

# THE LORD OF THE RINGS

by J.R.R. Tolkien



## THE AUTHOR

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (1892-1973) was born to English Baptist parents in Bloemfontein, Orange Free State (now part of South Africa), where his father was a banker. His father died in Africa when Tolkien was four years old; his mother converted to Catholicism in 1900, but died four years later. He and his brother then came under the care of Father Francis Morgan, a family friend in Birmingham and a Catholic priest, who saw to their education. As a young man he was fascinated with languages and attempted to formulate a language of his own. At Oxford he studied English Language and Literature with a special emphasis on philology. These studies laid the foundation for the languages he invented for the various creatures of Middle-earth in his fantasy works.

After seeing combat in World War I, Tolkien returned to Oxford to teach (1925-1959), and in this context began the writing for which he was to become famous. He began compiling tales of the fictional Middle-earth, drawn heavily from Anglo-Saxon and Norse mythology. These stories were not published at this time, but eventually were incorporated into *The Silmarillion* (1977), compiled and published posthumously by his son Christopher. His first published work was *The Hobbit* (1936), which was essentially a children's story. It was so well-received that he followed it up with *The Lord of the Rings* (completed in 1949, published in 1954-5), a trilogy consisting of *The Fellowship of the Ring*, *The Two Towers*, and *The Return of the King*. He also produced a definitive edition of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, a translation of *Beowulf* that was completed in 1926 but finally published by his son in 2014, and even translated the book of Jonah for the *Jerusalem Bible* (1966). Throughout most of his creative years he was part of an informal group of writers in Oxford known as the Inklings, the most notable of whom were C.S. Lewis (in whose conversion to Christianity Tolkien played a part), Charles Williams, and Owen Barfield. The fame he gained as a result of his books became a burden to him, especially the extent to which his books were adopted and misused by the members of the 1960s counterculture.

*The Lord of the Rings* (1936-1949) represents Tolkien's attempt to tell a story on an epic scale. At the time, fantasy writing had largely gone out of style, but the trilogy revived the genre and has since spawned many imitators. While interpreters of *The Lord of the Rings* have seen in it allegories of everything from the Christian Gospel to the story of World War II and the fight of the

Allies against the tyranny of Nazi Germany and some have claimed to see an environmental, anti-industrial subtext, Tolkien himself disavowed any such intentions, though he did admit that the trilogy “is of course a fundamentally religious and Catholic work; unconsciously so at first, but consciously in the revision.” In any work of literature where the author invents a new world out of whole cloth, however, the worldview of the author will always be reflected in the world he creates. Thus we should not be surprised that a Christian writer like Tolkien would incorporate many aspects of the Christian view of human nature, human life, and the ultimate triumph of good over evil.

## **MAJOR CHARACTERS**

- Frodo Baggins - The young nephew of Bilbo Baggins, the protagonist of *The Hobbit*, is entrusted with the responsibility of transporting the One Ring of Power to the Cracks of Doom where it was forged and destroying it.
- Bilbo Baggins - This elderly hobbit entrusts the Ring to Frodo before traveling to Rivendell, where he continues to write his memoirs.
- Gandalf the Grey - A wizard who is part of the Fellowship of the Ring, he dies in combat with the Balrog, but returns as the more powerful Gandalf the White to assist his fellow-travelers.
- Sam Gamgee - Frodo’s gardener, closest friend and faithful companion in his adventures.
- Peregrin (Pippin) Took - A young hobbit who joins Frodo as part of the Fellowship of the Ring, he later becomes a knight of Gondor.
- Meriadoc (Merry) Brandybuck - A young hobbit who joins Frodo as part of the Fellowship of the Ring, he goes on to become a warrior of Rohan.
- Tom Bombadil - A little old man who saves Frodo and his friends in the Old Forest and invites them to his home. He is older than all other creatures and lives with Goldberry, the lovely daughter of the River.
- Aragorn, Son of Arathorn (Strider) - A Ranger who is in reality the rightful King of Gondor, he joins the hobbits at Bree and becomes part of the Fellowship of the Ring. By the end of the story he has assumed the throne that is rightfully his.
- Elrond Halfelven - The elf lord who rules in Rivendell.
- Arwen Evenstar - The beautiful daughter of Elrond who loves Aragorn. The two marry after Aragorn ascends the throne of Gondor, though this requires that she give up her immortality.
- Gimli - The son of Gloin, a dwarf who had accompanied Bilbo on his adventure, he becomes one of the Fellowship of the Ring.

- Legolas - An elf from Mirkwood and an expert archer, he joins the Fellowship of the Ring. He and Gimli become fast friends despite the natural animosity of their peoples.
- Boromir - The eldest son of the Steward of Gondor, he joins the Fellowship of the Ring but later is slain by orcs after trying to steal the Ring for himself.
- Sauron - The Dark Lord who seeks control of the One Ring of Power is the novel's title character; his headquarters are in the Dark Tower of Barad-dûr in Mordor.
- Saruman the White - The head of the Wizards' Council and lord of Isengard, his pride gets the better of him and he becomes an ally of Sauron. He is brought down by the Ents and finally killed by his lackey Wormtongue.
- Galadriel - The Lady who rules the elves of Lothlórien.
- Gollum (Sméagol) - A small, slimy creature who has been warped by possessing the Ring for many years, he pursues Frodo throughout his travels in an attempt to retrieve the Ring. At the end of the story he seizes the Ring by biting off Frodo's finger, but he and it then fall into the Cracks of Doom, destroying both forever.
- Treebeard - An Ent from Fangorn Forest, he and his fellow tree-men destroy Isengard and imprison Saruman in the tower of Orthanc.
- Théoden - The king of Rohan who has fallen under the spell of Saruman through the agency of his evil adviser Wormtongue. When Gandalf delivers him from the spell, he joins the war against Sauron and dies heroically in battle.
- Éomer - Nephew of Théoden and Marshall of the Third Mark of Rohan, he succeeds his uncle as king.
- Éowyn - Niece of Théoden who falls in love with Aragorn, kills the Captain of the Ringwraiths on the field of battle, and in the end marries Faramir.
- Gríma Wormtongue - The evil adviser of Théoden who puts him under a spell in order to control him and the realm, he is in reality the servant of Saruman, whom he eventually kills, after which he is himself shot down.
- Faramir - Boromir's younger brother, the Captain of the hosts of Gondor, he is saved from death by Beregond and Pippin and succeeds his father as Steward.
- Denethor - The Steward of Gondor, he is the father of Boromir and Faramir. He commits suicide in despair over the imminent fall of Gondor.
- Beregond - Guardsman of Minas Tirith who befriends Pippin and later saves Faramir from death at the hands of his insane father.

## **PLOT SUMMARY**

### **PART ONE - THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING**

#### PROLOGUE

The author begins by summarizing something of the history of hobbits and the adventures of Bilbo Baggins as recorded in his book, *There and Back Again* (known to us as *The Hobbit*). The events of the trilogy begin sixty years after Bilbo's return.

#### BOOK I

##### Chapter 1 - A Long-Expected Party

The story begins as Bilbo Baggins prepares to celebrate his eleventy-first (111<sup>th</sup>) birthday with a great party in the Shire. Bilbo returned from his adventure with Smaug the dragon fabulously wealthy and possessing an unusual measure of health; he seems not to have aged a day in the sixty years since his incredible journey. Twelve years earlier he had adopted his young cousin Frodo as his heir; the two share the same birthday (September 22), and on the same day that Bilbo turns 111, Frodo reaches 33, the age of adulthood. The denizens of Hobbiton consider Bilbo eccentric because he largely keeps to himself, often visit the elves, and has dwarves and a mysterious wizard named Gandalf into his house at Bag End on occasion.

As the day for the party approaches, dwarves indeed begin to arrive, and Gandalf drives into town with a wagon load of fireworks. Gandalf and Bilbo discuss the latter's secret plan in Bilbo's parlor. In the days that follow, wagon-loads of food and other supplies arrive and pavilions are set up in an open field. Invitations go out to all in the surrounding region. When the day comes the celebrants arrive and all enjoy the food and festivities, capped off at the end of the day by Gandalf's fireworks display. After supper, Bilbo gives the expected speech, at the end of which he vanishes into thin air. This happened because he slipped onto his finger the Ring he had obtained during his journey. After disappearing he returned to his hobbit hole, where he changes into the clothing he had worn on his quest, takes with him the manuscript of his book, and leaves on the mantelpiece an envelope addressed to Frodo containing the Ring, which he would have slipped into his own pocket had not Gandalf arrived. As it is, the wizard must work long and hard to get Bilbo to leave the Ring (he even calls it "his Precious") before departing on his journey, where he plans to see the mountains again and settle somewhere where he can enjoy peace and quiet.

After Bilbo departs, Frodo leaves the festivities and joins Gandalf. The wizard points out the envelope containing Bilbo's will, which leaves almost everything to his nephew, and the Ring, of which Frodo still understands little. The next morning the mess is cleared away and various relations receive their small bequests, a few of a sarcastic nature. Some relatives even begin digging in the walls and floors to find the gold that Bilbo allegedly had buried there. After Frodo finally gets rid of the clamoring crowd, he sits down to relax, but Gandalf then comes in, warning him not to use the Ring and to keep it secret, for it possesses powers that even the wizard himself does not understand.

## Chapter 2 - The Shadow of the Past

In the years that follow, Frodo picks up some of Bilbo's eccentric ways. He refuses to mourn for his presumably dead uncle and each year throws a party on his birthday despite his absence. He wanders the Shire, often in the company of his friends Peregrin Took, known as Pippin, and Merry Brandybuck, and sometimes alone, when he is suspected of visiting elves. Like Bilbo, Frodo shows no signs of aging, even by the time he reaches the age of fifty. Elves and dwarves in increasing numbers begin to pass through the Shire, bringing news of a terrible evil arising in the land of Mordor.

At this time Gandalf again appears in the Shire after an absence of nine years. He tells Frodo what he has learned about the Ring left to him by Bilbo, warning him that it is more powerful than anyone could imagine and will eventually possess anyone who possesses it. One who uses it comes under the eye of the Dark Lord and eventually will be controlled by him. Gandalf takes the Ring from Frodo and throws it into the fire, revealing words inscribed in the elvish tongue that identify the Ring as the One Ring of Power that can enable its bearer to rule over all. Other rings have already been taken by Sauron, the Dark Lord, who is now in the Dark Tower in Mordor; three of those given to dwarves he now controls, and the nine given to mortal men have consumed them so that they have become his servants, the Ringwraiths. He seeks the One Ring in order to spread the Darkness over all the world. Gandalf then tells Frodo how Sauron had originally had the Ring taken from him by Isildur, who then lost it in the river. There it was discovered by a hobbit named Sméagol, who killed his best friend to get it, then was exiled from his tribe and hid in the depths of the Misty Mountains, where he was consumed by his "Precious" and became the creature Bilbo knew as Gollum. Though Gollum is under the domination of the Ring, he is not entirely lost because he retains memories of the past before he found it. The Ring, however, is pure evil and has a mind of its own, seeking to return to its Master.

Gollum followed Bilbo as far as he dared after losing the Ring, but eventually passed into the darkness of Mirkwood. Years later, Gandalf found him with the help of a great tracker, the ranger Aragorn, who pursued him into the depths of Mordor, and wrenched his story from him. Gandalf now knows that Sauron is taking a special interest in hobbits, in the Shire, and in the name of Baggins. Frodo, terrified, wonders why Bilbo, Gandalf, or the elves who now imprison him did not kill Gollum when they had the chance, but Gandalf warns him that the disfigured creature still has a role to play in the saga of the Ring that no one fully understands. Frodo asks why the Ring has not been destroyed, but Gandalf challenges him to try to do so. He finds that he cannot even release it from his hand, and Gandalf tells him that even the forges and hammers of dwarves could not destroy the One Ring; the only way to destroy it is to cast it into the Cracks of Doom inside the mountains of Mordor. Frodo is perfectly willing to have someone destroy the Ring, but feels totally unqualified to do it himself. Gandalf tells him, however, that for some unknown reason he has been chosen as the Ring-bearer. Frodo asks Gandalf to take the Ring, but the great wizard tells him that it would give him too much power and would ultimately destroy him. Nonetheless he offers to help Frodo to bear the burden that has fallen to him. Frodo realizes that he must go away in order to spare the Shire from the attentions of the Dark Lord, and Gandalf advises him to take companions whom he can trust utterly. At that moment Gandalf reaches out the window and hauls in Sam Gamgee, the

gardener, who has been eavesdropping, and recommends him as a fellow-traveler with Frodo, who must henceforth be known as Mr. Underhill in order to conceal his identity.

### Chapter 3 - Three is Company

Frodo is reluctant to leave the comforts of Bag End, but Gandalf convinces him that he must move quickly. He decides to leave after the celebration of his fiftieth birthday and to head for Rivendell, the home of Elrond the elf lord, though he shares his plans with no one but the wizard. He lets it be known that he will be moving to Buckland at the eastern edge of the Shire, with Sam Gamgee to accompany him and serve him, and in preparation for his move he sells Bag End to his obnoxious relatives, the Sackville-Bagginses. Gandalf takes a trip southward for some mysterious reason and promises to be back for the birthday party, but when September 22<sup>nd</sup> arrives, no sign of Gandalf is to be seen.

The next day Frodo, along with Sam and Pippin, set off on foot for Buckland, but before they leave, Frodo hears Sam's father talking to a stranger who is looking for him. After a day on the road, the three hear a rider coming up behind them. They quickly hide, and from their place of concealment they see a man dressed all in black on a huge black horse; this is the man who had been asking after Frodo in the village. He pauses, and as he sniffs the air Frodo feels a strong compulsion to put on the Ring. Before he can do so, however, the rider, whom Frodo does not recognize as one of the Ringwraiths, continues along the road. The next night the Black Rider appears again and again Frodo is tempted to put on the Ring. This time he is prevented from doing so by the sound of elves singing, which puts the Black Rider to flight. The elves soon approach Frodo and his companions and call him by name. When Pippin mentions the Black Riders, the elves are troubled and beg the hobbits to stay with them that night, to which they gladly agree. They join in the elven festivities and Frodo asks about Bilbo, Gandalf, and the Black Riders, but is told little except that the Shire is no longer a place of safety for them.

### Chapter 4 - A Short Cut to Mushrooms

When the hobbits wake in the morning, the elves are gone. Frodo, more cognizant of their danger than ever, determines that he can't expose his friends to such peril and decides to go one alone. Sam, however, will not hear of it, and tells Frodo that the elves had specifically told him to care for his master and not to leave him under any circumstances. They set out across fields and through forests, avoiding the road, and once catch a glimpse of one of the Black Riders. Once out of the forest they pass through cultivated soil, including the land of Farmer Maggot, who is inordinately proud of his mushrooms. The farmer offers them refreshments and tells them that he has just spoken to a Black Rider who was looking for Frodo; when told he wasn't there he rode toward the river. Farmer Maggot then invites Frodo and his friends to stay for supper and offers to take them to the ferry in a wagon so that they won't be seen by their pursuers. When they arrive at the ferry, they hear the sound of hooves in the distance. Frodo hides, but the voice they hear coming from the horse is not that of a Black Rider, but of their friend Merry Brandybuck, who has come to escort them to Buckland.

## Chapter 5 - A Conspiracy Unmasked

The four hobbits take the ferry to Buckland, located between the river and the Old Forest. As they reach the far side and look back, they see a Black Rider on the shore sniffing the air. Frodo has purchased a house in Buckland, though he has no intention of living in it, mostly as a way of concealing his true intentions in leaving Hobbiton. When the friends arrive at the house they enjoy a hot bath and another supper, the Pippin tells Merry about their adventures. Frodo steels himself to tell them of his impending departure from the Shire, but they have already figured it out and are determined to go with him despite his attempts to dissuade them. They know far more than he imagines; Merry once saw Bilbo put on the Ring and disappear and once read Bilbo's book, and Sam has been eavesdropping on Frodo's conversations with Gandalf whenever possible. They decide to leave first thing in the morning and go by way of the Old Forest rather than taking the road.

## Chapter 6 - The Old Forest

At six o'clock the next morning the four friends leave for the forest. Merry, who knows the area, warns them that the trees in the Old Forest are not friendly. They lose track of the path as the trees close in around them and they feel like they are being watched. As they travel the undergrowth and trees seem to force them southward toward the valley of the Withywindle, a dangerous place that is the subject of frightening tales. Despite their desire to travel northward, they reach the Withywindle. As they follow the only path available, they become increasingly hot and tired and finally fall asleep, all except Sam. He retrieves the ponies, which had wandered off, and comes back to find Frodo being held in the river by a tree root. After he pulls his friend out of the water, they discover that Merry and Pippin have been trapped by the roots and trunk of the tree against which they were sleeping. Sam and Frodo try burning the tree, but Merry and Pippin cry out that the tree will kill them if the fire is not put out. At this point Frodo can think of nothing to do but to cry for help. Much to his surprise, his cry is answered by a strange little old man named Tom Bombadil. Tom frees Merry and Pippin by singing to the willow tree that has imprisoned them, then invites the travelers to his house between the Old Forest and the Barrow-Downs for supper.

## Chapter 7 - In the House of Tom Bombadil

In Tom Bombadil's house they meet Goldberry, the daughter of the River Withywindle, who welcomes them and explains that Tom is the master of wood, water, and hill. They enjoy a sumptuous meal and an evening of singing, then sleep soundly in comfortable beds. As Frodo sleeps, he dreams of a tall tower. A man with white hair and a wizard's staff stands atop the tower, from which he is carried away by an eagle. Frodo then hears the thundering hooves of the Black Riders and falls back into an uneasy sleep. Pippin dreams of being captured by tree branches and Merry dreams of drowning in a pool, while Sam sleeps like a log.

The next day is a rainy one, so the hobbits stay with Tom and listen to his tales of the Forest and the Barrow-Downs and the Barrow-wights that walk among them. After supper that night, Goldberry sings her enchanting songs to them. Later Tom questions the hobbits, though he clearly knows more of their story than they can imagine. When he asks to see the Ring, Frodo gives it to him, and when he puts it on, he doesn't disappear, but the Ring does! Tom then gives it back to

Frodo, who is suspicious that he has been the victim of some trick. He slips the Ring on to be sure and indeed disappears, though Tom can still see him. He then gives them travel directions for the next day, warns them to avoid the Barrows, and tells them how to call him if they need him.

