



THE LORD OF THE RINGS
PART ONE

J. R. R.
TOLKIEN
THE
FELLOWSHIP
OF THE
RING

Illustrated by ALAN LEE



Being the first part of
THE LORD OF THE RINGS

J.R.R. Tolkien

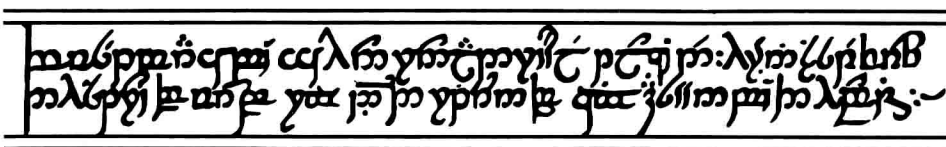
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Houghton Mifflin Company

BOSTON NEW YORK

2002



The Fellowship of the Ring

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available.

ISBN 0-618-26051-X

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Printed in China

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

THE FELLOWSHIP
OF THE RING

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VII THE TREASON OF ISENGARD
VIII THE WAR OF THE RING
IX SAURON DEFEATED
X MORGOTH'S RING
XI THE WAR OF THE JEWELS
XII THE PEOPLES OF MIDDLE-EARTH

*Three Rings for the Elven-kings under the sky,
Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone,
Nine for Mortal Men doomed to die,
One for the Dark Lord on his dark throne
In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.
One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them,
One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them
In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.*

NOTE ON THE TEXT

The Lord of the Rings is often erroneously called a trilogy, when it is in fact a single novel, consisting of six books plus appendices, sometimes published in three volumes.

The first volume, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, was published in Great Britain by the London firm George Allen & Unwin on 29 July 1954; an American edition followed on 21 October of the same year, published by Houghton Mifflin Company of Boston. In the production of this first volume, Tolkien experienced what became for him a continual problem: printer's errors and compositor's mistakes, including well-intentioned 'corrections' of his sometimes idiosyncratic usage. These 'corrections' include the altering of *dwarves* to *dwarfs*, *elvish* to *elfish*, *further* to *farther*, *nasturtians* to *nasturtiums*, *try and say* to *try to say* and ('worst of all' to Tolkien) *elven* to *elfin*. In a work such as *The Lord of the Rings*, containing invented languages and delicately constructed nomenclatures, errors and inconsistencies impede both the understanding and the appreciation of serious readers – and Tolkien had many such readers from very early on. Even before the publication of the third volume, which contained much hitherto unrevealed information on the invented languages and writing systems, Tolkien received many letters from readers written in these systems, in addition to numerous enquiries on the finer points of their usage.

The second volume, *The Two Towers*, was published in England on 11 November 1954 and in the United States on 21 April 1955. Meanwhile Tolkien worked to keep a promise he had made in the foreword to volume one: that 'an index of names and strange words' would appear in the third volume. As originally planned, this index would contain much etymological information on the languages, particularly on the elven tongues, with a large vocabulary. It proved the chief cause of the delay in publishing volume three, which in the end contained no

index at all, only an apology from the publisher for its absence. For Tolkien had abandoned work on it after indexing volumes one and two, believing its size and therefore its cost to be ruinous.

Volume three, *The Return of the King*, finally appeared in England on 20 October 1955 and in the United States on 5 January 1956. With the appearance of the third volume, *The Lord of the Rings* was published in its entirety, and its first edition text remained virtually unchanged for a decade. (Tolkien made a few small corrections, but further errors entered *The Fellowship of the Ring* in its second impression when the printer, having distributed the type after the first printing, reset the book without informing the author or publisher.)

In 1965, stemming from what then appeared to be copyright problems in the United States, an American paperback firm published an unauthorized and non-royalty-paying edition of *The Lord of the Rings*. For this new edition by Ace Books the text of the narrative was reset, thus introducing new typographical errors; the appendices, however, were reproduced photographically from the hardcover edition, and remain consistent with it.

Tolkien set to work on his first version of the text so that a newly revised and authorized edition could successfully compete on the American market. This first revision of the text was published in America in paperback by Ballantine Books in October 1965. In addition to revisions within the text itself, Tolkien replaced his original foreword with a new one. He was pleased to remove the original foreword; in his check copy, he wrote of it: ‘confusing (as it does) real personal matters with the “machinery” of the Tale, is a serious mistake’. Tolkien also added an extension to the prologue and an index – not the detailed index of names promised in the first edition, but, rather, a bald index with only names and page references. Additionally, at this time the appendices were greatly revised.

