more complex than its earlier analogue, being indeed an interweaving of at least six major voices besides minor ones and reported ones; as well as telling a complex tale in complex fashion what all these voices do is present, in our language, a violent 'culture-clash'.

This comes out most in the speeches and scripts impacted *inside* Gandalf's monologue of pages 269-78, the fifth and longest from a major speaker (the others coming from Glóin, Elrond, Boromir, Aragorn, Legolas). Within that monologue Gaffer Gamgee functions as a kind of base-line of normality and, concomitantly, of emptiness. 'I had words with old Gamgee', Gandalf reports, 'Many words and few to the point':

"I can't abide changes," said he, "not at my time of
life, and least of all changes for the worst." "Changes
for the worst," he repeated many times.

"Worst is a bad word," I said to him, "and I hope you
do not live to see it."

It is indeed a bad word, especially when all the Gaffer has to complain about is the Sackville-Bagginses; Denethor uses it as well, much later, but again with ominous effect. As for 'abide', as used by Gaffer Gamgee it has almost no semantic content at all; in context it means 'bear, tolerate, put up with', but in that sense is simply untrue. The Gaffer *can* abide changes; he just has. He means only that he doesn't like them. But there is a moral for him in the history of the word, which has the frequent early sense of 'to await the issue of, to wait (stoically) for, to live to see'. In this last sense the Gaffer *could* 'abide' changes, and he does. Right at the end he moralises, stubborn as ever, 'It's an ill wind as blows nobody any good, *as I always say'* (my italics), 'And All's well as ends Better'. At least he has learnt to eschew superlatives. But his language in Gandalf's monologue conveys an unwelcome reminder of psychological unpreparedness.

However there is another modern voice in Gandalf's monologue to act as vehicle for cultural contrast: this is Saruman's. He has hardly been mentioned before, and the question whether he is good or bad is more difficult to decide than with most. But when he is introduced by Gandalf, we know what to think very soon; the message is conveyed by style and lexis. Saruman talks like a politician. 'We can bide our time', he says, using a fossilised phrase:

'we can keep our thoughts in our hearts, deploring
maybe evils done by the way, but approving the high and ultimate purpose: Knowledge, Rule, Order, all
things that we have so far striven in vain to accomplish,
hindered rather than helped by our weak or idle
friends. There need not be, there would not be, any
real change in our designs, only in our means.'

What Saruman says encapsulates many of the things the modern world has learnt to dread most: the ditching of allies, the subordination of means to ends, the 'conscious acceptance of guilt in the necessary murder'. But the way he puts it is signifi-cant too. No other character in Middle-earth has Saruman's trick of balancing phrases against each other so that incompatibles are resolved, and none comes out with words as empty as 'deploring', 'ultimate', worst of all, 'real'. What is a 'real change'? The *OED*'s three columns of definition offer nothing appropriate; the word has got below dictionary level. As we all know, 'real' is now a word like 'sincere' or 'genuine', a word whose meaning its speaker asks you to take for granted, a politician's word, an advertiser's word. 'Real change' shows Saruman up with even greater economy than 'changes for the worst' does Gaffer Gamgee.

By contrast with these familiar styles and voices several of the other participants in the Council come over as archaic, blunt, clear-sighted. Gandalf himself uses an older vocabulary than usual, as if to authenticate himself, and Elrond's speech, as is only suitable for one so old, is full of old-fashioned inversions of syntax and words like 'weregild', 'esquire', 'shards'. Its burden is to state the Northern 'theory of courage', as Tolkien called it in his British Academy lecture, whose central thesis is that even ultimate defeat does not turn right into wrong. Elrond has seen 'many defeats, and many fruitless victories', and in a way he has even given up hope, at least for his adopted people the elves; but this does not make him change his mind or look for easy options.

The heroic note is struck most firmly, however, by the dwarf Glóin, or rather by his report of the dialogue between Sauron's messenger and that exemplar of stubbornness King Dáin. The messenger offers 'great reward and lasting friendship' in return for information about hobbits, or for the Ring. If Dáin refuses, he says:

"□ things will not seem so well."
'At that his breath came like the hiss of snakes,
and all who stood by shuddered, but Dáin
said: "I say neither yea nor nay. I must
consider this message and what it means

under its fair cloak."