#### Chapter 8 - Fog on the Barrow-Downs

The next morning the hobbits say farewell to Tom and Goldberry and continue their journey. They make good time until noon, when they stop to eat and unintentionally fall asleep. When they wake, the sun is setting and the hilltop on which they rest is surrounded by fog. Unwilling to spend the night on the hilltop, they plunge down into the fog. Frodo, in the lead, thinks he sees the way out of the Downs and rushes forward, but instead encounters two black standing stones. He leaps from his pony to call the others, but they are nowhere to be found, and the pony then runs away. Frodo is lost and alone. A black shape materializes out of the gloom and Frodo is seized by a Barrow-wight, who takes him back to his barrow. He wakes to find the other three imprisoned with him. The Barrow-wight moves to take Sam away, but Frodo attacks him with a sword and cuts off his hand, then sings the song that can summon Tom Bombadil. Tom quickly appears, banishes the wight, frees Frodo's companions, and gives each of them a forged dagger from the barrow's treasure. He then retrieves their ponies and escorts them to the boundaries of his country. Tom leaves them when they reach the road and tells them to go to the town of Bree and stay at an inn called the Prancing Pony. As they ride, they once again remember the Black Riders who are pursuing them.

#### Chapter 9 - At the Sign of the Prancing Pony

Bree, the human settlement closest to the Shire, is inhabited by men and hobbits who are familiar with the comings and goings of elves, dwarves, and other travelers, including Rangers, lonely wanderers in the wilderness who are said to have mysterious powers. When the hobbits arrive they are reluctantly admitted by the gatekeeper, but unbeknownst to them they are followed through the gate by a dark, shadowy figure. At the Inn of the Prancing Pony they are warmly received and given supper and a room for the night. After supper all but Merry go to the common room of the inn, where they are soon absorbed in conversation with the local hobbits. Frodo notices, however, that a strange man is sitting in the corner listening carefully to their talk. When Frodo asks the innkeeper, he finds that the man is a Ranger known as Strider. Pippin is telling stories of the Shire to entertain the company, but Strider warns Frodo that his friends talk too much. In fact he is about to tell his audience about Bilbo's farewell party, including his mysterious disappearance, but Frodo interrupts him just in time and begins to sing a silly song composed by Bilbo. As he capers around after the song, he inadvertently slips the Ring onto his finger and disappears, much to the amazement of the crowd. He crawls into a corner near Strider and removes the Ring, but both he and the Ranger realize the folly of what he has done; the Ring is seeking to reveal its presence to those evil beings who seek it. Before Frodo and his friends go to their room, both Strider and the innkeeper ask to have words with him.

## Chapter 10 - Strider

Strider follows Frodo, Sam, and Pippin back to the parlor; Merry is still missing. He offers to tell them what he knows and give them sound advice if they will let him accompany them on their journey. Frodo is doubtful, but is willing to listen to what the Ranger has to say. He knows who Frodo is and what he carries in his pocket and wants to help him keep and protect his secret, but has seen Black Riders in the vicinity. Strider warns the hobbits that the accident with the Ring will soon be known abroad and that they therefore must leave as soon as possible. He is willing to serve as their guide. Their conversation is interrupted by the innkeeper, who gives Frodo a letter from Gandalf. He says that the Black Riders have been around asking for a hobbit named Baggins. Strider tells him that the Riders are from Mordor, which terrifies the fat little man.

The letter from Gandalf warns Frodo to leave as soon as possible, travel only by day, and never under any circumstances to use the Ring. He also tells him that the innkeeper and Strider (whose real name is Aragorn) can be trusted, and that the party should head for Rivendell, the valley of Elrond and his elves. Strider assures them of his determination to protect them even at the cost of his own life and shows them his sword, broken now but one day to be forged anew. He is also worried about Gandalf, from whom he has not heard for quite some time. Suddenly Merry comes bursting into the room, saying that he has seen the Black Riders in Bree. He had a close encounter with one of them and was only revived from torpor induced by his deadly breath when the innkeeper's boy found him with a lantern and brought him back to the inn. They decide to sleep in the parlor for safety, and Strider puts dummies in their beds.

## Chapter 11 - A Knife in the Dark

While the hobbits sleep, three of the Black Riders go to the cottage in Buckland where he had been staying earlier to try to find him. The local hobbits raise the alarm and the Riders rush off, realizing that their prey has fled. When Frodo and his friends wake up, they go to their room and find it torn apart. They then discover that all the ponies are gone, so that they will have to carry everything they need for the journey to Rivendell on their backs and walk the whole way, though they do manage to purchase a sad-looking pony for three times its value.

They travel for three days, leaving Bree-land behind. Their first destination is Weathertop, but to get there they must first pass through the Midgewater Marshes, which they find decidedly unpleasant. By the fifth day they can see Weathertop, but Strider warns them that the place is also known to the Black Riders, and therefore may be dangerous. On the seventh day they find a path leading to Weathertop. They leave Sam and Pippin at the base of the hill with the pony while the others climb to the summit. Gandalf is nowhere to be found, though recently-etched runes on a rock lead Strider to conclude that he was there recently, but had been attacked by evil forces. Soon they see five Black Riders congregating on the road below, and the three quickly go down to join their fellow-travelers. They build a fire and camp for the night. Strider tells them tales of the ancient days. As they are about to go to sleep, they sense the Black Riders and soon see their shadows approaching. Frodo is seized with an irresistible urge to put on the Ring, but when he does so the Black Riders advance on him. He can now see them clearly. He draws his dagger, but is no match

for the terrifying monsters. He feels a sword pierce his shoulder, sees Aragorn driving the Riders off with torches, and quickly removes the Ring.

## Chapter 12 - Flight to the Ford

When daylight comes, Frodo is in great pain. Strider discovers that his dagger had torn the cloak of one of the Black Riders and that the sword that had pierced Frodo's shoulder lay broken on the ground. As they looked at it, the blade dissolved into thin air. Strider warns them that the sword carried deadly magic, but seeks to gather medicine that will help Frodo's wound. The herb that Strider applies helps somewhat, but Frodo is still weak and unable to use his arm. When they leave Weathertop, they divide the baggage among them and put Frodo on the pony. For two weeks they see nothing of the Black Riders, though Frodo dreams of them each night. In the course of their journey, they stumble upon the trolls that had been turned to stone by Gandalf during Bilbo's great adventure.

As they return to the road near the ford that will lead them to Rivendell, they hear the sound of horses' hooves and quickly hide in the bushes. The rider, however, is Glorfindel, an elf who had driven away the five Black Riders and had come in search of Frodo and his companions. He warns them that the Riders are likely soon to return, and that the ford may be guarded against them, since there are nine Black Riders in all. He urges them to keep moving and puts the wounded Frodo on his own horse. When they reach the ford they encounter an ambush - five of the Riders charge down the road behind them while the other four seek to block the way to the ford. Frodo is tempted by the Ring to pause, but he overcomes the urge as the elf-horse gallops forward, beating the Riders across the ford by the barest margin. The Riders attempt to follow, but suddenly a great flood sweeps them away; in it Frodo sees white riders, and behind him sees a great light accompanying his friends as they move toward the river. At this point Frodo loses consciousness.

## BOOK II

### Chapter 1 - Many Meetings

When Frodo wakes up he is in bed in the house of Elrond in Rivendell, and Gandalf is at his side. The wizard tells Frodo that he has been held captive but has escaped, and that Elrond has healed the hobbit's wound by removing a splinter of the Black Rider's knife, which if left in place would have turned him into a wraith in the service of the Dark Lord. As it is, the wound is healing nicely. Gandalf tells Frodo that the Ringwraiths were washed away by the flood at the ford, caused by Elrond and abetted by Gandalf, but were not killed, and that the bright light he had seen behind his friends was Glorfindel revealing himself as a true elf-lord.

After a nap, Sam fetches Frodo to come and join the party. For the first time he sees the legendary elf-lord Elrond and his lovely daughter Arwen, recently arrived at Rivendell. During the feast Frodo finds himself sitting next to Gloin, one of the dwarves who had accompanied Bilbo on the expedition to the Lonely Mountain. The old dwarf tells him news of doings in the north, where dwarves and men live prosperously together. After supper the guests go into the Hall of Fire to hear songs and tales. There Frodo sees a small figure in one corner, covered by a cloak, who turns out

to be none other than Bilbo Baggins! Bilbo tells Frodo that after he left the Shire he made his way to Rivendell and that, aside from a short trip to Dale to see the dwarves there, had remained in Elrond's sheltered valley. Bilbo asks Frodo if he can see the Ring, but when Frodo produces it a strange change comes over the old hobbit, causing the Ring-bearer once again to conceal the dangerous artifact. Soon Strider and Bilbo go off by themselves to finish a song while Frodo is enchanted by the music in the elven hall.

## Chapter 2 - The Council of Elrond

The next morning Elrond summons the group to a council. There Frodo meets a dwarf named Gimli, Legolas the elf, and Boromir, a warrior from the southern land of Gondor. The members of the council discuss affairs in the wider world. Gwaihir tells them that the dwarves of the Lonely Mountain, desiring to return to their ancestral home in the mines of Moria, sent a group led by Balin, another of Bilbo's companions, to establish themselves there. After some time nothing was heard of them. Later a representative from Mordor arrived and promised the dwarves eternal possession of Moria if they would only capture and turn over to the Dark Lord the hobbit thief who had stolen an insubstantial and insignificant ring. They refused to agree, and he rode off.

Elrond then tells the gathered company the story of the One Ring of Power, which is fully known to none present - how it was forged by Sauron to rule the rings of the dwarves, elves, and men, how it was taken from him in battle by Isildur, who was lured to his death by its power, and how it was then lost. Boromir then speaks up and tells the company that Gondor is under attack from the forces of Mordor and that his father has sent him to seek wisdom from Elrond. Aragorn at this point identifies himself as the descendant of Isildur and the heir of his kingdom. When Frodo realizes who "Strider" really is, he offers to give him the Ring, but Aragorn refuses. At this point Frodo shows the Ring to the gathered company. Boromir is skeptical about both Aragorn and the Ring, but Bilbo then tells his tale of how the Ring was found, its special properties, and how he left it to Frodo. Frodo then finishes the story by telling of his adventures on the way to Rivendell.

Frodo wonders what Gandalf has been doing recently, and the wizard then tells his tale. As Sauron rose to power, the Council had sought to oppose him, but had been dissuaded by a powerful wizard named Saruman the White, who argued that the Dark Lord need not be feared as long as the Ring was lost. Gandalf then heard of Gollum and his treasure and the ring found by Bilbo and began to suspect that this was indeed the One Ring of Power. He ordered extra guards around the Shire while he and Aragorn tried to locate Gollum, who undoubtedly would try to retrieve his Precious. While Gandalf went to Gondor to research the history of the Ring and find how it could be positively identified, Aragorn continued the search and finally found Gollum. He brought the creature to the elves of Mirkwood, where Gandalf interrogated him, finding that he confirmed Bilbo's story and much else, including the fact that he had told all he knew to Sauron while in Mordor. Gollum was left in the care of the elves of Mirkwood, but Legolas reports that the creature has escaped, rescued by orcs during an attack on the elves, and has not been recaptured.

Gandalf then concludes his tale. After leaving the Shire he encountered a wizard named Radagast the Brown, who told him that the Black Riders were in reality the Nazgûl, Sauron's dreaded Ringwraiths, and that they were asking questions about the Shire. Radagast had been sent by Saruman, the greatest of the white wizards, to tell Gandalf to come to him if he needed assistance.

Gandalf immediately rode to Isengard, where Saruman dwelt in a tower called Orthanc. Once inside the tower, he discovered that Saruman had formed a league with Sauron and intended to imprison him if he did not join the confederacy. He argued that, should powerful wizards such as themselves ally with Sauron, they eventually would be able to control him and turn the Power to their own ends. Gandalf refused, and Saruman incarcerated him at the top of the tower until he revealed the whereabouts of the Ring. He soon discovered that Saruman was assembling an army of wolves and orcs to serve his own purposes. One day the Lord of the Eagles rescued him from the pinnacle and carried him to Rohan, where he obtained an incomparable horse named Shadowfax that brought him to the Shire, through Buckland and Bree to Weathertop, and thence to the gates of Rivendell, where Gandalf sent the horse back to its own land.

The Council must now decide what to do with the Ring. Some suggest sending it to Tom Bombadil, over whom it seems to have no effect, but Gandalf argues that he would not be a sufficiently careful guardian. Glorfindel advises casting it into the sea, but Gandalf insists that a permanent solution must be found. Elrond then declares that the only possible hope is in unmaking the Ring in the fires where it was forged, at Mount Doom in the heart of Mordor. Boromir rejects the idea, proposing instead that they should use the Ring and the power it wields to defeat Sauron, but Elrond responds that the Ring belongs to Sauron and is entirely evil, thus cannot be used for the cause of good. Besides, Sauron will never imagine that anyone would want to destroy the Ring, or that they would actually choose to come to Mordor to do so. At this point Bilbo volunteers to carry the Ring, but Gandalf tells him that his time has passed. After a long silence Frodo steps forward and is quickly joined by Sam.

### Chapter 3 - The Ring Goes South

Elrond now sends out scouts to scour the land and gather information before any decision is made about how to proceed. Months pass and winter arrives before the scouts return. They find no sign of the Ringwraiths or Gollum. Elrond at this point chooses the company that will undertake the quest to destroy the Ring. It consists of nine, matching the nine Ringwraiths of the Enemy. In addition to Frodo and Sam, the Fellowship of the Ring includes Gandalf, Gimli, Legolas, Aragorn, Boromir, plus two others yet to be named. When they hear this, Merry and Pippin immediately volunteer and, with Gandalf's encouragement, are accepted. In the week before their departure, Aragorn's broken sword is forged anew and Frodo spends as much time as possible with Bilbo. On the day they leave, Bilbo gives Frodo his vest of chain mail forged by dwarves and his short sword Sting.

When the members of the company set out, they carry a minimum of weapons because their goal is secrecy rather than open conflict, and their provisions are borne by the same donkey the hobbits had gotten at Bree. For two weeks they travel southward, moving by night to avoid coming to the attention of the spies of the Enemy. When they stop to rest, Aragorn is troubled by the absolute silence of the place and Gandalf advises the company to set a watch. Soon flocks of crows fly overhead and Aragorn fears they have been spotted. They move toward a mountain pass, though they fear it may be watched or even blocked with snow. As they climb, they encounter both heavy snow and rockslides, which they fear have been caused by the Dark Lord, though Gimli is certain the mountain Caradhras, which bears a grudge against dwarves, is opposing them. Ultimately their path is blocked and they are forced to return down the path and seek another way forward.

## Chapter 4 - A Journey in the Dark

That night Gandalf tells the company that the only alternative before them is to move underground, through the Mines of Moria. The idea excites Gimli, whose forebears had worked the depths under the mountain, but strikes fear into the others. Yet Gandalf is hopeful that some dwarves may remain and that the caves are yet free of orcs. The company is divided and decide to sleep on it and take a vote in the morning, but the sound of Wargs, huge and dreaded wolves, makes up their minds for them. One wolf threatens their camp, but Legolas puts an arrow through its throat and the rest of the pack flees. Later that night they are surrounded and attacked again, but the swords of Aragorn and Boromir, the arrows of Legolas, Gimli's axe, and Gandalf's magical fire kill many and drive off the rest. By morning the bodies of the Wargs have vanished and Legolas is able to retrieve his arrows.

They journey quickly toward the doors of Moria, circling a lake that has an unhealthy look about it. When they approach the gate, they realize they will have to leave the donkey behind, but Gandalf lays hands on it and sends it back to Rivendell. The gates are hidden, but Gandalf speaks an incantation and an inscription appears when the moon falls on the rock face: *Speak, friend, and enter*. Gimli tells them that the door will only open in response to the password, which no one there knows. Gandalf then tries every spell in the elvish tongue he knows, but to no avail. In his frustration, Boromir throws a rock into the middle of the lake. Suddenly Gandalf brightens, shouts the elf word for *friend*, and the doors slowly open. As they enter, however, tentacles slither out of the lake and one grabs Frodo's foot. Sam saws at it with his knife, the monster releases Frodo, and the company rush into the cave inside the door, which then slams shut behind them.

As they travel underground, their path is lighted by Gandalf's staff. The wizard and Frodo draw their swords, which give off light if orcs are near. The deeper they go into the mountain, the more Frodo senses that evil is near. He begins to hear the sound of bare feet on the path behind them. They spend one night in a sort of guardroom along the passage, then begin to ascend until they reach a great hall carved out by dwarves centuries earlier. As they rest, Gandalf tells them of the great treasures mined by the dwarves, especially *mithril*, the silver substance that was the foundation of their wealth and out of which Frodo's chain mail is made. When Frodo stands watch that night, he thinks he sees two points of light, like eyes, in the distant darkness. The next morning they continue their journey and come upon a large chamber in which they find the tomb of Balin, who had indeed reached the ancient kingdom of his people.

## Chapter 5 - The Bridge of Khazad-Dûm

As the members of the company explore the caves around the chamber they find a book containing the story of the dwarves who accompanied Balin to Moria. It is badly damaged, but Gandalf is able to decipher enough of it to learn that Balin and his companions had established themselves in Moria and had found gold, mithril, and other valuables, but had ultimately been destroyed by invading orcs who plundered their treasure. Gandalf now knows where they are, but before they can head for the exit they hear a loud crash, the beat of drums, the sound of horns, and the trampling of many feet; the orcs are coming! Gandalf raises his staff and the orcs, accompanied now by giant cave trolls, back off temporarily. Aragorn discovers that one of the exits shows no sign of the attacking horde, but that it goes downward with no way of blocking the door after they pass through it. When the orcs enter the chamber, the company drives them off, killing more than a dozen

in the process, then flees through the eastern door. Gandalf remains behind to guard the entrance, using all the power of his spells to do so. He tells the company that he had encountered something fearsome, a fiery being that terrified even the orcs, but that he hopes it was buried in the collapse of the chamber.

