

LORD OF THE RINGS THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

By J.R.R. Tolkien

The Characters

FRODO BAGGINS

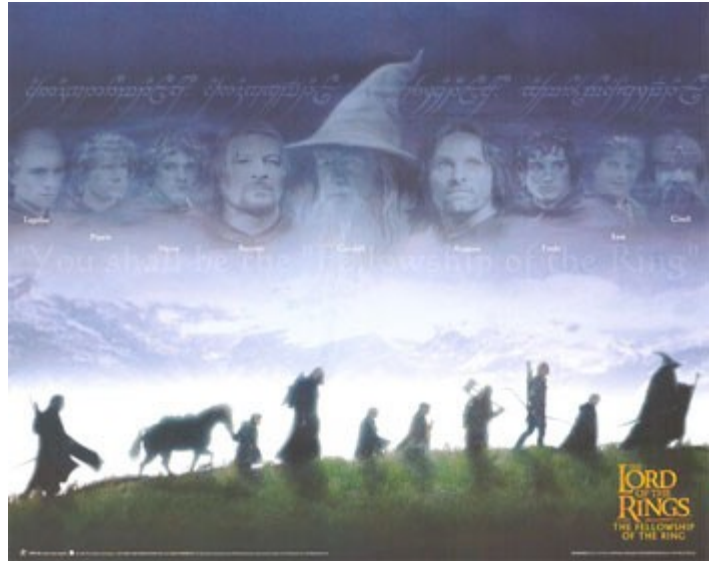
The hero of The Lord of the Rings trilogy, Frodo is a young cousin. He is raised in his home and his magic is revealed when Bilbo leaves the Ring to Frodo. Frodo's adventure begins when he learns that the ring is actually a thing of great evil. It is the Ring, made by Sauron, the Dark Lord, who is now trying to regain it. Frodo sets off on what will become a long and dangerous quest to destroy the Ring.



the quest to destroy the Ring. He proves himself a faithful servant.

Gandalf the Grey

is one of three main characters in The Lord of the Rings. Gandalf seems to be a character in The Lord of the Rings than he was in The Hobbit. In Rivendell he is revealed as an imposing figure of great power that he uses for unselfish purposes. He says that he's a steward over all living things, and he works to protect them from evil.



STRIDER/ARAGORN

As Strider, chief of the Rangers who secretly guard the Shire. Aragorn guides Frodo and the safety of the Shire. Aragorn reveals he is a descendant of kings. At the end of the book, Aragorn proves himself worthy of the throne of Gondor.



MERRY AND PIPPIN

These two hobbits, Merry and Pippin, serve as Frodo's companions. Frodo and Sam are more than Sam and Frodo, they are foolish, innocent, and unprepared for the trials ahead.



Saruman the White is a member of the Council that originally opposed Gandalf (the Necromancer). Saruman is the enemy of the Free Peoples. But Saruman is tempted by the ways of the enemy, and he has fallen into the temptation to be like him, to rule the world as he sees fit.

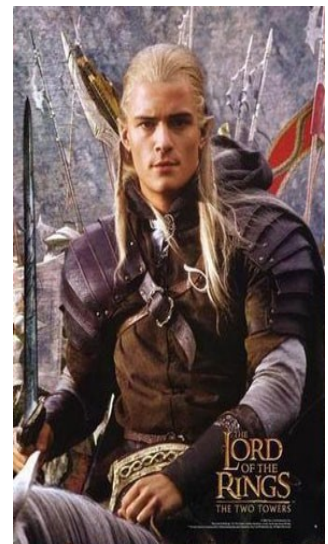


SAM GAMGEE (SAMWISE)

Sam Gamgee, the son of Frodo's gardener, sets out with Frodo on

Where Sam and Frodo face mainly mental trials, Merry and Pippin endure the physical trials of war.

SARUMAN (SHARKEY)



Continued on page 3

Inside this issue:

Setting	2
Themes	2
Characters continued	3
Point of View	3
The Plot	4

Setting in The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring



in the remote past. The name Middle-earth itself is actually an archaic word for the earth. Although wizards, elves, and dragons may no longer exist, the principles ruling Middle-earth are still in effect today.