Tolkien received his copies of the Ballantine edition in late January 1966, and in early February he recorded in his diary, that he had ‘worked for some hours on the Appendices in Ballantine version & found more errors than I at first expected’. Soon after this he sent a small number of further revisions to Ballantine for the appendices, including the now well-known addition of ‘Estella Bolger’ as wife of Meriadoc in the family trees in Appendix C. Most of these revisions, which entered variously in the third and fourth impressions (June and August 1966) of volume three, and which were not always inserted correctly (thereby causing further confusion in the text), somehow never made it into the main sequence of revision in the three-volume British hardcover edition, and for long remained an anomaly. Tolkien once wrote, concerning the revising of *The Lord of the Rings*, that perhaps he had failed to keep his notes in order; this errant branch of revision seems likely to be an example of that disorder.

The revised text first appeared in Great Britain in a three-volume hardcover 'Second Edition' from Allen & Unwin on 27 October 1966. But again there were problems. Although the revisions Tolkien sent to America of the text itself were available to be utilized in the new British edition, his extensive revisions to the appendices were lost after being entered into the Ballantine edition. Allen & Unwin were forced to reset the appendices using the copy as published in the first Ballantine edition. This did not include Tolkien's second, small set of revisions sent to Ballantine; but, more significantly, it did include a great number of errors and omissions, many of which were not discovered until long afterwards. Thus, in the appendices, a close scrutiny of the first edition text and of the much later corrected impressions of the second edition is necessary to discern whether any particular change in this edition is authorial or erroneous.

In America, the revised text appeared in hardcover in the three-volume edition published by Houghton Mifflin on 27 February 1967. This text was evidently photo-offset from the 1966 Allen & Unwin three-volume hardcover, and is thus consistent with it. Aside from the first printing of this second Houghton Mifflin edition, which has a 1967 date on the title page, none of the many reprintings is dated. After the initial printings of this edition, which bore a 1966 copyright notice, the date of copyright was changed in 1965 to match the statement in the Ballantine edition. This change has caused a great deal of confusion for librarians and other researchers who have tried to sort out the sequence of publications of these editions.

Meanwhile, Tolkien spent much of the summer of 1966 further revising the text. In June he learned that any more revisions were too late for inclusion in the 1966 Allen & Unwin second edition, and he recorded in his diary: 'But I am attempting to complete my work [on the revisions] – I cannot leave it while it is all in my mind. So much time has been wasted in all my work by this constant breaking of threads.' This was the last major set of revisions Tolkien himself made to the text during his lifetime. (Some small alterations were made by Tolkien in the 1969 one-volume India paper edition.) They were added to the second impression (1967) of the three-volume hardcover Allen & Unwin second edition. The revisions themselves mostly include corrections of nomenclature and attempts at consistency of usage throughout the three volumes.

J.R.R. Tolkien died in 1973. His third son and literary executor, Christopher Tolkien, sent a large set of further corrections of misprints, mainly in the appendices and index, to Allen & Unwin for use in their editions in 1974. Most of these corrections were typographical, and in line with his father's expressed intent in his own check copies.

Since 1974, Christopher Tolkien has sent additional corrections, as errors have been discovered, to the British publishers of *The Lord of the Rings* (Allen & Unwin,

later Unwin Hyman, and now HarperCollins), who have tried to be conscientious in the impossible task of maintaining a textual integrity in whichever editions of *The Lord of the Rings* they have published. However, every time the text has been reset for publication in a new format (e.g. the various paperback editions published in England in the 1970s and 1980s), huge numbers of new misprints have crept in, though at times some of these errors have been observed and corrected in later printings. Still, throughout these years the three-volume British hardcover edition has retained the highest textual integrity.

In the United States, the text of the Ballantine paperback has remained unchanged since Tolkien added his few revisions in 1966. The text in all of the Houghton Mifflin editions remained unchanged from 1967 until 1987, when Houghton Mifflin photo-offset the then current three-volume British hardcover edition in order to update the text used in their editions. In those new reprintings a number of further corrections (overseen by Christopher Tolkien) were added, and the errant Ballantine branch of revision (including the 'Estella Bolger' addition) was integrated into the main branch of textual descent. Beginning in 1987, the Houghton Mifflin editions also included an earlier version of this 'Note on the Text', which contains some slight errors and simplifications based upon what I then understood to be true. This revision of the 'Note on the Text', undertaken for a new reset edition of *The Lord of the Rings* (to be published in various formats), replaces and supersedes the earlier version.

