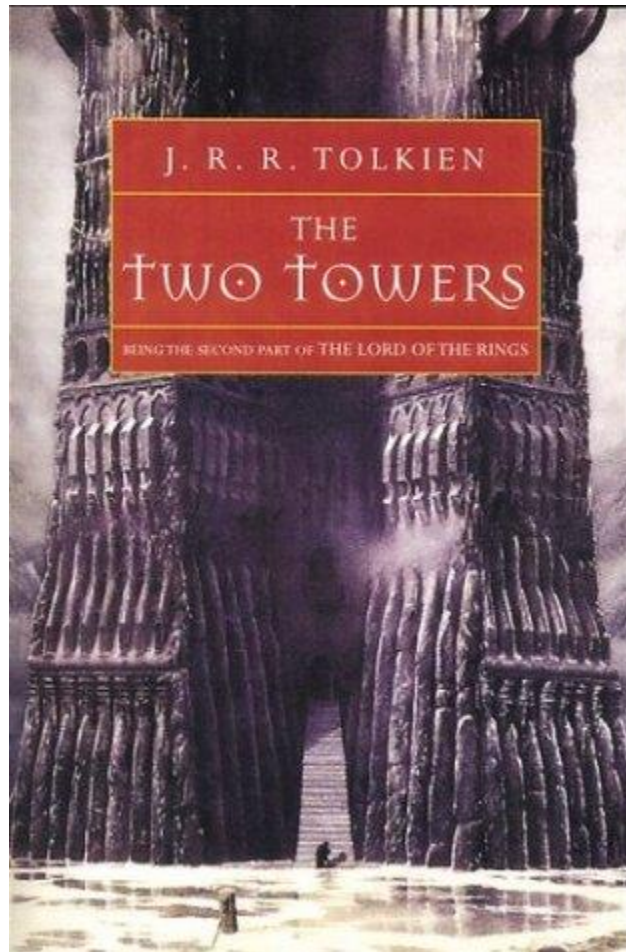


A Summary of *The Lord of the Rings Trilogy Part II The Two Towers* by J.R.R. Tolkien



A Summary of The Lord of the Rings Trilogy Part II The Two Towers

New York: Ballantine Books, 1965

ISBN: 345-24828-7-175

Summary by M. M. Piotrowski, written exclusively for The Goldhead Group, Ltd

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

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 taking The Ring to Mordor to be destroyed along with his friend and gardener, Sam. The wizard Gandalf returns and musters an army to stand against the Dark Lord Sauron. Gimli the dwarf, Legolas the elf, Aragorn the ranger, and Merry and Pippin, the hobbits, cover ground all over Middle Earth aiding Gandalf and helping to destroy Sauron's ally, Saruman the wizard.

Frodo and Sam are nearing the end of their journey, and Middle-Earth is girding itself for a war that will determine the lives of every creature on it for ages to come. Each race and each individual is faced with the choice of allowing evil to take hold or fighting against it even though it seems hopeless. Gandalf and his companions manage to bring good faith to many of Middle-Earth's people, but they must now try to recruit the great city of Gondor to their side, and Frodo has been taken captive by Orcs in the citadel of the enemy imperiling his crucial task of the destruction of The Ring.

Book III

Chapter 1: The Departure of Boromir

Aragorn realizes that Frodo has been gone for some time and begins to search for him, but instead of finding a hobbit, he finds a pack of Orcs. He hears the Horn of Gondor sounded and knows that Boromir is in need. Aragorn rushes towards the sound and finds Boromir dying. The great warrior of men is leaning against a tree, his body full of Orc arrows surrounded by dead Orcs. Boromir tells Aragorn of his attempt to take The Ring from Frodo and of his great remorse. Aragorn learns from the dying man that the Orcs took Merry and Pippin...and Boromir breaths his last.

