

# The Fellowship of the Ring

## Book One Study Guide: Chapter One

### The Long -Expected Party

It is sixty years since Bilbo's exciting adventure. He is now (1)\_\_\_\_\_ (p.21) years old, but, incredibly, he appears to have hardly aged a day.

In the meantime, when Bilbo was 99, he had adopted his young cousin Frodo (2) \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 21), who was sometimes referred to as his nephew. Frodo was adopted by Bilbo when Frodo was still in his (3) \_\_\_\_\_ (p.21), as hobbits refer to the irresponsible time between childhood and the coming of age at (4) \_\_\_\_\_(p.21). Before he came to live with Bilbo, Frodo lived with his mother's family, the (5) \_\_\_\_\_ (p.23), after both of his parents died in a tragic boating accident.

As the story begins Bilbo is planning a long-expected party to celebrate both his 111th birthday and Frodo's (6) \_\_\_\_\_rd (p.29) birthday. As is usual for hobbits, the party is characterized by the giving of (7) \_\_\_\_\_ (p.26) to other hobbits. Bilbo's party, however, is the grandest of them all, with huge amounts of food for everyone. The most special feature of the party is the memorable (8) \_\_\_\_\_(p.27) display presented by the wandering wizard named (9) \_\_\_\_\_(p.27).

The party is made even more memorable by Bilbo's speech. After bidding his friends and relations good-bye, he suddenly (10) \_\_\_\_\_ (p.30) with the help of his magic (11) \_\_\_\_\_ (p.31). Bilbo wants to leave the Shire in this dramatic way because, as he told Gandalf, he feels thin or (12) \_\_\_\_\_(p.32) in spite of his youthful appearance. He also wants to travel again and find a peaceful place to finish his book.

Bilbo had planned to leave his home, called (13) \_\_\_\_\_ (p.36), and all his possessions to Frodo. However, when the time comes, he feels strangely reluctant to leave the (14) \_\_\_\_\_ (p.33) behind. In fact, he becomes quite angry with Gandalf when the wizard strongly urges him to leave it. In the end, Bilbo gives up the ring willingly, but with strong encouragement from Gandalf. He then sets off with his (15) \_\_\_\_\_ (p.34) friends.

Frodo feels quite sad when he finds that Bilbo has gone, but is kept busy by relatives who are searching the premises for presents. Frodo is aided in his effort to protect his property by his friend and cousin (16) \_\_\_\_\_ (p.38). Bilbo's annoying cousins Lobelia and Otho (17) \_\_\_\_\_(p.38) demand to see the will, for they had long hoped to inherit Bilbo's home for themselves. Gandalf leaves Frodo rather abruptly, but not before warning Frodo to be careful about using the (18) \_\_\_\_\_(p.40). In fact, he warns Frodo to keep it (19) \_\_\_\_\_ (p.40) and to keep it (20) \_\_\_\_\_(p.40).

### VOCABULARY EXERCISES

I. Look up definitions for the following words in the glossary in the back of this text and write them in the blanks provided. If there is more than one definition to choose from, choose the one that best fits in with the context of the word as used in this section. You are given the page number and paragraph number of where the word can be found in the text.

1. commodity (p.25, par. 14) \_\_\_\_\_
2. allude (p.28, par. 3) \_\_\_\_\_
3. warren (p.23, par. 4) \_\_\_\_\_
4. phalanx (p.27, par. 5) \_\_\_\_\_
5. draught (p. 26, par. 5-- look up all meanings) \_\_\_\_\_

III. Match the word in bold letters with the definition that you think may match it.

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|---|--|
| _____ 11. <b>outlandish</b> folk        | A. apologetically                              |
| _____ 12. <b>perfunctory</b> clapping   | B. a small firework                            |
| _____ 13. <b>perpetual</b> youth        | C. done only as a formality; without sincerity |
| _____ 14. <b>ensuing</b> weeks          | D. lying face downward, as with fear           |
| _____ 15. a <b>squib</b> or cracker     | E. unending                                    |
| _____ 16. <b>prostrate</b> hobbits      | F. unknowingly                                 |
| _____ 17. <b>scintillating</b> birds    | G. clever or sparkling                         |
| _____ 18. smiled <b>ruefully</b>        | H. strange or bizarre                          |
| _____ 19. <b>inadvertently</b> remained | I. about to occur; impending                   |
| _____ 20. <b>imminent</b> speech        | J. following or succeeding                     |

