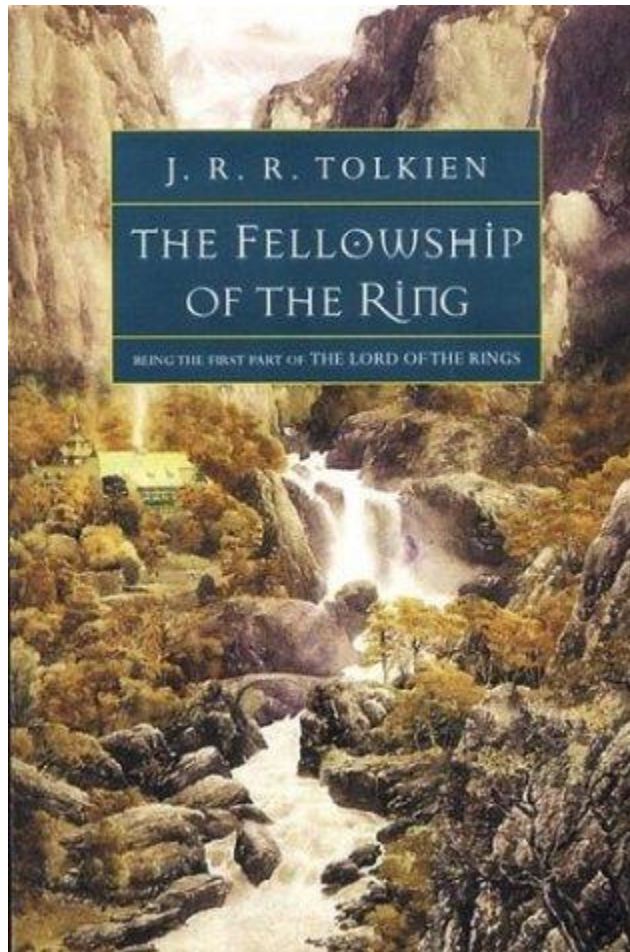


A Summary of The Lord of the Rings Trilogy Part I The Fellowship of the Ring by J.R.R. Tolkien



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New York: Ballantine Books, 1965

ISBN: 345-01533-9-095

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[You can purchase the full text at Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/dp/0345015339)

About the Author

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien was born in Bloemfontein, South Africa in 1892. He returned to England early in his childhood along with his mother and his brother. His father was supposed to follow them directly. However, Arthur Tolkien died of rheumatic fever in South Africa.

The Tolkiens settled in Birmingham where his mother converted to Catholicism; an action which had a great impact on Tolkien. The family became close to their Parish Priest, Father Francis Morgan, and he helped the Tolkiens through many hard times. Tolkien's mother passed away in 1904 when Tolkien was 12 years old at which time Father Morgan became his guardian. After two attempts, Tolkien earned a scholarship to Oxford in 1911 where he joined Exeter College, and majored in philology. Tolkien married Edith Bratt in 1916 with whom he had four children. He served as a second lieutenant in the Lancashire Fusiliers in WWI, caught trench fever in France in 1917, and was sent back to England to recover. He never returned to the front.

In 1925 Tolkien published a translation "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, and Pearle". This publication brought him notice at Oxford where he was offered the professorship of Anglo-Saxon. Tolkien published "The Hobbit" in 1936. In the late 1930's Tolkien began writing the "Lord of the Rings" which took him more than a decade to complete. The trilogy was published in England 1954. Tolkien's wife Edith died in 1971; he followed her shortly thereafter, dying of Pneumonia in 1973. Tolkien's son Christopher has compiled and published many of his father's works. He has also written a companion book to his father's work.

General Overview

The hobbit Frodo Baggins is given a ring by his uncle Bilbo. The wizard Gandalf tells him that this ring is a creation of the Dark Lord Sauron and a thing of evil power meant to take control all of Middle Earth. The Ring is the only thing that Sauron lacks in his effort to crush out life, happiness, and free will from all who dwell on Middle Earth and there is no way to hide it and only one way to destroy it. The Ring must be taken to Mordor and cast into the Cracks of Doom before Sauron can get his hands on it, but the Ring is a dangerous thing to hold and it constantly seeks to be reunited with its master.