Legolas and Gimli come upon Aragorn weeping over the body of their fallen companion. The three companions clean Boromir and lay him in one of the elven boats with his sword and the weapons of the enemies he killed. Among the dead Orcs they find some goblin-like creatures marked with a white hand and an S rune. They surmise that these are the creatures of Saruman the traitor wizard. When they push Boromir's

body out onto the river, Aragorn finds evidence that Sam and Frodo escaped the Orc attack and left by boat. At length, he decides that Frodo and Sam are not in need of immediate assistance and decides to go after Merry and Pippin. Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli set out to hunt Orcs.

Chapter 2: The Riders of Rohan

They come upon the bodies of some more dead Orcs and realize that they are not the only beings out hunting down evil. At length, they come onto the open plains of Rohan and Aragorn finds Pippin's footprints and the broach given to him by the elves. This find puts heart into the hunters as they are hot on the heels of the Orcs.

The hunters decide that they must take a short rest, and upon waking, Aragorn finds that the trail has gone cold for the Orcs; nevertheless, they proceed ahead. As they run over the fields of Rohan, Legolas catches sight of a group of riders approaching in the distance. Presently, the horsemen are upon them and challenge them. They give their names and learn that they are in the presence of Éomer the third Marshall of the Mark. Éomer tells them that he and his men have just come from massacring the Orc party, and that they found no hobbits among them.

Aragorn tell Éomer of the fall of Boromir and the Marshall is struck deeply with grief for the brave son of Gondor. He lends Aragorn, Gimli, and Legolas two horses to speed them in their search and bids them return the steeds when they have found the hobbits.

The three friends ride to the scene of the battle and search for signs of the hobbits. The battle took place on the edge of Fangorn forest, the oldest wood in Middle-Earth. They are not immediately able to find any evidence of the two hobbits, but that night Gimli catches a glimpse of an old, hooded man who is leaning on a staff. He guesses that he has seen the evil wizard Saruman, and the horses break their pickets and flee. Aragorn believes that Gimli is correct in his identification of the old man and keeps a close watch over his sleeping companions

Chapter 3: The Uruk-Hai

The scene shifts to Merry and Pippin in the clutches of the Orcs. Pippin recalls coming upon Orcs in the woods around their camp; he and Merry bravely attacked the creatures who seemed less interested in fighting than in capturing them. Boromir came upon the skirmish and fought like a hero and a madman to protect the hobbits, but they were taken in the end. Now Pippin is bound and has been hit on the head; he sees Merry bound and unconscious next to him. Pippin overhears that the Orcs have been ordered not to kill or maim them, but to bring them unharmed to Isengard for Saruman.

In order to leave some sign of his presence, Pippin breaks free for a moment and runs wide of the trail the Orcs are beating. He throws down his broach as a further clue. The Orcs recapture him and begin to bicker and fight among themselves. Some wish to follow orders, and some wish to eat the two hobbits. The Orcs begin to quicken their pace when they realize they are being pursued by the Riders of Rohan.

The men of Rohan come upon them on the borders of Fangorn and the hobbits are set aside under guard for the battle. The men Riders of Rohan kill the guards, but do not see Merry and Pippin; the two hobbits manage to free themselves of their bonds and flee into Fangorn.

Chapter 4: Treebeard

Merry and Pippin feel stifled by the great age of the forest, and they continue with caution. Suddenly the hobbits are told to turn around by a strange voice and when they do they are confronted by an even stranger being. He is a tall old man-tree who says that he is an Ent called Treebeard, and he wishes to know what they

are doing in his forest. They tell him some of their story and of the loss of Gandalf. Treebeard knows Gandalf and is struck speechless by the news of his loss.

The Ent takes them to one of his homes deep in the forest, and on the way he tells them of the race of Ents who are one of the oldest races in Middle-Earth. When they arrive at Treebeard's house, he gives them a drink and bids them to tell their tale. The hobbits tell as much as they may without revealing The Ring or Frodo's mission. When they tell him of Hobbiton and the Shire, Treebeard asks them if they have ever seen any Ent-like creatures there; the hobbits find this a very odd question.