This new edition also contains a number of new corrections (again supervised by Christopher Tolkien), as well as a reconfigured index of names and page references. For this 'best possible' version, the text of *The Lord of the Rings* is being entered into computers, which should allow for a greater uniformity of text in future editions. Rayner Unwin, for much of his life Tolkien's publisher, reminisced that as a child he was told, as an incentive to improve his religious knowledge, 'that the University Presses would pay five pounds to anyone who detected a printer's error in one of their authorized Bibles. I never heard of anyone who earned this small fortune, but I have often imagined an equivalent reward being offered three centuries after the first publication of *The Lord of the Rings*. It would take at least that long to achieve typographical perfection.'

It may indeed, but this new edition makes a significant stride towards such perfection, as well as achieving a desirable conformity of the text in the various formats in which it is published.

The textual history of *The Lord of the Rings*, merely in its published form, is a vast and complex web. In this brief note I have given only a glimpse of the overall sequence and structure. Further details on the revisions and corrections made over the years to the published text of *The Lord of the Rings*, and a fuller account of its

NOTE ON THE TEXT

publishing history, may be found in *J.R.R. Tolkien: A Descriptive Bibliography*, by Wayne G. Hammond, with the assistance of Douglas A. Anderson (1993).

For those interested in observing the gradual evolving of *The Lord of the Rings* from its earliest drafts to its published form, I highly recommend Christopher Tolkien's account in volumes six to nine of his series *The History of Middle-earth: The Return of the Shadow* (1988); *The Treason of Isengard* (1989); *The War of the Ring* (1990); and *Sauron Defeated* (1992). These volumes contain an engrossing over-the-shoulder look at the growth and unfolding of a masterpiece-in-progress, unparalleled in literature.

Last, I must once again acknowledge with great pleasure the friendly assistance and co-operation over many years of Christopher Tolkien and Wayne G. Hammond.

Douglas A. Anderson

April 2002

FOREWORD TO THE SECOND EDITION

This tale grew in the telling, until it became a history of the Great War of the Ring and included many glimpses of the yet more ancient history that preceded it. It was begun soon after *The Hobbit* was written and before its publication in 1937; but I did not go on with this sequel, for I wished first to complete and set in order the mythology and legends of the Elder Days, which had then been taking shape for some years. I desired to do this for my own satisfaction, and I had little hope that other people would be interested in this work, especially since it was primarily linguistic in inspiration and was begun in order to provide the necessary background of 'history' for Elvish tongues.

When those whose advice and opinion I sought corrected *little hope* to *no hope*, I went back to the sequel, encouraged by requests from readers for more information concerning hobbits and their adventures. But the story was drawn irresistibly towards the older world, and became an account, as it were, of its end and passing away before its beginning and middle had been told. The process had begun in the writing of *The Hobbit*, in which there were already some references to the older matter: Elrond, Gondolin, the High-elves, and the orcs, as well as glimpses that had arisen unbidden of things higher or deeper or darker than its surface: Durin, Moria, Gandalf, the Necromancer, the Ring. The discovery of the significance of these glimpses and of their relation to the ancient histories revealed the Third Age and its culmination in the War of the Ring.

Those who had asked for more information about hobbits eventually got it, but they had to wait a long time; for the composition of *The Lord of the Rings* went on at intervals during the years 1936 to 1949, a period in which I had many duties that I did not neglect, and many other interests as a learner and teacher that often absorbed me. The delay was, of course, also increased by the outbreak of war in

1939, by the end of which year the tale had not yet reached the end of Book One. In spite of the darkness of the next five years I found that the story could not now be wholly abandoned, and I plodded on, mostly by night, till I stood by Balin's tomb in Moria. There I halted for a long while. It was almost a year later when I went on and so came to Lothlórien and the Great River late in 1941. In the next year I wrote the first drafts of the matter that now stands as Book Three, and the beginnings of chapters I and III of Book Five; and there as the beacons flared in Anórien and Théoden came to Harrowdale I stopped. Foresight had failed and there was no time for thought.

It was during 1944 that, leaving the loose ends and perplexities of a war which it was my task to conduct, or at least to report, I forced myself to tackle the journey of Frodo to Mordor. These chapters, eventually to become Book Four, were written and sent out as a serial to my son, Christopher, then in South Africa with the RAF. Nonetheless it took another five years before the tale was brought to its present end; in that time I changed my house, my chair, and my college, and the days though less dark were no less laborious. Then when the 'end' had at last been reached the whole story had to be revised, and indeed largely re-written backwards. And it had to be typed, and re-typed: by me; the cost of professional typing by the ten-fingered was beyond my means.