They continue for more than an hour without sensing any pursuit. As they descend, the air becomes hotter and they see the red light of fire ahead of them. The exit is now near, but they must first cross a narrow bridge over a deep chasm and climb a set of stairs to reach the door. The orcs follow them, but are separated from them by the fire and their arrows fall uselessly in the midst of the company. Suddenly the orcs part and a hideous being of darkness surrounded by fire leaps the chasm and moves toward the company. It is a Balrog, an ancient evil roused from the depths of the mountain. The members of the company flee across the bridge, but Gandalf remains to face the monster. He forbids it to pass, and with his staff shatters the sword of the Balrog. He then strikes his staff against the bridge and shatters the span between himself and the monster. As the Balrog plunges into the abyss, however, it cracks its whip and entangles Gandalf's legs, dragging the wizard into the depths. The members of the company, now without their leader, flee into the daylight beyond the door led by Aragorn. When safely out of range of orc arrows, they mourn their great loss.

## Chapter 6 - Lothlórien

The company cannot afford much time to mourn, and soon Aragorn leads them rapidly on their way. Frodo and Sam, both wounded in the battle against the orcs, lag behind and eventually are carried by Aragorn and Boromir. At mid-afternoon they rest and Aragorn tends to the hobbits' wounds. In the process, he discovers Frodo's mithril cloak and all marvel at its beauty and strength. Once they continue and night falls, Frodo is certain that he hears the sound of padding feet behind them and sees the glimmer of a pair of eyes in the darkness. Soon they reach the border of Lothlórien, the home of wood elves since days long past, and Legolas is beside himself with joy and anticipation. They meet three elves who ask about their quest and agree to escort them through the wood. They are dubious about the presence of Gimli, because dwarves and elves have often been at odds, but consent to his passage if he is blindfolded. That night they sleep in the trees for safety, and while they sleep a company of orcs pass beneath them. One of the elves goes to tell his comrades about the presence of the orcs and another assures Frodo that the goblins will never leave the wood alive. After they pass, Frodo again hears something climbing up the trunk of the tree and sees two eyes staring at him. In the morning the elves prepare to blindfold Gimli, to which he strongly objects, but Aragorn resolves the conflict by insisting that all should be blindfolded so the dwarf is not singled out. As they approach the center of the wood, word comes from the Lady who rules the elves that all, including the dwarf, are to walk freely among them. When they open their eyes, they see around them a scene of great beauty. Frodo senses that ages past are still preserved in this pocket of Middle Earth where the Evil has not yet reached its deadly hand.

## Chapter 7 - The Mirror of Galadriel

That evening they arrive at Caras Galadon, the city of Lord Celeborn and his lady, Galadriel, who summon the members of the company to an audience. There they relate the tale of their

journey, including the loss of Gandalf at the bridge of Khazad-Dûm. Celeborn thinks their behavior foolish, but Galadriel argues that Gandalf was too wise to engage in folly. She even compliments Gimli on his desire to see the home of his ancestors, and he returns the compliment by speaking of her great beauty. Celeborn apologizes for his harsh words and promises to do whatever he can to help the members of the company in their quest. Galadriel gazes deeply at each of the company, and after they leave they all relate a feeling that they were being given a choice between fear and danger on the one hand and what their hearts most desire on the other. Most refuse to share what they were offered, but all are determined to pursue the quest no matter what dangers lie ahead. In the days that follow they regain their strength and speak of Gandalf and what he meant to them. Meanwhile, to the surprise of all, Legolas and Gimli are becoming fast friends.

During this time they see nothing of Celeborn or Galadriel, but one night she appears to Frodo and Sam. She leads them to the base of the hill on which the city is built and shows them a silver basin filled with water - the Mirror of Galadriel. She tells them that it shows things that have been, things that are, and things that are yet to come, though the pictures are not easy to interpret. Sam looks first and sees dreadful doings in the Shire. His first impulse is to go home immediately, but Galadriel warns him that what he has seen may not come to pass if the one who sees is faithful to his calling. Frodo takes his turn and sees Gandalf (or is it Saruman?) all dressed in white, then Bilbo pacing around his room, then a montage of scenes that he cannot identify. Suddenly the water grows dark and is filled with a great Eye like that of a cat. The Eye seems to be searching for him and as he gazes into the mirror, the Ring grows heavy on his neck. Frodo pulls back and Galadriel assures him that the Eye cannot see him, for it has sought to see into her mind as well and has failed. She reveals to Frodo that she wears one of the three elven rings that Sauron seeks. She confides in him that the elves are destined to leave Middle Earth and travel to the West, so that Lothlórien will be no more. Frodo then offers her the Ring, convinced that she is worthier to bear it than he could ever be. She resists the temptation and rejects the offer, confessing that, should she possess the Ring, she would be a tyrant Queen as wicked as Sauron.

## Chapter 8 - Farewell to Lórien

As the company prepares to leave Lothlórien, Celeborn promises to provide boats so they can navigate the great river that lies in their path. The members of the company debate what to do next. Boromir wants to head westward toward his home in Minas Tirith, away from Mordor. Aragorn had hoped to join him to regain his throne in Gondor, but now feels responsible to accompany the Ring and its bearer. The others are uncertain. In the morning the elves give them provisions, including a nourishing wafer called *lembas*, one bite of which can sustain a traveler for an entire day, and cloaks that would keep them warm and cool and camouflage them from their enemies. The elves guide them to the river and give them elven ropes both strong and light and three boats to take them on their journey.

When they reach the river, Celeborn and Galadriel approach them in a swan boat and invite them to a final repast. Celeborn describes the course of the river to the south and warns them of its dangers. Galadriel then presents gifts to each of the members of the company. To Aragorn she gives a sheath for his sword that guarantees that the blade will never be broken again, along with a gem in a brooch that rightly belongs to him as the heir of the great kings of yore, passed on to him by Galadriel's granddaughter and Aragorn's beloved, Arwen. Boromir receives a gold belt, Merry and

Pippin silver belts, Legolas a bow and arrows, and Sam a box of earth from Galadriel's garden that will prove valuable when he returns to the Shire. Galadriel asks Gimli what he would like and he insists he wants nothing but the memory of her beauty, but when pressed he requests a single strand of her hair; she grants his request and blesses him by telling him that gold shall flow through his hands in great profusion, but that he will never be dominated by it. Finally she turns to Frodo and gives him a phial that will be a source of light in dark places. After tearful farewells they embark on the river, which will take them whence they know not.

## Chapter 9 - The Great River

The company travels down the river for days, passing through the dismal and empty Brown Lands. Sam, who is too afraid of boats to row, spends his time watching the river and the shore as they travel. One day he sees what he thinks is a log with eyes following them. When he tells Frodo about it, Frodo shares his own similar experiences and the two conclude that the creature Gollum is following them, and has been since Moria. That night, while keeping watch, Frodo sees Gollum within a few yards of where he is hiding. When he draws his sword the creature disappears, but the encounter wakes Aragorn, who tells Frodo that he has been watching Gollum ever since they entered Moria, hoping to capture him and use him for their purposes. They warn the others, and for several days no one sees any sign of the malignant creature.

On the eighth day of their voyage they reach the rapids in the middle of the night. As they struggle to keep the boats from crashing against the rocks, they are suddenly besieged by arrows from the eastern shore, one of which hits Frodo in the back, though he is protected from harm by his mithril cloak. Gimli realizes that they are being attacked by orcs, which Sam suspects have been roused by Gollum. They escape the orcs and land on the western shore of the river, but soon a dark figure descends toward them from the sky. Legolas, however, shoots an arrow through its heart and it plunges into the river below. While they wait for daylight, Aragorn and Boromir argue about their next step. Boromir wants to strike out westward to his home in Minas Tirith, but Aragorn insists they should continue to follow the river as far as they can. When Frodo casts in his lot with Aragorn, the matter is decided. Aragorn and Legolas then strike out to find a way around the rapids and return a few hours later having located the ancient portage. They then take up both boats and baggage and begin to move through the rocky terrain, reaching the end of the rapids by nightfall. The next morning they set out again, and the river passes between high cliffs, narrowing and picking up speed as they go. Later in the day, they pass between two enormous statues of the kings of old, Aragorn's ancestors, reminding them of the glories of the land before the coming of the Shadow. As night falls, they approach the top of the falls of Rauros - the point at which a final decision must be made about their future direction.

## Chapter 10 - The Breaking of the Fellowship

In the night Aragorn senses the presence of orcs, which Frodo's sword Sting confirms, though they are not too near. The next day Aragorn asks Frodo to choose the direction he is to take, and he asks for an hour alone to consider his decision. As he wanders the woods, he is approached by Boromir, who tries to convince him to go westward. He rejects what seems to him the easy way out. Then Boromir changes the subject, asking why the Ring should not be used against Mordor by

those who desire good. Soon he launches into a grand dream of destroying Mordor, raising Gondor, and becoming a great and wise king through the use of the Ring of Power. He argues that sending a hobbit into the heart of Mordor is sheer folly leading inevitably to the capture of the Ring by Sauron. If Frodo is unwilling to accompany him to Minas Tirith, he asks him to lend him the Ring for a short time. Finally he lunges at Frodo, attempting to take the Ring by force. Frodo, realizing he is no match for the human warrior, slips the Ring on his finger and disappears. At this point Boromir realizes what he has done and weeps bitterly, begging Frodo to come back.

With the Ring on his finger, Frodo ascends to the top of the hill and by its power can see the entire land of Middle Earth around him. There are signs of war everywhere as the forces of Sauron advance. Then he sees the great unblinking Eye of the Dark Lord searching for Frodo, searching for the Ring. As its unwavering gaze approaches, he takes off the Ring just in time to avoid being found. As he goes down the hill, he decides that, as the Evil has penetrated even to the company itself, he must continue his journey alone. He puts the Ring on again and slips away. As time passes the members of the company begin to worry. When Boromir returns he tells them that Frodo has put on the Ring, though he doesn't say why he did so. The members of the company split up to search for Frodo, but Sam realizes that, if he intended to go to Mordor alone he would need a boat. When he heads for the boats, he finds one, apparently empty, leaving the shore, and leaps for it. He can't swim, so Frodo pulls him out of the water and the two head downriver toward the seat of the Dark Lord.

## **PART TWO - THE TWO TOWERS**

### **BOOK III**

#### **Chapter 1 - The Departure of Boromir**

Aragorn tracks Frodo to the top of the hill, but the hobbit is nowhere to be seen. In the distance he hears the voices of orcs, then a blast from Boromir's horn indicating that he is in need of help. When Aragorn reaches Boromir, the great warrior is surrounded by the bodies of more than twenty orcs he has slain, but his sword is broken, his horn cleaved in half, and he has been pierced by many orc arrows. Before he dies, he apologizes for trying to take the Ring, tells Aragorn that Merry and Pippin have been captured by the orcs, and begs him to go to Minas Tirith and deliver the city in its time of need. Aragorn is torn by the desire to seek his rightful throne and the urgency of the Quest. Were Frodo and Sam taken by the orcs as well? If not, where have they gone? When Legolas and Gimli arrive, they decide to place Boromir and his weapons in a boat and send them over the falls because they have no time or tools to bury him properly. As they sort through the bodies of the orcs, they find evidence of unusually large goblins bearing the insignia of Saruman, who somehow has learned of their flight. When they go to retrieve their boats they discover that one is missing. Aragorn finds evidence that Frodo and Sam have taken it, but the three remaining companions decide to follow the orcs and rescue Merry and Pippin.

## Chapter 2 - The Riders of Rohan

As they travel they come upon the dead bodies of orcs. Were these slain by some friends of the travelers, or did they die as the result of infighting among the different companies of orcs? As they get closer to the orcs, Aragorn finds a token from an elvish cloak that Pippin had left behind to mark their passage. They have now reached the border of Rohan, and he realizes that the orcs are making for Saruman's tower in Isengard. They need to rest, but sadly the orcs need no such break and increase the distance between them. Aragorn suspects that their weariness is due in part to the sorcery of the traitorous wizard Saruman.

Days later Legolas spots more than a hundred riders in the distance. The three decide to wait for them, hoping they have news, whether good or ill. The riders, men of Rohan led by Éomer, Marshal of the Riddermark, surround the travelers and draw their weapons. Conflict is only prevented when Aragorn reveals his true identity and shows them his sword. He tells Éomer something of their story but does not reveal the tale of the Ring or the nature of their Quest. Éomer in turn tells him that he and his men have destroyed the orcs, but saw no sign of the hobbits. The men of Rohan have sought peace, neither forming an alliance with Sauron nor making war against him, but Aragorn warns that neutrality will no longer be possible. When he tells Éomer of the deaths of Boromir and Gandalf, the leader of the men of Rohan indicates that Gandalf is not much liked among his people, largely because he took the wondrous steed Shadowfax from King Théoden, who has been unable to ride him since his return. Éomer invites them back to his city to assist in their war against Saruman, but Aragorn insists that they must continue to seek the hobbits. Éomer then lends them two horses, requiring only that they return them when their Quest is completed; Legolas and Gimli share a mount as Aragorn leads them in their pursuit.

When they reach the ashes of the dead orcs, burned by the men of Rohan, they fear that the remains of Merry and Pippin are among them. They are now at the edge of the forest of Fangorn, and Aragorn warns the others not to cut any living wood; the forest is an ancient one, and tales of creatures called Ents abound in the lore of the region. As they rest by a fire, an old man draws near, but says nothing. He then suddenly disappears, and they find that their horses are gone. They now suspect that the old man was none other than Saruman himself.

## Chapter 3 - The Uruk-Hai

The story now follows Merry and Pippin, who have been captured by the orcs and lay bound in their camp. They soon find that they have survived this long only because Saruman told the orcs to bring back alive any hobbits they might find. Before long a fight breaks out between the different tribes of orcs, and in the confusion Pippin is able to cut the rope binding his hands. As the orcs prepare to move toward Isengard, they cut the ropes binding the hobbits' legs and make them run with them. At the first opportunity Pippin dives to the side and drops the brooch holding his cloak, which Aragorn later finds. As the riders of Rohan close in upon them the orcs flee with redoubled speed. By nightfall the orcs are surrounded. As the men of Rohan snipe at the edges of the encampment, the hobbits' guards leave them, but they are soon approached by the leader of the orcs loyal to Sauron. He searches them, and Pippin realizes he is looking for the Ring. He and Merry offer to help him find it if he unties them, which he refuses to do. Instead he seizes them both and runs off through the forest, where he is quickly set upon by a rider, who kills him on the spot but

does not see his little prisoners. Pippin then cuts their bonds and, as the battle rages behind them, the two hobbits flee into the depths of Fangorn Forest.

#### Chapter 4 - Treebeard

As they go farther into the forest, Merry and Pippin quickly tire. They are almost out of provisions and find the forest stuffy and “treelike.” They climb to the top of a hill to look at the surrounding terrain and suddenly feel two branch-like hands on their shoulders and hear the voice of what they thought was a tree behind them. The tree-man then picks them up in his “branches.” When they ask who or what he is, he tells them that he is an Ent and that he goes by the name of Treebeard. He then asks them for news of the outside world, but says that they should postpone their tale until later. He then takes them to his home, promising them food, drink, and transportation when the time comes for them to leave. On the way, Treebeard tells them that the Ents are shepherds of the trees, that some Ents are becoming more treelike while some trees are awakening, and that some Ents are good while others are evil. When they arrive at the ent-house, they are given refreshments and begin to tell the story of their adventures, though they say nothing about the Ring. Treebeard is especially interested in the Shire, Gandalf, and Saruman, since they are quite close to Isengard.

The Ent tells Merry and Pippin that he and his folk have tried to stay out of the business of the outside world as much as possible, but that Saruman is becoming more and more of a threat; he is cutting down trees, some of them sentient, to feed the fires of Orthanc and creating by some means larger, stronger, and more vicious orcs - the Uruk-hai - that can travel by day as well as by night. Treebeard has decided that the time has come to take action against Saruman and his wicked experiments and invites Pippin and Merry to join him. He fears that their numbers are too small; they have produced no children in many years because the Entwives are nowhere to be found. Long ago the Entwives had become interested in cultivation of the land, while the Ents preferred the wilds of the forest. Soon they were separated, and when the wars came of old and the land of the Entwives was burned, the Ents went in search of them, but to no avail.

The next day Treebeard calls a council of the Ents. When they arrive at the meeting place, the hobbits are surprised to find that the Ents are as different from one another as are the trees they tend. The Ents converse in their own language, which Merry and Pippin cannot understand, and the conference goes on for hours. Treebeard tells the hobbits that it might take several days, so he assigns a young Ent named Quickbeam to entertain them while the council drags on. He takes them to his home and tells them that the ent-house in which he had grown up had been ravaged by orcs and all its trees had been cut down. By the end of the third day the Ents have made their decision - they will go to war against Isengard. Treebeard leads a contingent of fifty young Ents southward. As they travel more Ents join them, though Treebeard realizes that this march may be their last. Soon they see Isengard in the distance.

#### Chapter 5 - The White Rider

At this point the story returns to Aragorn, Gimli, and Legolas, who begin to question whether the old man they saw was really Saruman. According to Legolas, their horses had run off in joy, not

in fear as one might expect had the presence among them been the evil wizard. As they continue to search for any signs of Merry and Pippin, they find a golden leaf from Lothlórien, crumbs of lembas bread, severed ropes, and the broken orc blade that severed them. They now have hope that the hobbits have escaped, so they follow them into Fangorn Forest; Gimli fears the place, though Legolas assures him that it is old but not evil. As they travel they find the hobbits' footprints by the river. They then climb Treebeard's hill (though they know nothing of the Ents), and from the top they see the old man again, slowly coming toward them. Gimli urges Legolas to use his bow, but the elf is reluctant to do so without knowing for sure who the stranger might be.

The old man draws near, asks them to tell their story, and assures them that their friends are safe. They still fear that he is Saruman in disguise, but when they draw their weapons, the old man casts aside his rags and is revealed to them in shining white garments. Their weapons fly from their hands and, much to their astonishment, they realize that the old man is none other than Gandalf, transformed now into a far greater and more powerful wizard than he was before. He tells them that Frodo is taking the Ring toward Mordor, and he is pleased to hear that Sam went with him. The three companions sit down and relate their adventures. Gandalf then tells them that Sauron knows the Ring is in the possession of a hobbit and knows about the Fellowship of the Ring, but suspects that the plan of the company is to take the Ring to Minas Tirith and give it to some champion to use against him. At this point he does not imagine that the Ring-bearer is taking the Ring into the heart of Mordor in order to destroy it rather than use it. Not only that, but Saruman's own ambitions make it impossible for Sauron to trust him. He then speaks of a Winged Messenger - the one Legolas had felled with his bow. The rider, who did not die, was one of the Nazgûl, the Black Riders or Ringwraiths, who now ride on flying steeds. Meanwhile, Sauron is planning an assault on Minas Tirith and Saruman intends to attack Rohan, though he does not suspect that the Ents are rising against him.