Frodo, along with eight companions, sets out to destroy the Ring and save Middle Earth from Sauron's dominion. The companions begin the long journey to the land of Mordor where the Ring was forged in order to destroy it. They are beset by Sauron's minions the Nine Black Riders, Orcs, Trolls, and various embodiments of evil. The Ring exerts its influence over the party, and in the end Frodo takes up the task alone with only the help of his loyal gardener, Samwise Gamgee.

Prologue

Concerning Hobbits

An historical/anthropological background of hobbits is given including their ancestry, place of origin, and linguistic roots. The settling of the Shire is explained and small facts about hobbits such as their habits, quirks, and general approach to life are given. There are various cultural notes and architectural points expounded upon as well as the economics of the Shire.

Concerning Pipe-weed

Smoking tobacco is considered, by hobbits, to be their greatest contribution to the world at large. This section gives a brief overview of the historical significance of different strains of leaf, and is told in persona Meriadoc Brandybuck.

Of the Finding of the Ring

This small section tells how hobbits came to be in possession of the Ring. It is a précis of the scene between Bilbo Baggins and Gollum found in *The Hobbit*. It also notes many individual occasions on which Bilbo used the ring.

Book I

Chapter 1: A Long Expected Party

Bilbo Baggins, an amazingly well-preserved hobbit, begins planning a party for his 111th birthday which happens to fall on the same day as the 33rd birthday of his heir and nephew, Frodo Baggins. Thirty three is the age of majority among hobbits and it's to be quite an event.

The other hobbits in Hobbiton consider Bilbo and Frodo by association, to be odd and a bit too adventurous to be respectable. The notable exceptions to this opinion are Gaffer Gamgee, Bilbo's semi-retired gardener, and his son, Samwise Gamgee, the current gardener and a friend of Frodo's.

Strange people begin to arrive in the quiet Shire for the party including a company of dwarves and the wizard Gandalf the Grey (sometimes called Mithrandir). Bilbo is acting strangely and he comments to Gandalf that he feels "stretched".

The party starts off well and Bilbo makes a grand exit after dinner by use of his magic ring which can render the wearer invisible. Bilbo is preparing to leave the Shire and Hobbiton for good with Frodo coming into his inheritance. Bilbo and Gandalf quarrel about the ring, which Bilbo had planned to leave, along with everything else he owned, to Frodo, but in the end, Bilbo found himself reluctant to part with it.

Gandalf begins to be suspicious concerning Bilbo's ring. Bilbo sticks to his plan and leaves the Shire. Bag End (i.e. Bilbo's house) and all of his possessions, including the ring, go to Frodo. Gandalf warns Frodo not to use the ring and to keep it safe and secret. Frodo is somewhat nonplussed by this request, but agrees to comply with Gandalf's wishes.

Chapter 2: The Shadow of the Past

The Shire is full of gossip about Bilbo's disappearance and Gandalf's bad influence is blamed. Frodo inherits Bilbo's reputation for oddity. Several years pass and wanderlust grows in Frodo.

Rumors begin to reach the Shire of a Shadow growing in the East, and Gandalf returns looking careworn. He tells Frodo of the forging of the Rings of Power and reveals that the ring Frodo got from Bilbo is The One Ring forged by the Dark Lord Sauron to bind the Rings of Power and control the fate of all living things. Gandalf tells Frodo the history of The Ring and how it came to be in the possession of Gollum. Gollum had once been a hobbit-like creature called Sméagol who dwelt along a river, and The Ring was found in the river by his friend. The Ring exerted its evil influence over Sméagol and he killed his friend and took the ring. Bilbo, many hundreds of years later, came upon The Ring in Gollum's cave under the mountains. Gandalf is worried that Gollum has been to Mordor in search of The Ring, and thereby alerted the Dark Lord to the

existence of the hobbits, the Shire, and the finding of the Ring. He also informs Frodo that Bilbo is the only being in the history of the world to ever willingly part with a Ring of Power.