Their story gets Treebeard thinking of the wizard Saruman and he becomes very angry. He thinks of all of the trees that the wizard has destroyed, many of whom were his friends, and he decides that something must be done about it. The Ent laments that there are not more Ents to look to the business of Isengard, and Merry asks him there are not many of them. Treebeard tells them that long ago they lost the Entwives and have not been able to find them so their race has dwindled.

After they rest, Treebeard takes them off to a council of the Ents called an Entmoot to discuss what is best to be done about Saruman and the pollution of Isengard. The Ents are a slow and purposeful people and they take three days to decide what is to be done, but when they do they are off immediately to retake Isengard and destroy Saruman.

Chapter 5: The White Rider

Meanwhile, Gimli, Aragorn, and Legolas are still troubled over the old man that Gimli saw in the night. Aragorn finds signs of the hobbits and the three track the hobbits to Fangorn there they all three see the old man, and Gimli urges Legolas to shoot him before he can speak and ensnare them. Legolas stays his bow, and the old man makes his way towards them.

Aragorn asks the old man his name, but he does not answer instead asking for their tale and beginning to speak of hobbits. Legolas leaps with joy shouting "Mithrandir" and Aragorn recognizes Gandalf whom they all thought dead. Gimli is overwhelmed with joy, and tells Gandalf of all of their adventures since leaving Moria. Gandalf tells them he believes that Sauron has not guessed of their intent to destroy The Ring and will therefore not think to look for Sam and Frodo in his own land. He also brings news that the Nazgûl ride again this time as Black Flyers, for their mounts have wings.

The wizard tells them of the Ents and Treebeard and his guess that the two hobbits stirred them up with their story. He tells them that they must all now be off to the halls of Edoras in Rohan.

Gimli asks Gandalf about his battle in Moria and Gandalf tells them some part of that story. The wizard whistles, and Shadowfax, prince of horses, answers him bringing the two horses that Éomer lent the party and they ride for Edoras.

Chapter 6: The King of the Golden Hall

Gandalf pushes the group to ride hard and by dawn of the second day Legolas catches sight of the golden roof of King Théoden's mead hall Meduseld. When the company approaches the king's hall they are waylaid by a guard who tells them that he is under orders from the king's councilor Gríma Wormtongue, not to allow any strangers into the courts. The company gives their names and tells of their errand to return the horses lent to them by Éomer. The guard bids them enter but leave all weapons, including staves, behind. The door warden asks Gandalf to leave his staff along with his sword, but Gandalf pleads on account of his age and the warden relents.

They come into the hall of Théoden and find an ancient corpse-like man on the throne attended by a beautiful young woman and the advisor, Wormtongue. Gríma Wormtongue speaks to the king saying that Gandalf is a trouble maker and should be sent from the hall. Gandalf becomes annoyed with Wormtongue and bids him hold his peace. The wizard then unleashes the power of his staff and calls to the King. Théoden rises from his throne as if from a dream shedding age with every step until he is a middle-aged warrior once more.

The young woman attending him, his niece Éowyn, looks at Aragorn and his friends with wonder and gratitude before leaving the hall. Gandalf tells Théoden of the events that have taken place in the outside world while he was under the influence of Gríma, and Théoden calls for his nephew Éomer whom he has wrongly imprisoned on Gríma's advice. Gandalf urges Théoden to lead his people to safety in their mountain fortress of Helm's deep and Théoden agrees to do this...after he has cleared his land of the taint of Saruman.

Gríma Wormtongue, who is found to be in the pay of Saruman, flees Théoden's halls, and Théoden gives Gandalf Shadowfax as a token of thanks. Théoden leaves his hall to ride to battle against Saruman and puts his people in the care of his niece Éowyn.