Gandalf tells them that because Merry and Pippin are safe with Treebeard and Frodo and Sam are beyond their reach on their way to Mordor, they must go to Rohan and seek to help Théoden. Before they set off, Legolas asks Gandalf what happened at the bridge of Khazad-Dûm in Moria. Gandalf says that he cannot tell all that happened, but that he and the Balrog fell to the very bottom of the chasm over which the bridge stretched. There they fought long and hard, and finally Gandalf drove the Balrog off. He then pursued him to the peak of the mountain, where they fought again, and finally the Balrog was destroyed. He lay exhausted for many days on the mountain peak until he was rescued by Gwaihir, the Lord of the Eagles, and borne to Lothlórien, where he was healed and transformed into Gandalf the White. He brings to each of them a message from Galadriel, though the messages are cryptic at best. The companions then travel to the edge of the forest, where Gandalf whistles loudly. Soon Shadowfax comes galloping toward them, leading the other horses with him, and the company rides swiftly toward Rohan.

## Chapter 6 - The King of the Golden Hall

The next day they reach Edoras, the castle of Théoden, king of Rohan. At the gates their way is barred, and they learn that Wormtongue, the king's adviser, has ordered in his name that none be admitted except the men of Rohan. Gandalf gives their names and shortly thereafter they are escorted into the presence of the king, though they are forced to leave their weapons at the door, though Gandalf insists on keeping his staff.

When they enter the great hall they see the king, old and bent, his daughter Éowyn, and his adviser Gríma Wormtongue. They are greeted rudely, and Wormtongue hurls insults at Gandalf in particular; when he speaks ill of Galadriel, Gandalf must restrain Gimli from attacking him. Finally Gandalf becomes impatient and awes them with his magic, then leads Théoden outside. As they leave, the eyes of Éowyn and Aragorn meet. When Théoden emerges from the doors of his hall, the sunlight strengthens him and he casts away his staff; he is once more the king that had long ruled his land with great wisdom. Gandalf asks him to summon Éomer, who has been imprisoned for threatening Wormtongue. The wizard then tells Théoden what has transpired and encourages him to go forth to battle, holding the enemy at bay long enough for the Ring-bearer to accomplish his task. The king tells them that he himself will lead his men into battle against Saruman, while the women and children of Rohan will hide in the hills for safety. Wormtongue then emerges from the castle under guard. Théoden tells him that he will go to war with his king, but he begs to be left in charge of the castle and its people. Gandalf and Éomer reveal, however, that the king's adviser has been spying for Saruman and in the process weakening Théoden, has stolen many valuable treasures, and hopes to marry Éowyn and seize the throne for himself. Théoden then tells him to be off to his true master and says that if he ever sees him again, he will kill him.

In gratitude to his guests, he gives Shadowfax to Gandalf and suitable armor to Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli. During dinner, the look in Éowyn's eyes reveals her love for Aragorn - a love he does not return. Théoden then names Éomer as his heir and entrusts the care of the women and children to Éowyn, who will lead them to a place of safety and who arms herself for the task. Soon Théoden and Gandalf ride toward Isengard at the head of a thousand cavalrymen.

## Chapter 7 - Helm's Deep

On the second day of their journey a rider approaches them with news that the border force has been routed by the armies of Isengard, and that the survivors have taken shelter in Helm's Deep, where they will soon be under siege. Théoden is determined to ride to the relief of the besieged remnant of his troops. At this point Gandalf leaves on an unexplained errand, riding Shadowfax like the wind and promising to meet the others at Helm's Gate. Helm's Deep is a fortress built into a deep chasm, surrounded by stout walls and protected by mountains honeycombed with caves at the rear. The riders believe that if they arrive soon enough, they can fight their way through the enemies who have gathered so far and make a strong stand within the fortifications. As they ride swiftly onward, they see signs of an enormous enemy army hot on their heels, burning crops and villages as they advance. When the men of Rohan arrive at Helm's Gate, Éomer arranges his troops on the battlements while their horses are concealed safely in the courtyard of the citadel.

At midnight a flash of lightning illuminates the field outside the fortress, revealing a huge contingent of orcs preparing to assault Helm's Deep. Their flights of arrows receive no answer from within until they come near the walls, when the defenders unleash their barrage. The enemy, however, is so numerous that the piles of dead orcs hardly slow down the assault. Each sortie advances closer to the gate until wild men, shielded by orc arrows, attack the gate with battering rams. At this point Aragorn and Éomer charge outside the gate through a small door on the side and fall upon the men wielding the battering rams, killing or dispersing them and putting the orcs to flight in a panic. The two defenders realize that the gate has been badly damaged and prepare to go back inside to fortify it, but they are soon attacked by orcs who had lain in wait. Éomer is set upon

by two orcs who trip him up and are about to finish him off when Gimli emerges from the small door and decapitates both of them with his axe, after which the others flee. When they get back inside, they pile rocks behind the gate. Soon Gimli and Legolas are comparing the number of orcs they have killed; this will clearly become a competition between them.

As the moon rises, the defenders see that the enemy has increased in number during the night, and soon the assault is renewed with arrows, battering rams, and grappling hooks and ladders to scale the walls. Soon the situation worsens, as orcs creep through a culvert into the rear of the enclosure. Seeing this, Gimli and Legolas renew their competition, with the former charging toward the orcs who have invaded the fortress and then blocking the culvert, while the latter wields his knife against those who scale the walls. The score is now Gimli 21, Legolas 24. As dawn approaches, the orcs break through the culvert again and seek to burn the fortress from within. At the same time the gates are burst and the attackers swarm through the breach. The defenders make for the citadel, the tower at the center of the fortress, as Aragorn stands at the base of the steps to allow the others to get inside safely. As orcs charge toward him, Legolas looses the last of his arrows, allowing Aragorn to run to safety. Legolas now claims 39 kills and wonders what Gimli's score might be. Éomer and Gimli are still outside, and Aragorn and Legolas hope they are finding refuge in the caves. Théoden, who has thus far played no part in the battle, fears that Gandalf will not appear and, having no hope of success, decides to ride forth at dawn, inviting Aragorn to join him.

Before he does so, Aragorn climbs above the ruined gate and calls out to the orcs, warning them that if they don't retreat immediately, they will bring about their own doom. They laugh him to scorn, but soon the sound of a great horn is heard from the top of the citadel. The Uruk-hai are terrified, and soon Théoden and Aragorn emerge on their mounts, followed by a great cavalry, and drive the enemy back from the gates. The soldiers of Isengard soon realize that they are trapped, for behind them loom the Huorns, former Ents well on the way to becoming trees. Worse yet for the enemy, Gandalf the White appears over the hill at the head of a mighty army led by Erkenbrand of the Westfold. Thrown into chaos, the enemy troops drop their weapons and flee into the trees, from which none ever emerge alive; all are destroyed by the Huorns.

## Chapter 8 - The Road to Isengard

With the battle now won, the victors gather to celebrate. When Legolas and Gimli compare scores, the dwarf has won, 41-40, but each is delighted to find the other safe. All credit the victory to Gandalf's wizardry, but he denies the use of his powers; he did no more than take advantage of the speed of Shadowfax to summon the men of the Westfold. When they question him about the trees, he tells them that their power comes from something far older than his own. He then shares his plan to go in secret to Isengard to confront Saruman, and Théoden determines to go with him. Because the purpose of the trip is parley rather than combat, only a small number of men are needed; the remainder are to rest and recuperate while the men among Saruman's forces who surrendered were put to work burying the dead. During the journey Legolas and Gimli share a mount. Gimli speaks of the beauty and magnificence of the caverns beneath Helm's Deep, while Legolas marvels at the trees through which they ride; he is convinced that he can almost understand the language of the denizens of Fangorn Forest. Though each fears what the other finds full of wonder, they agree to travel together and visit both places when they return from the wars. As the company prepares

to leave the forest, they see for the first time the Huorns walking and returning to their home in Fangorn, having first buried the bodies of the orcs who were slain in battle.

When the company crosses the ford and approaches Isengard, they find that the formerly green valley is now a barren waste covered with thorns and brambles. Nothing green grows there. The valley is filled with the steam of the wizard's underground forges and furnaces. In the heart of the valley stands Saruman's citadel, the black tower called Orthanc where Gandalf had been imprisoned. As dismal as it is, it is merely a pale copy of Barad-dûr, the Dark Tower of Sauron in Mordor. As Gandalf leads the company through the gates, they are astonished to find that the tunnel leading to the fortress is in ruins and the surrounding land is flooded. Though Orthanc still stands, the power of Saruman has been overthrown, though by what instrumentality the company cannot imagine. They are more startled still to see two small figures relaxing among the ruins - Merry and Pippin! Merry reports that Treebeard and his fellow Ents have destroyed Saruman's works and imprisoned the wizard in his own tower, along with the turncoat Wormtongue. Gandalf and Théoden and their company then ride to the other side of the tower to meet Treebeard and his fellow Ents and to enjoy the sumptuous repast that the hobbits have prepared for them.

## Chapter 9 - Flotsam and Jetsam

Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli join Pippin and Merry for a fine dinner and enjoy for the first time in many days some pipe-weed that Pippin found floating in the ruins. As they smoke, the hobbits tell the story of their adventures with the orcs and the Ents. As they approached Isengard on the shoulders of Treebeard, they saw more than ten thousand of Saruman's warriors, orcs and men, leaving Orthanc to attack the ford and Helm's Deep, leaving Saruman virtually alone. The Ents then marched up to the gates, tore them to pieces, and began to destroy the walls. Saruman fled to the tower and turned on his machinery, hoping to deter the Ents with his fires. The Ents found Orthanc impregnable because of the magic that was embedded in it, but they were undeterred. Treebeard set them to work digging trenches and diverting the Isen River and many streams. At midnight Treebeard gave the order and the Ents broke the dams they had built, filling the valley of Isengard with water and flooding the horrifying machinery under the ground. The Ents then diverted the Isen back into its normal course and the flood waters filled every cavern beneath Saruman's tower, leaving the treacherous wizard imprisoned in his own fortress. The next morning Wormtongue appeared, expecting to be received gladly by Saruman, and was astonished to find nothing but ruins where Isengard used to be. He tried to flee, but Treebeard captured him and sent him into the tower to be with his master. Once the tale is told, Aragorn is puzzled by one thing - the presence of pipe-weed from the Shire in far-off Isengard. He concludes that Saruman must even have spies in the Shire.

## Chapter 10 - The Voice of Saruman

Before the company continues on their journey, Gandalf wants to speak with Saruman. He warns his friends that the old wizard is still powerful, especially because of the magic of his voice, and that they should not take him lightly. Gandalf and Aragorn, Théoden and Éomer, Legolas and Gimli ascend the steps to the door of Orthanc, leaving the hobbits and the men of Rohan on the ground below. Saruman appears on the balcony and speaks in gentle, soothing tones, tempting

Théoden and the men of Rohan to ignore Gandalf's counsel and resume their alliance with him. Gimli's harsh words break the spell and are seconded by Éomer. When Théoden finally responds to Saruman's offer of peace, he tells the old wizard that the only peace he wishes is that which will come with the destruction of Sauron and all who stand with him. Saruman reacts with wrath and insults, then in a last-ditch effort tries to cast his spell over Gandalf. But the White Wizard only laughs at him, offering instead freedom and protection if Saruman will yield up his staff and the key to Orthanc. Saruman refuses, and Gandalf casts him out of the Wizard's Council and confines him to the tower in which he is imprisoned. At his command Saruman's staff splits in two. Suddenly a large crystal ball falls from an upper window, thrown down by Wormtongue in an effort to kill Gandalf. The projectile misses its target and rolls away, only to be picked up by Pippin, who turns it over to Gandalf. As the company leaves Isengard they again encounter Treebeard, allowing Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli to see an Ent for the first time. He assures Gandalf that he and his fellows will guard Orthanc well to be sure that Saruman does not escape.

## Chapter 11 - The Palantír

As the company leaves Isengard, Gandalf warns of the necessity of moving in secrecy in the future because the Eye of Sauron will surely be turned in their direction after the destruction of Saruman's fortress. That night Merry and Pippin wonder about the significance of the crystal ball now in Gandalf's possession, and Pippin insists that he wants another look at it. Long after everyone else is asleep, Pippin creeps over to Gandalf and absconds with the object of his desire. He sneaks away and looks into the globe, which glows with strange fire. Soon he passes out and before he knows what is happening, the entire camp is awake. Gandalf rouses Pippin and questions him, discovering that the hobbit had seen the nine Nazgûl flying around a dark tower, then had been questioned by Sauron himself. Fortunately, he had fainted in fear before he was able to tell the Dark Lord anything of value. Gandalf then takes the globe, which is the powerful *palantír* of Orthanc, and gives it to Aragorn for safekeeping because it belongs to his family by right. The two realize that the globe was the means of communication between Sauron and Saruman and understand the importance of keeping its location secret, especially from Pippin, who is in danger because he has handled it and looked into its depths.

As they make plans for their departure the following morning, a shadow passes over them; the Nazgûl have crossed out of Mordor and are searching for the company. All immediately take to horse and flee as quickly as possible. As they speed away on Shadowfax, Gandalf tells Pippin that the palantír is one of seven magical stones that allow the bearer to communicate with the others, and that this power was what Sauron had used to bring Saruman under his sway. Gandalf explains to him that the Nazgûl they saw was seeking Saruman, whom Sauron now believes to be a traitor to his cause. The wizard then urges Shadowfax on as quickly as possible toward Minas Tirith.

## BOOK IV

### Chapter 1 - The Taming of Sméagol

The narrative now shifts to Frodo and Sam on their lonely way toward Mordor three days after abandoning the company. The two have been struggling to find their way, hemmed in on one side by steep mountains and on the other by fetid marshes. They now find themselves at the top of

a cliff with no discernible way forward. Gradually they work their way downward, finally using the rope given to Sam by the elves to lower themselves to the base of the last cliff. During their journey they encounter both a thunderstorm and the passage of a Nazgûl above them, shrieking and searching for the Ring.

They wonder whether Gollum is still on their trail, though they have heard nothing behind them for several days, but soon they catch sight of him again crawling on hands and feet down a sheer vertical rock face. A dozen feet from the base he falls, and Sam leaps upon him, but finds that the scrawny creature is too strong for him. Frodo joins the fray, draws Sting, his sword, and Gollum relaxes his grip on Sam. The pathetic creature grovels and whimpers, begging for mercy, and Frodo convinces Sam not to kill him. Instead, they will take him prisoner and use him to find the way to Mordor, where Gollum has been before. Gollum fears to return to Mordor, but even as he refuses, he hears a voice summoning him and quakes before its invincible power. In the twilight Gollum tries to escape, but Sam stops him and ties him with the elven rope, which causes the creature intolerable pain. Finally Frodo insists that he swear by his Precious - the Ring - to obey the Ring-bearer and never to surrender the Precious to Sauron or his minions. Sam then unties him and the three proceed on their way, following Gollum, who knows a way through the marshes unknown even to the orcs.

## Chapter 2 - The Passage of the Marshes

They travel for two days down a gully that leads them gradually to the edge of the marshes below the mountains through which they had come. When they reach the marshland, Gollum explains that they could move northward to a firm dry plain where they could make their way quickly to the gates of Mordor, but assures them that the route is watched constantly by Sauron and is heavily traveled by his armies of orcs. The Dead Marshes, dangerous and forbidding though they may be, are much safer if one wants to avoid detection. In the dark of night the travelers suddenly see lights swirling all around them. Gollum tells them that these are the lights of the corpses that are decaying beneath the surface of the water - men and elves and orcs who died in battle outside the gates of Mordor long ago; even now their faces can be seen under the slime. As soon as they get clear of the worst of the marshes the moon comes out, but with it comes the fearsome flight of a Ringwraith, sending them cowering on their faces to the ground. They continue once the moon sets, but Sam notices that Frodo keeps falling behind; the Ring is becoming an increasingly heavy burden the closer they get to Mordor. Frodo also senses the power of the Eye of Sauron drawing him. They are now in sight of the walls of Mordor, separated from Sauron's lair by less than a dozen miles of wasteland. The three sleep while waiting for night to fall, but Sam wakes to find Gollum hovering over Frodo and having an argument with himself; he is debating whether to take the Ring or to keep his promise. As he reaches for Frodo's neck, Sam speaks and Gollum quickly withdraws. When Frodo awakens, he tells Gollum that he need only lead them to the gate of Mordor and then he will be free to go anywhere but to Sauron.

## Chapter 3 - The Black Gate Is Closed

The next day they reach the pass leading into Mordor, which is guarded by a great iron gate between two watchtowers. Armed guards are everywhere and troops of orcs are ready to emerge if called. How are Frodo and Sam to penetrate such defenses? Gollum then tells the two hobbits that

he knows another way into Mordor. He had escaped from Sauron's clutches by way of a narrow stair called Cirith Ungol. He professes not to know whether or not it is guarded; Sam doesn't trust him, but Frodo thinks long and hard before agreeing to follow Gollum's advice. As he considers, four Black Riders circle high above them and return to Mordor. Frodo finally decides to go with Gollum, but as they wait for the sun to set, more and more soldiers gather at the gates of Mordor, ever swelling the ranks of the Dark Lord.

#### Chapter 4 - Of Herbs and Stewed Rabbit

As Gollum and the hobbits travel southward, the land becomes more pleasant the farther they go from the gates of Mordor. Frodo and Sam have eaten nothing but lembas bread for many days, and Gollum has fed himself with who knows what horrors, but the fresher land promises better subsistence. Gollum catches and kills two rabbits, which Sam then stews with herbs he finds growing in the area; to him and Frodo, this is a feast indeed, though Gollum strongly objects to anyone who would ruin good meat by cooking it. After they finish eating, Sam realizes that he has left the fire burning and that the smoke is now visible. He quickly stamps it out, but soon they hear voices around them. They are astonished to see four men, who quickly surround them. The leader among them introduces himself as Faramir of Gondor. When the hobbits tell him something of their journey and speak of their original company, the name of Boromir is one they recognize. Lacking time to speak further, Faramir leaves two of his men to guard Frodo and Sam. Frodo soon discovers that the two are Rangers who have been assigned to harry the men who have allied themselves with Sauron. The ensuing battle soon approaches their hiding place. The hobbits are frightened by the cacophony of war, but soon a beast comes crashing through the underbrush like nothing they had ever seen - an elephant! Sam had long wished to see one, and the thrill of the moment almost causes him to forget the terror the sight engenders.