#### ADDITIONAL NOTES:

This chapter serves as a bridge from the story of *The Hobbit*. When Tolkien set out to write a sequel to *The Hobbit*, he needed something to link the two stories together. Bilbo, the hero of *The Hobbit*, needed to make an appearance in this story to thread the two tales together. He appears here as the adoptive parent and benefactor of the protagonist (the main character) of this tale, Frodo Baggins. The story here begins at Bag End, just where the tale of *The Hobbit* finished sixty years earlier.

Another element that connects the stories of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* is, of course, the Ring itself. Tolkien considered this to be the most obvious object to link to the sequel (Letters 216). The ring was a mysterious magical object in *The Hobbit*, an object whose history is never fully explained in the tale. In this story, the ring becomes more than an interesting and helpful tool. Gandalf himself foreshadows the importance of the ring on page 40: "Let it be a warning to you to be very careful with [the ring]. It may have other powers than just making you vanish when you wish."

Foreshadowing is a literary device by which an author prepares the reader for future events. Either through narration or through the voice of a character, he "drops a clue." This technique helps unify the story and makes the events, when they occur, appear more natural. Sometimes, as in this case, the foreshadowing is obvious: we are fully expecting to learn some interesting news about the ring in the future. However, at other times, the foreshadowing is so subtle that you will not recognize it until the foreshadowed event occurs.

Where did Tolkien get the models for his Hobbits? Of course, the more rural and untouched areas of England provided some of his material, but the areas of England that Tolkien mainly knew were much more modernized. Well-known American literary critic Guy Davenport, who had met Tolkien himself, provides us with another clue as to the possible source of the Hobbits. His observations indicate that Tolkien's vision of the Hobbits may be much closer to home than most Americans might realize!

Davenport was once in Shelbyville, Kentucky not many years after the publication of *The Lord of the Rings*. There he met a history teacher named Allen Barnett. In the course of a casual conversation, Davenport discovered, to his own amazement, that Barnett not only knew Tolkien, but had attended Oxford University with him during his college years. Barnett had lost track of Tolkien once he had returned to Kentucky and had no idea that Tolkien had become a famous writer. He had never even heard of *The Lord of the Rings*.

This Kentucky teacher commented in passing that he had always found it curious that Tolkien had been so interested in his own stories of the Kentucky folk- of how they acted and spoke, of their growing and curing of tobacco, of their quiet country ways, and their keen interest in the genealogical relationships of their neighbors. Tolkien was especially interested, he said, in their quaint country names: names like Boffin, and Barefoot-- and Baggins. Tolkien had made Barnett repeat the Kentucky names and stories to him over and over. Intrigued, Davenport looked in the Kentucky phone books in that area. Sure enough, many of the Hobbit family names were listed there in this rural part of Kentucky which still preserved many of the older English influences, terminology, and customs.

Was Tolkien gathering material for the book even in his college days? Surely, Tolkien had no idea what lay in store for him. The idea of Hobbits had not even occurred to him then. But Tolkien's keen interest in the world around him and his long years of observation of people, places, and language helped contribute to the creation of his own new world. If you keep your own eyes and ears open, maybe you can begin to gather material for a book of your own someday!

### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS:

1. What did Sam learn from Bilbo?
2. Frodo evidently knew that Bilbo was planning in leaving the Shire. How did he feel when Bilbo did disappear? Why did he feel that way?
4. How did most of the other Hobbits view Bilbo? How did they view Gandalf?
5. Why did Bilbo want to leave the Shire?

### CHALLENGER:

5. On page 28, as the Hobbits prepare for Bilbo's speech, their greatest fear is that "he was liable to drag in bits of what he called poetry." Tolkien himself was a poet of some note. What do you think the author is trying to say about the relationship between a poet and his audience?