Chapter 7: Helm's Deep

The Rohirrim follow their king to Isengard where many of their number have been fighting the advance of Saruman's hordes. They are met by a lone horseman who tells them that the battle is lost and the Riders of Rohan have fled to Helm's Deep. Théoden turns to join his men at this fortress while Gandalf rides alone on an errand to Isengard. Gimli, Legolas, and Aragorn ride with Théoden King.

Théoden receives news of a great force mustering at Isengard to destroy and seize the lands of Rohan. The Rohirrim are attacked by a host of Orcs in Helm's Deep. The evil army breaches the first wall of Helm's Deep through a culvert, and Gimli is called upon to exercise his dwarfly prowess in blocking the breach. The battle rages fiercely through the night, and it does not look hopeful for the men of Rohan. Théoden resolves to make a dawn charge from the gates of his fortress and Aragorn vows to ride with the king even if it means his death.

At dawn the great horn of Helm's Deep is sounded and Théoden charges forth to slay his enemies with Isildur's heir at his side. The king's charge is matched by the returning Gandalf who has gathered the scattered soldiers of Rohan and the living trees of Fangorn forest. The enemy flees in terror of Gandalf the White Rider...right into the trees, from whence they never return.

Chapter 8: The Road to Isengard

After the battle for Helm's Deep is won, Gandalf leads a small party to Isengard to speak with the wizard Saruman. Théoden, with a small company of his men, Gimli, Aragorn, and Legolas rides with Gandalf. As they near Isengard, they catch sight of the Ents like great avenging trees moving about the ruined city. The closer they draw to Isengard the more polluted the land becomes and they mourn for beauty befouled by the hands of evil.

At length, the travelers come to the great tower of Isengard called Orthanc; there they find two hobbits smoking their pipes amidst the remains of a very fine meal. Merry informs Éomer that Treebeard has taken Isengard and made Merry and Pippin gate wardens. Legolas and Gimli are astonished to find the two missing hobbits at last and they are both grateful for their safety and amazed by their resilience. The hobbits direct Gandalf to Treebeard who is awaiting him Legolas. Aragorn and Gimli sit down to talk to their long-lost friends.

Chapter 9: Flotsam and Jetsam

Merry and Pippin tell their friends of their adventures and of the destruction of Isengard and besieging of Saruman in his tower at the hands of the Ents. They tell how the Ents flooded Isengard by redirecting the river Isen, and of Gríma Wormtongue's arrival and admission into the tower of Orthanc. In all of this, Aragorn finds that he most wonders at how pipeweed from the Shire came to be in Isengard, for Merry and Pippin found two barrels of Longbottom Leaf, the best tobacco in the Shire, in Saruman's stores. Aragorn resolves to tell Gandalf about this and see what he will make of it.

Chapter 10: The Voice of Saruman

Gandalf and Treebeard join the hobbits and their friends at the base of the tower of Orthanc, and Gandalf bids Saruman come out and speak to them. Instead, Saruman elects to speak to them from a high balcony. The voice of Saruman is a powerful and dangerous thing that can bewitch the senses and Gandalf warns all to be wary of it. Saruman first tries the voice on Théoden, who refuses to answer, the wizard tries again and Théoden finds his own voice and scorns Saruman's false offers of peace and help.

Saruman then tries his voice on Gandalf and is soundly rebuffed. Gandalf offers him amnesty if he will leave Orthanc and join the cause of right, but he refuses and Gandalf breaks his staff and casts him from the White Council. At this, Gríma hurls a crystal ball at Gandalf through the tower window, but it misses the mark and comes to rest in the flood waters.

Treebeard says a sad goodbye to the hobbits with whom he has become fast friends, and asks them to send word if they see any sign of the Entwives in the Shire. The hobbits promise that they will report any Ent-like creatures, and the Ents promise to keep watch over Saruman and Gríma in Orthanc.

Chapter 11: The Palantír

Pippin seems oddly restless when the party makes camp that night, and Merry finds that he had picked up the orb that Wormtongue threw from the tower. Gandalf confiscated the crystal ball and Pippin yearns to look into it. While the White wizard is sleeping, Pippin steals the orb from him and gazes into it; he becomes unable to look away and Gandalf rescues him from its grip. Pippin tells Gandalf of what he saw; he confesses that he was seen and questioned by the Dark Lord Sauron.