Frodo becomes afraid and offers The Ring to Gandalf. Gandalf refuses it and tells Frodo that if he wishes the world to be rid of the Ring and its evil influence than it must be cast into the Cracks of Doom in Mordor where it was forged. Frodo resolves to take The Ring and leave the Shire, for he fears that its presence will draw evil onto his friends and his home.

Sam Gamgee is discovered listening to this conversation, and it is decided, much to Sam's delight, that as punishment he will accompany Frodo when he leaves. Sam is warned to keep the whole affair a dead secret from all, and he promises to do just that.

Chapter 3: Three is Company

Frodo finds that in spite of his wanderlust he is very reluctant to leave the Shire; nevertheless, he is resolved to go and decides that he will head East to Rivendell and the house of Elrond Half Elven. Gandalf is called away from the Shire before Frodo leaves, and impresses upon him the necessity of proceeding according to the plan. He promises to return before the departure date or at least to send word before Frodo and Sam are to leave.

Frodo has bought a small house in Crickhollow as a cover for leaving Bag End, and he begins to move his things to the new house. Gandalf does not return or send word before the departure date; nevertheless Frodo sets out with his friend's Sam, Meriadoc (Merry) Brandybuck, Peregrin (Pippin) Took, and Fredegar (Fatty) Bolger. Merry and Fatty drive a cart to the new house, but Sam, Pippin, and Frodo elect to walk. Frodo desires to take a long last look at the Shire before he leaves.

On the road, Frodo begins to be uneasy, he learned before leaving Bag End that strange beings have been seeking someone by the name of Baggins, and it is making him very uncomfortable. He is so uneasy that he makes his friends hide from other travelers on the road. This turns out to be a wise decision because the hobbits soon find that they are being pursued by strange Black Riders on huge horses.

The hobbits are being chased by these Black Riders when they come upon a group of elves who shelter them for the night.

Chapter 4: A Shortcut to Mushrooms

Sam begins to develop a more thoughtful side to his character and the hobbits abandon the road in favor of the countryside in an effort to throw off pursuit. The little group becomes dreadfully lost and they begin to find themselves again, only to realize they are on land belonging to one Farmer Maggot from whom Frodo used to steal mushrooms as a small hobbit. They meet up with Farmer Maggot who tells them that a Black Rider has just been asking questions about them and offered him money for information on Baggins. Maggot feeds the hobbits, warns them against using the name of Baggins, and offers them a ride to Buckleberry Ferry.

On the way to the ferry, they meet with Merry who has set out to find them in his own little cart. They thank Farmer Maggot and join up with Merry.

Chapter 5: A Conspiracy Unmasked

Merry takes the hobbits to Frodo's new house in Crickhollow, and Frodo searches for the words to tell his friends that he has no intention of staying at his new house, as he is leaving the Shire altogether. He begins to

tell them only to find that Pippin, Merry, Sam, and Fatty already know all of his plans and intend to go with him on his quest.

Fatty elects to stay on in Frodo's new house impersonating him and diverting the questions of curious hobbits and strangers alike. He shows no fear of the Black Riders. Frodo's heart is warmed by the kindness of his friends

Chapter 6: The Old Forest

Frodo, Sam, Merry, and Pippin set out for the town of Bree and the Inn of the Prancing Pony where they are supposed to meet with Gandalf. Merry has purchased some ponies for them, and they set off happily only to find that the very forest seems to be against them. Trees block the path and the landscape seems to change before their eyes until they are thoroughly lost.

The hobbits are attacked by the trees and led astray by the Old Forest. Merry and Pippin are consumed by an old grey willow. The hobbits are rescued by an old, little singing man named Tom Bombadil, who forces the grey willow to relinquish Merry and Pippin, and takes them all home to supper.

Chapter 7: In the House of Tom Bombadil

At Tom Bombadil's house, the hobbits meet his wife Goldberry, daughter of the river, and she soothes their fears by with her calmness and hospitality.

The hobbits endure dark and disturbing dreams the first night in Tom and Goldberry's house, but the next day is spent in telling stories and singing songs, and they soon feel that they are able to go on.