Tolkien tries to draw you into his fictional world by creating the impression that Middle-earth is a real place. He describes in detail the landscape, filling it with the familiar plants and animals of Earth. The books, on one level, are a tour through Middle-earth.

You learn the names and background of different landmarks. You also meet the inhabitants of Middle-earth and learn something about their customs and histories. You'll probably enjoy these details, even though most are not essential to the plot.

The setting forms a very important part of the story. Places such as the Shire, Rivendell, and Lorien are different forms of utopias, presenting some of Tolkien's thoughts about the ideal society—for example, that humans should live in harmony with nature. Evil is often associated with particular locations, such as Sauron's stronghold in Mordor. It is also associated with mountains and barren landscapes; compare the Desolation of Smaug, for example, with the wastelands around Mordor.



Major Themes in The Lord of the Rings

“You are a ring bearer, Frodo. To bear a ring is to be alone”

friendship, hurt their own efforts by fighting among themselves. Tolkien goes further to show that friendship should not be given just within a closed circle but should be extended to all people.

The friendship between Frodo and Sam illuminate this importance as they not only work together as friends, but ultimately come to rely on each other for success.

STRUGGLE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL

The forces of good in Middle-earth are engaged in a continuing struggle against evil. What will be the final outcome of this struggle? Some readers think Tolkien indicates evil will prevail, while others say he's optimistic about the ultimate victory of good.

Those feeling Tolkien thinks evil will win out note that it's left to seemingly powerless individuals like Frodo to face the overwhelming force of evil. These individuals must struggle on with no hope for assistance from someone more powerful, and with little

hope for victory or even survival. Victory, when it is achieved, comes only at great cost to the forces of good. And it seems to win only a breathing space, barely enough time to recover before evil again arises and threatens the freedom of Middle-earth.

Other readers see a strong vein of optimism in Tolkien's works. They point to the fact that the inhabitants of Middle-earth are helped in their fight by a benevolent power. The workings of that power are seldom visible to the individuals in the midst of the action, but a larger viewpoint reveals a grand design. This seems to imply that good



The main weapon of evil—despair—is used to turn people from their assigned tasks and so foil the designs of good. These elements in the works make people seem like puppets manipulated by opposing powers of good and evil.

Tolkien, however, also notes the importance of free will. His characters are

free to accept or reject possible courses of action. The forces of good in The Lord of the Rings, such as Gandalf and Galadriel, respect this freedom to choose. They continually tell others that they not only can but must make their own decisions. Not even the prospect of total defeat can justify interfering with the free will of others. The forces of evil, on the other hand, seek to destroy free will.

RESPONSIBLE USE OF POWER

In Middle-earth, power is a dangerous thing that can turn against those who wield it. The forces of good in Middle-earth, such as Elrond and Gandalf, recognize this danger and are very careful how they use their power. They know that no matter how good their intention, they will find their purpose perverted if they resort to force. The best example of this is their refusal to use the Ring. The Ring gives the power to dominate

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others, and with it they could overthrow Sauron. But the Ring also dominates the will of whoever wears it. Even if Gandalf used the Ring only out of the worthy desire to help others, he'd fall under its influence and turn into another Dark Lord like Sauron.

Although the forces of good will not use the power to dominate others, they do have other powers available to them—the power to heal, the power to understand, and the power to create beauty. But these seem pitifully small in the face of Sauron's power, and the temptation to "fight fire with fire" is strong.

Characters continued from page one...



The Lord of Mordor, is the most powerful and evil in The Lord of the Rings. He is also referred to as the Necromancer in The Hobbit. Tolkien's only physical description of him is as a lidless red eye. This serves to heighten the sense of dread surrounding him, more than any other description could. Through Sauron, Tolkien offers his own ideas about evil: that nothing started out evil, that evil cannot create but can only pervert, that evil cannot comprehend good and so cannot predict the actions of good, and that evil destroys free will. Through the power of the Ring, Sauron intends to enslave the inhabitants of Middle-earth.