#### Chapter 5 - The Window on the West

When Faramir returns from the battle, he interrogates Frodo about his quest and the company of which he was a part. Frodo tells him as much as he is able, though he conceals any knowledge of the Ring. Faramir is dissatisfied because he knows that Frodo is hiding something from him. Sam leaps to Frodo's defense, but Faramir calms him down. He then identifies himself as Boromir's brother; he knows his brother is dead because the boat that bore his corpse had passed by river down to Gondor and thence to the sea beyond. This knowledge fills Frodo with fear because he thinks that if Boromir is dead, the other members of the company must have perished also. Faramir comforts him, pointing out that someone who valued him must have prepared Boromir's body for its final voyage. Faramir by now believes Frodo's narrative and orders his men to take the two hobbits with them to a place of safety for the night.

As they travel Faramir learns more from Frodo, including the shocking news of the death of Gandalf in the depths of Moria. By now the young warrior has guessed the secret Frodo hides, though he does not know what form it takes. He realizes that Boromir must have tried to steal it and assures Frodo that he has no desire to follow his brother in such a pursuit. Frodo is inclined to trust him, but he keeps his secret, believing an excess of caution is better than foolish openness. Sam realizes that they have lost track of Gollum, though he thinks that he occasionally catches sight of a shady figure following them through the woods. As they approach the hideout of the men of

Gondor, the hobbits are blindfolded and led behind a waterfall into a large cave. After dinner Faramir and Frodo talk further, Frodo of the heroic exploits of Boromir during their journey and Faramir of the decline of the kings of Gondor and the rise of the stewards (his father is the twenty-sixth of that line) to a position of power. He speaks of the alliance with the horsemen of Rohan and the long war against the powers of the Dark Lord - a war that they are steadily losing. Sam then speaks of the elves and their experiences in Lothlórien. Inadvertently he turns the conversation to Boromir's attraction to the Ring, saying aloud what Frodo has been trying so hard to keep from mentioning. Frodo is aghast, but Faramir, who now understands what lies behind the riddles that have clouded their conversation, assures them that he will use his knowledge to protect Frodo and advance his quest rather than seeking the Ring for himself; he does not even desire to see it lest it prove too much of a temptation.

## Chapter 6 - The Forbidden Pool

Just before dawn Faramir wakes Frodo and takes him high into the mountain to where he can look down into a pool below. There they see Gollum diving into the pool. Faramir asks Frodo whether he should have the creature killed, but Frodo tells him that Gollum is no threat to the men of Gondor, but only seeks fish in the pool. Faramir insists that Gollum must be killed or captured, and Frodo goes down to the pool to talk him into coming with him. Soon Faramir's men capture and bind Gollum and take him to the captain. Faramir makes him swear never to reveal the location of their hideout and turns him over to Frodo. Faramir asks where Frodo intends to go, and Frodo tells him that Gollum is leading them to a secret pass into Mordor through Cirith Ungol. Faramir warns him not to go near that horrible place, though he cannot say why his people consider it to be so dreadful.

## Chapter 7 - Journey to the Cross-Roads

That morning the two hobbits and Gollum leave the men of Gondor with thanks for their hospitality and kindness. Faramir warns them to keep to the edge of the forest, but says that his scouts had surprisingly seen no signs of life or movement in the region toward Mordor. After two days on the woodland path they leave the forest and begin to travel only by night despite the fact that the days are dim and dreary. Late that afternoon they reach the crossroads leading to Cirith Ungol.

## Chapter 8 - The Stairs of Cirith Ungol

As they begin the ascent into the mountains on the other side of the crossroads, Frodo feels his burden becoming heavier. Soon in the distance they see the ruins of Minas Morgul, the city of the evil men who, having been absorbed by the power of the Dark Lord, had become the nine Ringwraiths. Frodo is powerfully drawn by the Ring toward what used to be the lovely Tower of the Moon, but Sam and Gollum prevent him from crossing the bridge into the city. As they rush up the path away from Minas Morgul they hear a loud crash and see a red light, and the earth trembles as a great army marches from the city toward Gondor under the command of the king of the Ringwraiths. He pauses at the bridge, but is unable to sense the presence of Frodo or the Ring.

After climbing further into the darkness, they reach a set of stairs cut into the mountain and follow Gollum steeply upward. After traveling for several hours along a narrow path, they reach a

second stairway, much longer but easier to climb than the first. After a brief few hours' sleep, the tunnel into Mordor comes into view. Frodo tells Gollum that he has fulfilled his part of the bargain and is free to go, but the creature insists that they still need him to show them the way forward.

## Chapter 9 - Shelob's Lair

As they draw closer to the tunnel entrance, they detect a hideous odor, like the filth of a band of orcs. Gollum insists, however, that this is the only way into Mordor apart from the gate. The tunnel is pitch black, and the hobbits struggle upward along the smooth path with only their sense of touch to aid them. They encounter side passages, and at one point they pass an opening that seems to be the source of both the horrific smell and the darkness. As they walk forward, they realize that Gollum is no longer near them. They hear a sound behind them, and Sam reminds Frodo of the light given to him by Galadriel. He pulls it from his bosom, and to their horror they see two multifaceted eyes advancing toward them that seem to be deterred not at all by Galadriel's Phial. Realizing that flight is futile, Frodo draws Sting and advances toward the fearsome eyes; much to his surprise, the eyes dim and the creature flees from them. The two hobbits then run for the exit from the tunnel, but find it blocked by a thick, strong spider web. Sam's sword is unable to sever the strands of the web, but Sting cuts through them with ease, and soon Frodo and Sam are again on the run.

Unknown to them, the tunnels under Cirith Ungol are the habitation of Shelob, an evil creature in the form of a great spider, older than Sauron, who feeds upon all living things and lusts to devour everything that breathes. Gollum had encountered her in the past and had bowed before her, promising to bring her food, which had become scarce in the dead lands surrounding Mordor. Now he had kept his promise. His plan was to lead the hobbits to the great spider and, when she was done with them, to seize the Precious for himself. Sauron, meanwhile, was happy to have her guard the secret passage into his kingdom and kept her fed by sending her orcs, of which he had plenty, and prisoners for whom he had no use. As Frodo and Sam run for the exit, Frodo outruns his friend, and soon Sam sees the great spider emerge from a tunnel between them. As she rapidly pursues Frodo, Sam cries out to warn him, but suddenly finds himself muzzled by a strong grip from behind - he is in the traitorous Gollum's clutches. The two struggle and Sam manages to strike a blow on his enemy's arm, causing Gollum to flee back down the tunnel. Sam then turns in the direction in which Shelob had pursued his master.

## Chapter 10 - The Choices of Master Samwise

By the time Sam reaches Frodo he is helpless, bound by webs and being dragged off by the great spider. He picks up Frodo's sword, laying useless by his side, and cuts off one of the spider's claws, penetrates one of her compound eyes, then finds himself beneath the belly of the monster. Shelob rises to crush him, but he raises Sting just in time, and Shelob is pierced by the force of her own strength descending on the tiny hobbit. She leaps aside and prepares to deliver the death blow to the courageous hobbit. But Sam then takes out the Phial of Galadriel and speaks the words he had heard in Lothlórien. The Phial glows and Shelob is blinded; she shrieks with pain and stumbles back down the tunnel, descending to its depths, never to trouble Frodo and Sam again.

When Sam returns to his master, he finds him unresponsive. Shelob had stung him, and even when Sam cuts the webs that bind him, he feels no pulse nor detects no breath. Believing that Frodo is dead, Sam composes his body and prepares to carry on the quest that his master had undertaken.

He takes the Ring from Frodo's neck and puts it around his own, then moves forward to the summit that reveals the path leading into Mordor. Suddenly he hears the sound of orcs coming up behind him from the tunnel while others approach from the direction of the pass. The only way he can think of to escape them is to put on the Ring. Sam hides and listens to the voices of the orcs. They have discovered Frodo's body, and before Sam can get to him they have carried him back into the tunnel, intending to take him to their captain in Cirith Ungol. As Sam listens to the commanders of the two orcish armies, he finds that Frodo is not dead, only stunned by Shelob's poison. Sam, still wearing the Ring, pursues the orcs toward Cirith Ungol but is not fast enough. The gate of the fortress is slammed in his face, leaving him on the outside and Frodo inside, the prisoner of the orcs.

## **PART THREE - THE RETURN OF THE KING**

### **BOOK V**

#### **Chapter 1 - Minas Tirith**

The narrative now returns to Gandalf and Pippin as they race toward Gondor, where Sauron's forces are preparing to attack. They enter the seven-tiered city of Minas Tirith, now in a state of decay, and are ushered into the presence of Denethor, the Steward of Gondor and the father of Boromir and Faramir. Denethor demands of Pippin details of Boromir's death, and the hobbit tells him of his son's bravery. He then offers his sword in the cause of Gondor in the coming battle. Gandalf and Pippin are then shown to their quarters, after which Gandalf goes to attend the lords' council while Pippin receives instruction in the ways of Gondor from Beregond, a soldier of the Guard, who in turn questions Pippin about his adventures. Beregond tells him that the elderly, women, and children are leaving the city in anticipation of the battle that is to come. After a hearty meal, Beregond goes to attend to his duties and sends Pippin to find his son, who will be happy to show him around the lower levels of the city. They go to the Great Gate and watch as almost three thousand soldiers from the surrounding lands, far fewer than hoped for, come to aid in the defense of Minas Tirith. After Pippin returns to his room, Gandalf warns him that the Darkness has come.

#### **Chapter 2 - The Passing of the Grey Company**

Meanwhile, Aragorn, Merry, Gimli, and Legolas return with Théoden to Edoras. On the way they encounter a troop of thirty Rangers from the North accompanied by the two sons of Elrond who have come to help against the Enemy. One of them gives Aragorn a staff with a banner made for him by Arwen and reminds him that, in the last extremity, he must remember the Paths of the Dead. They spend a night at Helm's Deep, and the next morning Merry offers his service to Théoden, who appoints him as his squire. Soon Théoden rides for Edoras at the head of fifteen hundred men while Aragorn, Gimli, and Legolas make for the dreaded Paths of the Dead.

After the king and his soldiers ride off, Aragorn explains to Legolas and Gimli that during the night he looked into the Orthanc stone, the Palantír that used to belong to Saruman, which he succeeded in submitting to his will. Through the stone he revealed his true identity to Sauron and showed him the reforged sword of Elendil, which imparted a sense of dread and panic to the Dark Lord. Aragorn is determined to follow the Paths of the Dead to the Stone of Erech, where warriors of long ago who betrayed Isildur by refusing to fight against Sauron are condemned to wander

forever until the time comes when they can fulfill their oath. He hopes to enlist them in the battle against the Dark Lord. Aragorn and his company, including the Rangers, the sons of Elrond, and Gimli and Legolas, ride swiftly to Edoras, arriving before Théoden and his men, where they are greeted with joy by Éowyn before continuing their journey in the morning. That night she tries to talk Aragorn out of pursuing his plan and, failing to do so, begs to be allowed to accompany him as a warrior. He insists that she remain in Edoras to fulfill the command given her by her king.

Aragorn and his company then pass through the Door into the Paths of the Dead. There he summons the ghosts of warriors long dead to the Stone of Erech. Gimli, at the rear of the line of march, then senses a presence behind him; the Dead are following Aragorn and his men. When they arrive at the Stone the King of the Dead swears that he and his men will fight with Aragorn until Sauron and his forces have been vanquished, and Aragorn promises that they will then finally be free of the curse upon them.

### Chapter 3 - The Muster of Rohan

Merry rides with Théoden as the Riders of Rohan gather their forces together. They soon find that Éowyn has led the women and children to safety, but when they ask her about Aragorn, she tells them that he has gone to the Paths of the Dead; none have ever returned thence, so they fear that he is lost. When they make camp, a messenger from Denethor of Gondor arrives begging their help, as Minas Tirith is about to be besieged. Théoden promises to come the following day with at least six thousand horsemen. The next morning Théoden summons Merry, releases him from his service, and tells him to stay behind with Éowyn. He refuses, insisting that he will walk to Gondor if necessary, and the king agrees to allow him to accompany them as far as Edoras. Éowyn sees that he is suitably equipped for battle. When they get to Edoras, Théoden orders Merry to remain behind despite his strenuous objections. Soon, however, a young Rider offers to take him on his horse. The Rider introduces himself as Dernhelm, though in reality it is Éowyn in disguise; she, too, is unwilling to be left behind as the men of Rohan go to war.

### Chapter 4 - The Siege of Gondor

Meanwhile, Pippin is summoned by Denethor and assigned to serve as his squire, waiting on him and carrying messages. He is told to go to the armory and don the appropriate gear. As the hours pass, a deepening shadow from the East covers the land. After sunset, Pippin is enjoying a meal with Beregond and suddenly they see five Nazgûl circling round the city. A horn then sounds as Faramir and four of his men approach the gates. The Black Riders swoop down toward them, but are driven off by the magic of Gandalf, riding Shadowfax. Faramir is then summoned into his father's presence, where he gives an account of his journeys - the movement of the Enemy, the battle against his warriors, and last of all the encounter with Frodo and Sam. When Gandalf hears that they have headed toward Cirith Ungol, he is fearful that the Enemy may already have the Ring.

Denethor shows no appreciation for Faramir's feats, but instead openly wishes that he had died in the place of Boromir, his father's favorite. He insists that Boromir would have brought him the Ring, but Gandalf assures him that the elder son would have kept it for himself and been destroyed by it. Denethor responds that sending the Ring into Mordor in the keeping of a little hobbit was the height of folly; it should have been sent to Gondor for safekeeping. Gandalf argues that even the great Denethor would have been overthrown by the drawing power of the Ring; after

all, Gandalf himself had refused it when Frodo offered it to him. Before Gandalf and Pippin go to bed, Gandalf shares his hope that Frodo is still free; he reasons that Sauron has begun his attack earlier than intended for some reason, and that reason may be the use of the palantír by Aragorn. He also deduces that Gollum is with Frodo and Sam and may have engaged in some treachery to direct them toward Cirith Ungol.

In the morning Denethor sends Faramir to reinforce the fords at Osgiliath. As he departs, Gandalf warns him not to throw his life away foolishly or in bitterness because he will be needed back home soon. Meanwhile, the defenders of Minas Tirith wonder whether the Riders of Rohan will arrive in time. That night news comes that the captain of the Black Riders is advancing on Osgiliath at the head of a great army; few have any hope that Faramir can hold the fords against him. By the next morning Faramir has retreated, though exacting heavy casualties from the Enemy. At this point Gandalf mounts Shadowfax and rides to his aid. Later Gandalf returns, guarding wagons carrying the wounded, and reports that the Enemy is approaching the city while Faramir is holding the rear so the retreat does not become a rout. Gandalf advises a counterattack with the available horsemen, but Denethor is as reluctant to take the wizard's advice as he is to give credit to Faramir for his bravery. As the men of Gondor approach the gates, the Enemy descends upon them in force and they break into a run. Finally Denethor orders a sortie, led by Gandalf, who drives off the Nazgûl; the attackers are thrown into confusion. The slaughter of orcs and men is short-lived, however, as Denethor summons his riders back into the city. The last to enter is Faramir, gravely wounded by the dart of a Black Rider and carried by one of his men.

Minas Tirith is now under siege with no sign of the Riders of Rohan on the horizon. Meanwhile, the Enemy receives reinforcements daily. Soon Sauron's forces dig themselves in and move up great engines of war capable of casting missiles over the walls of the fortress. Once the catapults are in place, the bombardment begins with balls of fire shot over the walls and into the city. While the defenders are busy putting out fires, the Enemy sends another barrage - the heads of those who died at the fords of Osgiliath. As if this were not depressing enough, soon the Nazgûl begin circling above the city like enormous vultures looking down at their prey. Denethor, meanwhile, sits in despair by Faramir's side, furious with himself, with Gandalf, and indeed with all the world. While Denethor mourns at his son's bedside, Gandalf takes command of the city's defenses. As the siege engines are moved toward the walls, the defenders retreat in confusion.

Having given up all hope, Denethor releases Pippin from his duties and tells him to go find Gandalf, but the noble hobbit refuses to be released and promises to be at the Steward's side should the Enemy enter the citadel. Denethor then orders his servants to carry Faramir down to the mausoleum that holds the mortal remains of the Stewards of Gondor. He tells them to lay Faramir on an empty stone, then he lies down beside him, tells them to cover the two with a cloth, pour oil on it, surround it with wood, and be prepared to set fire to all when he gives the command. Realizing that the Steward is mad, Pippin rushes out to find Gandalf. He finds him at the forefront of the battle, where an enormous battering ram is approaching the gates under the command of the Lord of the Nazgûl. As Pippin watches in horror, the ram shatters the gates of Minas Tirith and the great Black Rider enters the city. All flee in panic except Gandalf, who withstands him on the noble steed Shadowfax. At the height of their confrontation a rooster crows, followed by the horns of the advancing Riders of Rohan.

## Chapter 5 - The Ride of the Rohirrim

The story now returns to the forces of Rohan as they travel with all speed to the relief of Gondor. Merry, under the protection of Dernhelm, has been riding for four days with no sleep. Because both of them are unauthorized participants, Merry is ignored and Dernhelm never speaks a word. One night Merry sneaks out to the spot where Théoden and Éomer are holding council. They have made a pact with a group of Wild Men who have agreed to scout for them and show them a way to the gate of Gondor that bypasses the encampments of the Enemy. As they approach the city, they realize that it is under siege and on fire, but are pleased to see that the forces of Sauron are entirely preoccupied with their attack and are paying no attention to their rear. Théoden then rises in his stirrups and calls for his men to charge, and soon they are wreaking havoc, slaying orcs left and right and scattering the Enemy in confusion.