"'Consider well, but not too long," said he.
"'The time of my thought is my own to spend,"
answered Dáin.
"'For the present," said he, and rode into
the darkness.

We get exchanges like this several times in *The Lord of the Rings*, mostly involving dwarves: Elrond and Gimli swap grim proverbs in the next chapter, Théoden King silences Merry in similarly abrupt style in Book V chapter 2 ... Whatever it is, it comes over in Dáin's speech as a force: words imply ethics, and the ethics of the spokesmen of Middle-earth fit together, beneath surface variation. None of them but Saruman pays any attention to expediency, practicality, *Realpolitik*, 'political realism'.

Any one of the counsellors in this chapter would bear similar analysis. Gandalf's account of Isildur makes a point through its combination of ancient words and endings ('glede', 'fadeth', 'loseth', etc.) with sudden recall of the words of Bilbo and Gollum. 'It is precious to me, though I buy it with great pain'; the 'reality of human nature' persists. More subtly Aragorn and Boromir strike sparks off each other through their ways of speech as well as their claims, Aragorn's language deceptively modern, even easy-going on occasion, but with greater range than Boromir's slightly wooden magniloquence. There is even significance in Aragorn letting his rival have the last word in their debate, with a clause which is perfectly in line with modern speech□'we will put it to the test one day'□but also relates easily to the vaunts of ancient heroes, like Ælfwine's *nú mæg cunnian hwá céne sý* in *The Battle of Maldon*, 'now who is bold can be put to the test'. Still, the overriding points are these: the 'information content' of 'The Council of Elrond' is very high, much higher than can be recorded by analyses like this; much of that information is carried by linguistic mode; nevertheless most readers assimilate the greater part of it; in the process they gain an image of the 'life-styles' of Middle-earth the solider for its occasional contrasts with modernity. Language variation gives Tolkien a thorough and economical way of dramatising ethical debate.

A part of the answer is that the Rohirrim are not to be equated with the Anglo-Saxons of history, but with those of poetry, or legend. The chapter 'The King of the Golden Hall' is straightforwardly calqued on *Beowulf*. When Legolas says of Meduseld, 'The light of it shines far over the land', he is translating line 311 of *Beowulf*, *líxte se léoma ofer landa fela*. 'Meduseld' is indeed a Beowulfian word for 'hall'. More importantly the poem and the chapter agree, down to minute detail, on the procedure for approaching kings. In *Beowulf* the hero is stopped first by a coastguard, then by a doorward, and only after two challenges is allowed to approach the Danish King; he and his men have to 'pile arms' outside as well. Tolkien follows this dignified, step-by-step ceremonial progress exactly. Thus in 'The King of the Golden Hall' Gandalf, Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli are checked first by the guards at the gates of Edoras (= 'enclosures'), and then by the doorward of Meduseld, Háma. He too insists on the ceremony of piling arms, though Tolkien's characters object more than Beowulf does, largely because he is a volunteer and in any case fights by choice barehanded. There is a crisis over Gandalf's staff,

indeed, and Háma broods, reflecting rightly that 'The staff in the hand of a wizard may be more than a prop for age'; he settles his doubts with the maxim 'Yet in doubt a man of worth will trust to his own wisdom. I believe you are friends and folk of honour, who have no evil purpose. You may go in.' In saying so he echoes the maxim of the coastguard of *Beowulf*, 'a sharp shield-warrior must know how to tell good from bad in every case, from words as well as deeds. I hear [from your words] that this warband is friendly I will guide you.'