The Lord of the Rings has been read by many people since it finally appeared in print; and I should like to say something here with reference to the many opinions or guesses that I have received or have read concerning the motives and meaning of the tale. The prime motive was the desire of a tale-teller to try his hand at a really long story that would hold the attention of readers, amuse them, delight them, and at times maybe excite them or deeply move them. As a guide I had only my own feelings for what is appealing or moving, and for many the guide was inevitably often at fault. Some who have read the book, or at any rate have reviewed it, have found it boring, absurd, or contemptible; and I have no cause to complain, since I have similar opinions of their works, or of the kinds of writing that they evidently prefer. But even from the points of view of many who have enjoyed my story there is much that fails to please. It is perhaps not possible in a long tale to please everybody at all points, nor to displease everybody at the same points; for I find from the letters that I have received that the passages or chapters that are to some a blemish are all by others specially approved. The most critical reader of all, myself, now finds many defects, minor and major, but being fortunately under no obligation either to review the book or to write it again, he will pass over these in silence, except one that has been noted by others: the book is too short.

As for any inner meaning or 'message', it has in the intention of the author none. It is neither allegorical nor topical. As the story grew it put down roots (into the

past) and threw out unexpected branches: but its main theme was settled from the outset by the inevitable choice of the Ring as the link between it and *The Hobbit*. The crucial chapter, 'The Shadow of the Past', is one of the oldest parts of the tale. It was written long before the foreshadow of 1939 had yet become a threat of inevitable disaster, and from that point the story would have developed along essentially the same lines, if that disaster had been averted. Its sources are things long before in mind, or in some cases already written, and little or nothing in it was modified by the war that began in 1939 or its sequels.

The real war does not resemble the legendary war in its process or its conclusion. If it had inspired or directed the development of the legend, then certainly the Ring would have been seized and used against Sauron; he would not have been annihilated but enslaved, and Barad-dûr would not have been destroyed but occupied. Saruman, failing to get possession of the Ring, would in the confusion and treacheries of the time have found in Mordor the missing links in his own researches into Ring-lore, and before long he would have made a Great Ring of his own with which to challenge the self-styled Ruler of Middle-earth. In that conflict both sides would have held hobbits in hatred and contempt: they would not long have survived even as slaves.

Other arrangements could be devised according to the tastes or views of those who like allegory or topical reference. But I cordially dislike allegory in all its manifestations, and always have done so since I grew old and wary enough to detect its presence. I much prefer history, true or feigned, with its varied applicability to the thought and experience of readers. I think that many confuse 'applicability' with 'allegory'; but the one resides in the freedom of the reader, and the other in the purposed domination of the author.

An author cannot of course remain wholly unaffected by his experience, but the ways in which a story-germ uses the soil of experience are extremely complex, and attempts to define the process are at best guesses from evidence that is inadequate and ambiguous. It is also false, though naturally attractive, when the lives of an author and critic have overlapped, to suppose that the movements of thought or the events of times common to both were necessarily the most powerful influences. One has indeed personally to come under the shadow of war to feel fully its oppression; but as the years go by it seems now often forgotten that to be caught in youth by 1914 was no less hideous an experience than to be involved in 1939 and the following years. By 1918 all but one of my close friends were dead. Or to take a less grievous matter: it has been supposed by some that 'The Scouring of the Shire' reflects the situation in England at the time when I was finishing my tale. It does not. It is an essential part of the plot, foreseen from the outset, though in the event modified by the character of Saruman as developed in the story

without, need I say, any allegorical significance or contemporary political reference whatsoever. It has indeed some basis in experience, though slender (for the economic situation was entirely different), and much further back. The country in which I lived in childhood was being shabbily destroyed before I was ten, in days when motor-cars were rare objects (I had never seen one) and men were still building suburban railways. Recently I saw in a paper a picture of the last decrepitude of the once thriving corn-mill beside its pool that long ago seemed to me so important. I never liked the looks of the Young miller, but his father, the Old miller, had a black beard, and he was not named Sandyman.

The Lord of the Rings is now issued in a new edition, and the opportunity has been taken of revising it. A number of errors and inconsistencies that still remained in the text have been corrected, and an attempt has been made to provide information on a few points which attentive readers have raised. I have considered all their comments and enquiries, and if some seem to have been passed over that may be because I have failed to keep my notes in order; but many enquiries could only be answered by additional appendices, or indeed by the production of an accessory volume containing much of the material that I did not include in the original edition, in particular more detailed linguistic information. In the meantime this edition offers this Foreword, an addition to the Prologue, some notes, and an index of the names of persons and places. This index is in intention complete in items but not in references, since for the present purpose it has been necessary to reduce its bulk. A complete index, making full use of the material prepared for me by Mrs. N. Smith, belongs rather to the accessory volume.

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