The company spends two nights in the house of Tom Bombadil, and the hobbits learn that he is one of the Eldest who has been alive since the creation of the world.

Chapter 8: Fog on the Barrow-Downs

The hobbits leave the house of Tom Bombadil and become lost and separated in a fog. Frodo is taken captive by a Barrow Wight, and finds that both of his companions have also been captured and rendered unconscious. They are again saved and set on their path by the obliging Tom Bombadil.

Tom arms them with weapons from a Barrow Wight's treasure trove, and Frodo assumes the alias of Mr. Underhill which is the name he intends to use in Bree.

Chapter 9: At the Sign of the Prancing Pony

The hobbits arrive at the Inn of the Prancing Pony and are given rooms by the harried innkeeper, Barliman Butterbur. Pippin, Sam, and Frodo go to the inn's common room after dinner, but Merry says that he is not in the mood for company and may take a walk instead.

In the common room, Frodo notices a weather-beaten stranger staring at him, and Barliman tells him that the man is a Ranger called Strider. Frodo joins Strider at his table and Strider warns him not to let Sam and Pippin forget that there is danger around, as both of them have been talking too freely in the open.

Frodo tries to divert attention from the overly gregarious Sam and Pippin and inadvertently slips on The Ring and disappears. The clientele of the Prancing Pony are suspicious and leave the inn. Strider admonishes Frodo using the name Baggins – which Frodo did not give in Bree – and asks him for a private interview. Strider says that Frodo may learn something to his advantage by speaking privately with him.

Barliman runs through and tells Frodo that he's just remembered something quite important that he needs to tell him

Chapter 10: Strider

Strider meets Frodo, Sam, and Pippin in their room – Merry has gone out on his walk – and asks for a reward in exchange for information. He names his price as joining Frodo's party as their guide. Frodo decides to hear him out before deciding on this point.

Barliman Butterbur enters and sheepishly gives Frodo a letter from Gandalf which he had promised to deliver months ago. He promises to do whatever is in his power to help the hobbits in atonement for forgetting to send on the letter.

The letter advises Frodo to travel as quickly as possible to Rivendell and to trust Gandalf's friend Strider, whose real name is Aragorn, son of Arathorn. Frodo follows Gandalf's advice and takes Strider on as guide. Strider is worried over Gandalf's absence, and decides to take them to Rivendell by a cross-country route.

Merry comes back from his walk with a strange tale of Black Riders sniffing about Bree and the hobbits decide to sleep in the parlor leaving dummies made of clothing in their beds.

Chapter 11: A Knife in the Dark

There is an attack by Black Riders on Fatty Bolger at Frodo's house in Crickhollow. Fatty escapes, but the Riders ascertain that The Ring has left the Shire and they go thundering off in search of it.

In Bree, the hobbits wake to find that their beds were slashed and torn apart in the night. Barliman informs them that the stable doors were forced open and all of the livestock, including their ponies, were either stolen or fled.

Barliman feels so badly over the letter and the ponies that he buys them a pack pony at three times its value and they set out on foot from Bree with Strider leading the way. Strider takes them through a boggy marshland to the hill called Weathertop.

On Weathertop they find signs that Gandalf has been there recently and they are much heartened. Strider tells them the story of Beren and Lúthien, (called Tinúviel) a tragic story in which the fair Tinúviel eschews her immortality for the love of the human Beren. From those two sprung a race of kings that legend says will never fail.

During the night the party is attacked by five Black Riders and Frodo ignores the advice of both Gandalf and Strider by putting on The Ring in an attempt to escape. This action attracts the Black Riders – whom Frodo now sees as grey ghosts – and Frodo is wounded. Strider manages to drive off the five Black Riders before they can do any more damage.

Chapter 12: Flight to the Ford

Strider discovers that Frodo's wound is worse than it appears on the surface. The tip of the knife he was stabbed with broke off inside his shoulder and is poisoning him. The company redoubles their efforts to reach Rivendell, for Elrond is a famous healer and Strider has some hope that he will be able to save Frodo.