The point is not, though, that Tolkien is once more writing a 'calqued' narrative, but that he is taking advantage of a modern expansive style to spell out things that would have been obvious to Anglo-Saxons in particular, the truths that freedom is not a prerogative of democracies, and that in free societies orders give way to discretion. Háma takes a risk with Gandalf; so does the coastguard with Beowulf. So does Éomer with Aragorn, letting him go free and lending him horses. He is under arrest when Aragorn re-appears, and Théoden notes Háma's dereliction of duty too. Still, the nice thing about the Riders, one might say, is that though 'a stern people, loyal to their lord', they wear duty and loyalty lightly. Háma and Éomer make their own decisions, and even the suspicious gate-ward wishes Gandalf luck. 'I was only obeying orders', we can see, would *not* be accepted as an excuse in the Riddermark. Nor would it in *Beowulf*. The wisdom of ancient epic is translated by Tolkien into a whole sequence of doubts, decisions, sayings, rituals.

The Riders gain life from their mixture of homely, almost hobbitic familiarity with a strong dash of something completely alien. Éomer is a nice young man, but there is a streak of nomad ferocity in the way he and his men taunt Aragorn and company with their narrowing circle of horses and Éomer's silent advance 'until the point of his spear was within a foot of Aragorn's breast'. They behave like mail-shirted Red Indians. And like a Middle-earth Deerslayer Aragorn 'did not stir', recognising the nomad appreciation of impassivity. A certain craziness shows itself in the Rohirric psychology at other points, as Éowyn rides in search of death and Éomer, sure he is doomed to die, laughs out loud for joy. The Dunlendings have heard that the Riders 'burned their prisoners alive'. Tolkien denies it, but there is something in his description that keeps the image alive.

For all this there is, once more, a visual correlative, and it is the first flash of individuality Éomer is given; he is 'taller than all the rest; from his helm as a crest a white horsetail flowed'. A horsetail plume is the traditional prerogative of the Huns and the Tartars and the steppe-folk, a most un-English decoration, at least by tradition. Yet it comes to prominence several times. Across the chaotic battlefield of Pelennor it is 'the white crest of Éomer' that Merry picks out from the 'great front of the Rohirrim', and when Théoden charges at last, opposing hornblast and poetry to horror and despair, behind him come his knights and his banner, 'white horse upon a field of green', and Éomer, 'the white horsetail on his helm floating in his speed'. As it happens, there is a word for both Éomer's decoration and the Riders' collective quality, but it is not an English word: it is *panache*, the crest on the knight's helmet, but also the virtue of sudden onset, the dash that sweeps away resistance. This is exactly the opposite of English 'doggedness', and is a virtue traditionally regarded with massive suspicion by English generals. However *panache* in both the abstract and concrete senses help to define the Riders, to present

them as simultaneously English and alien, to offer a glimpse of the way land shapes people. Théoden's kindly interest in herbs and hobbits (they would have had him smoking a pipe, given time) co-exists with his peremptory decisions and sudden furies. It is a strange mixture but not an implausible one. There must have been people like that once, if we only knew.

Source: Tom Shippey, *The Road to Middle Earth,* Grafton, Harper Collins, 1992, pp. 107-116.

Adaptations

The Road Goes Ever On: A Song Cycle are poems by Tolkien, with music by Donald Swann, recorded on Caedmon Records in 1967. *Poems and Songs of Middle Earth* were also recorded in the same year. William Elven performs.

'The Ballad of Bilbo Baggins' was recorded by Leonard Nimoy.

Lord of the Rings was made into an animated film released in 1978, directed by Ralph Bakshi.

The Lord of the Rings, directed by Peter Jackson, is to be released as three separate live action movies beginning in 2001. There is a trailer/ preview available on the internet.

"Harvard Lampoon" published a parody of *The Lord of the Rings* entitled *Bored of the Rings* in 1969.

Topics for Further Study

J. R. R. Tolkien's lifelong interest in Philology, the study of change and development in language, is one of the foundations of his narrative. Research a study of comparative languages, particularly as it applies to a language family that interests you culturally.

Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* has attracted the work of many illustrators. Tolkien himself was a gifted amateur illustrator and a number of his illustrations for his stories have been published. Study Tolkien's illustrations and discuss the ideas, artistic movements, and individual artists that you believe may have entered into his style.