## Chapter 6 - The Battle of the Pelennor Fields

Confronted by the magic of Gandalf, the Lord of the Nazgûl leaves the city to rally his troops. Théoden, in his enthusiasm, rides far ahead of the main body of his men and leads a charge against men from the North. The Northmen are routed, but in the process Théoden's horse is shot by a dart from the King of the Ringwraiths and falls to the ground. The king is pinned beneath him and soon finds himself face to face with the dreaded Lord of the Black Riders. At that moment Dernhelm strides toward him and challenges the horrible creature. The Lord of the Nazgûl mocks the brave warrior, boasting that no mortal man may hinder him as he makes war. Dernhelm then begins to laugh and identifies herself as a woman - Éowyn, the king's niece. The Black Rider pauses, and Merry, who has been thrown to the ground, creeps toward them. The monster on which the Nazgûl rides launches itself toward Éowyn, who skillfully cuts off its head with her sword. Just as the Lord of the Ringwraiths is about to fall on Éowyn, Merry crawls up behind him and drives his sword into the back of his knee. The distraction is enough for Éowyn to thrust her weapon into the vacant face of the King of the Black Riders, killing the one who had just boasted of his immortality. As Théoden breathes his last, he names Éomer as his successor, and the new King of Rohan leads his troops in a renewed slaughter of the Enemy. But Éowyn is dead as well, and the men bear her and her uncle toward the gate of Minas Tirith. They are met by the Prince of Dol Amroth, who marvels that a woman should join in such a battle. As he gazes at her beauty, he realizes that she is still alive. Meanwhile, Éomer's initial attack is being repelled by reinforcements that seem to arrive without end. Black ships come sailing up the river. The forces of the Enemy are filled with renewed energy while the defenders of Minas Tirith fall into deep despair until the ships land, and from them emerge Aragorn and his company, including Legolas, Gimli, the sons of Elrond, and the Rangers. After hours of hard fighting the Enemy is routed, and by nightfall not one of the warriors of Sauron remains alive on the field of battle.

## Chapter 7 - The Pyre of Denethor

While the battle is still raging, Pippin reaches Gandalf, who is about to ride to the fray, and tells him that Denethor in his madness, is about to burn alive both Faramir and himself. Gandalf pulls Pippin up onto Shadowfax and the two hasten to the tombs, where they find Beregond holding off with his sword the servants who are about to light the pyre on which Denethor and Faramir lie.

Furious at this attempt to thwart his will, Denethor rises from the pyre and attacks Beregond, but Gandalf uses his magic to fling the sword from the hand of the madman. He rescues Faramir in the nick of time, but Denethor then reveals that he possesses a palantír like the one Aragorn took from Saruman. When he speaks, it is obvious that he is completely under the sway of the Dark Lord. Finally, in his madness, he seizes a torch from one of his servants, leaps onto the funeral pyre, and sets it alight, burning himself to death with the palantír in his hands. The roof of the chamber containing the tombs then collapses into ruin and Gandalf and Beregond bear Faramir to the Houses of Healing.

## Chapter 8 - The Houses of Healing

With the battle won, the unconscious Éowyn and the body of Théoden are borne inside the city. Merry accompanies them and in the process meets Pippin; the two are overjoyed to see one another safe and sound. Merry, whose arm hangs limp after his sword thrust against the King of the Black Riders, is escorted to the Houses of Healing as well. The physicians of Gondor can find no cure for Merry and Éowyn, victims of the Shadow cast by the Nazgûl, nor for the fever into which Faramir had fallen. Even Gandalf is unable to help, but Ioreth, a woman caring for the sick, reminds him that the kings of Gondor of old had the gift of healing. The wizard goes to find Aragorn, but the Ranger is reluctant to enter the city, fearing that it might cause controversy with the Steward; he therefore comes with Gandalf in disguise. When he reaches the Houses of Healing, he orders Ioreth to gather an herb called kingsfoil, which he uses to treat Faramir. When the new Steward of Gondor recovers, he recognizes Aragorn and acknowledges him as the rightful king; soon the entire city knows that the king has arrived. Aragorn turns next to Éowyn and revives her as well, though he knows that part of her despair is the result of unrequited love that he can never return. Gandalf and Pippin then rush to see Merry and find that Aragorn has healed him also; not surprisingly, the first words he speaks when he wakes up involve asking for dinner. Aragorn and Gandalf then tell the keepers of the Houses of Healing that Merry should be able to get out of bed the next day, but that Faramir and Éowyn should be kept in bed for ten days at least. When Aragorn goes out into the city, he is besieged by people seeking his healing power for their sick and wounded.

## Chapter 9 - The Last Debate

The next morning Gimli and Legolas go in search of Merry and Pippin. They then tell them of their adventures after passing through the Paths of the Dead. Aragorn led his followers to meet the hosts of Mordor, whom they routed with the aid of the ghost warriors. After victory was secured, Aragorn released the King of the Dead and his warriors from their oath and sent them to their final rest, while he and his followers freed the slaves held captive by the Dark Lord and took the best of the ships of Mordor, then sailed toward Gondor.

Meanwhile, Prince Imrahil of Dol Amroth and Éomer are meeting with Aragorn, Gandalf, and the sons of Elrond to discuss strategy. Gandalf warns them that victory against the overwhelming power and numerical advantage of Mordor can never be achieved by force of arms. The others object that he seems to be advocating going into a defensive shell, but he instead insists that the only hope is found in the quest of Frodo and Sam to destroy the One Ring, the foundation of Sauron's power. The gathered forces must therefore confront the enormous might of Sauron's armies in order to keep his attention focused on them rather than on his own land, where the real

threat to his dominance lies. This may well be a suicide mission, but certain death awaits them if they fail to act. All agree and prepare to leave two days hence with an army of seven thousand, pitifully few in comparison to the might of Mordor, while leaving three thousand to defend Minas Tirith.

## Chapter 10 - The Black Gate Opens

As the army prepares to leave with Aragorn and Gandalf in the lead, accompanied by Gimli and Legolas, Merry is left behind to recuperate while Pippin marches with the men of Gondor. Some among the leaders argue that they should direct their forces against Minas Morgul, surely an easier target than the Morannon, the great Gate of Mordor, but Gandalf reminds them that, according to Faramir, Frodo had gone that way; the last thing they want to do is draw Sauron's attention in the direction of the Ring-bearer. Three days into their march they encounter an ambush set by orcs, but they had been warned by their scouts and easily drive them off. From that time on, however, the Nazgûl fly high over their army, tracing their every movement. When they reach the Morannon, they line up in battle array and the captains ride forward, issuing a challenge in the name of the King of Gondor, demanding that Sauron come out and face justice for the evils he has done. In response, the door of the great gate is thrown open and from it rides a huge man on a black horse - the Lieutenant of the Tower of Barad-dûr, the Mouth of Sauron. He mocks Aragorn, but the rightful king fixes his eye on him and forces him to back down. He then turns to Gandalf and shows him Sam's sword and Frodo's elven cloak and mithril chain mail, informing them that the two hobbits are prisoners of the Dark Tower and will be tortured long unless the forces before the gate retreat and Gondor become tributary to Mordor, essentially becoming enslaved by the Dark Lord. Gandalf then unveils his staff, the light of which blinds the messenger of Sauron, and takes from him the property of the two hobbits. He then utterly rejects Sauron's terms and warns the messenger that he is courting sudden death. The enraged messenger then retreats, but the great gates swing open to reveal a great army ready to attack the forces arrayed before the Morannon. At the same time hordes of orcs sweep in from both sides while the Nazgûl descend from above; the forces of Aragorn are trapped in a vise from which escape seems impossible. Pippin, in the front lines, sees a troll attacking Beregond. He kills the troll with his sword, but the monster falls on him. Just before he passes out, he hears a cry go up: "The eagles are coming!"

## BOOK VI

### Chapter 1 - The Tower of Cirith Ungol

The narrative now returns to Frodo and Sam. The former has been captured by orcs and taken to Cirith Ungol, while the latter, in possession of the Ring, is outside the gate of the fortress with no idea about how to get in and rescue his master. Sam, looking out on Mount Doom in the distance, considers using the Ring, but knows that this close to Mordor he would surely be seen by Sauron. He then hears great clamor inside the fortress - the two bands of orcs are fighting one another. The gate opens and two orcs emerge, running from the fray, and are shot. Sam then rushes toward the gate, but is stopped by two Watchers who exert a force that prevents enemies from entering or leaving, but he takes out the Phial of Galadriel, and the light overpowers the Watchers. Sam is now inside the tower of Cirith Ungol, but all he sees around him are dead orcs. As he climbs

the steps of the tower searching for Frodo, he encounters one orc, who flees from him in terror. When he reaches the pinnacle, he hears two orcs arguing; the fight that led the orcs to destroy one another started over Frodo's mithril coat. The two suddenly run down the stairs, carrying with them the prizes that they will later display to Aragorn at the Morannon. Sam, all alone and unable to find Frodo, begins to sing. When he pauses, he hears a faint answer. One of the orcs returns to command silence, and Sam realizes that Frodo's prison can only be reached by a ladder. He draws Sting, kills the orc, and finds Frodo, naked and shivering, in the corner of the highest room in the tower. Sam gives him the Ring, then the two dress in orc garb to prepare for their journey down into Mordor. As they pass the Watchers, again using the Phial of Galadriel, the gates collapse into rubble and a Nazgûl swoops screaming from the sky.

## Chapter 2 - The Land of Shadow

Sam and Frodo run from the tower as fast as they can to escape from the Nazgûl, then hide in a thicket when a band of orcs ride past in search of them. As they trudge deeper into Mordor, Frodo becomes increasingly tired as the burden of the Ring grows greater. Soon they emerge from the mountains and look down on the plain of Gorgoroth, and Mount Doom belching smoke and fire forty miles distant. The plain is filled with camps of orcs and men, and the situation appears hopeless. As Sam and Frodo move northward, they encounter two orcs, quarreling as usual. From their conversation the hobbits learn that Gollum is still alive and that recent battles have gone against the Dark Lord. One orc kills the other, and Frodo and Sam realize they have had a narrow escape from the hordes who are hunting them. They lay concealed until nightfall while Sam tells Frodo about his adventures with Shelob and the orcs. Finally Sam gives Frodo the last of their food and water and goes to seek more while his master sleeps. He finds a trickle of water, but as he is filling his bottle, he hears a sound nearby; Gollum is again following them, but Sam drives him off. As they travel, they hear a company of orcs coming up behind them. They crouch behind their shields and for some time are ignored, but one of the slave-drivers mistakes them for orcs and tells them to fall in. They march with the orcs for some miles, which takes them north of their destination. Soon others companies of orcs arrive, and the confusion that sets in when the companies converge allows the two hobbits to escape.

## Chapter 3 - Mount Doom

As Frodo and Sam hide from the orcs and get some rest, Sam realizes that they have only enough food and water to get them to their destination, but nothing to sustain them on the journey back again. Accepting the probability of impending death, he determines to press on. The closer they come to Mount Doom and Sauron's tower of Barad-dûr, the more Frodo feels the weight of the Ring; it not only tires him, but also increasingly draws him under its power. In order to lighten their burdens, they divest themselves of their orc disguises and throw off their shields and even Sam's cooking pans. They no longer attempt to conceal themselves, but fortunately the attention of Sauron is completely focused on the lands outside the gates of Mordor; he does not dream that the Ring-bearer is under his very nose. Sam, meanwhile, has been giving Frodo most of their food and all of their water, but he realizes that he will have to carry the weakening Ring-bearer on the last stage of the journey.

Halfway up the mountain they reach a path that leads them to their destination. As they struggle upward, Gollum leaps upon them and tries to take the Ring from Frodo, but Frodo manifests strength from an unknown source and throws the pathetic creature off. As Frodo trudges toward the summit of the mountain, Sam drives Gollum off with his sword. He is tempted to kill him, but for some reason refrains, and as he turns to follow his master, Gollum follows at a distance. Soon they enter a cave leading to the mountain's fiery interior, and Sam sees Frodo standing at the very edge of the Cracks of Doom. Frodo, overcome at last by the power of the Ring, refuses to destroy it and slips it onto his finger, disappearing in the process. As he does so, Gollum rushes past Sam and leaps upon Frodo, while Sauron sees the Ring-bearer, realizes his peril, and sends the Nazgûl flying toward Mount Doom. Gollum and Frodo fight over the Ring, and suddenly Gollum bites off Frodo's finger and seizes the Ring for himself. As he celebrates his triumph in obtaining his Precious, he loses his balance, and falls into the Cracks of Doom, taking the Ring with him. Mount Doom then erupts in a fiery burst of lava, destroying the Ringwraiths in the process.

#### Chapter 4 - The Field of Cormallen

The narrative now returns to the conflict outside the gates of Mordor. The battle between the Captains of the West and the forces of Sauron is going badly until the eagles join the fray. They swoop down upon the Nazgûl, who flee in terror as they hear a desperate summons from their master to hasten to Mount Doom. Meanwhile, the forces of Mordor are seized with dread. Aragorn and his forces are ready to attack, but Gandalf tells them to hold off. As they wait, Mount Doom erupts and the Gates of Mordor crumble into ruin. Sauron's power is gone, his troops are routed, and the Shadow passes from the land.

Meanwhile Frodo and Sam leave the cave and walk down the path to the foot of the mountain, where they are cut off by the lava flowing from its heart. They sit down and prepare to die, but as they do so, Gandalf, carried by the King of the Eagles, spots them and rescues them from their peril. When they awake, they are in a soft bed in Ithilien, under the care of Gandalf and Aragorn. They are amazed to see their wizard friend, whom they thought had died in the mines of Moria. Soon they are received with honor into the presence of the newly-recognized King of Gondor, Aragorn son of Arathorn, as a minstrel sings the tale of Frodo of the Nine Fingers and the Ring of Doom. They sit down to dinner with all their friends, and afterward share the stories of their adventures. Pippin had been dragged half-dead from a pile of bodies by Gimli, and he, Frodo, and Sam had been restored by the healing hands of the King. When the time of celebration is over the victors prepare to return to Gondor and Minas Tirith.

#### Chapter 5 - The Steward and the King

Back in Gondor, the few who remain in Minas Tirith have no news of the war between Sauron and the Captains of the West. They only know that Denethor, Steward of Gondor, and Théoden, King of Rohan, are dead and that the new king, whom they hardly know, is leading his troops against a mighty and evil foe. Éowyn and Faramir, recovering from their wounds, wish they could participate in the great battle taking place outside the Gates of Mordor. As time passes, the two fall in love, not knowing whether these days in the Houses of Healing will be their last. After seven days, however, an eagle messenger brings glad tidings of the overthrow of Sauron and the fall

of the Dark Tower and assures the rejoicing citizens of Gondor that their king is returning to rule over them in peace and justice.

While Faramir takes charge of preparations for the return of the King, Éowyn continues to be overwhelmed with sadness. Faramir, knowing the reason, confronts her with her unrequited love for Aragorn, professes his love for her, and asks for her hand in marriage. She accepts, and the veil of sorrow is lifted from her brow. When Aragorn and the victorious armies arrive, Faramir bows before him and surrenders his staff of office as Steward of Gondor, but Aragorn returns it to him, insisting that he continue to serve under his kingship. Faramir then brings out the ancient crown of Aragorn's forefathers, and Aragorn tells him that it should be brought to him by the Ring-bearer and placed on his head by Gandalf. In the days that followed, the glory of Gondor is restored beyond anything it had known in days of yore, Aragorn makes peace with his neighbors and honors those who fought valiantly against the forces of evil. Faramir is made Prince of Ithilien and Beregond becomes the Captain of his Guard. Éomer returns to Rohan to put his house in order, promising to come back for his father's remains, and Éowyn accompanies him, though her future is in Ithilien with Faramir. The reunited Fellowship of the Ring remains together in Minas Tirith, waiting for some unspecified future event for which Aragorn desires their presence. That event finally occurs on Midsummer Day, when the elves arrive in all their splendor, including Elrond and Galadriel, to witness the marriage of Aragorn to Arwen Evenstar.

## Chapter 6 - Many Partings

When the days of celebration end, Frodo approaches Aragorn and Arwen and begs leave to return to the Shire. They gladly grant his request, and Arwen gives him a shining gem on a silver chain and grants him the privilege of taking her place in the journey of the elves to the Grey Havens, since she has chosen to share the joys and pains of mortality with her beloved husband. All the dignitaries then accompany the body of Théoden back to Edoras for his funeral. Afterwards, Legolas joins Gimli for a visit to the caves of Helm's Deep and Gimli follows Legolas into Fangorn Forest, each amazed at the beauties so highly prized by the other. As they pass Isengard, Treebeard welcomes them and they find that the Ents have transformed it into a beautiful garden. He recently released Saruman and Wormtongue, who he thinks are incapable of doing any more damage.

From Fangorn each of the travelers goes his own way, with Gandalf, the elves, and the hobbits making for Rivendell. On the way they pass two beggars clothed in rags - Saruman and Wormtongue, who are trying to escape from Aragorn's realm. Gandalf offers them help, but they refuse with anger and bitterness, and Saruman warns the hobbits that the Shire they find might well be very different from the one they left behind. Soon Galadriel and Celeborn depart for Lothlórien and the rest go on to Rivendell. The first thing the hobbits do is find Bilbo, who is about to celebrate his 129<sup>th</sup> birthday. They tell him all about their adventures, though he has trouble staying awake these days, and before they go he asks Frodo to finish writing the memoirs he has begun. Then Gandalf and the hobbits take their leave and move in the direction of the Shire.

## Chapter 7 - Homeward Bound

As the hobbits and Gandalf travel toward the Shire, Frodo does not seem to be himself; he is preoccupied and withdrawn, and his wounds, both physical and emotional, seem to bear him down more and more, especially when they pass the places where he had encountered the Ringwraiths a

year earlier. When they reach Bree they find it practically deserted, and the landlord of the Prancing Pony catches them up on the news. Sam is delighted to find that his beloved pony has returned of its own accord, but business at the inn is bad because the land has been inundated with refugees, thieves, and ruffians, and people are afraid to leave their houses at night. Gandalf assures the landlord that better days are coming since the new King has taken the throne - a man he knows as Strider, the mysterious Ranger. He warns them that the Shire too has seen evil days. The hobbits turn toward home, but Gandalf at this point leaves them to pay a long visit to Tom Bombadil.

## Chapter 8 - The Scouring of the Shire

When the hobbits reach the bridge over the Brandywine River, they find it gated and locked. They demand entrance and are denied, but Merry and Pippin soon frighten the gatekeepers and drive off the ruffian who serves as their enforcer. They soon find that the Shire has fallen under a form of tyranny where the citizens are terrorized by draconian rules and bountiful crops are seized by the Chief and his henchmen. The next morning they are met on the road and arrested by a band of armed sheriffs, though Frodo and his friends refuse to take them seriously. After sleeping in the sheriff house, they travel on toward Hobbiton, leaving the sheriffs behind. When they draw near the village of Bywater, they find many of the houses burned and others deserted. The Chief clearly has enlisted the aid of some of the scoundrels who were part of Saruman's coterie at Isengard, who now control him and do as they please. Merry, Pippin, and Sam again drive them off with their swords, but they realize they will soon face a larger and more formidable force.