Aragorn hears of Pippin's misadventure and identifies the orb as a Palantír. Then, to everyone's surprise, he tells Gandalf that he will take the orb now, and Gandalf hands it over. Gandalf takes Pippin up on Shadowfax and rides on ahead of the party. He explains to Pippin that the Dark Lord mistook him for the Ring bearer and will now be after him personally. Pippin is very brave and is happy to draw the Evil eye from Frodo and Sam.

Book IV

Chapter 1: The Taming of Sméagol

Frodo and Sam make their way toward Mordor through fog and gloom. They stand on a cliff overlooking a stinking bog looking for a way to climb down. Sam's elven rope comes in handy, but as they descend, Sam sees Gollum climbing down the cliff after them. Sam ambushes the little creature, and with Frodo's help, subdues him. Frodo knows that Gollum has made the journey into Mordor before and makes him their guide. Gollum swears by The Ring that he will not harm Frodo and will be good.

Chapter 2: The Passage of the Marshes

Sméagol, Gollum's proper title, leads them into the marshes by night. Sam is completely mistrustful of him and he thinks that Frodo is too soft-hearted when it comes to Gollum. Sam keeps watch over Frodo while he sleeps and will not allow Gollum to be alone with him. They arrive at the heart of the swamp; Sméagol leads them around the worst of it and ever closer to Mordor. Frodo sees dead faces in the waters of the marsh and Sméagol tells him that the marshes were once the field of battle upon which the first war for The Ring was fought long ages ago. He tells them that they are called the Dead Marshes.

They make their tedious and perilous way through the Dead Marshes by night with the Nazgûl flying overhead. Sam overhears Sméagol talking to himself and realizes that he is a split being. Part of him is Sméagol the hobbit, who genuinely fond of Frodo, and the other part of him is Gollum, who is riddled with the evil and malice of The Ring. Nevertheless, Sméagol leads them safely through the great stinking bog and towards the Black Gate of Mordor.

Chapter 3: The Black Gate is Closed

Gollum leads them to The Gate, but they find that there is no way they could pass through it undetected, and their guide tells them that he knows another more secret way. Frodo agrees to let Sméagol take them his way into the stronghold of the enemy. Gollum tells them of some of the perils of his alternate route, but the hobbits see no other option if their task is to be accomplished. They must place their trust and their chances of success in Sméagol.

Chapter 4: Of Herbs and Stewed Rabbit

They continue their weary trek through the dead land, every day draining their hope and determination. Sam asks Gollum to help him find the ingredients to make a nice stew for Frodo, and the little creature does so well that Sam warms up to him slightly. Frodo is delighted at having a hot meal, but when Sam goes to the river to wash up he hears whistling and reports it to Frodo. The hobbits hear the voices of men and hide in the brush only to be discovered by four large men who remind Frodo of Boromir.

The leader of the group introduces himself as captain Faramir of Gondor and demands to know their business. Frodo tells as much as he can without revealing the existence of The Ring. He tells of Aragorn and the re-forging of Isildur's sword. Faramir is awed and amazed but he has no time for them at the moment as he is trying to prevent Sauron from gaining more supporters by attacking men who are on their way to join him. He leaves the hobbits under guard as he goes to join battle with some men from the South. Sam and Frodo witness the skirmish in which Faramir's troops destroy the Southern men depriving the Dark Lord of at least some of his resources

Chapter 5: The Window on the West

Faramir returns from the battle and questions Frodo intensely looking for news of Boromir and of Isildur's Bane, the name by which the men of Gondor know The Ring. Faramir tells Frodo of the death of Boromir; Frodo and Sam are deeply hurt by this news, but wonder how Faramir came by it. Faramir reveals that he is Boromir's younger brother and was visited by a vision of his brother dead and at peace. Faramir brings the hobbits to his secret camp, and Frodo is uneasy about Gollum for Faramir tells them that it is death to be caught at his camp uninvited.