BOROMIR

Boromir is the son of Denethor, the Ruler of Gondor. You first meet Boromir when he joins the company who set out to destroy the ring with Frodo. He is overcome by the power of the ring and tries to take it for himself, but later is killed defending Merry and Pippin.



LEGOLAS

A representative of the Elvin race, Legolas joins the company of the fellowship in Rivendell. He has keen eyes and ears of which he is depended upon by the others.



Representing the dwarves in the Fellowship is Gimli. He forms a strong friendship with Legolas which serves to strengthen the

fellowship.

THE RINGWRAITHS, THE NAZGUL, THE MORGUL KING, THE WITCH-KING

Their captain is called the Dark Captain, the Morgul king, and the Witch-king of Angmar. The ringwraiths were nine men who served Sauron and fell under the power of the rings he had made for the race of men. Now they have faded into a shadow world and are invisible. Their cry drives men to despair.



Point of View in The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring



Written in the third person, these are stories told through the eyes of one of the characters for various purposes. First, the narrator is considered to be a representative of the modern world, a comfortably familiar character you can identify with in a book filled with such magical images as wizards and elves. Second, following the story from the hobbits' point of view makes the hobbits the heroes of the book, placing an emphasis on their traits and their way of looking at the world. In this way, Tolkien shows the importance of ordinary people and reveals what it is that he believes makes them so special.

While the narrator of these books generally follows the story from the point of view of a character, he's not limited by that character's knowledge. He's able to step out of the story and offer information and insights that the characters are not aware of. In this way he's able to show you the underlying patterns and can reveal a clear pattern in seemingly random events. Over time he shows how these individuals involved.



“There is an evil here. One that does not sleep.”

Themes continued from page two...



What are YOU looking at?

THE PLOT

Long after the events in *The Hobbit*, Bilbo again leaves the Shire, but not before reluctantly passing on his magic ring to his heir, Frodo Baggins.

Many years later, Frodo learns from Gandalf, the wizard, that his ring is the Ring, which belonged to the evil ruler Sauron. Sauron was thought to have been destroyed ages ago. But now he has reappeared in his ancient stronghold of Mordor. His Ring was presumed lost, but Sauron has discovered that it's presently in the hands of a hobbit named Baggins, who lives in the Shire.

To protect the inhabitants of the Shire from Sauron's wrath, Frodo decides to take the Ring and leave Bag End for Rivendell with three friends-



Sam. Gandalf was supposed to say no word has been heard from him, but the four hobbits are closely pursued by the Black Riders, servants of Sauron. They are prepared for the dangers that face them, but sometimes they're almost killed because of the Ring. Fortunately, they are joined by a man called Strider, who offers to take them to Rivendell.

One night, Frodo is wounded in an attack by the Black Riders. His friends bring him to Rivendell, where he is cured by Elrond, the leader of the Half-elven (a race of people who are half elf and half human).

A council meets in Rivendell to decide what to do about the Ring. It's agreed the Ring must be destroyed, for the temptation to use it is too strong, and anyone who does use it will be corrupted by its power. Frodo takes on the task of bringing the Ring to Mordor and casting it into the volcano where it was forged.

Strider takes this opportunity to reveal his true name: Aragorn. He is rightful heir to the throne of Gondor, which has been ruled by stewards for many years in



“Gandalf, where is Taiwan?”

the absence of a king. He plans to return to Gondor, to aid in its fight against Sauron and to claim his crown.

When Frodo departs from Rivendell, he is accompanied by representatives of all the free races of Middle-earth: Gandalf the wizard, Legolas the elf, Gimli the dwarf, Aragorn and Boromir of the race of men, and Frodo's hobbit friends, Sam, Merry, and Pippin.

While passing through the mines of Moria, the company is threatened by a Balrog, a terrifying creature of flame and shadow. While fighting the Balrog, Gandalf and the creature plunge into a deep abyss and are both thought killed.

The rest of the company splits up further south. Boromir has fallen under the influence of the Ring and tries to take it from Frodo. Frodo runs away and decides to travel on to Mordor alone, but his faithful servant, Sam, insists on going with him.