Frodo warns them to avoid killing, especially their hobbit kinsmen, and the four decide to raise the Shire and get the terrified populace to stand up to the tyrants. Merry blows the horn of Rohan to summon the inhabitants of the region, who gather and make their plans. They barricade the ends of the village and hide in their homes. Soon a score of ruffians descend on them, certain of having their way. When they reach the center of town the hobbits emerge from their hiding places and surround them. The leader of the ruffians orders an attack and is immediately struck down by four arrows; the others then lay down their arms and are bound and placed under guard.

That night Frodo learns that his disreputable relative Lotho Baggins, who now calls himself the Chief, had used the fortune left by Bilbo to buy up property and soon made a fortune selling to Saruman, who sent his ruffians to keep order. Before long the mayor and anyone else who protested found himself in prison and the rules began to multiply, as did the ruffians, led by a scoundrel named Sharkey. By the time Frodo and his friends arrive, the Chief is a virtual prisoner in Bag End, serving as a figurehead for the tyranny of Sharkey and his cohorts. They have destroyed all the beauty of the Shire and replaced it with filth and pollution.

The next morning more than a hundred ruffians descend on Bywater, but the hobbits are ready for them. They trap the men between two piles of wagons at front and rear and hedges on the side. The ruffians try to fight their way out, but most are killed and the others flee and the Battle of Bywater, the last battle ever fought in the Shire, ends in a rout. They then move on to deal with the Chief. They find Bag End full of ruin and ugliness. They enter Frodo's old home, and the Chief is nowhere to be found. Soon Sharkey emerges from the back of the dwelling; he is none other than Saruman himself. He boasts to Frodo that the destruction he has wrought is in revenge for what the Ents did to Isengard. Frodo demands that he leave and never return, but the company of hobbits who accompanied him argue that he deserves death. Saruman threatens them with a curse, but Frodo assures them that the only power he still has is the deceptiveness of his voice; otherwise he can do

them no harm. He refused to take vengeance on the old sorcerer and drives him and Wormtongue from the Shire. On the way out the door, Saruman draws a knife and stabs Frodo, but the knife shatters on the hobbit's mithril cloak. Sam prepares to slay him, but Frodo again forbids it, and Saruman bitterly complains that the Ring-bearer has not only robbed him of his revenge, but also placed him in debt to his sworn enemy. Frodo offers mercy to Wormtongue, but Saruman tells him that his groveling servant has killed Lotho. He then kicks Wormtongue, who draws a dagger and slits his throat, after which three arrows pierce the body of the murderer.

## Chapter 9 - The Grey Havens

The hobbits then turn to the task of cleansing and rebuilding the Shire. They begin by freeing all the prisoners, then Merry and Pippin take charge of rounding up and expelling the remaining ruffians. All the ugly new buildings are destroyed and the old ones are rebuilt, stronger and better than ever before. Saruman had destroyed all the lovely old trees, and they would take time to replace. Sam finds, however, that the box Galadriel gave him contains dust that, when sprinkled on freshly-planted trees, speeds up their growth, so that soon great trees are growing throughout the land. That year the harvest is more abundant than anyone can remember.

The next spring Frodo is taken ill; the Ring, though destroyed, has taken a toll on the Ring-bearer. When Bag End is completely repaired and ready for occupancy, Frodo asks Sam to move in with him, but Sam tells him that he wants to marry Rosie Cotton, to whom he has long been attracted. Frodo tells him that the hobbit-hole has plenty of room for Sam, Rosie, and any family they might have, and so they agree to join him there. Frodo, meanwhile, undertakes the completion of Bilbo's book, though he becomes increasingly isolated and melancholy. As Bilbo's 131<sup>st</sup> birthday approaches, Frodo prepares to travel to Rivendell. He leaves Sam his keys and his book, now completed. Sam accompanies Frodo in the early part of their journey, and after a short time they encounter a company of elves, led by Elrond and Galadriel and including Bilbo. They are going to the Grey Havens and thence beyond the sea, and Frodo is to join them. When they reach the Grey Havens, Gandalf awaits them, for he too is leaving Middle-earth in the white ship prepared for them. Merry and Pippin ride up, the hobbits say their farewells, and Sam returns to the Shire to raise a large family, become the mayor, and keep alive the memory of the great deeds done by the Fellowship of the Ring.

### NOTABLE QUOTATIONS

“You make that clearer with every word you say. It has got far too much hold on you. Let it go! And then you can go yourself, and be free.” (Gandalf, Book I, ch.1, p.60)

“It is far more powerful than I ever dared to think at first, so powerful that in the end it would utterly overcome anyone of mortal race who possessed it. It would possess him.” (Gandalf, Book I, ch.2, p.76)

“One Ring to rule them all, one Ring to find them,  
One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them.” (Book I, ch.2, p.81)

“I can put it no plainer than by saying that Bilbo was *meant* to find the Ring, and *not* by its maker. In which case you also were *meant* to have it. And that may be an encouraging thought.” (Gandalf, Book I, ch.2, p.88)

“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 judgment. For even the very wise cannot see all ends. I have not much hope that Gollum can be cured before he dies, but there is a chance of it. And he is bound up with the fate of the Ring. My heart tells me that he has some part to play yet, for good or ill, before the end; and when that comes, the pity of Bilbo may rule the fate of many - yours not least.” (Gandalf, Book I, ch.2, p.93)

“Such questions cannot be answered. You may be sure that it was not for any merit that others do not possess: not for power or wisdom, at any rate. But you have been chosen, and you must therefore use such strength and heart and wits as you have.” (Gandalf, Book I, ch.2, p.95)

“All that is gold does not glitter,  
Not all those who wander are lost;  
The old that is strong does not wither,  
Deep roots are not reached by the frost.  
From the ashes a fire shall be woken,  
A light from the shadows shall spring;  
Renewed shall be blade that was broken,  
The crownless again shall be king.” (Gandalf, Book I, ch.10, p.231)

“Frodo has been touched by the weapons of the Enemy, and there is some poison or evil at work that is beyond my skill to drive out.” (Aragorn, Book I, ch.12, p.272-273)

“You have come and are here met, in this very nick of time, by chance as it may seem. Yet it is not so. Believe rather that it is so ordered that we, who sit here, and none others, must now find counsel for the peril of the world.” (Elrond, Book II, ch.2, p.318)

“The time of Elves is over, but our time is at hand: the world of Men, which we must rule. But we must have power, power to order all things as we will, for the good which only the Wise can see.” (Saruman, Book II, ch.2, p.340)

“It is perilous to study too deeply the arts of the Enemy, for good or for ill.” (Elrond, Book II, ch.2, p.347)

“The road must be trod, but it will be very hard. And neither strength nor wisdom will carry us far upon it. This quest may be attempted by the weak with as much hope as the strong. Yet such is oft the course of deeds that move the wheels of the world: small hands do them because they must, while the eyes of the great are elsewhere.” (Elrond, Book II, ch.2, p.353)

“I will take the Ring, though I do not know the way.” (Frodo, Book II, ch.2, p.354)

“It is not of the Ring, nor of us others that I am thinking now, but of you, Gandalf. And I say to you: if you pass the doors of Moria, beware!” (Aragorn, Book II, ch.4, p.388)

“There are older and fouler things than Orcs in the deep places of the world.” (Gandalf, Book II, ch.4, p.402)

“Indeed in nothing is the power of the Dark Lord more clearly shown than in the estrangement that divides all those who still oppose him.” (Haldir, Book II, ch.6, p.450)

“Your Quest stands upon the edge of a knife. Stray but a little and it will fail, to the ruin of all. Yet hope remains while all the Company is true.” (Galadriel, Book II, ch.7, p.462)

“Against delay. Against the way that seems easier. Against refusal of the burden that is laid on me. Against - well, if it must be said, against trust in the strength and truth of Men.” (Frodo, Book II, ch.10, p.514)

“Good and evil have not changed since yesteryear; nor are they one thing among Elves and Dwarves and another among Men. It is a man’s part to discern them, as much in the Golden Wood as in his own house.” (Aragorn, Book III, ch.2, p.50)

“There are some things that it is better to begin than to refuse, even though the end may be dark.” (Aragorn, Book III, ch.2, p.53)

“Do I not say truly, Gandalf, that you could go whithersoever you wished quicker than I? And this I also say you are our captain and our banner. The Dark Lord has Nine: But we have One, mightier than they: the White Rider. He has passed through the fire and the abyss, and they shall fear him. We shall go where he leads.” (Aragorn, Book III, ch.5, p.133)

“One who cannot cast away a treasure at need is in fetters. You did rightly.” (Aragorn, Book III, ch.9, p.215)

“Mordor! If I must go there, I wish I could come there quickly and make an end!” (Frodo, Book IV, ch.1, p.266)

“I am commanded to go to the land of Mordor, and therefore I shall go. If there is only one way, then I must take it. What comes after must come.” (Frodo, Book IV, ch.3, p.310)

“So we always do. We look towards Númenor that was, and beyond to Elvenhome that is, and to that which is beyond Elvenhome and will ever be. Have you no such custom at meat?” (Faramir, Book IV, ch.5, p.361)

“Why, to think of it, we’re in the same tale still! It’s going on. Don’t the great tales never end?” (Sam, Book IV, ch.8, p.408)

“Even in this gloom hope gleams again. Our Enemy’s devices oft serve us in his despite.” (Éomer, Book V, ch.5, p.133)

“Even in the heart of our stronghold the Enemy has power to strike us: for his will it is that is at work.” (Gandalf, Book V, ch.7, p.154)

“The hands of the king are the hands of a healer, and so shall the rightful king be known.” (Ioreth, Book V, ch.8, p.169)

“No, they eat and drink, Sam. The Shadow that bred them can only mock, it cannot make: not real new things of its own.” (Frodo, Book VI, ch.1, p.233)

“As Frodo clung upon his back, arms loosely about his neck, legs clasped firmly under his arms, Sam staggered to his feet; and then to his amazement he felt the burden light.” (Book VI, ch.3, p.268)

“Begone, and trouble me no more! If you touch me ever again, you shall be cast yourself into the Fire of Doom.” (Frodo, Book VI, ch.3, p.272)

“Gandalf! I thought you were dead! But then I thought I was dead myself. Is everything sad going to come untrue? What’s happened to the world?” (Sam, Book VI, ch.4, p.283)

“Sing and be glad, all ye children of the West,  
for your King shall come again,  
and he shall dwell among you  
    all the days of your life.” (Book VI, ch.5, p.298)

“By the labor and valor of many I have come into my inheritance. In token of this I would have the Ring-bearer bring the crown to me, and let Mithrandir set it upon my head, if he will; for he has been the mover of all that has been accomplished, and this is his victory.” (Aragorn, Book VI, ch.5, p.303-304)

“Tall as the sea-kings of old, he stood above all that were near; ancient of days he seemed and yet in the flower of manhood; and wisdom sat upon his brow, and strength and healing were in his hands, and a light was about him. And then Faramir cried, ‘Behold the King!’” (Book VI, ch.5, p.304)

“This is your realm, and the heart of the greater realm that shall be. The Third Age of the world is ended, and the new age is begun; and it is your task to order its beginning and to preserve what may be preserved. For though much has been saved, much must now pass away; and the power of the Three Rings also is ended. And all the lands that you see, and those that lie round about them, shall be dwellings of Men. For the time comes of the Dominion of Men, and the Elder Kindred shall fade or depart.” (Gandalf, Book VI, ch.5, p.307-308)

## ESSAY QUESTIONS

Discuss the following in a five-paragraph essay:

1. In the Foreword to *The Lord of the Rings*, J.R.R. Tolkien says, “I cordially dislike allegory in all its manifestations,” and insists that the trilogy is intended to have no message whatsoever, but simply to serve as an entertaining tale from which the reader is free to make his own applications. Nonetheless, critics and casual readers alike have sought allegorical significance in the book. Why do you think this is the case? What definition of “allegory” do you think Tolkien had in mind when he denied its existence in his work? Do readers who claim to find it define the word in the same way?
2. In the Foreword to *The Lord of the Rings*, the J.R.R. Tolkien insists that nothing in the trilogy was intended to refer to the major figures or events of World War II, during which most of the writing took place. Sauron, then, is *not* intended to represent Adolf Hitler. What characteristics of the Dark Lord have led many to make such an identification? Write an essay in which you support the author’s assertion, arguing important ways in which Sauron cannot possibly be a surrogate for the vicious German dictator.
3. J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* makes no mention of God or religion of any kind, yet is a profoundly Christian work of fantasy. If Christian literature is not defined by references to God or the Christian faith, what defines a work as Christian? What about Tolkien’s great trilogy qualifies it for such a classification?
4. Unlike the warrior-heroes of the great epics of classic literature, Frodo Baggins, the protagonist of J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*, has no special powers that set him about from others. In fact, he is a sort of Everyman. His strength, however, lies not in physical or martial prowess, but in his character. Some critics have argued that Frodo is a Christian hero because the character traits that he possesses are Christian virtues. Choose three such virtues and discuss how Frodo displays them. Be sure to use Scripture to demonstrate that these are peculiarly *Christian* virtues.
5. Commentators on J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* have pointed to the Christian character of the trilogy by noting that it contains several characters who in one way or another serve as Christ-figures. One of these is the wizard Gandalf. Discuss the parallels that would lead critics to this conclusion. In what ways does Gandalf *not* serve as a Christ-figure?
6. Commentators on J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* have pointed to the Christian character of the trilogy by noting that it contains several characters who in one way or another serve as Christ-figures. One of these is Aragorn, son of Arathorn. Discuss the parallels that would lead critics to this conclusion. In what ways does Aragorn *not* serve as a Christ-figure?

7. Commentators on J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* have pointed to the Christian character of the trilogy by noting that it contains several characters who in one way or another serve as Christ-figures. One of these is Frodo, the Ring-bearer who makes great personal sacrifices to save the world in which he lives. Discuss the parallels that would lead critics to this conclusion. In what ways does Frodo *not* serve as a Christ-figure?
8. Some commentators on J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* have observed that Gandalf, Frodo, and Aragorn reflect in lesser ways the threefold ministry of Christ as prophet, priest, and king. Evaluate these parallels. Do you consider the comparisons to be accurate? Why or why not? Support your arguments with details from the novel.
9. Discuss the treatment of the subject of temptation in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Is the author's handling of the subject biblical? Why or why not? Be sure to use specific Scripture passages and incidents from the books to support your analysis.
10. In Luke 17:33, Jesus says, "Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it." The idea that sacrificing your life and discarding your treasure is the true path to life is a prominent theme in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. To what extent is the treatment of self-sacrifice in the novel a biblical one? Choose three characters who exemplify this virtue and analyze the nature of their sacrificial deeds.
11. Discuss the role played by the Christian virtue of humility in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Choose three characters who display humility and show how this virtue contributes to the ultimate triumph of good over evil in the novel.
12. Proverbs 16:18 says, "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Choose three characters from J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* who display the truth of this biblical maxim and show how pride led to their downfalls.
13. In J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo on several occasions tries to undertake his quest alone, having no desire to bring others to what he considers certain destruction. He is always unsuccessful, however, because of the loyalty of his friend and companion Sam Gamgee. The two hobbits are in some ways foils because of their different personalities. Discuss how their differences play an essential part in the ultimate success of the quest to destroy the Ring. Why could Frodo never have accomplished his task alone?
14. Discuss the development of the character of Aragorn in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. How is the reclusive Ranger Strider transformed into the mighty King of Gondor throughout the course of the trilogy? In your opinion, does Aragorn grow and change as a result of his experiences, or is his true character increasingly unveiled as the novel progresses? Support your conclusion with specifics from the books.

15. Discuss the changes that Frodo undergoes in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. What does he learn and how is his character shaped by the experiences he encounters in the course of his quest? In what ways is he a more admirable character at the end of the story than he is at the beginning?
16. To what extent is Sauron, the title character in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, a type of Satan? Write an essay in which you point out similarities between the Dark Lord and the Devil, but be sure also to note any salient differences that may exist.
17. In J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, the One Ring of Power serves as a source of temptation to many characters. What differentiates those who succumb to the temptation from those who successfully resist it? Be sure to use specific examples of both in developing your analysis.
18. J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* narrates the end of a passing age that will be succeeded by the Age of Man. How does the author picture this coming age, one without Sauron and orcs, but also one without wizards, elves, dwarves, and hobbits? Is the dawning age better than the old world? Why or why not? According to Tolkien, can man be trusted to control his own destiny?
19. Lord Acton once said, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." How does J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* illustrate the truth of Lord Acton's assertion? Choose three figures who are corrupted by power in the novel and analyze how power itself serves as a corrupting force in their lives.
20. Compare and contrast the portrayals of the corrupting nature of power in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. Consider both the nature of the power that is in view and the effects of that power on the ones who possess it. Which tale most effectively illustrates the inevitably evil nature of unfettered power? Support your conclusion with specifics from both works.
21. Compare and contrast the portrayals of the corrupting nature of power in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and Goethe's *Faust*. Consider both the nature of the power that is in view and the effects of that power on the ones who possess it. Which tale most effectively illustrates the inevitably evil nature of unfettered power? Support your conclusion with specifics from both works.
22. Compare and contrast the portrayals of the corrupting nature of power in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Consider both the nature of the power that is in view and the effects of that power on the ones who possess it. Which tale most effectively illustrates the inevitably evil nature of unfettered power? Support your conclusion with specifics from both works.