The hobbits exchange stories with Faramir at his camp, and Sam becomes so charmed by the gracious warrior that he lets slip news of The Ring and of Boromir's longing for it. Faramir guesses that Boromir tried to take

The Ring by force and that The Ring is carried by the two hobbits. Faramir passes this test of his will by allowing Frodo to keep his burden rather than taking it for himself.

Chapter 6: The Forbidden Pool

Faramir wakes Frodo during the night while everyone else is still sleeping and takes him outside. He shows Frodo that Gollum has found his way to the secret camp and is fishing in a pool. Frodo begs for Gollum's life and Faramir grants it after Gollum swears on the Ring that he will never return to the camp nor tell anyone of it. Faramir grants the hobbits their freedom and his protection, but when he learns of the path they plan to take, he advises them to stay away from it at all costs. The hobbits thank him for his advice and his hospitality and take their leave.

Chapter 7: Journey to the Cross-Roads

Faramir gives Sam and Frodo food, clothing, and walking staves as parting gifts, and they depart led by Gollum. They move behind Gollum with growing unease sleeping by day and traveling by night. Gollum keeps assuring them that they must go to the cross-roads, and they follow him obediently. When they reach the cross-roads they find a great stone figure of a king which the Orcs have decapitated, but Frodo sees the statue's head on the ground wreathed with flowers and takes heart.

Chapter 8: The Stairs of Cirith Ungol

The two worn down hobbits follow the course that Gollum sets for them, and witness the great hordes of Mordor riding out to battle. Their hearts are heavy at the thought of their friends facing such vast armies of evil, but they continue on determined to complete their mission. Gollum leads them to a stair that climbs the face of a mountain, and they spend days ascending its dizzy heights until they come to the mouth of a foul-smelling cave.

Chapter 9: Shelob's Lair

They enter the cave and are consumed by utter blackness and an oppressive feeling of evil. They soon realize that the cave is man-made because the walls and floor are even and smooth. They are in a corridor on the outer reaches of Sauron's stronghold, and passages open off to the sides. Frodo stumbles into one of these passages and is enveloped by a disgusting reek until Sam manages to pull him back into the main tunnel. They realize that Gollum is no longer with them and they hear a terrifying hiss behind them. Frodo remembers the gift given to him by Galadriel and uncorks the phial filling the tunnel with light.

The light reveals huge eyes watching and following them. Frodo draws his sword and advances on the monster; to his amazement the monster retreats before him. They soon discover the nature of the creature for as it retreated it spun a web imprisoning them in the passage. Frodo manages to hack through the web and he and Sam sprint towards freedom. Frodo pulls ahead of Sam and Sam sees the spider come at Frodo from a side passage. He yells to Frodo, but his cry is cut short by a slimy hand. Gollum has returned and attacks Sam, Sam beats him off with his walking staff and he flees into the darkness.

Chapter 10: The Choices of Master Samwise

Sam runs to Frodo's aid and attacks the huge spider. She comes at Sam wounded and enraged by his attack. Sam takes out the phial of Galadriel and Shelob the spider slinks away defeated. Sam hurries to Frodo's side and desperately tries to wake him, but his friend shows no sign of life. Sam realizes that his companion and

friend is dead, and he is consumed by black despair. When he comes back to himself, Sam realizes that their mission is still undone and he takes the ring and Frodo's sword. He arranges Frodo's body as best he may and continues down the dark tunnel into the heart of Mordor.

After a time, he begins to hear the voices of Orcs and knows that he is nearing the journey's end. The voices become clearer and Sam realizes that they are discussing Frodo's body and how it came to be where it was. He hears them talking about the spider Shelob and realizes that Frodo is not in fact dead, but poisoned by her and will awake in a few hours. Frodo is alive and in the hands of the enemy.