Tolkien served in the trenches in World War I during the Somme offensive. Look at both his biography and at narratives of the battle of the Somme and attempt to find reflections of his experiences in *Lord of the Rings*.

For a time in 1965-66, Tolkien and his publishers were involved in a battle with Ace books over their unapproved paperback edition of *Lord of the Rings*. Investigate the history of copyright laws, and discuss the long running problems of British authors with American copyright laws.

Some critics have noticed the similarity between the society Tolkien drew in the Shire and the social ideas of William Morris. Study the ideas of Morris about work, art, and society, and discuss the extent to which the picture Tolkien draws of the Shire agrees or diverges from those ideas.

Compare and Contrast

Early Twentieth Century: Tolkien's secondary school education is centered on the language and literature of Greece and Rome. He is expected not only to be able to read and write both languages, but to be able to speak them with some fluency. Debating in Latin was common, and in Classical Greek not unknown.

Today: Science and technical subjects have moved to the heart of the curriculum in English-speaking countries, and few students receive a similarly thorough training even in their mother tongue.

Early Twentieth Century: The society that Tolkien depicts is an essentially self-sufficient one, in which families grow their own food and most goods are produced locally by craftsmen. Trade, when mentioned, is usually in luxuries: wine, pipeweed, and dwarf-made toys. In Tolkien's own childhood in the English countryside, this life-style would have not have seemed like the stuff of fairy-tales, but very close to people's own experience.

Today: Nearly all goods are mass-produced, often on a world-wide scale of distribution, and even the production of meals from basic ingredients is being superceded by ready prepared foods.

Early Twentieth Century: There is a strong antipathy among many British people towards Catholics. Mrs. Tolkien's conversion distances her and her children from both her own and her husband's family. Her sister, who is converted at the same time, is forced by her husband to renounce her new faith.

Today: Britain has a large population of Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus whose religious views and observances are generally treated with respect and who are legally protected from discrimination.

What Do I Read Next?

Tolkien's first published fiction in 1937 was *The Hobbit*, subtitled *or There and Back Again*. It was written as a freestanding children's story within the world of Middle Earth. It became, however, with significant revisions of the Ring finding episode, the prelude for the whole of *ord of the Rings*.

Although J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Silmarillion* was published posthumously in 1977, he was working on it as early as 1917. It is a narrative of the Elder Days, beginning with Eru, the One, Ilúvatar, the creator, and ending with the downfall of Númenor and the changing of the world so that there was no longer a straight passage to the Deathless lands. Unlike *The Hobbit* or the *Lord of the Rings*, it makes little or no use of modern novelistic conventions. Christopher Tolkien writes in the Foreword that the material "became the vehicle of his profoundest reflections. In his later writing, mythology and poetry sank down behind his theological and philosophical preoccupations: 'from which arose incompatibilities of tone.'"

Tolkien's *Farmer Giles of Ham* published in 1949 includes a gentle send-up of scholarship and ironic observations on the perennial faults of central government in a hilarious tale of a talking dog, a short-sighted giant, a clever but unlucky dragon, and a hero more astute than heroic, but no less effective for it.

Tolkien's "On Fairy Stories," a revision of his Andre Lang Lecture of 1938 at the University of St. Andrews, was first published in 1947 in "Essays presented to Charles Williams." It is more generally available in the collections *Tree and Leaf* or *The Tolkien Reader*, and is a reflec-tion on his thinking about what he was trying to achieve in *Lord of the Rings*.

Grimm's Teutonic Mythology, translated by J. S. Stallybrass, (4 volumes, 1882-88) from the original work by the Brothers Grimm of fairytale fame, is a rich collection of the fragments of the lost mythology and legend from the Germanic past.

Topics for Discussion

1. How does Tolkien develop the nature of the Black Riders so that their identity as Ringwraiths does not come as a surprise?

2. Many characters convey pieces of information at the Council of Elrond— information about the history of the Ring, about events that have happened more recently, or about their own presence at the Council. What information is new to the reader?