23. Compare and contrast the portrayals of the corrupting nature of power in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Consider both the nature of the power that is in view and the effects of that power on the ones who possess it. Which tale most effectively illustrates the inevitably evil nature of unfettered power? Support your conclusion with specifics from both works.
24. Compare and contrast the portrayals of the corrupting nature of power in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Consider both the nature of the power that is in view and the effects of that power on the ones who possess it. Which tale most effectively illustrates the inevitably evil nature of unfettered power? Support your conclusion with specifics from both works, and be sure to consider the fact that the evil power fails in one case and succeeds in the other.
25. Compare and contrast the portrayals of the corrupting nature of power in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Consider both the nature of the power that is in view and the effects of that power on the ones who possess it. Which tale most effectively illustrates the inevitably evil nature of unfettered power? Support your conclusion with specifics from both works.
26. Compare and contrast the portrayals of the corrupting nature of power in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength*. Consider both the nature of the power that is in view and the effects of that power on the ones who possess it. Which tale most effectively illustrates the inevitably evil nature of unfettered power? Support your conclusion with specifics from both works, being sure to take into account the fact that both were written by Christian authors.
27. Both J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and Homer's *Odyssey* are tales of a hero undertaking a quest. Compare and contrast the heroes, the quests they undertake, and the outcomes of those quests. To what extent may the differences be accounted for by the Christian and pagan frameworks in which the two authors were writing?
28. Both of J.R.R. Tolkien's most famous works, *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*, are in a sense quest narratives. Compare and contrast the two in terms of the nature of the quest, its impact on the world at large, and its impact on the protagonist.
29. Scholars generally agree that, of J.R.R. Tolkien's two most famous works, *The Lord of the Rings* is much more obviously Christian in its themes and worldview than is *The Hobbit*. Why is this the case? What qualities of the trilogy make it more evidently Christian than the children's story that preceded it?
30. Compare and contrast the protagonists in J.R.R. Tolkien's best-known works, *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. As you make connections between Bilbo Baggins and his cousin Frodo, consider their personalities, the quests they undertake, the challenges they face, and the outcomes of those challenges, both for the protagonists and for the society in which they live. Which do you find more admirable and heroic? Why?

31. Both J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* are in a sense quest narratives. Compare and contrast the two in terms of the protagonists and the nature of the quests they undertake. While Bunyan's Christian is clearly intended to represent the course of the Christian life with its trials and triumphs, to what extent may the same be said of Frodo?
32. Both J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and T.H. White's *The Once and Future King* make use of the idea of a rightful king lost in obscurity who returns to claim his throne, but the two authors use the idea in very different ways. Compare and contrast the treatments of the concept of the returning king in the two works. Which of the two kings, Aragorn or Arthur, more convincingly represents the true Returning King, Christ Himself?
33. Both J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and Dante's *Inferno* portray a protagonist who must pass through Hell in order to achieve Heaven, in the process learning much about the nature of evil. Compare and contrast the visions of evil pictured by the two authors. What are they attempting to communicate when they have their central characters pass through realms of unspeakable evil in order to gain Paradise?
34. The worldview of the Christian faith is one in which the great "myths" of human existence - Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Consummation - are actually true. The same is the case in the Middle-earth created by J.R.R. Tolkien in *The Lord of the Rings*. Why is it important to the characters in the novel that their mythology is rooted in actual past events? Why is it essential that the same is true for Christians? What parallels exist between the two "mythologies"?
35. While J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* never mentions God or a Higher Power, the characters speak often of fate and its impact on the lives of the citizens of Middle-earth. Discuss the true nature of the fate or destiny that influences the lives of the characters. Is this closer to the impersonal fate of the classical world or the sovereign God of the Bible? Why do you think so? Support your conclusion with specifics from the novel.
36. Many critics have argued that J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* contains an anti-industrial subtext. After all, Sauron and Saruman are destructive of all that is natural, while the hobbits are clearly associated with the fields and the elves and Ents with the forests. To what extent do you consider the book a critique of industrialism and the author an advocate of environmentalism? Be sure to use specifics from the trilogy to support your arguments.
37. Discuss the difference between domesticated nature and wild, untamed nature in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Give examples of the distinction and evaluate the role played by the distinction in the assessment of the trilogy as advocating environmentalism. Would Tolkien have agreed with the attitudes of extreme environmentalists today about the relationship between man and the natural world? Why or why not?

38. Scholars have often debated about the character of Tom Bombadil in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. What is his function in the story? Would the tale have been materially affected had the author left him out entirely? Why or why not?
39. In J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, the wicked characters are not at all fully-formed, but simply embodiments of evil. Why do you think the author chooses to frame them in this way? What does this tell us about Tolkien's concept of the nature of evil?
40. In J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, most of the characters are clearly good or clearly evil; few are ambiguous in their moral stance. Why do you think the author constructed his fantasy world in such a way? Is the world in which we live really as black and white as Tolkien suggests? Be sure to consider the Christian worldview of the author in your analysis.
41. One of the most complex characters in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is Gollum, the strange creature who possessed the Ring for many years and spends the entire trilogy trying to regain it. Rather than being purely good or evil as most of the characters in the story are, he seems to have a split personality, divided between Sméagol, his former self, and Gollum, obsessed with his "Precious," so much so that he carries on conversations with himself. What is the significance of this schizophrenia? What does it indicate about the power of the Ring and about the author's view of human nature?
42. The Bible has much to say about the ways in which God uses the weak to accomplish His will in the world. The same theme runs throughout J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Discuss ways in which the trilogy portrays the ability of the weak to overcome the strong and the supposedly foolish to triumph over those who are viewed as wise. Does Tolkien's epic give the same reasons for these things as the Bible does? Why or why not?
43. Some critics have disdained J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* as a racist work because the good characters like the elves are light-skinned while evil figures like the orcs are dark and swarthy. Is this criticism legitimate? Why or why not? Be sure to consider the makeup of the Fellowship of the Ring in your analysis.
44. J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* portrays a preliterate culture, or at least one where books like the memoirs Bilbo is writing are rare. As a result, songs play an important role in the trilogy. Why does the author include so many of them, treating the reader to the full lyrics? Why are they important in the world of Middle-earth, and what do they convey to the reader of the story about the imaginary world he is entering?
45. One quality that distinguishes good from evil characters in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is the quality of loyalty. While the members of the Fellowship of the Ring are fiercely loyal to one another (with the exception of Boromir's lapse), the evil characters are constantly fighting among themselves, even to the point of destroying one another, much to the benefit of the heroes. Discuss this aspect of the difference between good and evil from a biblical perspective. Why should this not surprise us?

46. In William Shakespeare's plays, conditions in the natural world often mirror the political environment in which the characters live and move. The same may be said of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien, however, carries the concept farther than Shakespeare does in that nature in the trilogy not only mirrors social conditions, but the denizens of the natural world also act to create or modify those conditions. Mountains send avalanches to block the path of the heroes, animals spy for Sauron and Saruman or rescue Gandalf and the other members of the Fellowship, and trees fight against the orcs. The moral struggle in the story is thus cosmic in scope. Discuss this idea in the context of a biblical worldview (see Romans 8:18-25).
47. Peter Jackson's film versions of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* were generally well-received, but Christopher Tolkien, the caretaker of his father's legacy, hated them because they gave entirely too much time and attention to battles and spectacle. Is this a legitimate criticism, or simply a reflection of the differences between literature and film as distinct media that must tell stories in different ways?
48. The film versions of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* directed by Peter Jackson were in many ways quite faithful to the books on which they were based, but some differences did exist, whether involving deleting some characters, rearranging the sequence in which the story was told, or emphasizing some events at the expense of others. Choose three specific differences between the movies and the books and evaluate the changes made by the director. Were they justified, or did they detract from what Tolkien was seeking to do in his trilogy?
49. Discuss the view of the nature of evil portrayed in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Is evil an external force, something with which all creatures are born, or a matter of choice? Support your conclusion with specific examples and evaluate Tolkien's view of the nature of evil from Scripture.
50. Some commentators on J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* have argued that the true hero of the story is not Frodo Baggins, but his faithful companion Sam Gamgee. Why might they draw such a conclusion? Do you agree or disagree? Support your analysis with specifics from the story.
51. J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* provides many examples of good characters being corrupted, either by Sauron or by the Ring, but rarely portrays the redemption of an evil character. Does this suggest that the novel contains no concept of redemption, or does the author picture redemption in other ways? Support your analysis with specifics from the trilogy.
52. Middle-earth in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is a man's world. Few female characters play significant roles in the story, though those few are certainly memorable. Why do you think this is the case? Is Tolkien a misogynist, or is the composition of his cast of characters motivated by something else entirely? Support your analysis with specifics from the trilogy.

53. Hope is a significant theme in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Even when the central characters consider success in their quest to be impossible, they hope against all hope and carry on nonetheless. Discuss the nature of the hope exercised by the characters and compare it to the biblical virtue of hope as expounded by the Apostle Paul in his epistles.
54. The book of Genesis repeatedly shows the damage done when parents favor one child over another. Similar problems may be seen in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, particularly in the relationship between Denethor, Steward of Gondor, and his two sons Boromir and Faramir. How do the Genesis accounts differ from those in Tolkien's trilogy, both in the nature of the favoritism and its consequences?
55. In J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, the rulers of Rohan and Gondor, Théoden and Denethor, serve as foils for one another. What salient characteristics of the two leaders serve best to contrast the two, thus bringing into bold relief their positive and negative qualities?
56. Near the end of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, the Shire is briefly turned into a police state by Saruman and Wormtongue with the cooperation of human thugs and corrupt hobbits. Most of the trilogy was written during World War II. To what extent is the police state of the Shire a picture of the Nazi dictatorship in Germany or that of Stalin in Russia? Be sure to include both comparisons and contrasts in your analysis.
57. Dualistic religions in the ancient world such as Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism taught that good and evil were equal and opposing forces in the world, engaged in battle toward an uncertain outcome, and that followers of the religion were obliged to assist the powers of good in overcoming the forces of evil. To what extent is the Middle-earth of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* dualistic in its view of good and evil? Is the interaction of the two faithful to the teachings of Scripture on the subject?
58. Augustine of Hippo, an early Christian theologian, argued that evil had no independent existence, but was simply the absence of good. To what extent does the evil portrayed in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* reflect an Augustinian view of the nature of evil in the cosmos? Be sure to use specific characters, incidents, and quotations to support your answer.
59. In J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, the evil characters are often corrupted forms of corresponding good creatures - trolls are corrupted forms of Ents, orcs of elves, Ringwraiths of human kings, Saruman is a corrupted wizard, and Gollum a corrupted hobbit. To what extent does this portrayal of evil reflect the biblical narrative of the Fall, where evil is incapable of creating anything, but corrupts what was originally good and seeks to extend and perpetuate its influence?
60. In J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, why is the humble Frodo a suitable Ring-bearer, undertaking the great quest to destroy the Ring of Power, while Gandalf, Galadriel, and Aragorn are not? Be sure to address both the question of what makes Frodo suitable and the issue of why the other three, despite their inherent greatness, are not.

61. In Book I, chapter 2 of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, Gandalf tells Frodo, "I can put it no plainer than by saying that Bilbo was *meant* to find the Ring, and *not* by its maker. In which case you also were *meant* to have it. And that may be an encouraging thought." Discuss the concept of Providence, or divine sovereignty, as it is presented in the trilogy. The characters may speak of luck, chance, or fate, but behind all of these lies a sense of purpose. How is that purpose described and revealed?
62. In J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, does Frodo ultimately succeed or fail in his quest? To what extent is the destruction of the Ring and the deliverance of Middle-earth from the power of evil due to Frodo's strength of character and to what extent does it result from forces beyond his control, or even in a manner contrary to his decisions? What does the answer to the question tell you about the worldview of the author and his understanding of the nature of human redemption?
63. When J.R.R. Tolkien spoke of his understanding of the world, he said that, as a Christian, "I do not expect 'history' to be anything but a 'long defeat' - though it contains (and in a legend may contain more clearly and movingly) some samples or glimpses of final victory." How is the author's view of history reflected in the closing chapters of *The Lord of the Rings*? Consider the place of the events narrated in the trilogy in the larger history of Middle-earth. Did the defeat of Sauron eradicate evil forever and open the door to Paradise, or were things of value lost even in the course of a great victory?
64. In Book VI, chapter 4 of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, Sam Gamgee, on finding that he and Frodo have survived the cataclysm at Mount Doom and that Gandalf is alive after his confrontation with the Balrog, asks, "Is everything sad going to come untrue?" What is Tolkien's answer to Sam's question, and how does it reflect the worldview on display in the trilogy?
65. J.R.R. Tolkien once wrote in a letter to a friend that *The Lord of the Rings* was "fundamentally a religious and Catholic work." One of the ways in which readers have seen the influence of Catholicism is in the portrayal of Galadriel; as the queen of an ethereal realm who receives devotion from all around her, she appears to be a sort of Virgin Mary of Middle-earth. Evaluate this connection. What about Galadriel and her role in the trilogy would support this parallel and what might cause one to dispute it?
66. In Matthew 5:5, Jesus tells His disciples, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." To what extent is J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* a commentary on this Beatitude? Be sure you go beyond the character of Frodo in your essay and point out both positive and negative illustrations of Jesus' statement.
67. In Matthew 5:7, Jesus tells His disciples, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy." To what extent is J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* a commentary on this Beatitude? Consider the relationship between Frodo and Gollum in your essay, but also be sure to discuss other examples of mercy or lack of it in the trilogy.

68. Some commentators have suggested that the nine members of the Fellowship of the Ring in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* provide a picture of the universal church as portrayed in Scripture. Do you agree? Why or why not? What characteristics do the members of the Fellowship share with the qualities of the Church described in the New Testament?
69. Martin Luther, in the hymn *A Mighty Fortress is Our God*, describes Satan with these words: "His craft and power are great / And armed with cruel hate / On earth is not his equal." To what extent does this description fit Sauron, the title character in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*? In what other ways is Sauron like Satan? Are there ways in which the analogy fails?
70. J.R.R. Tolkien once wrote, "In making a myth . . . a storyteller . . . is actually fulfilling God's purpose, and reflecting a splintered fragment of the true light." What do you think Tolkien meant by this statement, and how is it fulfilled in *The Lord of the Rings*?
71. In Ephesians 6:12, Paul says, "We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." To what extent does J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* give an accurate picture of this spiritual battle in a mythical environment? In your essay consider the nature of the enemy and the nature and outcome of the battle.
72. Bible scholars have long debated the relationship between divine sovereignty and human freedom of choice in Christian teaching. It is essentially a paradox - two seemingly-contradictory ideas both of which are clearly presented as true in Scripture. Evaluate the presentation of this paradox in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Does the author treat the subject in a manner coherent with biblical teaching? Why or why not? Be sure to support your analysis with specific examples and quotations from the trilogy.
73. J.R.R. Tolkien argued that the highest function of fairy tales is what he called *euclastrophe* - "the sudden happy turn in a story which pierces you with a joy that brings tears." His great fantasy novel *The Lord of the Rings* is full of such unexpected happy turns. Give three examples of euclastrophe in the trilogy and discuss the significance of this literary technique in Tolkien's writing.
74. In Book I, chapter 2 of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, Gandalf tells Frodo, "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 judgment. For even the very wise cannot see all ends. I have not much hope that Gollum can be cured before he dies, but there is a chance of it. And he is bound up with the fate of the Ring. My heart tells me that he has some part to play yet, for good or ill, before the end; and when that comes, the pity of Bilbo may rule the fate of many - yours not least." How are the themes of mercy and providence expressed in this quotation worked out in the remainder of the trilogy? Give specific examples to support your analysis.

75. In I Corinthians 1:27, Paul writes, “But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong.” The concept expressed in this verse is similar to Gandalf’s response to Frodo’s question about why he should be the Ring-bearer in Book I, chapter 2 of J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*: “Such questions cannot be answered. You may be sure that it was not for any merit that others do not possess: not for power or wisdom, at any rate. But you have been chosen, and you must therefore use such strength and heart and wits as you have.” Compare and contrast the nature of the “choosing” in these quotations as well as the reasons why the choices were made. Is Tolkien here accurately reflecting the biblical teaching on election?
76. In book II, chapter 2 of J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*, Elrond says, “It is perilous to study too deeply the arts of the Enemy, for good or for ill.” Reflect on these words, discuss how the truth of them is portrayed in the novel, and consider their applicability to those who would devote themselves to the study of the occult in order to combat it.
77. In Book II, chapter 6 of J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*, Haldir says, “Indeed in nothing is the power of the Dark Lord more clearly shown than in the estrangement that divides all those who still oppose him.” Discuss the various ways in which the power of Sauron tends to create divisions, both among his enemies and among his followers. Contrast these with the unity that characterizes the free races that seek to defeat the power of Mordor.
78. In Book III, chapter 2 of J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*, Aragorn says, “Good and evil have not changed since yesteryear; nor are they one thing among Elves and Dwarves and another among Men.” Give examples that show the absolute system of morality that infuses Tolkien’s masterpiece. How are evil characters immersed in relativism?
79. In both John Steinbeck’s *The Pearl* and J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*, the protagonist throws away an object desired by all because it has become an instrument of evil. Do the great pearl and the Ring of Power symbolize the same kind of evil, or do the authors have different forms of evil in mind? Support your arguments with specifics from both works.
80. In both John Steinbeck’s *The Pearl* and J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*, an object of great value becomes a source of temptation, both to those who possess it and those who do not. Compare and contrast what the two works of literature have to say about the nature of temptation and the proper response to it. Be sure to relate both to the teaching of the Bible on the subject.
81. In both John Steinbeck’s *The Pearl* and J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*, the protagonist strikes out violently against the person closest to him when he thinks that person is trying to take his treasure from him. Compare and contrast the scenes where Kino beats Juana and Frodo becomes angry with Sam. Be sure to consider both the causes and the outcomes of the two conflicts in your analysis.

82. In both John Steinbeck's *The Pearl* and J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, the central characters press forward because of hope despite facing desperate circumstances. The fact that their hope turns out to be futile in one case and is realized in the other tells much about the respective worldviews of the two authors. Compare and contrast the role of hope in the two stories, both as a motivator for the characters and as an indicator of the worldviews of the authors. Be sure to cite specifics from both works in your analysis.
83. Songs play a central role in the societies of the protagonists in both John Steinbeck's *The Pearl* and J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Analyze the roles played by songs in the two stories. What roles do they play in the cultures of native Americans on the one hand and hobbit and elves on the other? How do they help to shape the characters and the narratives in which they play a part? Why are the songs in one subconscious while in the other they are sung aloud?
84. Both C.S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* and J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* are fantasies that incorporate aspects of Christian truth in tales of imaginary worlds. Compare and contrast the approaches to Christianity found in the two works. Be sure to consider the ways in which the tales are told as well as the content of the two fantasies.
85. Aslan in C.S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* and Gandalf in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* are both Christ-figures. Compare and contrast the ways in which the two characters portray the saving work of Christ. Use Scripture as well as details from the two stories in your analysis.