They become lost in Troll territory and are found by the Elf Lord Glorfindel who is a member of Elrond's house. Glorfindel warns them that the Nine (Black Riders) are close and they must make haste. The Elf Lord gives the injured Frodo his swift white horse and when the Black Riders draw near he sends the pair speeding for Rivendell.

Glorfindel's horse outpaces those of the Black Riders and Frodo is brought safe across the river that marks the boarder of Elrond's holdings. When the Nine Black Riders attempt to cross the water, the river rises up and sweeps them away. Frodo loses consciousness and knows no more.

Book II

Chapter 1: Many Meetings

Frodo wakes to find himself in Gandalf's company at the house of Elrond. He has been sleeping for several days, and Elrond has worked healing magic on his injury.

Gandalf tells Frodo that he was being held captive and that is why he was unable to join them on the road. He also tells Frodo that the Black Riders are nine men made ringwraiths in ages past by the Rings of Power, and they are now bound to serve Sauron.

Frodo meets Elrond and his famed daughter Arwen, and learns that Strider is the heir of the race of kings. He feasts with the elves and their many guests and manages to forget his troubles for a while. Frodo finds Bilbo in residence and they both take great joy in their reunion.

Chapter 2: The Council of Elrond

Elrond calls a council to discuss The Ring with representatives from all of the major races on Middle Earth. The Dwarves tell a tale of having been approached by servants of Sauron seeking alliance and The Ring. Elrond recounts for all the saga of The Ring beginning with its forging.

The man Boromir, eldest son of the Steward of Gondor, tells how that city and the city of Minas Tirith struggle to remain free of the Shadows. He also tells of a vision that brought him to Rivendell seeking answers. Strider reveals himself as the bearer of the broken sword from Boromir's vision and the heir of Isildor.

Gandalf reveals the treachery of Saruman the White, the highest member of the wizard's order, who kept him hostage for refusing to join forces with the Dark Lord. He tells of being rescued by Gwaihir Windlord, king of the eagles. Gwaihir brought him into Rohan, the land of horses, and out of Rohan he rode Shadowfax, the swiftest horse ever foaled.

The council decides that there is no way to safely hold or hide the Ring and that it must be taken to Mordor and destroyed. Bilbo volunteers to take The Ring to Mordor, but the council declines his offer and the task falls to Frodo.

Chapter 3: The Ring Goes South

The hobbits spend time in Rivendell recovering from their journey while Elrond scouts the movement of the Enemy. Elrond tells Frodo and Sam that he will choose seven companions for them on their quest which will make nine to match the Nine Black Riders. Aragorn's sword is forged anew and Bilbo gives Frodo his old sword, Sting, and a coat of dwarf-made mail.

Elrond chooses Gandalf as the leader of the Fellowship, Aragorn as his second, Boromir to represent the race of men, Gimli for the dwarves, and Legolas for the elves. Merry and Pippin – with Gandalf's support – insist on being made a part of the Fellowship. The nine companions set off from Rivendell going east toward Minas Tirith and Mordor.

They head for the Redhorn Gate through the Misty Mountains; as they begin to climb the slopes of Caradhras, snow falls thick and fast. Snow quickly becomes a blizzard, which in turn becomes falling rocks, and the Fellowship is forced to a halt.

They are foiled by the mountain as Boromir and Aragorn struggle through the chest-high snow to make a path back down the mountain. The two men end up carrying the poor little hobbits in turn down from the heights.

Chapter 4: A Journey on the Dark

It is decided that if they cannot go over the mountains then they will go under them through the ancient holdings of the dwarves called the mined of Moria. Moria was abandoned by the dwarves in ancient days because of a great evil that awoke in the bowels of the earth. They decide to seek the gates of Moria.

The company is set on by wolves in the night, and Gandalf keeps them at bay with fire. The company makes haste towards the gates of Moria. At the gates Gandalf struggles to remember the password that will open the door, and Gimli hopes to learn what became of his cousin, Balin, who took a group of dwarves to reclaim Moria decades ago and has not been heard from in some time. Sam is forced to say goodbye to Bill the pony, and Frodo is apprehensive about the pool of dark water that lies before the gate.