3. What shows that the Ring has no effect on Tom Bombadil? What is later given as an explanation for this? Why is Gandalf unwilling to entrust the Ring to Tom?

4. When Frodo offers his Ring to Galadriel, she refuses it, as had Gandalf and Aragom. Why does she refuse it?

How do the three elven Rings, one of which she wears, differ from the other Rings of Power?

5. Pippin, Aragorn, and Denethor all use one of the palantiri. What happens in each case? What accounts for the different effects that the palantiri have on Denethor and Aragorn?

6. In the trilogy many characters and objects have powers beyond the "natural." Such supernatural powers are part of the inner consistency of Middie-earth. The most pervasive of these elements are the Rings of Power, the palantiri, and Gandalf. Select three or four other supernatural objects or characters and show how they fit into Tolkien's concepts of Middle-earth.

7. Tolkien often shows how evil can unintentionally work for good. How is this demonstrated by Grishnakh? By Grima?

8. After the Battle of Minas Tirith, Gandalf tells Pippin that if Elrond had not allowed Merry and him to come along "then far more grievous would the evils of this day have been." What are the contributions of Merry and Pippin?

9. Although Galadriel and the other elves of Lorien are not part of the fellowship, they contribute to the success of the quest. Discuss their major contributions to the work and well-being of the fellows.

10. According to Tolkien's essay "On Fairy-stories," evil should be recognizable because of its ugliness. How does this principle reinforce Tolkien's portrayal of the orcs as evil characters?

11. Aragorn's claim to kingship is indicated in many ways. What are the actions or circumstances which prepare the people of Gondor for Aragorn's eventual coronation? Why are they significant?

Ideas for Reports and Papers

1. Throughout the trilogy Tolkien uses foreshadowing and flashbacks to draw the scattered events of his narrative together. Select at least eight scenes and events in the trilogy (drawing from all three volumes) and show how Tolkien uses these techniques effectively.

2. Songs and verses play a major part in the trilogy, both artistically and structurally. Referring to sections from all three volumes, identify several different types of songs and verses and explain their relevance to the overall narrative and their function in the creation of settings and characters.

3. Even though Frodo, Aragorn, and Gandalf are the "heroes" of the trilogy, Samwise Gamgee is in many ways more "real." Analyze the development of Sam's character. How does Tolkien make him such an appealing character? How does Sam change during the quest?

4. Tolkien stated his preference for "history, true or feigned" as a subject for his writing. Among the "historical" devices incorporated into the trilogy is the set of appendices at the end of The Return of the King. How does "The Numenorean Kings" in the first appendix throw light on situations in the trilogy?

5. Select one of the places in Middleearth (e.g., Mordor, Lorien, the Shire) and explain some of the laws or principles that operate there. Compare it with our world. What are the abilities which animate and inanimate beings have there, and what customs or situations are taken as a matter of course?

Further Study

Beagle, Peter S., "Tolkien's Magic Ring," in *J. R. R. Tolkien, The Tolkien Reader*, Ballantine Books, 1966, pp. ix-xv.

An excellent, if non-technical and short, introduction to *The Lord of the Rings* by another celebrated writer of fantasy.

Rosebury, Brian, *Tolkien a Critical Assessment*, St. Martin's Press, 1992.

An excellent extended study of Tolkien's style, and an antidote to a lot of extremely bad criticism.

Shippey, T. A., *The Road to Middle Earth*, Harper Collins, 1992.

One of the finest pieces of Tolkien criticism yet written, it is unsurpassed for the sources of *The Lord of the Rings* and the influence of Philology upon Tolkien's work.

Tolkien, J. R. R., "On Fairy Stories," in *The Tolkien Reader*, Ballantine Books, 1966, pp. 3-82.

Written while Tolkien was beginning the *Lord of the Rings*. It is a critical theory and justification for the trilogy.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Epics for Students (EfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, EfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of EfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of EfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in EfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by EfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

EfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Epics for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the EfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the EfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Epics for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Epics for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from EfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Epics for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from EfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Epics for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of EfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Epics for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of EfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Epics for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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