Out of that pool rises a many-legged monster which attacks Frodo just as Gandalf manages to open the doors. Sam saves Frodo and they flee into the dark of Moria.

Moria's interminable darkness dispirits the travelers and Frodo begins to think that they are being followed by something. At length, Gimli comes upon a stone which reads, Balin son of Fundin, Lord of Moria, and he knows that the stone marks the burial place of his cousin.

Chapter 5: The Bridge of Khazad-Dûm

The Fellowship finds the record book of Balin's colonists and learns that they fought many battles against Orcs and Trolls for the rule of Moria before they were finally wiped out. They are ambushed while in the record room and Frodo takes a powerful spear thrust from a Cave-Troll. They manage to escape the ambush and reach the last stage of their journey through Moria; the bridge of Khazad-Dûm. At the bridge, they are faced by the demon that drove the dwarves from Moria, a Balrog. Gandalf herds them onto the bridge and turns to face the fire demon that he throws into the pit of Khazad-Dûm. The Balrog pulls Gandalf with him into the pit, and the rest of the Fellowship stumbles out of Moria into the Dimrill dale and the light of day. Gandalf is gone.

Chapter 6: Lothlórien

The party wends its weary way out of the Dimrill Dale toward Lothlórien, and Frodo again thinks he hears a follower. On the outskirts of the Elven land of Lórien, they meet Haldir, an elf of that land, and he offers them food and a safe place to sleep which they gladly accept. Haldir and his brothers draw away the Orcs who have been hunting the Fellowship since they left Moria, and Frodo gets a peek at the thing that has been following them. In the morning, Haldir leads them into Lothlórien.

Chapter 7: The Mirror of Galadriel

The company is presented to Lord Celeborn and Lady Galadriel who rule Lothlórien. Gimli – who is a dwarf and therefore a traditional enemy of the elves of Lothlórien – is moved by Galadriel's great beauty. Aragorn tells the elves of their journey through Moria and the loss of Gandalf, whom the elves mourn bitterly.

The lady Galadriel invites Frodo and Sam to look into her mirror made of blessed water which reflects the past, the present and possible futures. Frodo sees many disjointed visions, and finally a huge eye ringed in fire searching for him. Galadriel breaks her spell and tells Frodo that the eye also searches for her because she wears a Ring of Power. Frodo offers the Ring to Galadriel, but she resists the temptation to take it.

Chapter 8: Farewell to Lórien

They depart Lórien in boats given to them by Celeborn, bearing supplies that were gifts of the elves, and each individual has been given a gift by Galadriel. She gives Merry and Pippin silver belts with gold clasps shaped like flowers. Aragorn receives a sheath for his newly-forged sword; Boromir is given a belt of gold. Legolas receives a bow; Sam gets a box of earth from Galadriel's own garden. Frodo gets a phial containing the light of Eärendil, and Gimli asks the Lady for a hair from her head. She gives him three hairs.

Chapter 9: The Great River

Sam spots the thing that Frodo has noticed following them and tells Frodo that he thinks it might be Gollum looking for The Ring. Frodo speaks to Aragorn and he confirms Sam's guess. They also become aware that they are being tracked along the river bank by a company of Orcs.

Chapter 10: The Breaking of the Fellowship

They make camp on the west side of the river and discuss their options. Boromir and Aragorn must head toward Minas Tirith, and Frodo can choose to go with them or to head on to Mordor.

Frodo seeks out solitude in order to make his decision; Boromir joins him and begins to talk of The Ring and how useful it could be as a weapon for Gondor. Frodo becomes increasingly more uneasy as Boromir warms to his subject. Finally, Boromir asks Frodo to borrow The Ring and Frodo refuses. Boromir becomes angry and tries to take The Ring by force; Frodo puts on The Ring and eludes him. Boromir is at once filled with remorse for his actions and tries to apologize, but Frodo is already gone.

Frodo decides to take The Ring to Mordor alone, but Sam anticipates him and insists on going with him. So Frodo and Sam set out for Mordor alone and the Fellowship is broken.